

My dear fellow citizens,

1. On this historic and solemn occasion marking the independence of our motherland, I am delighted to extend my heartfelt greetings and best wishes to all Goans. Today, we remember with deep gratitude the sacrifices made by our freedom fighters during the Indian National Movement. We pay our respects to them for securing our precious independence from colonial rule. It is because of their courage and commitment that India stands today as the largest democracy in the world.
2. Across the country and also abroad, Indians celebrate 15th August with great pride—participating in flag-hoisting ceremonies, singing patriotic songs, and sharing sweets. Young children enthusiastically take part in cultural events, embodying the spirit of freedom and unity.
3. As we stand under our beloved tricolour, we recall the extraordinary men and women who laid down their lives for our freedom. Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, and countless others—some whose names may not be recorded in history books—shaped our destiny through their selfless actions.
4. On this glorious day, let us salute the freedom fighters and martyrs who made the supreme sacrifice for the freedom, unity, and integrity of our nation. Let us also express our gratitude to the brave men and women of our armed forces, police, and civil services who continue to protect the unity and integrity of our nation at the cost of their lives. Their dedication and sacrifice inspire us to contribute meaningfully to the greater good.

5. For the people of Goa, Independence Day holds a special significance. While the rest of India attained freedom in 1947, our own struggle continued. For fourteen long years, the people of Goa held on to the dream of joining the motherland. That dream was realized on 19th December 1961, when Goa was liberated and proudly became part of the Indian Union. This reminds us that freedom may be delayed, but it can never be denied when people stand united.
6. Since gaining independence, India has made remarkable progress in every field—from launching successful space missions like Chandrayaan-3 to becoming the fourth-largest economy in the world. We are becoming global leaders in IT, pharmaceuticals, science, industry, agriculture, technology, and defence. Our democracy is vibrant, our youth are innovative, and our voice is increasingly respected on the global stage. As we take inspiration from our past, we must work diligently in the present and look ahead to a future where we transform India into a *Viksit Bharat* by 2047—driven by unity, innovation, and inclusive growth.
7. Even though Goa is a small state, it holds immense cultural, historical, economic, and ecological significance. Known for its pristine beaches, rich heritage, and scenic landscapes, Goa attracts millions of tourists from around the world each year. Goa's biodiversity, especially in the Western Ghats along its eastern border, is home to a wide array of flora and fauna. As we celebrate our achievements, we must also commit to taking our economic prosperity forward and not rest on past laurels.
8. Over the past few decades, Goa has made commendable progress in sectors such as education, healthcare, and

infrastructure. Today, Goa is embracing the principles of *Kartavya Kaal*, leveraging the robust systems established under the Constitution of India, and actively contributing to the vision of a developed, prosperous, and inclusive *Viksit Bharat*.

9. Goa is a small state, yet it has one of the highest per capita income in India, reflecting its economic vitality. The state is well-integrated across its north-south and urban-rural continuum and enjoys excellent connectivity to metropolitan cities and trade hubs via road, rail, sea, and air.
10. Goa was the first state in the country to implement rapid molecular testing (NAAT) as the primary diagnostic tool for early detection of tuberculosis, with 19 NAAT machines deployed since 2020.
11. The state has been recognized as the best-performing under the non-high-focus category for outstanding achievements in population, reproductive health, and family planning at the 7th JRD Tata Memorial Conclave.
12. Goa has also been declared a fully literate state, underscoring its unwavering commitment to education and development.
13. Goa is among the first states to launch the National Health Authority's "100 Microsites Project," aimed at onboarding private healthcare providers onto the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission platform. This initiative has earned national appreciation for Goa's proactive adoption.
14. For the fifth consecutive year, Goa has secured the top position in the small states category in the State Food Safety Index (SFSI).

15. Goa is the first state to establish the Goa State Schools Standards Assessment and Accreditation Authority, ensuring the effective implementation of the National Education Policy 2020.
16. Goa is also having an ISO-certified Directorate of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, reflecting its commitment to quality and innovation in vocational training.
17. With a renewed focus on sports infrastructure, Goa is poised to emerge as a vibrant sports destination in the near future.
18. In a landmark development, a novel cable-stayed bridge built on a curve—connecting Sada to Varunapuri and the Goa International Airport—has been commissioned in Goa marking a significant milestone in India's infrastructure journey.
19. According to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index 2024 released by NITI Aayog, Goa has maintained its 4th position and continues to be recognized as a “Front Runner” state.
20. On this Independence Day, let us renew our pledge to keep our state and our nation united, to work for progress, and to build an *all-inclusive India*—a developed, self-reliant, and inclusive nation that fulfils the dreams of our great freedom fighters and meets the aspirations of our people and youth.
21. **Jai Hind!**