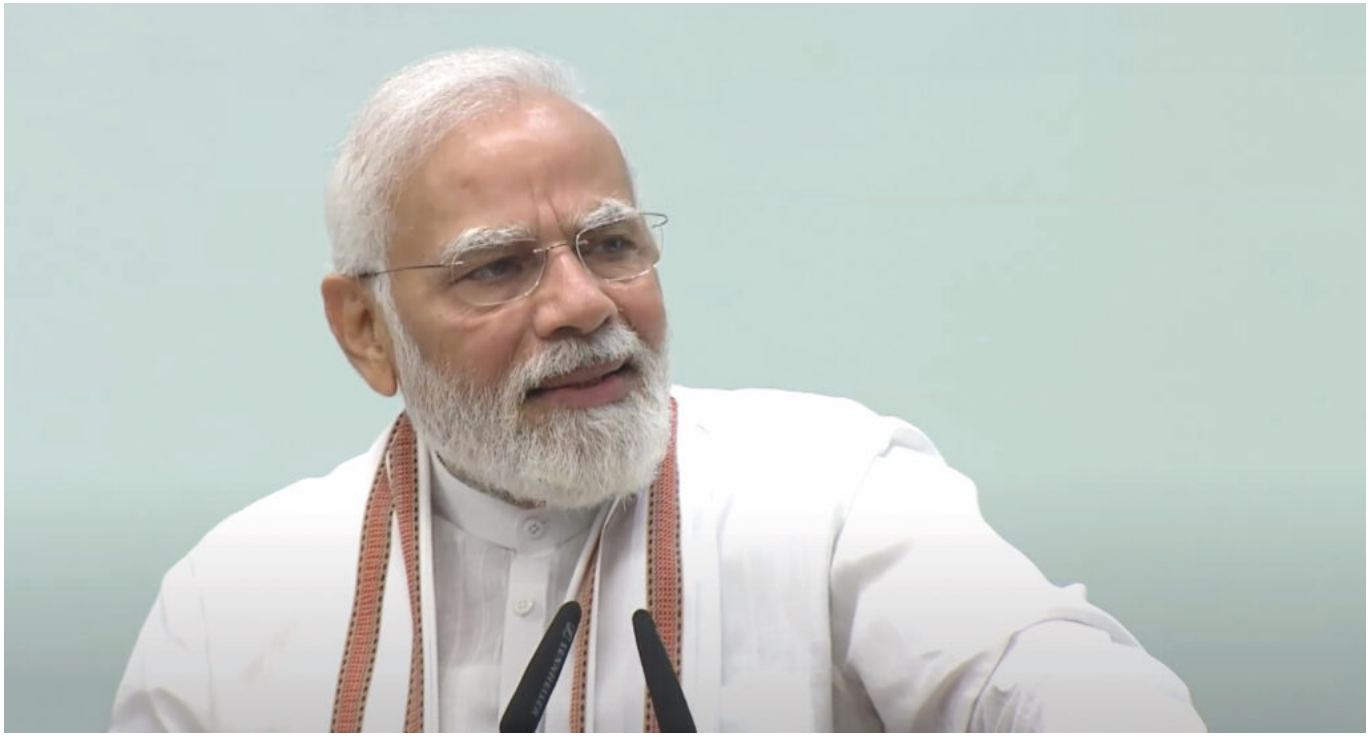
‘I can do it’ is the Mood of New India: PM Modi



Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

May 22, 2022

Prime Minister: Yes, Srikanth, tell me.

Srikanth: Sir, first of all thank you very much. You took important time off your schedule to call us soon after the tournament. Sir, I can proudly say that no other athlete in the world can boast about this. Only we have this privilege of talking to you immediately after the win, Sir.

Prime Minister: Tell me this, Srikanth. Generally, badminton is not very close to the hearts of the people. What did you feel when you were made captain of the team and there were huge challenges and responsibilities and such a huge target before you?

Srikanth: Sir, everybody was playing well individually. We just needed to bring everybody together for the team events and fight till the end. All the players used to discuss together. Being a captain, I did not have to do much as all the players were playing brilliantly.

Prime Minister: No, no! Everyone played well, but it was not a small task. You have been humble, but you must have felt the pressure at one stage because the captain of a cricket team also faces the litmus test in the last over.

Srikanth: The last match was very important as it was a decider for the Indian team in the finals. I am privileged that I could play that match. When I stepped onto the court, I thought that I had to play my best badminton and put in 100 percent effort.

Prime Minister: Well, you have been No. 1 in the world ranking and you have won the gold medal in Thomas Cup. Though I should not ask this as every success has its own value, yet I would like to ask as journalists often do. Which one of these two victories do you consider the most important?

Srikanth: Sir, both were my dreams. Being World No. 1 is every player's dream and Thomas Cup is a team tournament in which ten players play like a team.

This was a dream because India had never won a medal in Thomas Cup and it was a big opportunity for us this year because all of us were playing brilliantly.

I felt good that I could fulfill both my dreams.

> *"On behalf of the entire country I congratulate the entire team as after decades, Indian flag has been firmly planted. This is not a small feat."*

Prime Minister: It is true that our performance in Thomas Cup used to be below par earlier and nobody in the country discussed such tournaments. Not many people were aware of such a big tournament. Therefore, I called you on the telephone to say that it would take 4-6 hours in India to know what you people have achieved. I congratulate you and the entire team on behalf of the country, because you have hoisted the flag of India. It is not a small achievement.

Srikanth: Thank you, Sir!

Prime Minister: I can realize the pressure you must have had as a player and as a captain at the last moment. But the way you have brought laurels to the country by handling the entire team together with patience. I congratulated you on the phone. But I am feeling happy to congratulate you in person.

Srikanth : Thank you Sir!

Prime Minister: Satwik, tell me about the game. Tell me your experience.

Satwik: Definitely! The last 10 days were very memorable moments in my life. I was getting huge support from the support staff when I was playing. We were also getting support from India. Though physically we are here, my mind is still there in Thailand. The last point which Srikanthbhai won is still in front of my eyes. Still, we are enjoying that moment, Sir.

Prime Minister: Do you dream of your captain scolding you at night?

Satwik: All of us slept with medals after the finals. Nobody removed his medal.

Prime Minister: I saw somebody's tweet. Perhaps, it was Prannoy, who was sitting with the medal and saying he was not getting sleep. Do you ever analyze your shortcomings after watching the video despite your good performance?

> *"Such successes inject great energy and confidence in the entire sporting ecosystem of the country."*

Satwik: Yes Sir. Before the match, we sit with the coach and analyze the game of our opponent with whom we have to play next.

Prime Minister: Satwik, your success has not only proved that your coach was right but also that you are a very good player. A good player is one who prepares himself according to the needs of the game, molds himself and accepts the change. Only then he can achieve and you have accepted the change whatever was needed to grow yourself. As a result, the country is proud of you. My best wishes to you. You have a long way to go, don't stop. Keep going with the same strength. Many best wishes!

Announcer: Chirag Shetty.

Prime Minister: Satwik has praised you a lot, Chirag.

Chirag Shetty: Sir, Namaste. I still remember we came here last year. You called us after the Olympics, there were 120 athletes and you invited everyone to your home and those who did not win medals also came here. We were very sad that we could not win medals for our country but this time when we went for Thomas Cup, we had a passion to do something to get a medal. Hardly would we have thought that it would be gold, but yes we thought about a medal. I think we cannot give better joys than this to our country.

Prime Minister: When you came last time, I could see dejection in many faces and most of you thought that we came here without medals. On that day I had also said that reaching there was equivalent to a medal. But today you have proved that a defeat is not a defeat, you just need courage and passion to win in life and victory is there to kiss your steps. I asked one of your double partners and he told me. I know that you were indifferent when you came here after the Tokyo Olympics, but today you have compensated it with interest and glorified the country. It has not been long after the Olympics disappointment, but what was it which made you victorious within such a short time. What was the reason?

Chirag Shetty: As I said earlier, we were very disappointed with our performance in the Olympics because our opponent whom we beat went on to win the gold medal eventually. They lost only one game to us. Before that they did not lose to anybody. But this time, it happened just the opposite. We lost to them in the pre-quarter final group stage, but we went on to win the gold medal. It was really very good. Call it destiny or something else. But we became passionate that we have to do something. I was not only the one who had this feeling, but all the 10 people who are sitting here had the same feeling. We were together. I think these 10 players actually represent India's population that no matter what happens we will fight back.

> *"This is like a golden chapter in India's sporting history and champions like you and players of your generation are the authors of this. We need to keep this momentum going."*

Prime Minister: Great! I would say this to you Chirag and your entire team that you have to get many more medals. You have a long way to play and flourish and

take the country to the world of sport, because now India can't lag behind. All of you who have been scoring victories are inspiring the future generation for the sport. I think this itself is a huge achievement. Many best wishes to you, friend.

Chirag Shetty: Thank you so much, Sir.

Announcer: Lakshya Sen.

Prime Minister: Let me first express my gratitude to Lakshya because I had told him on the telephone while congratulating that I will eat 'Baal Mithai' from you. He remembered and came with it today. Yes, Lakshya, tell me.

Lakshya Sen: Namaste, Sir! I met you first when I won the gold medal in the Youth Olympics and I am meeting you for the second time today. I would like to say we feel very motivated when you meet us. I would like to say that may I continue to win medals for India and meet you and bring 'Baal Mithai' for you.

Prime Minister: I was told that you suffered from food poisoning there.

Lakshya Sen: Yes, Sir! The day I reached there, I had food poisoning. I could not play for two days, but I started feeling better when the Group stage matches began. I played one match, but was forced to rest for another match due to food poisoning.

Prime Minister: Is it due to eating anything?

Lakshya Sen: No, Sir. I ate something at the airport and I had a bad stomach. But as the tournament progressed, I felt better day by day.

Prime Minister: Now, the young kids of the country also want to go and play. What would be your message for the children aged 8-10 years?

Laksya Sen: As Vimal Sir has said I was very mischievous and used to do a lot of mischief. I would like to say about myself that if I would have done a little less mischief and focused on playing, it would have been better but I would like to tell the rest of the people that whatever they do they should put their heart into it and work with full attention.

Prime Minister: There must have been physical problems but you must have suffered a lot of mental problems after food poisoning because the balance that you have to maintain when the game is on and the body does not support. You think

about it later what was that force or training which did not let you sit idle despite the food poisoning and physical weakness. And you came out of it. Remember that moment once again, the strength that helped you achieve this. Ten people must have said not to worry, but there must have been an inherent strength within you. And secondly, don't give up your mischief because it is also your strength. Live your life with fun. Many congratulations.

Prime Minister: Yes, Prannoy. It was your tweet.

Prannoy: Yes, Sir. It was my tweet. Sir, it's been a very happy moment for all of us because we won the Thomas Cup after 73 years and I think it is an even more proud moment because we could win it for our country on our 75th year of Independence. So I think that's a great gift for the country and I am very happy.

Prime Minister: Prannoy, Malaysia and Denmark are very formidable teams. All eyes must be on you during the deciding matches against them in quarter finals and semi- finals. How did you manage that pressure and produce aggressive results?

Prannoy: Sir, the pressure was too much that day, especially on the day of the quarter finals. Because I knew that if I lose this match then we will not get a medal and we will have to return without a medal. But the spirit and enthusiasm of the team throughout the entire tournament was such that we had to win a medal and it was energizing us from day one. Once inside the court, I felt that somehow I had to win. It was the same situation in the semi-finals. There was so much pressure, because I knew that we could get gold if we reached the finals. So, I had to win that match. I thank the entire team for the support and energy!

Prime Minister: Prannoy, you are a warrior. More than the game, the spirit of victory is your biggest strength. You don't bother about your physical injuries and are committed. It is the result of this. You have huge energy as well as passion. Many best wishes to you!

Prannoy: Thank you very much, Sir

Announcer: Unnati Hooda.

Prime Minister: Is Unnati the youngest?

Unnati: Good evening, Sir.

Prime Minister: Tell me, Unnati.

Unnati: Sir, first of all I am part of here and feeling very happy today. One thing that motivates me is that you do not discriminate between a medalist and non-medalist.

Prime Minister: Great! How were you feeling when you were part of the team with so many seniors at such a young age? There have been several Olympic winners in the team as well. Were you intimidated or you felt that you were also equal to them?

Unnati: Sir, I learnt and gained so much experience from this tournament. It felt good when the boys' team won. I also thought that the girls' team had to win the next time and win a medal.

Prime Minister: Ok, tell me, what is there in the soil of Haryana that so many good players are emerging from there.

Unnati: Sir, first of all, it is milk and curd.

Prime Minister: Unnati, it is my belief and of the entire country that you will definitely make your name meaningful. You have got the opportunity at such a young age. It is the beginning. Much remains to be done.

Victories at this stage should not overwhelm you. A lot remains to be done because you have a very long career. You have gained experience at a very young age. You need to digest this success and move forward. It will be of great help to you. And I am sure that you will follow this. I wish you all the best. Congratulations.

Unnati: Thank You, Sir.

Tressa Jolly: Good Evening, Sir. As a young player, it's an honour to play for India. In the coming years, I will make India proud and get more medals for our country.

Prime Minister: How is the support from the family?

Tressa Jolly: Sir, Papa was the physical education teacher earlier. So he is already into the sport. So he used to support me to play good badminton. He made a

badminton court at home for me. Later, I won medals at the state and national level. Then I was hopeful that I could make it to the national team.

Prime Minister: Are all the family members satisfied now?

Tressa Jolly: Yes Sir. Very much!

Prime Minister: Now your father must be satisfied as he has put in a lot of effort for you.

Tressa Jolly: Yes.

Prime Minister: Great. See Tressa, the way you guys played in the Uber Cup, I'm sure the country is very proud of it. And all of you stuck to your goals. You might not have got the desired result, but I am sure that you and your team will soon get the desired results. You have made a good beginning. You have energized the young generation of the country. And this country of 125 crores had to wait for seven decades for this.

It is not a small feat that you have fulfilled the dreams of so many generations of our players in seven decades. And when I was speaking to Tressa, you are not aware that you have really done a great job. And now you must also be feeling that you have done something.

When you get such great success in the sports you are associated with, your victory provides a new enthusiasm and self-confidence to India's sports ecosystem which the best of the coaches can't do, promising speeches of important leaders can't do it.

There's still a bit more to do in the Uber Cup, we will wait, but we'll also ensure victory. And I am sure that we will not have to wait long because I can see that passion in your eyes after what you have done there.

Our women's team has shown their mettle time and time again and the top class players they are. I can see very clearly friends that it is a matter of time. If not this time, then the next time for sure! Victory will be yours.

And as you all said that the Amrit Mahotsav of independence, the 75 years of independence, is going on and this rise of India in the world of sports makes India proud.

Reaching the pinnacle of success makes every Indian proud. ‘Yes, I can do it’ – this is the spirit of India with a new confidence. As Prannoy said that he had made up his mind not to lose this time, not to back down.

This spirit of ‘yes, we can do it’ has become a new force in India. And you represent that. No matter how strong our competitor is and his past records, what is important today for India is the performance! We have to move forward to reach our goals with this spirit. But friends, you all have to remember one more thing. Now the expectation of the country from all of you has increased and, therefore, there will be more pressure. This pressure is not bad. But being buried under this pressure is bad. We have to convert pressure into energy; we have to convert it into power. We should take it as encouragement. Somebody says buck-up, but it does not mean that he is putting pressure on you. In fact, he is encouraging you to put in your best efforts. We should consider it as our source of strength. And I am sure you will prove it.

Winners of the Indian Badminton Team

In the last few years, India’s youth have been performing well in almost every sport. And there has been an attempt to do something new, something better.

In that too, India has made many new records in the last seven-eight years. Our youth have shown results. Be it the record performances in the Olympics and the Paralympics.

This morning I met the Deaflympics players. Our children have performed so well. It is a matter of great satisfaction and bliss.

Today the old beliefs about sports are also changing, as you all have said.

Parents are also encouraging and helping us. Parents are also becoming ambitious that their children should move ahead in this field.

A new culture, a new environment has been created and this is a golden chapter in the sports history of India, and whose creators are all of you, the players of your generation who are today taking India to new places with victory flags.

We have to keep up this momentum. We should not allow any slackness. I assure you that the government will walk shoulder to shoulder with you, and will provide all possible help and encouragement to you. We will also provide whatever arrangements are needed.

And I am assuring not just to you who are in front of me, but to all the players of the country. Now we don’t have to pause, we don’t have to look back. We have to look ahead, set our goals and be victorious. I wish you all the very best.

Many thanks!