India remembers Rajiv Gandhi

Monday, 21 May 2012

21st May 1991, Sri Perumbudur was rocked by a blast. Suicide attacker had succeeded in their evil motives. They snatched away Rajivji from us and the progressive movement of a developing nation was brought to a screeching halt. This was an international conspiracy, that many top world leaders were afraid about. The then Palestinian President Yasir Arafat had serious concerns about such an attack on Rajiv Gandhi and so he had also warned him.

In November 1990, mid term polls were declared in India. From the very beginning it was clear that the mood of public was Pro Congress and Rajiv Gandhi was likely to be the Prime Minister again.

During Rajiv Gandhi’s Prime Minister rule , the neighboring country Sri Lanka was burning with isolation and violence. To maintain the regional harmony and the sovereignty of its neighbour Rajiv Gandhi’s government acted promptly.

Rajiv Gandhi after signing a treaty with Sri lanka

“The agreement holds out the promise of a strong, united, peaceful Sri Lanka which is as much in our interest as it is in yours.It is the unity of hearts that guarantees the unity of Nations. India and Sri Lanka have been the joint founders of the non alignment movement. Our commitment to non-alignment grows out of our traditions and ethos of our freedom struggle. Peace in our region depends crucially on all of remaining non aligned.”

No body could’ve imagined that it would be so life threatening for him to desire peace. The ‘Shaanti Sena’ sent by India had destroyed the hopes of LTTE , that was set out to divide Sri Lanka. This was a big jolt for LTTE chief Prabhakaran and he started planning the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. He was also perturbed by the possibility of Rajiv Gandhi returning to power after Indian elections. From the beginning of year 1991, LTTE terrorists had laid the foundation of Rajiv ji’s assassination.

After the two dress rehearsals in local rallies , the attackers finally succeeded on 21 May 1991 in Perumbudur.

21 May 1991 became a black day in the history of India. The Sun had set even before rising. His dreams also died with him, unfulfilled.

Wish his dream had not died, Wish he had not died.

Rajiv

Gandhi was born in a politically active family yet he was an apolitical person.

His entry to politics was circumstantial but when he took over the control, his every move was of a mature statesman

ENTRY IN POLITICS

31 October 1984

Like every other day, the morning sun was cozy and the sunlight was filtering down from the tree leaves. Like every other day, birds were out of their nests flying high in the sky. But unlike every other day, when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was stepping out of her house, his bodyguards did not pay her the usual respect, instead shot her down point blank. It was an end of an era by all ways. Her death suddenly created a vacuum around. Everyone just had one question in mind, who will fill this vacuum?

Rajiv Gandhi rose to the occasion.

Because his entry to Politics and power was circumstantial, the opposition doubted his credentials but when he acted, every step became a milestone.

Rajiv Gandhi , speech on 15 August 1985

“This morning at 3 am, an agreement has been done between students in Assam and the Government of India.”

Rajiv Gandhi did not only gave a vision but also showed a great sensibility as a Prime Minister when he made Anandpur Sahab issue an election issue pointing that disinterest of opposition in maintaining the integrity of India. It should also be noted that Congress has performed best ever under Rajiv Gandhi’s leadership. In 1984 Lok sabha election , Congress got 412 seats, respected Atal Bihari Vajpayee couldn’t even win the election.

As a Member of Parliament he displayed immense maturity. It seemed as if he had been in politics for a long time.

In his not so long tenure, he proved the mettle of his vision and thoughts.

In the 20th Century, Rajiv Gandhi wanted the countrymen to eye at 21st century and not 19th century. Probably that’s why we all know he

tried his best to propel the country ahead in the fields of Computer technology and Science.

Rajiv Gandhi emerged like a bright star on the sky of a developing India.

“Rajiv used to say that if we try to progress in all the areas simultaneously, we might not be able to succeed. So we need to focus essentially on some key areas where we are already equipped and where we have a larger possibility of reaching the front ranks.”

Rajiv Gandhi had equal amount of attention towards village development as well as Computer technology advancement. He emphasized on Panchayati Raj strengthening and simultaneously brought the country towards technological advancement.

Being inspired by Mahatma Gandhi’s thoughts on self reliance of Villages, he too believed that the India of 21st Century can only be realized when rural India is also developed.

Rajiv Gandhi

We need to change the scenario of rural areas and for that we need to change the lives of farmers, workers. This is the only way out. We need to the farmers closer to the use of technology, give them advanced equipments, give them newer variety of seeds and teach them new irrigational methods. On the other side we will also make sure that they get the right price of their production. This way we are trying to help out the farmers.

Bringing the 73rd Constitutional amendment, he also brought the idea of ‘a government of the people, by the people, for the people’ into a real shape.

Rajiv Gandhi

“After the country got Independent, the constitution promised the resolution of empowering the third strata of society. First and second is functional from Delhi ,or functional in capital cities which is decently empowered after several elections. These can not be moved now. But because the third strata is still weak , the weakness passes on to the first and second strata too. People at the top strata become paper lions. This way a complete hollow set up is built and that is what we need to rectify.”

“For Rajiv ji Panchayati Raj and Women empowerment were necessarily linked. He was exactly right when he thought that Indian society cannot be democratized without women participation.”

In this set up of Panchayti Raj, every strata of society got equal opportunities. Today

every level of society is a participant in the process of progress.

Today
India has a strong standing in the field of Information Technology throughout
the globe and the credit goes to Rajiv Gandhi

Rajiv
Gandhi

“We need
to ensure that newest of technology is utilized and used at the rural level. We
need to befriend Science and technology to jump to higher notches.”

Narayan
Moorti , founder , Infosys

“He
raised the confidence of the nation. He emphasized on the role of technology,
Information Technology in particular. I think he showed to the world that he
had a dream, he ‘too had a dream’ as he said. We all got enthused by seeing a young,
idealistic and dynamic person. Rajiv Gandhi was one of the two people whose
death invoked great sentiments in me because he was Young, dynamic and he had a
vision for India for the future. He was an extraordinary leader and I think we
all are going to miss him. I wish he had lived longer”

Purushottam
Agrawal

“The
best part about Rajiv Gandhi’s vision was that he realized it very early that
in the progress of India, Information Technology is going to play a decisive
role. To realize this, to say this and to be joked about for this vision was
only possible for him because he was apolitical by thoughts and so he could say
what was right without being entangled by momentary politics.”

Decades
before, Rajiv Gandhi had imagined the world of today. During his tenure he
initiated a lot of programmes for the progress of technology.

Subhash
Kashyap

He laid
stress on the development of fields like Space research , Nuclear research ,
Genetic Engineering , Genetic Biology and
Computer software development.

Showing
focus towards these selected areas, he was instrumental in India’s success in
theses areas.”

Rajiv
Gandhi had the conviction to change his dreams into reality. He wanted to

development initiatives to be treated like a mission and so all his targets were his missions rather.

Rajiv Gandhi

“We have devised a very special programme for Women. For the first time a perspective plan is made that digs deep into the problems of Women in India and tries to solve them.”

Purushottam Agrawal

“Rajiv Gandhi’s emphasis on Panchayti Raj explains the fact that he believed that in a country like India or for that matter any country the real power ,be it political or administrative, cannot be fully tapped and democratized without women “

Rajiv Gandhi was not only interested in the technological development of the country but he had equal interest in maintaining the national culture.

Rajiv Gandhi

“I was touring Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh for 3 days. Wanted to know how difficult life is in these places. See the coincidence, It has snowed and now I know how difficult it is for you.”

He wanted the structure of development to be uniform and in sync with the national culture.

Rajiv Gandhi

“The biggest problem is lack of discipline. Discipline everywhere, on the roads, discipline in public and at a much higher level discipline in the functioning of Governments. Central Government, State governments. This is where we need to tighten up.”

To ensure Youth participation in the political system of the country, his government lowered the age of voting from 21 to 18.

Rajiv Gandhi

“Unemployment
is the problem of most young people in India and so we have brought down the age of voting from 21 to 18.This will make your (youth) thoughts come up and help in raising your voice, so that a government is formed that helps you”.

Subhash
Kashyap

“He
wanted that if democracy has to be a success, a common man’s participation is must. It requires the real participation.”

For a
successful democracy, the bargaining of candidates during government formation needs to be checked. He realized that administration is not accessible and answerable to a common man’s needs. He was prompt in making changes.”

Rajiv
Gandhi

“Till
there is a gap in the implementation of schemes and the problems at grass root level, till there is a gap in execution and transparency ,there would be scamps happening. The faulty administrative structure that we have erected today waits for command from Delhi (Central control) for any step to be taken at village level. We need to change this. We need to send control to the village, to the blocks in the rural areas. Then when the question is asked at the rural level, answer is given at the rural level , the scope for wrong execution will be over. Then any programme made from Centre will benefit you fully.

Rajiv
Gandhi was equally concerned about the communal harmony of the nation

Rajiv
Gandhi

“Mahatma
Gandhi ji and Indira Gandhi ji laid down their lives fir the integrity of the nation. India cannot survive without secularism. We will do anything to uphold our secular values. With all my strengths, I shall continue to serve the people of India”.

Rajiv
Gandhi was a strong supporter of Peace and Harmony, inside the state as well as outside the state. He advocated the need to know the opinion of people against the wars and conflicts. He was very clear expressing his opinion against disarmament on the international platform.

Rajiv
Gandhi, at an International event

“We
believe in human rights and human dignity. Peace can not be bought to the mere control of armaments while encouraging the development of newer generation of

weapons – nuclear and conventional. Peace requires the diversion of resources from weapons to development. Peace requires a wholesome environment and the conservation of nature’s gift of life on planet earth. Peace means an end to terrorism, whether by states or individuals.”

Who had
known that a soldier of Peace would have died such a violent death. The country was stunned, the world was shocked. Leaders and dignitaries had come from around the world to pay last tributes to the legend.

Rajiv
Gandhi in his short span of leadership achieved so much for India what many can’t get in whole life.

Today on
his Martyrdom day, Nation salutes the visionary.

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