

SPEECH OF SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE, FORMER PRESIDENT OF INDIA ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF 'NETA APP'

I am indeed happy to be launching the '**Neta**' mobile application today.

2. Be it politicians, practitioners and framers of Public Policy, implementers or the Corporate Sector, feedback from the people is of critical importance. In a democracy, feedback has an even important role since it gives opportunities of empirical evidence for gauging public mood and accordingly doing course correction. In this context, the launch of this app today is indeed welcome step towards strengthening our democracy's feedback mechanism.

Dear friends,

3. Today we celebrate two things. First is the ingenuity and enthusiasm of our youth. I am told that the Neta app has been built by an entirely young team led by 27-year old Pratham Mittal. It is heartening to see such young boys and girls leveraging technology to solve the challenges facing our nation. Secondly, this app is also a manifestation of how young minds

with their new tools and new skills can revolutionise the shape of politics of our country.

Ladies and Gentleman,

4. India is unique due to its diversity and we are united by that very trait. But the biggest challenge of being such a large democracy is the inability of the citizens to actively participate in the process of policy-making. It is often the case that the only time the entire citizenry takes conscious interest in the nitty-gritties of democracy is when they come out to vote.

5. On the other hand, information dissemination has largely been a one way process where media or the government feeds us information and we only play a passive role. With the advent of technology, this has completely turned the tables. This app is an example of how this newly evolved two way channel can be used effectively.

6. Eisenhower, the 34th President of United States of America, rightly said, and I quote "***Politics ought to be the part-time profession of every citizen who would protect the rights and privileges of free man.***"

Friends,

7. We must not forget that **“we the people”** who have given ourselves this Constitution elect **our Government**, for **us**. We must, therefore, make sure that our aspirations do not go unheard. A good democracy cannot work without informed voters, good leaders and a system of accountability.

8. I am told that during the trial launch in Karnataka, 90% of candidates who won were also rated the highest on the Neta app. I notice another benefit of this app is that it gives a platform to the young leaders to be recognised.

Ladies and gentlemen,

9. This app definitely marks a milestone in making our democracy more participative but we must not forget that it is only a beginning. I wish all the very best to the developers in their future endeavours.

THANK YOU

JAI HIND