

# **SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF SUVARNA SOUDHA BUILDING**

**BELGAUM, KARNATAKA, 11-10-2012**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am privileged to be amongst you on this happy occasion. This beautiful structure stands on sacred soil, which was once ruled by the great queen Kittur Chennamma, who challenged the colonial powers. Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak launched the Home Rule League from Belgaum in 1916 with the words Freedom is my birthright. Mahatma Gandhiji presided over the historic Congress Session at Belgaum in 1924, the only occasion the Mahatma chaired any session of the Indian National Congress. Encouraged by the Congress session, people from Belgaum took active part in the freedom movement.

I understand Belgaum used to be known as Venu Grama (Village of the flute). Today, this region is the Sugar bowl of the State. It has made immense contribution to Karnataka's history, education, literature, culture and economy.

True to its name, Belgaum is known for music, especially Hindustani music. Many stalwarts like Kumar Gandharva, Mallikarjuna Mansur, Gangubai Hangal and Bhimsen Joshi come from this area and have added glory to Indian classical music. The Belgaum session of the Indian National Congress witnessed a Kannada song by Gangubhai Hangal.

The 12<sup>th</sup> century thinker, social reformer, saint and religious teacher Basaveshwara lived in this part of the State and brought about sweeping social change in Karnataka and surrounding region.

This Suvarna Soudha is inheritor of a proud and glorious tradition. Democratic process started in erstwhile Mysore state much before the rest of the country. Maharaja Chamaraj Wadiyar established the Mysore Representative Assembly way back in 1881 and his son Maharaja Krishnaraj Wadiyar established a Legislative Council in 1907. Erstwhile Mysore was amongst the first princely states in India to start the formation of democratic institutions with a view to associating representatives of the people in the process of administration.

This Representative Assembly saw several transformations and evolved into a mature house of legislation which is what we see today in the form of the bi-cameral house of Karnataka Legislative Assembly and Karnataka Legislative Council.

I hope the northern districts of the State will now be much closer to governance and this will ensure balanced growth and development of the State by removing social, economical and educational imbalances. The Special Development Plan with the support of all political parties and the recommendations of the Dr. D.M. Nanjundappa High Level Committee on Redressal of Regional Imbalances which is being implemented across the state should help Karnataka achieve all round progress.

I am happy to inaugurate the “Suvarna Soudha”, built by the Karnataka Government at Belgaum in commemoration of the

Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the formation of the State. I dedicate this second seat of legislature to the people of Karnataka and hope that it shall prove to be the epitome of good governance, bringing welfare and prosperity to the common man whose interests should be paramount in our political system.

Thank you.

Jai Hind!