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Constitutional morality imperative, says President

Organs of state, constitutional functionaries, citizens must abide by it: Kovind

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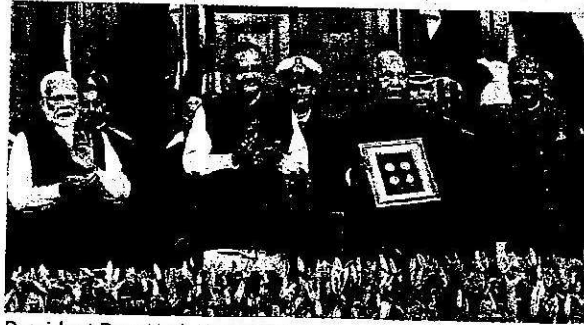
President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday quoted Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to say that all the three organs of the State, persons occupying constitutional posts, civil society members and citizens should abide by "constitutional morality".

The President made the observation at a joint sitting of Parliament in the Central Hall of Parliament to mark Constitution Day on the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the statute.

The event was boycotted by a majority of the Opposition parties over the Maharashtra government formation issue, and they staged a protest in front of the Ambedkar statue in Parliament House.

The Bahujan Samaj Party, the Biju Janata Dal and the Telangana Rashtra Samithi, however, attended the function.

Mr. Kovind's remarks came against the backdrop of criticism by the Opposition of the Centre's decision



President Ram Nath Kovind releases a coin to commemorate 'Samvidhan Divas' at Parliament. *PTI

to revoke President's Rule in Maharashtra at 5.47 a.m. last Saturday and swear in a BJP government that lasted only four days.

PM's call to citizens

At the function, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called upon people to focus on their duties as much as asserting their rights.

"If a citizen saves every drop of water, he is performing his duty. If he is getting immunisation done at the right time, he is performing his duty. If he is voting, he is performing his duty. If he is paying his taxes, he is per-

forming his duty," he said.

The Prime Minister quoted Mahatma Gandhi as saying "rights go hand in hand with duties".

He said had Dr. Ambedkar been alive, he would have been the happiest today because "India has strengthened both its independence and democracy."

"If I were to sum up the essence of the Constitution in easy language, it would be 'dignity for Indians and unity for India'," he said. "It has upheld the dignity of every Indian and has ensured the unity of India stands strong," he added.

Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu proposed to include fundamental duties in the curriculum as well as display them in public places. "We must reach out to the youth through appropriate campaigns," he said.

Eyesight analogy

Mr. Naidu, who is also the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, stressed the importance of the mother tongue.

"Mother tongue is like our eyesight. The other language is like your spectacle. If you have eyesight, the spectacle will improve it. We must protect, preserve, promote, propagate and practice our mother tongue," he said.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said the Constitution was a document that "truly reflects the national consciousness". He urged every citizen to focus on the fundamental duties in everyday life.

To mark the 250th session of the Rajya Sabha, President Kovind released a commemorative stamp and a few booklets at the event.