

President warns of 'low-intensity proxy war'

President A.P.J Abdul Kalam on August 14 said the "challenges to peace from across our geographical borders" and the "constant threat of low-intensity proxy war" required a comprehensive strategy to ensure India's security.

Addressing the nation on the eve of the country's 60th Independence Day, a month after the 7/11 terror bombings in Mumbai, Kalam said he will also suggest to the government a National Campaign to Eradicate Terrorism and the formulation of a citizens' security bill to ensure comprehensive national security.

"Only in an environment of stable peace can the nation concentrate on social and economic development," Kalam said in the address, covering issues from terrorism to development, with an added emphasis on national security.

"However, there are challenges to peace from across our geographical borders, from terrorism and violence and from scarcities created by rapidly depleting natural resources," Kalam said in the address over radio and TV.

"The constant threat of low-intensity proxy war and terrorism has become a disturbing feature of national life. This constitutes the new face of war," he said, and called for special measures to draft a comprehensive security system. We need to evolve a National Campaign to Eradicate Terrorism in our nation with a mission-oriented integrated management structure and people's participation. It has been recognised that terrorism does not take place without any planning."

He also said there was a need for a citizens



President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam addressing the nation on the eve of India's 60th Independence Day, in New Delhi on August 14.

security bill — without elaborating what its contours would be — and called for measures such as national identity cards, an e-governance grid and faster judicial process to deal with terror cases.

This, he said, requires action by the political, administrative, scientific and industrial communities to take a holistic view of the situation and emerge with a vision, integrated missions and politics for the nation to be safe and prosperous.

Kalam also sought to link India's economic development with another aspect of security. "A clear relationship exists between energy security and national security," the President said.

"If there are inadequate energy supplies, or if energy supply cannot be afforded, then the economy of the country will be severely affected," Kalam said in the address, adding that he will also recommend an energy inde-

pendence bill to the government and Parliament.

President Abdul Kalam said the country should aim to mine enough uranium with the cooperation of some of the states and that the vast thorium reserves should be harnessed by Indian scientists and technologists.

"With cooperation from all sectors of science, technology and industry in India, I am confident we have the capability to build our own thorium-based reactors. This will enable us to be self-reliant, secure and independent in nuclear energy."

Speaking about other areas of development and his vision of a "safe, prosperous, happy and socio-economically developed nation before the year 2020", Kalam said there were sufficient examples to suggest that the nation can do it.

Towards this end he narrated numerous role models and success stories that he wanted emulated by agriculturists, educationists, teachers, doctors, nurses and healthcare institutions.

He also spoke at length about rural development and said the Bharat Nirman Programme, with an outlay of \$38 billion, was in position and added that his own pet project — providing urban amenities in rural areas, or PURA — had the recognition to enhance rural poverty.

President Kalam also called for measures to push food output from 200 million tonnes to 360 million tonnes per annum and said India must achieve 100 percent literacy and skills among youth that can lead to a knowledge society by 2020. ■

PM expresses concern over national security

Continued from Page 1

In a speech repeatedly greeted with applause by the audience and viewed in millions of homes across the country, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh spoke of the country's all-round progress, but also pointed to the many failings such as persisting hunger and suicides by farmers burdened by debts.

"The going has never been as good for India in the past as it is now," he said, adding that the economy had been growing at an impressive pace of over 8 percent for three successive years. This, he said, was unprecedented.

"India is certainly on the march," he said, while admitting that poverty, hunger and illit-

eracy needed to be eradicated.

Manmohan Singh said while India could rejoice over development projects, it had to take care of those who are displaced by them; while Indian cities were growing, the slums could not be overlooked; and while Indian industry and services were successfully competing globally, "globalisation ... can also hurt the common man".

He also referred to a slew of development plans the government has announced to promote people's welfare.

"We have to pay more attention to the quality of local administration," he said. "We need to rid our municipalities of the cancer of corruption... We have to work hard to

eliminate corruption in the delivery of public services; in fact, eliminate it from all walks of life. We will work to put in place a system that rewards honesty, probity and efficiency."

Prime Minister Singh made it clear that the government would go ahead with its promise to provide quotas in educational institutions for students from socially backward sections while expanding educational opportunities for all youths.

He also called for a more efficient police force and a better judiciary.

"We must build a new India of their dreams," the Prime Minister said, referring to the country's young. "We have a dream of India." ■