

PM's live radio address useful medium

The News, Monday, March 08, 2010

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Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has said all targets set by the government after assuming office about two years back have been achieved to great extent with the cooperation of the people. He vowed to put the country back on the path of all round socio-economic development for the welfare of the masses. Prime minister said this in his first live address on radio of a new monthly series of his addresses to the nation. The founder of Pakistan Peoples Party Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto always gave importance to Radio Pakistan for its vast outreach to about seventy-five per cent population across the country as well as outside Pakistan. Bhutto considered Radio Pakistan as an effective medium for reaching out to the public.

Prime Minister Gilani keeping in view the importance of radio as the people's medium has decided to address the nation on the first Friday of every month at 7 pm, which is a convenient time for the listeners. The heads of state and government in many countries of the world address their nations regularly over the radio. United States President Franklin D Roosevelt laid the foundation of weekly radio address before World War-II, which was still continuing.

Gilani in his address spoke in detail about the issues of national and international importance and pointed out that the armed forces rendered innumerable sacrifices in crushing the terrorists and extremists who were distorting the image of Islam and the country. Paying rich tribute to the armed forces and the law enforcement agencies for their sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, he said that after facing defeat in Swat and Malakand these terrorists have made their way to settled areas of the country. The people have now recognized the faces of terrorists and extremists and the time is not far off when the country would be purged from these elements. The acts of terrorism have adversely affected the national economy and the foreign entrepreneurs and investors were reluctant to make investment in Pakistan. Besides some worrisome consequences of unexpected events unfolding in the neighborhood of Pakistan, economic instability and unsatisfactory law and order situation had been the major challenges for the government. These are difficult times but with the full cooperation of the people and unity in the nation Pakistan would Inshallah overcome these challenges with determination. After getting rid of the impact of terrorism, efforts are now under way to improve the national economy.

Listing achievements of his government the prime minister said all targets set by the government after assuming office have been achieved to a great extent with the cooperation of the people. The opposition and the government are striving to resolve the multifarious problems with a missionary zeal. The environment of confrontation has been transformed into one of reconciliation and harmony. The government is committed to the supremacy of the Constitution and Parliament. It was indeed a very happy augury that all the state institutions were working within the ambit of the Constitution. The deposed

judges of the superior judiciary were restored and the government honoured the decision of the Supreme Court on the appointment of the judges in the superior courts.

The successes of the government include internal autonomy given to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan and the Aaghaza Haqooq-e-Balochistan initiative taken for the betterment of the people of the province as well as the rehabilitation of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). North West Frontier Province was given its arrears of the net hydel profit and was also provided separate funds for the people affected by the acts of terrorism and extremism. The recently announced historical National Finance Commission (NFC) Award with consensus following the understanding shown by the federal government and the four provincial governments was also one of the finest examples of the policy of reconciliation being pursued.

The 1973 Constitution has been tarnished by the dictator over the past many decades and the present democratic government was fully committed to reform the Constitution in its original form by repealing all dictatorial changes. The nation would hear the good news soon in this connection. In line with the commitment and pledge made in the PPP manifesto, the government restored all the sacked employees of various departments and was endeavouring to create all employment opportunities for the youth. Under the prime minister's internship programme forty-three thousand youth have been provided jobs in different departments throughout the country. In order to provide financial assistance to the poor, Benazir Income Support Programme and Wasila-e-Haq Programme under which seventy billion rupees are being distributed among the poor families across the country in a transparent manner. It has also made efforts to boost the agriculture sector and farmers have been provided tractors on subsidy under Benazir Tractor Scheme besides loans worth billions of rupees. This initiative would help overcome the food shortage. At the same time due attention was also given to the current water and power crises in the country and measures were being taken to resolve it on permanent basis. As a result of steps taken there was sufficient stock of wheat.

In order to provide relief to the people, the government provided Rs 3 billion subsidy on the occasion of Eids and Ramzanul Mubarak through the Utility Stores to offset the impact of price hike of eatables and consumer goods. The salaries and pensions of the government employees have also been enhanced. In addition, the government distributed shares of Rs 100 billion among half a million workers of 80 public sector organizations. During the last two years the government made progress in fulfilling the promises made in the PPP manifesto and also tried to resolve the issues it had inherited. The government replaced the concept of political confrontation with the notion of reconciliation and harmony. The priorities of the government are to eliminate terrorism, further improve law and order, cut down unemployment and poverty, restore national pride and prestige in the international community, end political confrontation and promote stability in the national economy.