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Letter No. 2.

Date : 16.05.2005

Dear friends,

Savinay Namaskar.

In my letter of December 24, 2004, I had observed that the practice of legislators, particularly Members of both Houses of Parliament, periodically hiking their own salaries, allowances and pension is unethical and not in accordance with administrative norms and propriety.

After this arbitrary practice of the Hon'ble Members of the Parliament was brought to the notice of the public, the Honourable Speaker of Lok Sabha, Mr. Somnath Chatterjee, has taken an initiative in this regard. It is heartening to note that he has persuaded various political parties to accept the setting up an autonomous agency to review and revise the salaries and perquisites of parliamentarians. I heartily congratulate him.

However, this step alone will not pave the way for India's future progress. Recently, during a function in the precincts of Parliament House to mark the construction of a memorial for Shaheed Bhagat Singh, His Excellency, The President of India, expressed grave concern over the horse-trading in state assemblies, involving huge monetary advantages to legislators. Even leaders of stature, irrespective of their political affiliations, cannot absolve themselves of responsibility for such acts of moral turpitude. Not surprisingly, the contemporary image of political leaders is one of astonishing venality: that they would go to any lengths to acquire power or to cling to it.

The President's critical remarks must have stemmed from deep anguish over the mercenary conduct of political parties, which would inevitably prove detrimental to his "Vision 2020": of a strong, self-reliant India.

The leadership of independent India had dissociated itself from the nation's glorious past. In drafting a constitution for independent India, they neglected to apply their minds independently or logically; nor did they use our indigenous talent and inveterate value system. Instead, they borrowed and adopted indiscriminately, from the discordant system of governance perpetuated by the