

**Address by H.E. Ms. Neeta Bhushan, High Commissioner of India
on the occasion of 156th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi ji
(2nd October, 2025)**

Rt Hon Sir Anand Satyanand, Former Governor General of New Zealand;
Dr. Paramjeet Parmar, List Member, ACT Party;
Ms Manisha Morar, President, Wellington Indian Association ;
Mr Veer Khar, President New Zealand Indian Central Association;
Mr Naginbhai Patel, Chair of Pujaya Mahatma Gandhi Birthday
Commemoration Committee and its members;
Dr Pushpa Wood and Members of GOPIO Wellington;
Dignitaries, members of the Indian and Kiwi communities; and Friends,
Namaste and Good Morning,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all today as we celebrate the 156th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi ji, the Father of our Nation. On this day, the world also observes the International Day of Non-Violence, a recognition given by United Nations in 2007 to spread Gandhiji's timeless message of peace.

2. This is not just an occasion to remember a leader, but to remind ourselves of the values he lived for non-violence, peace, tolerance, and respect for humanity. Gandhiji believed that true strength lies in compassion and that lasting progress can only be built on harmony.

3. Even today, his words remain deeply relevant. ***When he said, "The earth provides enough for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed"*** he was reminding us of the importance of sustainability,

moderation, and care for our environment principles the world urgently needs to follow.

4. When challenges like poverty, inequality, climate change, and conflict confront us, Gandhiji's vision offers guidance. He taught us that each small step, each act of kindness, each voice raised for truth can create change. His life itself is proof of the power of moral courage.

5. Many great leaders around the world from Martin Luther King Jr. to Nelson Mandela drew strength from Gandhi ji's ideas. His influence continues to inspire movements for justice, peace, and human dignity across nations, including here in New Zealand.

6. If the 21st century is the century of the common man and woman, then Gandhism has even more relevance in inspiring individuals who wish to be agents of change, striving to make their societies and this world a better place. Always leading by example, Gandhiji taught us to stand strong in the face of fear and hold fast to truth and freedom, even when confronted with extremism, brutality or prejudice. ***He once said "A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history".***

7. Today, more than ever, because of the world we find ourselves in and many instances of violence we have seen in recent times, many around the globe feel the need to remember and live by Gandhiji's message of peace and non-violence. He reminded us that "Once we recognize the

common parent stock from which we are sprung, we realize the basic unity of the human family, and there is no room for enmities and unhealthy competition”.

8. Friends, on this significant day, let us resolve to understand the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and strive to live by his important message of peace and non-violence. We also owe it to future generations to pass on the significance of Gandhiji’s philosophy so that we contribute in making this world a better place to live.

9. In conclusion, I would like to thank the representatives of PMGBCC, Wellington City Council for collaborating and supporting this event and all friends of India who have assembled here to celebrate the birth anniversary of one of the greatest humanists and visionaries the world has ever seen. May his light continue to guide us towards peace, truth, and human dignity.

Thank you once again for being here.

Jai Hind!
