

**Address by Hon'ble Union Minister for Labour and Employment,
Government of India
At the Presentation Function of Vishwakarma Rashtriya Puraskar and
National Safety Awards for the Performance Year 2009
At Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 29th November, 2011**

Shri Ravi Mathur, Additional Secretary, Shri A.C.Pandey, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Dr. M. Rajaram, Deputy Director General & Head of Department, DGFASLI, the Awardees of Vishwakarma Rashtriya Puraskar and National Safety Awards, dignitaries, representatives of press and media, invitees and friends.

I am extremely happy to be amongst you this morning on the occasion of this important National function organized by the Ministry of Labour and Employment for presentation of the Vishwakarma Rashtriya Puraskar and National Safety Awards for the performance year 2009. Indeed it is an honour to give away the awards to all the distinguished awardees of industrial establishments, ports, construction sites and installations under AERB in the presence of this august gathering. They have contributed significantly to the organizational productivity and safety and well being through active participation in these national award schemes. All of them deserve appreciation at the highest level for their contribution. On this happy occasion, I extend my hearty congratulations and warm felicitations to all the awardees who are present here from different regions of the country representing a wide spectrum of our industry.

I congratulate you for your excellent contribution to enhance productivity, quality and best utilisation of resources in your respective organizations. You have added value services to your organization and as well to the nation. The efforts put by all of you have been exceptional, outstanding and the nation is acknowledging with pride the contribution of your work for building a strong nation. I am proud to state that you are the persons who have contributed extraordinary and accomplished great achievements by your innovative thoughts and creativity. I also appreciate your dedication of duty and presence of mind while attaining such distinction.

I am happy to note that the industrial injuries and fatalities are showing a declining trend over the years in the manufacturing sector. As per the information available, there has been a declining trend noted in total injuries in the last two years. The number of total injuries have been reduced from 33,004 to 31,505 and fatal accidents reduced from 1,509 to 1,459. I would urge the officials in my Ministry, Directorates, working under its ambit and all other stakeholders to demonstrate our concern through appropriate means and measures to ensure that India attains best industrial safety standards in the world.

The Ministry of Labour and Employment has taken several significant steps for providing better working conditions to our industries and people working there. The National Policy on Safety, Health and Environment at work place has been declared in the year 2009. The fundamental purpose of this National Policy is not only to eliminate work related injuries, diseases, fatalities, disaster and loss of national assets, but also to enhance the well-being of the employees and society at large. Its objective is also to ensure achievement of high level occupational safety and health through proactive approaches. I hope that the effective implementation of the National Policy on Safety, Health and Environment at Workplace with the coordinated efforts of the Central and State Governments, and all stakeholders would ensure enhanced Occupational Safety and Health Standards in India.

It gives me immense pleasure to mention that India recently participated in a World Congress on Safety and Health at Work held in Istanbul, Turkey in September 2011. There a Summit of Ministers for a Preventative Culture involving 33 Ministers of Labour from all over the world including myself, signed the Istanbul Declaration on Occupational Safety and Health at Work, recalling that the right of workers to a safe and healthy working environment should be recognized as a fundamental human right. The Declaration announced that priority should be given to occupational safety and health in

national agendas by building strong and sustained national preventative culture.

I am extremely happy to see a large number of senior executives from different regions of the country representing diversified fields of industrial activities, construction industry, ports and docks, who are present here not only to receive National Safety Awards, but also to encourage their employees who are being conferred awards under the Vishwakarma Rashtriya Puraskar Yojana.

I am informed that many of the progressive and enlightened industrial establishments are implementing voluntary and self-regulated Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems (OSH-MS) as well as the Good Safety Management Systems in their respective organizations for promotion of occupational safety and health. I sincerely congratulate them for their proactive efforts in this direction and hope that other companies would emulate them. It is an established fact that preventive safety and health culture is not a prescriptive formula at the enterprise or national level but it is a dynamic and progressive process that evolves over a period of time with the active participation of all stakeholders. It is a continuous search for improvement in the work methods, processes and systems. Shared experiences from different contexts and work situations pave the way for progress. I am sure that these two national level awards i.e. Vishwakarma Rashtriya Puraskar and National Safety Awards, which have stood the test of time over the decades, can contribute in a significant way to achieve its objective.

I take this opportunity to appeal to all industrial establishments in the country to introduce worker-participative schemes in a big way to harness and leverage the hidden potentials of our work force at plant level. I would also fervently request the Trade Union fraternity to be cooperative with the managements to make these worker participative schemes successful. I am confident that these Award Schemes operated by the Government, will

continue to make significant contribution in motivating our workers, unions and managements alike for expeditious industrial and economic development of our country.

I once again extend my heartiest congratulations to the award winners for their hard work and outstanding performance and to their families. I hope that they will continue with the same dedication, commitment and devotion for the overall industrial and economic development of our country so that India secures a place of pride amongst the industrialized nations of the world.

JAI HIND