

## Let's count our blessings

Dr R K Pachauri, October 25, 2011

While there is considerable basis for all of us to feel deeply offended by the extent of corruption in this country and the upsurge of protests spearheaded by Anna Hazare, we should also count some of our recent achievements as a nation, for which the government at various levels deserves some credit. One area that I feel we are doing distinctly well in is in the field of external relations and diplomacy. Much has happened in recent months and years to show that India's foreign policy is finding appropriate expression not merely in pronouncements, but in efforts being made to bring about change in the right direction. First and foremost, the return of our helicopter which strayed into PoK and was handed back within a period of five hours shows a distinct change in attitudes in Pakistan and India towards each other. Our Government deserves some credit for this change and most definitely for the exercise of restraint after 26/11 in 2008.

In several other respects, such as mending relations with Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka, we are doing reasonably well within the bounds of realistic expectations. With the US, India now commands a certain level of respect which cuts across bipartisan lines. World leaders have clearly marked India as a favourite destination, just as invitations to our leaders to visit other countries are now regarded as a matter of some importance there.

Of course, much of the changes that we see are the result of sustained levels of economic growth at a healthy level, and as a nation we have to continue with this record, not just to wipe out poverty in this country but also to ensure a decent standard of living for all our people. We would earn respect worldwide only if we are seen as a country with economic success. It is important for us to realize that India's place in the world must take us back to the days of glory that we saw before we were subjugated by a colonial power.