

Your Excellency Hon'ble President of India, Shri Kamat, Hon'ble Minister for Communication, Shri Meena, Hon'ble Minister of State for Finance, Dr. Subbarao, Governor, RBI and friends, I am delighted to be here today in your midst on this occasion.

2. I congratulate all of you on the happy occasion of the celebration of the Platinum Jubilee of your institution. As many of you know, I have had a close association with RBI over the years. My interest in the central bank of the country dates back to the days when I was a student and later a teacher of Economics. My relationship with the RBI has only grown over time, more so since my earlier stint as Finance Minister in the early 1980s.

3. 75 years in the life of an institution, let alone the life of an individual, is a landmark event. When I say this, it also carries a personal element. I am not sure if many of you know that I was born in the same year that RBI was established. Right from its very beginning, Reserve Bank has occupied a pivotal position in the institutional fabric of our economy.

4. When India got her independence and the Five Year plans were launched in the country, RBI played its role in promoting economic development by aligning the banking system to the needs of a planned economy. With nationalization of banks in India in 1969, RBI successfully effected significant changes in the institutional arrangements

and ensured stringent control and supervision of the banking system. Again, the initiation of the process of liberalization and globalization of the Indian economy since 1991 has seen RBI adding several new dimensions to its roles and responsibilities.

5. RBI's role had once more come to the fore in the recent past at the time of the global financial crisis. Almost every country had been impacted by the crisis, and India was no exception. Like central banks around the world, the RBI too has been in the forefront of this battle. By synchronizing the liquidity management operations with those of exchange rate management and non-disruptive internal debt management operations in a calibrated manner, the Reserve Bank ensured that appropriate liquidity was maintained in the system, consistent with the objective of price and financial stability. Thus by responding to the evolving situation quickly, effectively and responsibly, the Reserve Bank helped us in a big way to mitigate the impact of the crisis on our economy. All of us in the country should be proud of the critical role that RBI has played in this regard.

6. Such a remarkable journey of this institution has been made possible, to a large extent, by the sincere and dedicated service put in by its staff right from the beginning. RBI has also been particularly fortunate to have a panoply of distinguished personalities at its helm all these years. These gentlemen have shaped, formed and steered the Bank's culture and contributed significantly to financial policy making in India. I have had the good fortune to know and

work with quite a few of them at different points, some of whom I am glad to see here today.

7. I once again congratulate all of you on this occasion and hope that you would continue to work with even greater vigour and keep up and enhance RBI's outstanding track record.

