

Sign language interpreters to make NDA second anniversary "accessible"

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NEW DELHI: In response to a letter from the National Association of the Deaf to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and information and broadcast (I&B) minister Arun Jaitley, the government has assured that the live telecast of the event to mark two years of the BJP-led NDA at the India Gate on Saturday will be accessible to people with hearing disability.

The ministry, in a response to NAD on Friday, assured that Doordarshan has made arrangements for telecast of the anniversary celebrations with sign language interpretation.

The disability rights groups also want that the interpreters must be available on not just DD News, but also DD National so as to enable greater access as the latter has a wider reach. There is also a demand for subtitles during live telecast to enable better understanding.

It is estimated that there are 18 million deaf persons in the country. The association on May 25 wrote to Prime minister Narendra Modi, I&B minister Arun Jaitley, minister for social justice and empowerment Thawar Chand Gehlot and Doordarshan seeking that the live telecast of the programme be made accessible to the people with hearing disability.

In their letter, secretary of the association, AS Narayanan sought that to make the telecast accessible the government must ensure "inclusion of professional sign language interpreters as well as English/Hindi subtitles during the PM's speech".

The association also sought that from 5 pm to 10 pm the interpreter should be there during live telecast through DD News, DD Urdu and DD Bharati.

In its letter, NAD has reminded minister Arun Jaitley of his statement on World Disability Day. It is pointed in the letter that the minister had stated at the function that appropriate governments and establishments shall take measures to ensure that "persons with disabilities have access to electronic media by providing for audio description, sign language interpretation and close captioning."

Convener of Disabled Rights Group (DRG) Javed Abidi asserted the need for subtitles during live telecast and said that the government must also issue advisories to private channel to provide for sign language interpreters as a significant section of the people these days watch private channels.