



# English rendering of the text of PM's address at the inauguration ceremony of TransStadia "Arena Project" in Ahmadabad, Gujarat

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All the respected dignitaries, and before them my friends from the field of sports who brought laurels for the country.

People who are familiar with this region, they know what was the situation of Kankaria ten years ago. This godforsaken building of the dairy, it was so forgotten and isolated that dogs used to roam in it. This is the right example of how things can be turned around if the people are capable of dreaming big. I will urge the people from the world of sports that after the event they must visit all the facilities of this stadium and inspire others that India is also developing all the facilities in the field of sports that our sportspersons see in the other countries.

Whenever I got an opportunity to meet sportspersons of our country I was able to connect with them, I love to talk to them, I hear their issues. I have never found them lacking in the will power, never found them wanting in hard work. I've never found them wanting in terms of determination to bring glory to the country despite difficulties. We have a capable young generation, this New India is before me, the entire New India, but our perception towards sportspersons is a problem. I haven't asked them but they must have experienced this thing that whenever they introduce themselves to others while traveling in train or while traveling by a plane that they are national or international level players then do you have any idea what would be the next question? The next question would be that it's fine that you play national games or play in international games but what is your occupation? It means that it's difficult for our countrymen to consider sports as a career or as a means to serve the country. They all would have experienced this that whenever they tell others that they participate in national games then people would say that it's okay that you are a national level player but what do you do besides sports? What could be more painful than asking a soldier who protects the border that what does he do or what is his occupation besides protecting the border? Same thing happens with our sportspersons in our society. And it's not only the society, even their family members, when sportspersons would have started in the field of sports, their family members would use to ask them whether they will focus on their studies or not or will just spend time in the sporting activity? People would use to say that you just go out to play since morning; some people would even be saying these things to sportspersons like Phullela Gopichand that please don't spoil the life of our children.

This is the environment in the country and I want to change that. In our country, sports has emerged as a vocation to scale new heights in an individual's life but 1.25 billion Indians can also take pride in the world due to them. In other countries of the world if I mention the name of any sportsperson of that country in my speech then people continue to clap for five minutes. Two days ago, I was there in Portugal and the entire environment of the event was completely changed the moment I mentioned one of their football players, the sound of clapping for him filled the entire venue. This kind of respect for our sportsperson should become a tradition of our country, of our families and it should emerge as a social legacy of our country. We should also develop facilities. Today I got the opportunity to publicly dedicate the launching app for that program, for that mega event of sports. However, it's not always that one can emerge a national or international level sportsperson. Sporting activities have their own importance in life, they teach us how to lead our lives. We can easily learn one thing from a sportsperson. Sometimes people tell us, they tell us more that we politicians must learn that how to digest victory. But I have seen that a sportsperson can teach you how to cope up with a failure, they have this strength in them and this strength paves the way for their victory. You can gain this strength from the world of sports, from the sporting arena. Every second there is a battle between the success and failure and these sportspersons are very fortunate that they can lead their lives, can cope up with the successes and failures of their lives in the spirit of sports. We also need to develop facilities.

Around thirty lakh people participated in the *Khel Mahakumbh* (the mega sporting event) in Gujarat the last time. It's not possible that each one of them will be a champion. However, one can encourage a player by clapping for him, it gives them strength, it gives them courage. Sports should emerge as a natural culture and that is why we started the *Khel Mahakumbha* in Gujarat, in such a short span of time its positive results can be noticed, otherwise people are not able to relate Gujarat with sports, it doesn't come to their mind.

Gujarati is someone who goes to a school or college with two pens in his pocket and sells one by the time he comes back in the evening. They are natural businessmen. He will get something new, he will show it to his friends and he will be able to sell it. What can be a cause for greater happiness than this that the same Gujarat has so much talent in the sporting field and they are able to prove themselves in national, international sports? Gujarat won 10 gold medals in 25 years, 10 in 25 years. And due to *Khel Mahakumbha*, Gujarat won 10 gold medals in just one year.

Now, every city, every district will prepare necessary field for the sporting activity, will arrange for coaching, will select good students and then develop a sporting culture, this is going to gradually percolate down. We are going to launch a nationwide programme 'Khele India' on the lines of *Khel Mahakumbha* in Gujarat. Millions and millions of people should participate in sports as the sports help the life bloom, that is why when I saw this stadium today, though I knew about it as I was associated with this since inception, however, after seeing this stadium I felt like telling Udit to conduct half an hour, hour long tours for the students of schools and colleges. Gujarat government should also conduct tours for the student to show them this stadium. When they see this then they will realize what kind of science is behind this. What kind of resources are deployed for sports and the important role played by modern science in sports; what kind of restrictions are imposed on the food for sportspersons, what are the limits. I still remember, our Parthiv, I know him personally since childhood as he is a son of my friend. In order to make him a good cricketer, his uncle regularly used to take him to stadium at 4 O'clock in the morning. He did it on regular basis, throughout his life he used to wake up 4 in the morning to make his brother's son a cricketer, used to take him to the stadium on scooter despite extremely cold weather, used to encourage him to produce one Parthiv Patel. Efforts of the entire family are dedicated, devoted to this.

I'd urge all of you to try to meet Deepa. As a sportsperson, the entire country knows Deepa, however, very few people would be aware about this, I have not seen a better motivator than her. Please try to get a chance to listen to her, half of her body doesn't work, however, whenever she talks, she talks about new dreams, new enthusiasm, she talks about realizing the new goals. These are the real people, these are the role model for our new generation. We should encourage the youngsters with their example, create atmosphere for sports in our country. We must create necessary infrastructure in the country and for the first time the Gujarat has given a new model for public private partnership in the field of sports to the country. This is an example of what kind of facility can be created jointly by the government and business, government and the industry.

And I'm confident that the name of India will be resonated in the Olympic field in near future, it will be resonated in much louder and more comprehensive manner. Even the smallest countries of the world leave their mark on the world map by succeeding in Olympics; India, a country of 1.25 billion people, is capable of fulfilling these dreams. Our youths need opportunities, need facility and they need unflinching support of their entire families for this. These youths are capable of changing the fate of this country that is why this system is being created.

Whenever I will meet sportsperson in our country, I will urge them to visit this facility to see how it can be modified, to see what can be added in this and gradually develop this kind of facilities in the country and find ways to attract people towards the sports otherwise video games are spoiling our children. Friends I want kids in the sports arena, in the field. When I was in Gujarat, when I used to visit schools for two-three days and I used to ask them one

question that how many times they shed sweat in a day? How much they run, whether they can climb a tree or not or how fast they can climb stairs? And I used to feel sad when many of them used to say that they don't sweat. They used to tell that they come to school and directly go home and then don't go out after returning homes.

This kind of childhood is not good for us. It is our duty to connect children of our family to a sports field. Games can be played even without facilities. We have done well in cricket, it's a matter of pride and we must continue with that, however, I'm not able to figure out what's wrong with football. But we cannot forget football and hockey. My friend Bhutia is sitting here, he made India in the world in the field of football. This time, India is going to host under-nineteen FIFA World Cup. I'm bringing the players from all over the world so that our youths are encouraged. It's our duty to bring players from all over the world to India; there are several other sports in which India can again carve out a place for itself. In general Indian youth are doing well in the field of shooting, in the field of archery. And you must be aware that our daughters beat our sons in the field of sports. They are bringing laurels for the country, our daughters have achieved feat after feat for the country. If our daughters are capable of doing this then we don't need any bigger inspiration, any other inspiration is not needed.

Friends, please come forward to make sports a part of our lives, we should launch a project, develop facilities, industry should come forward, families, governments, society should come forward so that India can leave its mark in the field of sports as well.

With this desire, I offer my best wishes to all of you.

This is such a program that 'New India' is sitting before me. It's difficult to leave such an atmosphere. However, a new direction for India's fortune is going to be opened in the Parliament at midnight. I'm directly going to Parliament from here but whatever time I had I got the opportunity to spend it with you. I am grateful to these players that they attended this program as your words reflect the power of your hard work. Your hard work is very powerful. Please come forward, friends, please come forward, friends these are the people who have glorified the country's name. And friends, you must have heard a new name, the name of Srikanth. Srikanth, please raise your hand. Srikanth has recently brought laurels for the country.

Brothers and sisters! He is the asset for our country. We should welcome him with a big applause, please give him a standing ovation.

Thank you very much.

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