



English rendering of the text of PM's speech at Dutch-Indian community Reception at The Hague, Netherlands

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"*Ka Hal ba?*" (How have you been)?

My dear brothers and sisters here in Netherlands, I express my heartfelt gratitude to the madam mayor and the deputy mayor. They welcomed me here and they are present here on this occasion. I express my gratitude to them.

The reverberations that you hear all around, the enthusiasm and joy that you feel, whosoever is watching this program on television in India, they must be surprised that even in such a small Hague, Indian community is so strong. I'd like to specially honor the people from Suriname; I was fortunate to visit Suriname several years ago.

The fifth of June is celebrated with much fervor in Suriname. Wherever Indians are settled in the world, for those Indians, our brothers and sisters of Suriname, during that time wherever Indians were taken as laborers, be it Mauritius, Suriname or Guinea; it is more than one-hundred and fifty years and at least four generations have passed but they have still preserved Indian language, Indian culture and traditions in the same way, I heartily congratulate them for it and I offer my deep respect to them for this. And we must honor those ancestors who never got any opportunity to look back at the country but they were able to preserve Indian culture in their families even after four-five-six generations. Otherwise, things change fundamentally in just one generation, the language changes, and sometimes parents take pride in such things that their son doesn't know Indian language. However, these things give you the strength to remain attached to your roots. Just two young boys are able to move a heavy and big iron ball from its place if they apply their force properly, however, moving a tree with deep roots is a different thing altogether, it cannot be moved easily and moreover it also provides shelter that is why we can learn from our brothers and sisters from Suriname how to remain attached to our roots and what kind of strength it gives to you.

Similarly, many amongst you might never have to India. Many amongst you, whose great grandparents, when they left India, you may not know which village they came from, who were their relatives etc. but their hearts still beat for India. In a way, you people are self-made and self-reliant, whatever you people have achieved you have done it with your hard work and your capabilities but still you have a feeling deep inside your hearts that you people are indebted to India and somehow you have to pay it back; and I believe that there cannot be any sentiment or devotion greater than this.

There are two kinds of people here, one who left India around one-hundred and fifty years ago and reached here via Suriname and others who recently landed here at the airport. Those who have recently come here by air, I wish to ask them, do you think if you had been cut-off from India for 150 years even then could you have retained the same feelings of Indianness, same pride of being Indian which the people of Suriname have still retained.

Therefore, I would like to tell people residing here, whatever maybe the color of your passport, blood relations do not change with the change in the color of the passport and it is my request to each and every Indian that please do not make relations based on the color of the passport. Color of the passport may be different but your ancestors and my ancestors are the same.

I also worship the same land as is worshipped by him. It was the misfortune of his life that he had to leave India, I am lucky because I am still connected to Indian roots. It is a bigger obligation for me that I embrace people of Suriname with an open heart and we should live together like one. There should not be any gap between us. People who have come here recently may find it difficult to speak Hindi but people of Suriname don't have any trouble in speaking in Hindi. Please recognize this strength.

Netherlands is the only country in the entire Europe which has got the second largest Indian Diaspora, therefore, not only Europe but we can also count Caribbean countries in it and make Hague such an energetic place through which we can connect with all Indians in this area.

Now days, technology has made it so easy to connect with all the families here through mobile, after all there is strength in unity. And I have seen your strength, my program was finalized at the last moment and we didn't get much time for preparations. You people must have got the information only two or three days back but you all reached here in such great numbers.

There are embassies which have people to represent government of India and as you know, they are called Ambassadors or *Raajdoot* in Hindi language, but here all of you are *Rashtradoot* i.e. our country's representatives.

Every Indian settled across the world is a representative of the country as he is the one who helps the world to understand the greatness of our country. When the world realizes that India is a country with all the sects of the world, there is not a single sect of world which does not has a proud place in India. People are surprised to know that even the smallest of the religions or faiths are present in India and all of them live there with pride.

When the world gets to know that India has 100 languages and more than 1700 dialects, they are really surprised; saying that we face language problems with the change of country in Europe; how could you people live with 100 languages in your country. The thing which unites us is our love for our motherland, our love towards the sacrifice and penance, towards history, towards culture and therefore any Indian can proudly stand up and say that my country is full of diversities. Whatever one can experience in the world, you can naturally experience that in my country.

Whenever I meet world leaders and tell them that I am Prime Minister of the government of 1.25 billion people, they look at me with astonishment. They feel that they face problems in running their small countries. How do you do it? I tell them that you run your country but in India 1.25 billion Indians collectively run our country. This is the power of democracy.

Within India, especially since I got the opportunity to serve in the governments, our biggest effort has been to encourage the people's participation and we have given priority to the people's participation in all the spheres of our country. We have come out of the thinking that the government will do everything, only government can solve all the problems, god gifted wisdom only to governments, and it is our effort that with people's participation our nation can progress at a much faster pace.

If the government decides that it will build toilets so that people can stop defecating in open, we will construct toilets for girl students in schools. Such programs were run earlier also but those were run by the governments. We asked people to take up these programs and you will be glad to know that within a year the task of making separate toilets for girls and boys in schools have been completed by people. What I mean to say is that this new government has given priority to people's participation in every sphere of its work, otherwise, what used to happen earlier, democracy simply meant to press buttons of EVM machines once every five years and elect candidates as per their liking and give them the contract to run the government for five years, telling them this is the list of 10 things that you must do in next five years else we will elect a new candidate. This is not the principle of democracy, it represents a very limited aspect of democracy in which people cast their votes, governments are elected, but government can function only with the help of people's participation.

Whenever there is a natural calamity, all of us have experienced that the strength of the government machinery falls short, but people, social institutions, religious institutions come out taking so many food packets with them. Everyone's help during natural calamities reaches immediately; why, this is the people's power. This government has encouraged people's participation in every sphere of its work. India has a federal structure, how central and state government work closely collaborating with each other i.e. how to promote federal structure in spirit, this government has stressed on it.

I believe that when development is accompanied by good governance only then the aspirations of public are fulfilled. When a combination of both development and good governance takes place then people's problems are solved. Just making a good bus stand is development, but if the buses ply on time, there is cleanliness in the buses, behavior of driver and conductor is good, then this is the good governance. Then the common man gets satisfaction that, yes, it is my government, it is my country, it is my property. This government is continuously striving to encourage public participation which will strengthen it and help us to take the nation forward.

You must have seen two years ago when our government was formed, there was only one news on TV that the price of pulses was very high, pulses were very costly. Wherever one used to go, only one thing was discussed; Modiji, please tell us why the prices of pulses are not coming down? Wherever one went only this thing was discussed.

Now the prices of pulses have come down very much but now no one asks how it did happen, but I had requested the farmers of our country to increase the sowing of pulses and no additional thing is required for their cultivation. It can be sown along with other crops, helps to generate extra income and the farmers of my country have shown it by producing pulses in abundance, which has now brought down the food prices. If middle income families consume more pulses then they get more protein, which increases the strength of the body as many nutritional requirements are met. What I mean to say is that more than the government's efforts, the people's power plays an extremely important role.

There is a perception that, in India, women are only house wives, they don't do anything except for staying in the kitchen only. This is a myth; the truth is different. Even today, India's animal husbandry, dairy, milk, in a way this whole area is handled by women. Men have very small role in it. Women's involvement in agriculture is huge, they contribute physically, but our social structure is such that it is not measured in terms of money. This does not mean that women do not have a role in the journey of economic development of India. Women have a role, they also have potential and therefore our government has decided to make this half the population of the country a part in the journey of India's development. Not only empowerment of women, but it's also women led development. When we started the campaign for opening of bank accounts under the Prime Minister Jan Dhan Yojana, 40 percent of the people of our country had never even set their foot on bank's premise, they were out of the formal economy. So when we started the campaign for opening of bank accounts, and it is a matter of great pleasure that of all the bank accounts opened during the campaign, most of the accounts opened were of the women customers. Women started to feel that they were also a part of the financial system.

Recently, we have started a scheme called *Mudra Yojna* to promote entrepreneurship so that youth of India becomes job creator instead of job seeker. Even while running a small business, people can hire one or two persons and give them jobs. And so, in order to help small businesses, we have started this very big scheme, the Mudra Yojna.

This Mudra Yojna is such that if a citizen comes to the bank and provides all his information then without any guarantee of any kind he can get a loan from Rs 50,000 to Rs 10 lacs. About 7 crore people have taken advantage of it, 7 crore people, and more than 3 lac crore rupees have been distributed under the scheme. Someone got Rs.50,000; someone got 55,000 rupees, some other one got 80,000 rupees, and some others got 10 lakh rupees. You will be happy to know that the in people who have taken advantage of this scheme, more than 70 percent of them are women. This is the proof of woman empowerment and women led development.

Today, everywhere, even in the so called developed countries, average maternity leave is 12 weeks. Maternity leave is 12 Weeks for working women in developed countries, India is a country which passed a law in parliament in this regard, and now working women are given maternity leave of 26 weeks and this is because we look at the future of India. Today, it may appear to some that she will not work for 6 months yet she will be paid. Someone might think like that, but she will be raising a child for 6 months who is the future of my country, this is an investment. Keeping a working woman discharged from job and paying her salary for six months, at the beginning it seems to be giving doles but if you look at the future, then you get to know that her child will get good care for the initial six months, his founding 6 months will be so strong that our future will be bright, our future will be stronger, we are working in that direction.

When former US President Mr. Obama's visited India for Republic day celebrations of 26th January, and when he was given a guard of honor of the three military wings i.e. Army, Navy and Air Force, all the three wings had female battalions and it was being done by a woman only. The US President came down from the dais and told me that Modi Ji, I am surprised to see that India can do this thing.

I replied that this was just the beginning, wait for tomorrow and when the parade was held on the January 26, the main news for the whole world was that women were leading the parade. The women in our country are playing a very big role in the field of security.

If you go to Delhi and there are many other such states in the country also that if you go there, you will see that 33% posts in the police have been reserved for women, and these empowered women are responsible for our security, we are working in that direction. You must have seen that they are flying fighter planes, our women are flying fighter aircraft, and this is a subject of discussion in the world today.

Today, India has earned a big name in the world of space technology all over the world. Just last week, 30 Nano satellites were launched successfully. Earlier, our scientists made a world record by launching 104 satellites in one go. Last month the heaviest satellite was launched and how much did it weigh? Newspapers mentioned that the satellite was equivalent to the weight of several elephants. You will be happy to know that three major women scientists are working on that project. Who would not be proud of the power of mothers and sisters of my country?

Whether it is the field of science, whether it is the field of education, or the area of health; now days if you hold a teachers' conference in any state of India, you will have to put a notice board that a particular corner is reserved for the male teachers. Today, the work of the entire education sector is being handled by the mothers and sisters of my country. You can go to any sector be it sports, nursing, paramedics, medicine, you will see that women are working in that field. I mean to say that women power is there, and in sports, in the Olympics, who brought the medal, our daughters have brought all the medals and brought laurels for the country. Not only this, in the games for the physically challenged i.e. Paralympics, it is our women who did the task of raising the Indian flag.

There is such a government in Delhi, which has its heart and mind set on how to empower half the population of the country, how can they be empowered, how women led development can be achieved, how can they have equal partnership in the journey of financial development of the country and has regularly been taking initiatives to achieve this and as a result of this, women of my country are playing an extremely important role in raising the Indian flag.

The country should move forward, it should be better than what it used to be in the past, but the time will not wait any longer. Moving ahead with the same speed at which we have reached here will not help us to achieve the goal which is there in the heart of every Indian. Therefore, it has become imperative to increase the speed. Earlier governments used to complete one or two projects that were associated with them.

Today, aspirations have increased so much so that even completing new tasks everyday falls short of expectations. And it is not enough to take the country forward, it is equally important to modernize the country also. We have to move forward but we have to become modern too. India of 21st century should not be lagging on global benchmarks, it should not be left behind in the field of science and technology, our infrastructure should be according to the global standards, and India should have the strength to be on par with the world, we are moving forward with this vision.

Today there is an atmosphere of health-consciousness and concerns for the environment. Everyone feels that if we breathe, we must breathe well, if we drink we must drink good water and if we eat, the food should be of good quality, an intrinsic consciousness has developed. India has taken the lead in the field of energy, in the area of renewable energy of 175 gigawatts. For many of you gigawatts may be a new term because for centuries we never thought beyond megawatts. Megawatts was the ultimate measure for us. We have set a target of generating 175 gigawatts of electricity through renewable energy.

What role should solar energy, wind energy, nuclear energy, biomass energy play in meeting our energy needs? This will be a very big change which will create positive impact, we are working at a rapid pace in that direction. And today the competition has become so intense, the situation is such that solar energy will be cheaper than the electricity produced from coal. You can imagine the future that if the whole system is run by solar energy, then what a big change for economy it will be.

Our country which imports oil from the Gulf countries today, how big a reduction will be in these imports, how much the country will become self-sufficient and that is why this thrust on generating solar power. This sun, did we discover it after I became Prime Minister, was it there earlier or not, was it, I could see it but they could not. And so this is our initiative to make the whole life modern.

When I became prime minister, initially I wanted to learn and understand things, so I used to take meetings and briefings of officers to know what was going on. One day, while taking a briefing of electricity department I asked if there is still any place where electricity has not reached yet. Since it has been 70 years of our independence, this question should not be asked, however I asked if there was any far flung place where electricity was yet to reach. I was astonished when they said, sir, there were still 18,000 villages where electricity has not yet reached. You please tell me what is the difference between 18th century and 21st century? People in the 18th century used to live without electricity and make do with only sunlight or moonlight. Even after 70 years of independence, 18,000 villages in my country were living the life of the 18th century.

I have to fulfill the dream of a modern India so I took the responsibility and asked them how long would it take. They told me that, sir, it would take 7 more years. This attitude surprised me, very comfortably they said that it would take another 7 years. I asked them why do you do this, shouldn't we hurry? Finally, one day I spoke from the Red Fort on August 15 that we will give electricity to these 18,000 villages in thousand days. It has been less than thousand days, yet around 13-14 thousand villages have been electrified. Brothers and sisters, because I want to make a modern India and for the rest of the villages, electrification work is being completed at a very fast pace.

There are two and a half lakh panchayats are in India, 6 lakh villages are there in those panchayats. Now you all tell me if you can live without mobile for an hour, can you? It becomes troublesome, isn't it ? If this is your right then every poor person, every village in India also has this right or not? Brothers and sisters we have taken the mission of Digital India. Work of optical fiber network is underway at a very high speed in those two and a half lakh panchayats, and in the coming days, we will create optical fiber network for digital system in these villages along with the most modern facilities of transmission as a result of which long distance education will become possible, tele-medicine will become possible. Thus all the facilities which are available in urban areas will also be available in villages, we are working in that direction, which means India moves forward and also becomes modern at the same time, we are working by focusing on those things and our efforts are in that direction only.

Brothers and sisters there are many things. You must certainly be interested in India but I request you, you are living in such large numbers in the Netherlands, have come from Suriname, you are Dutch citizens, what is the problem in getting an OCI card? Don't you feel that you should establish these links? I was surprised when I heard that there is such a big Indian Diaspora but only ten per cent of them have OCI cards. Please tell me that before the coming 26th January you all will complete this work in mission mode. You should do it and I will also instruct the embassy here.

See, this OCI card is a link of your centuries old relationship with India, it is the umbilical cord, you should not forget this and you should also not consider this thing in monetary terms alone.

Please get this OCI card by paying whatever is required.

Two days ago I was in Portugal, there the Prime Minister of Portugal was publicly displaying his OCI card. He said I am proud that I have an OCI card, I am a native Indian and today I am the Prime Minister here. It should be there in the minds of every Indian that I have it, and when I meet somebody then I'll ask them, if they have it or not and will criticize them if they don't have it.

This feeling should be there and I would like, and I will also ask our embassy, since a new ambassador has come, now I will enquire how many OCI cards have been made per day and I would like you to help because this work of ours should be completed.

Now look, since 2015, the facility of e-Visa has been arranged in India for the holders of Dutch passport. You would be taking advantage of it and I tell you that the Government of India is also thinking about giving a 5-year business visa for the Dutch nationals in the coming days.

A Business and Tourist Visa of 5 years is an important effort to connect Dutch citizens with India.

I request all of you to make continuous efforts to remain connected with India. You are connected with your nation and its traditions through your hearts and minds, you are delighted to hear about good things in India, your life so much Indian-ised, please carry on with your efforts to keep it much closer to India.

Do you want to connect with me? Sure! Do you want to have the Prime Minister of India in your pocket? Why are you silent? If the Prime Minister of India is in your pocket then what's the harm in it? Don't you want to proudly proclaim, just leave it dear, Prime Minister of India is in my pocket, don't you want that? I'll tell you the way, please download the Narendra Modi App on your mobile, I will be available in your pocket 24x7 and I will be able to listen each and every beat of yours. Our relations should be a close one, you have full rights over me. It will not be decided on the basis of the color of your passport, my life is dedicated to all of them who have India in their hearts.

You turned up here in such a large number despite such a short notice, with these feelings; I heartily thank you all very much.

Thank you very much.

AKT/AK/NT/RSB

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