



English rendering of PM's speech at the Indian Community Reception in Philippines

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Greetings,

My visit would have been incomplete had I gone back without meeting you people. You people have come from different places by taking out your time. You have come here despite today being a working day. This is the result of your love, your affection towards India because of which today we have gathered under this roof. At the outset, I would like to specially thank you people because wherever I go outside India then I certainly try to meet Indian community there. But I would like to congratulate you people for the discipline that you have showed today. This in itself is a very big strength otherwise such a huge crowd and I'm easily able to meet all of you, this thing in itself is a big reason for happiness for me, and all of you deserve regards and congratulations for this thing.

This is my first visit to this country but this region is extremely important for India and since the time you people have given me responsibility to work as Prime Minister then from the beginning we have emphasized upon the Act East Policy. Because, in a way, we feel a lot of affinity with these countries. We have a natural affinity for them. Due to some or some other reasons, due to some legacies there is some kind of emotional bonding is there between us in some measure. There will be hardly any country in this region which will not be familiar with the Lord Ram or Ramayana; there will be hardly any country which will not have respect for Lord Buddha. This in itself is a great legacy and the Indian community that inhabits in this region can very well shoulder the responsibility of nurturing and glorifying this legacy. An ordinary Indian can contribute several times more than what can be done by the embassy. And I have experienced that today every Indian in the world speaks about himself being an Indian with a pride and confidence. It's a big thing for any country. For centuries, Indian Diaspora all over the world and Indians have a tendency of globetrotting, our ancestors left our shores hundreds of years ago and India has this uniqueness that wherever we settled we opted that place as our own. It's not a small thing to adopt everyone while preserving your uniqueness and it becomes possible when people have a very strong self-confidence. And wherever you people went, you showed your strong self-confidence there. Irrespective of wherever you have settled, irrespective of the number of years, number of generations you have been staying outside India, it's possible that the language connection might too have broken down but you are not able to sleep well if something goes wrong in India. And you take pride if something good happens. And that is why this is the effort the present government to take the country to those heights of development so that we can get parity with the world and once we achieve the capability to have parity with them then I don't think anybody can stop India from going forward. Whatever difficulties are there, they are there only till the time achieve parity and once we cross those hurdles then we get a level playing field. And Indians have that kind of capabilities in their arms, their brains and hearts that no one can stop them from marching ahead. And that is why in the last three and three and a half years the government has made a consistent effort that whatever strength the country has, whatever capabilities of 1.25 billion people it has, whatever natural resources it has and whatever cultural heritage it has and the people of India in any period, you take any period be it 100 years, ago, 500 years ago or thousand years ago or be it 5,000 years ago, there will not be a single event in the history when we have caused any harm to anyone.

Whenever I meet people of any country of the world, and when I tell them that during the first and second world wars we did not capture anybody's land, we did not have to hoist our flag anywhere, neither did we had any intention to capture the world but more than 1.5 lakh soldiers from our country had sacrificed their lives in search of peace. We did not desire or seek anything for us in the first and second world wars, however, 1.5 lakh Indians embraced martyrdom in search of peace and any Indian can say this thing with pride that we are the people who provide to the world, we are not the ones who seek something from it and we are certainly not the ones who snatch away from others.

Today, any Indian can take pride in India's association with the peace keeping force of United Nations that if there is strife anywhere in the world then through the United Nations the peace keeping forces play their role in maintaining the peace at those strife torn places. And if there is anyone in the entire world making the maximum contribution to the peace keeping forces then these are Indian soldiers. And even today, Indian soldiers are deployed in several strife-torn places of the world. The land of Buddha and Gandhi spreads peace - these are not mere words. We are those people who have demonstrated this thing in our lives, who have assimilated the peace, peace is in our veins and that is why our ancestors gave us this formula of VasudhaivaKutumbkam (The world is a family), the formula that we have demonstrated through our lives. However, the world acknowledges the strength of all these things only when India is strong, when India is capable and it is moving forward to scale new heights in every field of the life only then the world acknowledges these things. Irrespective of the level of one's knowledge about the substances of life, irrespective of a glorious history, irrespective of the greatness of your legacy, the world acknowledges all these things only when the present is also equally bright, and is full of energy and strong. And that is why it is our duty to make the 21st century a century of India if it is considered the century of Asia, it is as important as studying and taking inspiration from our past. And I don't think it's difficult. After the experience of last three and three and a half years I can say this thing that this is possible. You might have seen in the past some time as far as the government of India is concerned positive news are being reported about it. Now there is no apprehension that there will be some negative news and what people will ask us when we go to our office. Now whenever you step outside your house you have that confidence - No, only good news will come from India. It's a country of 1.25 billion people, its main theme, the main theme of the government and the society is only revolving around the positivity alone. Every time the decisions are taken only in the interest of the country while keeping the development in the mind. It's a country of 1.25 billion people and how the economy will function if 30 crore families are outside the banking system even 70 years after the independence.

We took this task upon ourselves, we started Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Scheme and banks were feeling uneasy as they were required to open accounts even cases of zero balance. And everyone knows that entire banking world is here in Manila. And banks argued with them: Sir, at least please allow us to charge them for the stationary. I told them that this was the right of the poor people of the country; they should have a respectable access to the banks. That poor fellow used to think that whether he can enter into that air-conditioned bank or not as there were armed guard outside the banks. And then that poor fellow was forced to visit to a money lender and all of us know that what these moneylenders do. The bank accounts of 30 crore countrymen were opened under the zero balance scheme. And sometimes you people have seen the rich community. I have seen both the rich people and small heartedness of those rich people. You must have seen the poor people as well but I have seen the richness, the large heartedness of poor people. We have opened zero balance bank accounts but today I can say this thing with pride that these poor people have developed a habit of saving in those Jan Dhan Accounts. Earlier they used to stash their money in the wheat stored in the house, they used to keep it under their bed, and mothers used to be apprehensive that if their husbands had bad habits then he would spend it somewhere else. But you will be happy to note that in such a short span of time 67,000 crore rupees have been deposited in Jan-Dhan accounts. The poor people have become active participant in the mainstream of the country's economy. It's not a small change, the person who was outside the system, who didn't have the power and capability, today, the same person has come at the centre of the system.

There are several initiatives that were never discussed, people did not even think about them. Some people even wondered whether these things were feasible? We have accepted that our country will continue to run the way it is. Why it will be like this only? If Singapore can be clean, Philippines can be clean, Manila can be clean then why cannot India be clean? Which resident of the country would prefer living in filth? No one wants that. But someone has to take initiative, someone has to take the responsibility, someone has to take up the work without worrying about success or failure. We have tried to take it forward from where Mahatma Gandhi left it. And I tell you that today more than 2.25 lakh villages in India have now become open defecation free. So what a big change it has brought to the quality of life of a common man of our society.

Now in our country, those of you who have visited India in the last 20, 25, 30 years or those of you who are still in touch with India, must be knowing that getting a gas cylinder, getting a gas connection in a household was considered to be a big thing. and if one would get a gas connection in the house, if a gas cylinder came to the house, then the atmosphere in the neighborhood used to be such that somebody had got a Mercedes car, meaning it was considered a very big achievement that we have got a gas connection in our house. Gas connection used to be such a big thing in our country that Members of Parliament used to get 25 coupons in a year so that they can oblige 25 families in their constituencies. What they used to do I don't want to say that, it used to come in newspapers, means connection for gas cylinder. You must remember that when elections were held in 2014, BJP was at one end and Congress party was on the other end. Bharatiya Janata Party gave me the responsibility to lead that election. A meeting was held in Congress Party and the whole country was waiting to know under whose leadership they will fight elections. After the meeting a press conference of Congress party was held in the evening. What was said in that press conference, it was said that if we win the elections in 2014, then we will give 12 cylinders in a year instead of the 9 cylinders that we give right now. We will give 12 cylinders, do you remember it or not, meaning 12 cylinders instead of 9 cylinders, Congress was fighting election on this issue. Till 2014 this was the scope of thinking, it is not a thing of too far from now and the country was also applauding: 'Great! We will give 12 cylinders instead of 9.'

Giving gas cylinders and gas connection to five crore families, to those mothers who cook food by burning wood-sticks in stoves. Now tell me how would you feel on hearing that on one side the scope of thinking is to increase gas cylinders from 9 to 12, and on the other side there is a person who says that in three years he will provide gas cylinders to five crore families and he will give these connections for free.

A mother who is poor, when she cooks food on a stove by burning woodsticks, scientists say that in one day, smoke of four hundred cigarettes goes into the body of that mother. What's her crime? Who will worry about her health, and the children who play there, they cannot remain untouched from that, what would be their condition? Should there be a change in their lives or not? And bringing the woodsticks and if those are soggy, then how painful it would be to use them in cooking, how difficult it would be. Should they be freed from that problem after 70 years of freedom or not, and some people have this approach. The basic thing which I want to tell you is that sometimes the poorness of thoughts can create very big problems.

Once from Red Fort, I requested the people of India, I said that brothers, if you can afford then why you do need gas subsidy? What interest do you have in 800, 1000 or 1200 rupees in a year, just give it up, I had said just this much, and you will take pride in it that 1.25 crore families of my country, - 1.25 crore households, it's not a small number, they voluntarily gave up the gas subsidy and Modi did not put it in the government coffers.

Modi decided that we will give that to the poor people and we successfully moved forward in the direction of providing free gas connection to 3 crore families. We have already provided gas connections to 3 crore families. My promise is for 5 crore families. There are total 25 crore families in India, from 25 crore families I have made promise for 5 crore families and we have already provided it to 3 crore families. There is a surprise in this also, since you all are from our own family so I can tell you something. When government subsidy was given, it seemed that people would be benefitting from it. So what did I do, I linked it with Aadhar, bio metric identification, and because of this it was discovered that gas subsidy was being paid in the name of such people that were never born. I mean to say where it would have gone? Tell me, where it could go? It would have been going in somebody's pocket or not, now I have brushed it and it has stopped. I just did this much that this kind of subsidy is given to the right people, it should not be given to those people who are ghosts and lying and who have never been born, I just did this much, and it is not a big thing and do you know what are the results, we saved 57 thousand crore rupees. And we have not saved this amount just once, every year 57 thousand crore rupees were spent, now tell me where did it use to go? Now the people in whose pocket it used to go, what would they think about Modi, would they ever come to take a photo? Would they come? Would they like Modi? Tell me if we should work or not? Should there be a change in the country or not? Harsh decisions should be taken or not? Should we take the nation forward or not?

By coming here you people have blessed me and I can assure you that I will leave no stone unturned to fulfill the purpose which has been given to me by the country. What were the news that used to come before 2014, how much was siphoned off in the coal, or in 2G, this used to be the news or not? After 2014, what is asked from Modi, Modi Ji please tell how much money came? See, this is the change. There was a time when the country was worried about how much went and today the time is such when people are eagerly asking, Modi Ji please tell how much has come?

Friends, there is no dearth in our country, our country has all the possibilities to move ahead, we have every capability, keeping that in mind we are marching ahead with many important policies. The country is scaling new heights of development and we are moving forward with public participation. We are moving ahead taking the most common people with us and its results will be so good that you too would not like to live abroad for a long time. It felt good to me that you people came in such a big number and blessed me.

Many many Thanks.

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