



English rendering of the text of PM's address at Inauguration of filling of Aji Dam under Sauni Yojana

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How are you ? All well?

Present here on the dais, Chief minister Shri Vijaybhai, Deputy chief minister Shri Nitin Bhai, Former chief minister Anandiben, Members of the Council of ministers of the state, my colleagues in the Union Council of ministers, Members of Parliament, Mayor and my brothers and sisters present here in large numbers.

Nyari Ki Baat Nyari, Aji Kare Razi (Nyari is unique and Aji can make you to agree). When I took over as the chief minister of Gujarat in 2001, shortly thereafter I got a call from Rajkot that Aji Dam had become full and you must visit here. I still remember, those were the initial days after assuming the office of Chief minister and I was out to survey the situation of earthquake hit Kutch. I got the news in about 10-15 days that the Aji Dam had become full to the brim and the people of Rajkot were so happy that I was told that I must visit there. I was lucky to offer Jal Puja on that special day. And that day I experienced how Aji compels a person and as Vijay Bhai just said this is the 11th time in the past 40 years when the water level in the Aji Dam has become full to the brim. There is hardly any need to explain the importance of water to the people of Saurashtra and Kutch in Gujarat.

Earlier, when I used to visit Rajkot I used to find a small tank just outside every house hold with which was fitted a tap. People used to get down and fetch water from that tank. Wherever we used to visit in Rajkot in those days invariably the topic of water was discussed there. In those days I used to travel in connection with the Sangh's work and while making the tour plan we had to take into consideration on which days water supply will be there. The Railway tankers carrying water to Rajkot used to become headlines in newspapers across the country. We have seen those difficult days and governments generally increasing the number of tankers to supply more water. The people became used to it. No problem, we will manage when the next week a tanker would come. Some areas used to demand installation of hand pumps and it was considered a big thing if the demand was fulfilled.

Brothers and sisters, See! From there where has Gujarat now come to! At that time we were dependent on water tanker and hand pumps and now we have laid such a massive pipe line that a Maruti car can pass through it, and it can supply plenty of water and fill the dam as well. Brothers and sisters, if there is a government with foresight; if it is dedicated to the well-being of the public; if it has the intention of changing the lives of the common man we can guess what kind of good results can be produced. The today's youth of Gujarat who are in the age group of 15-17 and the generations to come after them would not know what was the situation in Gujarat earlier? People were desperate for electricity. When the electricity would be available? Whether electricity would be available during the dinner time or not? If a farmer wanted to run water pump in the field then they did not use to sleep through the night so that they can be informed when electricity is available to run the pumps to irrigate their fields. There is no reason to forget those days. How far we have come, how hard we have worked, with what kind of good intention, with what kind of sacrifices we have achieved this, we can only understand all this when we understand the difficulties faced by our parents in the earlier time. What else could be the reason that compelled people to leave Kutch, Kathiawad and settle in slums across the country? If somebody had 50 Bigha land and if he wanted to arrange the marriage of his daughter, and if he was required to raise a loan by pledging his land then nobody was ready to lend money to him by keeping his land in mortgage, the lender would offer a loan of only Rs 5,000 to 25,000 saying that the land was of no use to him. So, take it if you want to or leave it. The owner of 50 Bigha land couldn't get a loan of Rs 50,000 by mortgaging his land for daughter's marriage. Reason! The land had no value due to water shortage. And it was not long time ago, this was the reality of Gujarat twenty years ago. I don't want to dwell who was responsible for this. However, since the time the people of Gujarat gave us the opportunity to serve them, be it the leadership of Keshubhai Patel or of Anandiben Patel or of Vijay Bhai Rupani or when I had the opportunity to serve you as your servant; during this entire period, we moved from heaven to earth to give water to the people of Gujarat, to give them electricity, to lay roads to the villages. And that is why we can look into your eyes, we can talk to you with a sense of satisfaction. We don't have this feeling that we have done any favour, and this feeling should not develop in ourselves. We have a feeling of fulfilling our duties and this inspires us to work even harder because you people continue to bless us.

Vijay Bhai just told you that I came here straight away after a hectic foreign tour. I don't have any reasons to feel tired as the people of the country, people of Gujarat, people of Rajkot continue to shower me with so much love. I still remember as explained by Nitin Bhai that when I had started Sauni Scheme in Haimu, Gadhvi Hol and Rajkot then I had explained it to everyone by making a power point presentation.

I still remember that so many questions were raised. It is not doable and Modi is talking about this as elections are round the corner. People in the government naturally don't miss any opportunity but news papers also raised the questions that it was not doable. How such a massive fund will be arranged, how so many pipelines will be laid? And nothing will take place till 2040. An atmosphere of doubt was created and at that time I had assured the people of Gujarat with full confidence that this project would be executed, it would be executed within the stipulated time and we would work very hard to provide the water, we had taken that vow.

There is a requirement to use the budget funds for several things but I knew that once we were able to provide the water to every nook and corner of Gujarat, to every nook and corner of Saurashtra, to every nook and corner of Kutch then this land itself would fetch money from across the world and the era of development in Gujarat would scale new heights, we were fully aware about

this. And this is the result that before time, within seven months....otherwise the Aji Dam had run out of water in October-November. It's not raining with the full force yet, the land has become wet only and water is rushing to Aji with full force. And look at the science, technology and capacity that water has been supplied from a distance of 470 kilometers. And we have taken the water to Narmada dam, at a height equivalent to that of a 65 story building. This science has its own uniqueness. Water could only be supplied to your homes when we took the water at a height equivalent to the height of a 65 story building.

Brothers and sisters, it requires money. It is public money and must be used for public welfare but it ought not be wasted, it must be well spent. This entire scheme is a good example of money being well spent. And the work of Sardar Sarovar Dam was finished just 10 days ago. Chief Minister and his colleagues closed the doors of the dam. The work of doors was completed during the tenure of Anandiben, even then hurdles remained there. Who were the trouble makers it will be known to everyone when the history of Narmada will be written. There were so many people those were indifferent, who were indifferent to snatch away the right of Gujarat, those who did immoral things and kept our people under misery.

Brothers and sisters, water is available now but it also brings responsibilities with it. And I'd like to request to the people of Rajkot and Saurashtra that we should not forget how we came out of those difficulties. And now it is not just water, it has Midas touch, it's going to bring prosperity. It's god's gift. As we seek god's forgiveness and collect every grain of the sweets dedicated to god if it falls on the ground, similarly we have no right to waste water. We must save water. And when water is available then I've a right to talk about water conservation and therefore I beg to the people of Kachch, Saurashtra and Gujarat to save water.

Some of you may have gone to Mahudi to offer your respect. People who visit Mahudi, members of Jain community visit Mahudi in large numbers, people who have visited Mahudi, they would be aware about the teachings of Buddhi Sagar Ji Maharaj. Buddhi Sagar Maharaj was there 90 years ago, he has written this thing 90 years ago. He has written it, and a hand written copy of it is available that one day water will be sold in shops, he wrote this thing 90 years ago. Ninety years ago this great soul had predicted that water will be sold in shops. Today, we purchase Besleri water bottle from shop and if we are required to use water for drinking, for irrigation in that manner. And now we have enough water for drinking when Rajkot is moving in the direction to become smart city. At this time an important task of managing waste water is before Rajkot. The water that drains into gutter, we must recycle that water for other usage within Rajkot like it should be used in factories, in gardens and also in construction industry. And that is why it will not be difficult for us to have quality drinking water. If Rajkot is developed then Aji and Nyari won't let us thirst for water, this is the work that we have done. Therefore, brothers and sisters, and specially to farmers, the farmers of Saurashtra, Kachcha and Gujarat, I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to the farmers of Kachcha as they followed me wholly when I urged them as chief minister of Gujarat to use drip irrigation. They used drip irrigation in the entire Kachcha, they increased the use of drip irrigation in the entire Banaskantha, they adopted micro irrigation and that has changed the face of agriculture there.

Brothers and sisters, now it's not a big deal for science to provide drip irrigation facility to every field, to provide sprinklers for irrigation to produce more crop by using less water. The engineering industry of Rajkot is so capable that I'd urge them to compete with each other to provide tools and techniques that farmers can easily use for using every drop of water for irrigation. The engineering industry in Rajkot is capable of producing these tools for farmers, they should demonstrate this skill and they should emerge as a trend setter not only for Gujarat and India but also for the developed countries of the world.

Brothers and sisters, I'm happy as today these young students got the opportunity to meet me. For some people hackathon is a new word, but it's important to properly understand this thing. Generally, the government officers, the bureaucrats who have been working with government for years have developed a feeling that we know everything. The God has gifted us all the wisdom. They have a feeling that they know solutions for every problem. This was common in the past. However, I have changed this perception. I told them that these 1.25 billion Indians are wiser than us; I told them that the young generation is smarter and if we tell them about the problems they can find solutions. Sometime back I asked the departments of government of India to prepare a list of the tasks that are difficult to execute, tasks which require more efforts, more time and more money. However, I relentlessly pursued this matter with them. Initially, they used to inform me that everything was fine with their department but I asked them that there must be some difficulties please look for them and inform me. They identified 500 issues where they felt the need to rethink. I organized a hackathon. I asked the engineering colleges of the country that these are 500 issues, you should form a team, you sit on your computers day in and day out, 42,00 students participated in this exercise and they worked for fifty hours, through the day and night, and came out with new solutions for these 500 problems and I'd like to say this thing with a sense of pride that the departments have broadly adopted their proposals and began to implement them.

What should the municipal corporation of Rajkot do to make it a smart city? How to increase people's participation? How to solve the traffic problems, how to develop a system for payment of taxes? What should be done to bring about the changes in poor people's lives? It's an era of Wi-Fi, How to digitalise Rajkot through Wi-Fi, through Digital India? They have identified 100 such issues and they have asked all the colleges in Gujarat, all the colleges in the entire Saurashtra, they have invited them to register to participate in the competition to find solutions for these 100 issues. Thousands of youth are eager to participate in this hackathon beginning on 29 July. How to change the face of Rajkot, how to modernize the system of Rajkot, this is going to be done by our college going young generation. I salute their energy and enthusiasm. I compliment you. And I am confident that this hackathon is a good way to increase people's participation and everybody will help in this, everybody will encourage it, and our new generation, our college going generation, the generation that is getting connected to the world through mobile phones, the generation that performs all kind of tasks on computers will participate in this hackathon to change the fortune of Rajkot. I have full confidence in this thing.

Brothers and sisters, who will not be happy today after having seen the water in Aji Dam? With the feeling of that joy, how much happiness will we feel if we see a green Saurashtra, keeping that thing in the mind I once again express my gratitude to the state government that the Sauni Scheme that was born under the clouds of suspicion has today turned out to be very successful. The man who incurred the expenditure to get the water is going to drink it, and this water of Narmada, this holy water, it has come as

a blessing from god, may this water change our fortune as well. With these good wishes I express my gratitude to all of you.

Thank you.

AKT/KT/DG/AK

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