



# English rendering of the excerpts of the PM's address on inauguration ceremony of Ghogha-Dahej Ro-Ro ferry service

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My dear brothers and sisters,

Friends,

The feelings that a farmer gets after seeing his bumper crop; the feeling that a potter gets when he makes a beautiful water pitcher or earthen pots or earthen lamps, the same joyous feeling that he gets after making them; the experience, the happiness that a weaver gets after weaving a beautiful carpet; I'm experiencing the same thing now. I'm feeling like that I've come here after having experienced the desires and emotions of 1.25 billion fellow countrymen just a while ago.

While traveling from Ghogha to Dahej through the sea, every single moment I was thinking that the time which is getting passed at this moment, it is writing a new history, it is opening the doors of a new future. And we will lay a solid foundation for a New India, we will realize the dream of a New India by passing through this door. Everybody from Sardar Patel to Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar had dreamt of properly utilizing the people's power of the country for this thing. And today we have crossed a mile stone of their dreams.

This ferry service between Ghogha and Dahej will not only make the lives of millions and millions of people of Saurashtra and South Gujarat easier, but it will also bring them closer.

This ferry service will kick-start a new era of social and economic development in this entire region. New opportunities of employment will be available to those youth who will take advantage of this facility. A new chapter of coastal shipping and coastal tourism is going to be added with this thing. In the future, all of us, the people who are present here should take note of it; that in future Hazira, Pipavav, Jafra and Daman and Diu, we can link all these important places through this ferry service in future.

I've been told that the government has a plan to take this ferry service to Hazira beyond Surat and then up to Mumbai in the coming years. The issue of starting a similar service in the bay of Kutch is being discussed and a lot of progress has been made in this regard. I convey my best wishes to the state government and for this kind of initiatives being taken by them and I assure them that they will get the full cooperation of government of India.

This initiative of the government is a living example of the government's commitment for the development of entire Southern Gujarat including Dahej. We have specially focused on the centres like Dahej and Hazira for providing momentum to industrial development in the entire South Gujarat in addition to Bharuch. Perhaps, nobody would have been able to think earlier about the kind of work that is being done with regard to the rail network and road linkages in addition to establishment of Petroleum, Chemicals & Petrochemicals Investment Regions.

emphasis has also been laid on the development of infrastructure in Hazira. In the coming days, these regions are also going to benefit from Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor. The maritime development of Gujarat is a role model for the entire country. I am hopeful that this project of Ro-Ro ferry service will work like model project for other states as well.

The way we have understood and solved the problems that affect this kind of project by working hard for several years so that this kind of difficulties can be minimized if we need to construct a new project in future; Gujarat has done tremendous work in that direction.

Friends, not just today but for the centuries India has been way ahead of other countries in the field of water transportation. Our techniques used to be far better than that of other countries. However, it is also true that during the period of slavery we gradually stopped learning from our historical advantages; we gradually forgot them. Along with the reduction in new innovations, the existing capabilities of that time also slowly became a part of history. Otherwise, after independence why water transportation was completely neglected, was completely ignored in a country, whose navigational capabilities were recognized by the world for hundreds of years.

Friends, even today the share of roads in transportation sector is 55%, while the share of railways is 35% and waterways that is the cheapest mode, accounts for just 5 or 6%. Although, the share of waterways and coastal transport had been nearly thirty per cent in the third world countries. This is our reality and this is the challenge before us and we have to move ahead with the determination to change this situation.

Today, you will be surprised to know that logistics accounts for 18% of our total economy. It means that in comparison with other countries the cost of moving goods from one part to the other part is costlier in our country. And because of that those things that are required by the poor people get costlier due to transportation cost. We can halve the cost of logistics by encouraging the water transportation and we have all the resources, facilities, means and capabilities; we have all these things to do that.

Friends, in our country we have 7,500 kilometers long coast line and 14,500 kilometers long internal waterways, or river network for waterways. In a way mother India has already blessed us with 21,000 kilometers long waterways. For years we have been sitting idle on this asset and we failed to understand how to utilize this thing.

You will be surprised to know that the first port policy in our country was formulated in 1995. The country got independence in 1947 and the port policy made in 1995, so how much we delayed it? Prior to that the work for the development of ports was not taking place with a long term vision. Things were just functional somehow. And it is true that because of that the country had to suffer the economic loss of billions and billions of rupees.

I give you an example; if we transport coal through waterways then it costs around 20 paise per ton per kilometer. But when we transport the same coal through railways then it costs Rs. 1.25 per ton per kilometer; the cost of 20 paise becomes 1.25 rupees and you can think how the cost will be multiplied if we use roads? You tell me that whether we should transport the coal by cheaper means or not? You will be surprised to know that even today 90% coal is being transported through the railways. We have determined to change this situation that's been in use for decades and the government has been regularly taking new initiatives for this purpose. Friends, when we purchase a new house then we take into account that what kind of connectivity that place has with other areas, whether road is available or not, whether rail service is available or not, whether bus services are available or not if we need to go somewhere.

When we start a new business even then we take into account what kind of connectivity is in that area; whether there will be any problem in the movement of goods in that area or not?

When it is our general approach then this question also arises that why should we establish our industry away from sea shores? If the raw material, if the finished goods produced in the factories are dependent on the connectivity of ports then will it not be prudent to develop the industry along the coastal areas? Not only will it reduce the cost of logistics but it will also help in improving the ease of doing business.

Whatever is required inside the country, the industry for those things can be set up anywhere inside the country; and it must be done. However, whatever is required to be sent to the other countries, whatever is to be exported then if we do these things in coastal areas then it becomes more convenient; it fetches more profits.

Friends, it is being said in the world of transport that if you are solving tomorrow's problem today then you are already very late. You just imagine, if someone decides to construct a flyover in area which faces traffic jam everyday then the number of vehicles goes up so fast that by the time the flyover gets ready there will be traffic jam on it as well. This was the situation of our country. And that is why the government is working in the transport sector by taking into the account the present needs and the requirements of the future as well. Our formula is P for P, Ports for prosperity. Our ports are the gateways of the prosperity. A project like Sagarmala is reflection of this vision. We have been working on this project while keeping the requirements of 2025, of 2035 in the mind. And under this scheme, the government has been investing massively in more than 400 projects by taking into account the requirements of present times to till 2035.

Investment of more than 8 lakh crore rupees is being lined up for these different projects. Sagarmala project will certainly become a big basis for a New India.

Friends, we need more modern ports to establish strong relations with other countries through the oceans. Ports are like lungs of our economy. If ports become dysfunctional and they don't work according to their capacity then we will not be able to trade much. As body supplies oxygen sucked by the lungs to its different parts through the veins with the help of heart, similarly, in economy this role is being performed by railways, highways, airways and waterways. If the supply of blood, if the supply of oxygen becomes deficient in the body then it becomes weaker, similarly if there is a lack of proper connectivity then the economic development of the country also starts getting slow. And that is why this government has been deploying the maximum resources in these two sectors – infrastructure and connectivity.

Friends, this is the result of efforts made by the government that a massive change has been brought about in the port sector in the last three years. The capacity that has been added so far, most of it has been added in the last two-three years. And situation of those ports and government companies have improved which have been incurring losses. And the government is also focused on the development of skills related to coastal services.

As per one estimate, in the future due to Sagarmala project alone, there will be potential for creation of one crore jobs in different parts of the country. We have been working with this approach to make the entire framework of transportation modern and integrated.

These days, you people experience traffic jams at several places. Our ports also face this kind of jams and due to these jams at the ports the logistic cost goes up, and waiting time goes up. As we are not able to do any productive work, we only keep waiting once we are stuck in a traffic jam; similarly, the vessels continue to wait for loading and unloading of goods. And it's not just that vessel but the entire economy gets stuck. It's extremely essential to modernize the ports and remove the bottlenecks.

Sagarmala project has one more aspect and it is the blue economy. Earlier people only used to talk about the ocean economy but we talk about blue economy. Blue economy means the combination of economy and ecology. Blue economy also nurtures the eco-system of seas along with economic activities.

If the industrial revolution of 18th and 19th centuries took place on the land then the economic revolution of the 21st century will take place through the seas, it will happen through the blue economy.

Friends, given our present requirements and challenges, it is extremely essential that we maximize the use of sea faring prowess of our country. Increased use of the capabilities of the blue economy will become the basis for a New India.

Blue economy can be used for ensuring food security. For example, if our fishermen brothers engage in the production of sea beads, if they add value in it then it can supplement their income. Similarly, blue economy can become a strong basis for New India in the field of energy, in the field of mining and tourism.

Friends, this government is developing a new work culture in the country. A work culture that is accountable and transparent. And today due to this work culture the work on projects have been done at a fast pace. Today, the roads are constructed at twice the speed, the railway tracks are being laid at twice the speed in the country.

The arrangements are being made for using drones and satellites for monitoring of the projects in order to complete them within the stipulated time. There must be some reason that today you people get the passports so quickly. There must be some reason that today you people so easily get the gas cylinders. There must be some reason that now you people don't have to wait for months to get the income tax refund. These changes have been brought about in your lives and the main reason behind these things is the change that we have brought about in the work culture of the government. It's such a work culture that ensures delivery of the rights of poor people, the rights of middle class people to them through the use of technology.

Whatever you people taught me in Gujarat that experience has become very useful for me in Delhi. I have been getting the files being dug out and I've been ensuring the completion of those projects that have been stuck for decades. We have developed a system called Pragati. Projects worth over Rs. 9 lakh crore have so far been scrutinized through it. The projects that have been stuck for four decades are getting completed at a fast pace after being scrutinized through Pragati. This government is trying to establish an honest economy and an honest social economy in the country. Demonetization has not only ensured that black money stashed in the safes is being deposited in banks but it also provided that kind of proofs to the country that made it possible to start an unprecedented cleansing campaign.

Similarly, the country is getting a new kind of business culture under the GST. We are aware that earlier people used to go out with their trucks and they used to get stuck for hours at check posts. All the check posts have been abolished after the implementation of GST. The truck which used to take five days, now it takes three days to reach its destination. The cost of transporting goods has come down and the corruption worth thousands of crore rupees at those check posts and all such things have also been abolished due to GST. Now please tell me, those who have looted the country so far by working as a contractor, whether they will be angry with Modi or not? Whether they will be angry with Modi or not? Will they be upset with Modi or not? But whether the welfare the citizens of the country should be ensured or not? Whether the citizens of the country should be benefited or not?

There is a business culture under which the entire business is conducted honestly and all the profits are also made honestly. And it's my experience that no businessman wants to resort to dishonest means. However, some rules and regulations, some officers and politicians apply pressure on him, they compel the poor fellow. We have been working to provide an honest environment to him.

You see the numbers of traders joining the GST is continuously growing. 27 lakh people have been added to the indirect tax net after the implementation of GST.

Friends, I'm aware that some traders who have been coming back to the mainstream are apprehensive about the scrutiny of their past records. I'd like to fully assure them who have been honestly joining the development of the country, who have been coming to the mainstream that no officer will be allowed to harass them due to their previous record.

Brothers and sisters, despite a lot of reforms and tough decisions the economy of the country is on the right track, it's in the right direction. If we look at the recently released data then the production of coal, electricity and natural gas; the production of all these things has increased substantially. Foreign investors have been making record investments in India. India's foreign exchange reserve has topped \$ 40,000 crores from \$ 30,000 crores.

Several experts are in agreement with this thing that the fundamentals of the country's economy are quite strong. We have taken important steps in the reform sector and this process will continue. And the financial sustainability of the country will also be maintained. We will continue to take step that is necessary to boost the investment and speed up the economic development.

Friends, this is an era of evolving systems. It's an era of realization of success through solemn pledges. All of us will have to take a solemn pledge for building a New India, and we will have to realize that. Today, a new facility has been created for a New India through the launch of Ghogha-Dahej ferry service here.

Once again I convey my best wishes to you and invite you people to take maximum of advantage of it.

Bharat Mata Ki Jay (Victory to mother India),  
Bharat Mata Ki Jay (Victory to mother India),  
Bharat Mata Ki Jay (Victory to mother India),  
Thank you very much.

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