



# English rendering of Excerpts of PM's address at HT Leadership Summit - 2017

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Shobhana Bhartia Ji,

All the dignitaries present here,

Brothers and sisters,

Once again I got the opportunity to come amongst you. I get to see a lot of familiar faces. I express my gratitude to Hindustan Times Group and its readers for inviting me again.

Friends,

Two years ago when I have attended the summit then the topic was "Towards a Brighter India", in just two years, in just two years today we have been talking about "The Irreversible Rise of India". It's not only the change in the topic. It's a reflection of the change in the thinking of the country, change that has been brought about in the confidence of the country.

If we look at the country in its totality, if we look it at as a living entity then today the kind of positive attitude has been brought about in the country that has never been there earlier. I am not able to recall that the poor, the youth, the women, the farmers, the exploited and the deprived persons ever had this kind of confidence in their capabilities, their resources and their dreams.

This confidence has been brought about when all of us, we 1.25 billion Indians have tirelessly worked day and night for this thing. The trust of countrymen on themselves, on the country, this is the formula for the rise of the country.

Today is Gita anniversary, it has been clearly stated in the Gita:

Uddharet Atmana Atmanam Na Atmananam Avasadyet Atmev-Atmano Bandhu Atmev Ripur Atmana

Please raise your level and avoid the negative thoughts,

You yourself is your friend, you yourself is your enemy.

And that is why the Lord Buddha had also said this thing:

'Appa Deepo Bhav,' it means you should become your own lamp.

The rising confidence of 1.25 billion countrymen, it is becoming a strong basis for the development of the country.

From everyone who is present here in this hall to the person who has been driving an auto rickshaw outside this hotel, who has been pulling a rickshaw, who has been mending the damaged banks of his field, who has been sleeping in a tent after performing the duty of a sentry in the snow, they all have done the hard work of that was expected of them and because of that today we have been talking about the 'Irreversible Rise of India' by going beyond the topic of 'Towards a Brighter India'.

Friends,

In 2014, people had not voted for just to change a government. They had cast their votes to bring about the change in the country. It was for bringing about those changes in the system that are stable, permanent and irreversible. Despite so many years after our independence, the weakness of our system was coming in the way of success of our country.

It was a system that wasn't able to do justice with the potential of the country. Everywhere some individual else was fighting against this system. It's not just my effort but it is my commitment as well that this fight between the people and the system stops and we bring about irreversible change in their lives and increase their ease of living.

So that the people don't have to take trouble for small things like railway and bus tickets, for gas and electricity connections, for getting admissions in to a hospital, for getting passport and income tax refunds.

Friends, the biggest priority for this government is a corruption free, citizen-centric and development friendly eco-system. It should be such an eco system that is based on the policies, technology and transparency where the possibilities for leakage and irregularities have been minimized.

If I talk about Jan-Dhan scheme then it has brought about such a change in the lives of poor people that nobody could have thought about earlier. The poor persons who were earlier turned down from the door steps of the banks in an insulting manner today they have their own bank accounts. Jan-Dhan account holders have also been given Rupay Debit Cards. In our country of 1.25 billion the number of such people is more than 30 crore.

Think about the self confidence of that poor person when he deposits his money in a bank account, when he uses his Rupay debit card. This self confidence, this courage is now permanent, nobody can now change it.

Ujjawla scheme is like this only. It has permanently changed the lives of more than 3 crore rural women. It's not just that they have got a free gas connection but they have got safety, health and time for their families.

Please think about the change that has been brought about in the lives of millions and millions of such women due to the Clean India Mission. Not only that the government has constructed toilets but it has also set those millions and millions of women and daughters free from that pain that they used to bear while waiting for the evening.

Some people will continue to click the photographs of some filth somewhere, will continue to write about it and debate it on TV but people know what kind of irreversible change this campaign has brought about on the ground.

Brothers and sisters, I don't know that how many people sitting in this hall will be able to relate with this thing that the kind of tip that they will give to a parking attendant while going out from here, today a poor person's life can be insured in less than that amount.

Just think that accidental insurance for less than one rupee per month and life insurance cover for a premium of 90 paise per day. Today, more than 15 crore poor people have joined these schemes of the government. An amount of nearly Rs. 1,800 crore has been provided to poor people as the claim money under these schemes. Had any other government given this kind of fund then it would have been presented as a messiah.

This kind of important thing has been done for the poor people but I don't think that anybody paid attention on it. This is also a reality and I move forward by accepting it. One more example is of LED bulb. During the tenure of previous government its price was about Rs. 300 to 350, now it is available to a middle class family for nearly Rs. 50. After the start of Ujala scheme nearly 28 crore LED bulbs have been sold in the country and it has resulted in the saving of over Rs. 14,000 crore for the people.

It's not like that there will be a full stop in the reduction of electricity bill or on this saving. This saving, it will be a continuous process and now this saving has become permanent.

Brothers and sisters, I don't know whether anybody had stopped the previous governments from doing such things. However, I know this much that no one can stop us from taking those decisions that will bring about permanent changes in the system, those decisions which are in the interest of the country.

Those people who are of the view that this country can't be changed instantly through a magic wand they are full of pessimism and frustration. This approach prevents us from doing anything new and innovative.

This approach prevents us from taking decisions. Therefore the approach of this government is different altogether. For example if we talk about the Neem coating of urea. During the previous government, the percentage of Neem coated urea was 35%. And it was known to the entire system that it will be of no use if we do the Neem coating of just 35% of urea. If we need to prevent the diversion of urea, if we want to stop its diversion to factories then we will have to do the Neem coating of 100% of urea. But this decision was not taken earlier, the decision of doing 100% Neem coating of urea.

Brothers and sisters, this decision has not only stopped the diversion of urea but it has also increased its efficiency. Now farmers have to use less urea for the same area of the land and it's not just that, his production has been going up despite using less urea.

Similarly, we have been creating a digital platform in the country through which a farmer of any village can sell his produce anywhere. This is going to be an extremely big systematic change in the country. E-Nam - electronic national agriculture market, more than 450 markets (Mandis) have been connected online through this platform. In future, this platform will be of immense use to farmers in fetching a remunerative price for them.

Recently, the government has started a scheme in the agriculture sector - Kisan Sampada Scheme to strengthen the supply chain and storage system in the country. The objective of this scheme is to prevent the loss of those perishable agri and horticulture produce that perishes before reaching the market. Under this scheme, the government is strengthening the food processing sector so that the field of a farmer can also work like an industrial unit.

The government is going to spend more than Rs. 6,000 crores on creation of food parks, on the modern technology related to food processing sector and for creation of the complete infrastructure for agro-processing sector.

Brothers and sisters, the demand for organic farming and organic products has been consistently going up with the time. Several other states of the country are capable of becoming 100% organic on the lines of Sikkim. Particularly, this can be encouraged in our Himalayan states. For this purpose, the government has been working on the scheme to promote organic farming by creating 10,000 clusters.

Recently, we have taken an important decision. Brothers and sisters, until now Bamboo was considered a tree as per the law of the land and because of this thing it was very difficult for farmers to harvest the bamboos, now the government has removed the bamboo from the list of trees.

It will benefit those farmers in the far flung areas, particularly the farmers of north-east who have been engaged in the making of bamboo furniture and bamboo handicraft. And you will be surprised to know that the bamboo was not considered a tree in one of the laws passed by the previous government.

This contradiction has now been removed after a gap of 10-12 years.

Friends, the decisions are taken with a holistic approach in our government, they are taken by understanding the needs of the country. This kind of decisions were not taken earlier that is why every citizen of the country was worried earlier. They wanted to see the country free from inherent problems and also wanted to see the creation of new systems.

Brothers and sisters, the earlier system of the country had made corruption acceptable in the country. It was black money which was controlling every major sector of the country. In 2014, 1.25 billion Indians had voted to change this system. They had voted for finding a permanent solution for these things plaguing the country, they had voted for creation of a New India.

You yourself can feel the kind of behavioural change has been brought about in the country following the demonetisation. It is for the first time since independence that the corrupt people are apprehensive before carrying out black money transactions, they have been fearful of being apprehended. The black money which was the basis of parallel economy earlier, it has come into the formal economy following the demonetisation.

The important thing is that this money that has come back to the banking system has also brought evidences along with it. The kind of data the country has got is no less than a treasure. With the help of mining of this data we got to know that in our country 400-500 companies were operating from a single address and a single company used to have up to 2,000 bank accounts. Wasn't it a strange paradox? On the one hand poor people were facing problem in opening a bank account on the other companies were able to easily open thousands of accounts.

Whatever irregularities were committed in these accounts during the note ban now they have been getting detected. So far nearly 2.25 lakh such companies have been de-registered. We have also fixed the responsibility of the directors of these companies as it was incumbent upon them that these companies work in a proper manner. Now they have been barred from becoming directors in any other companies.

Friends, it's such a step that will strengthen the culture of a healthy and transparent corporate culture in our country. Implementation of GST is also an important step in cleansing of the country's economy. The system that was created in the last 70 years, the weaknesses, the compulsions that have crept in doing business, now the country has moved forward by leaving them behind.

A new chapter of transparency has been opened in the country through the GST. More and more traders have been joining this honest system. Friends, one such irreversible change has been strengthened through Aadhaar number. Aadhaar is such a powerful thing through which this government wants to ensure the rights of the poor people are given to them.

Aadhaar has an extremely important role in ensuring the delivery of subsidised ration, scholarships, expenses on medicines, pension and the subsidy given to the poor from the government. Such a system has been created by linking Aadhaar with the power of mobile and Jan-Dhan accounts which was incomprehensible a few years ago. It's such a system which is irreversible.

In the last three years, millions and millions of bogus names have been removed from the system with help of Aadhaar. Now it is going to become a potent weapon against the Benami property.

Brothers and sisters, this government has completely changed the old method of public procurement. We have developed a new system under the name of GeM – government e-market place.

Now the government awards tenders and public procurement is being done through this system. Now owners of cottage industry, small time handicraft manufacturers, people those who carry out manufacturing at their homes they can sell their products to the government through this GeM.

Brothers and sisters, we are moving forward towards a system which will thoroughly remove the possibility of generation of black money due to the weaknesses of the system.

And the day when most of the buying and selling in the country, most of the financial transactions will have a technical and digital address then the organised corruption will be controlled significantly. I'm aware that what kind of political cost it will have for me but I'm also ready for that thing.

Friends, when the schemes pick up the pace only then the country makes progress. There must be some reason because of which the speed of a lot of government schemes has gone up. There are same tools, same resources but the system has picked up a pace. It became possible because the government has been developing a new work culture in the bureaucracy. It is making the bureaucracy more responsive.

- Today, it's the result of same thing that 22 kilometer long national highways have been constructed whereas during the previous government the figure was 11 kilometers per day.

- During the last three years of the previous government 80,000 kms long rural roads were constructed whereas in the three years of our government 120,000 kms long rural roads have been constructed.

- During the last three years of the previous government, 1100 kms long new railway lines were laid, during the three years government this figure is more than 2100 kms.

- During the last three years of the previous government, 2,500 kms long railway lines were electrified; during the three years of this government more than 4,300 kms long railway lines have been electrified.

- During the last three years of the previous government, capital expenditure of nearly 1.49 lakh crore was made. A capital expenditure of nearly 2.64 lakh crore has been made during the three years of this government.

- During the last three years of the previous government, a total of 12,000 megawatt new renewable energy capacity was added, during the three years of this government, a total of 22,000 megawatt new renewable energy capacity has been connected to the grid.

- If we compare the growth of shipping industry then during the previous government its growth was in negative whereas in the three years of this government shipping industry has registered a growth of more than 11%.

Friends, if we had not rectified the things at the ground level then whether it was possible to provide this kind of momentum?

Whether the government could have taken these decisions? No. It's not easy to bring about big and durable changes. It requires the overhaul of the entire system. And when these changes take place only then the country reaches at the 100<sup>th</sup> spot from 142<sup>nd</sup> in terms of Ease of Doing Business ranking.

Brothers and sisters, all of you are aware what we have inherited when we assumed power in 2014. The condition of economy and governance, fiscal order, banking system, everything was in a bad shape. And when you people were required to write this thing in a few words, when you were required to write a headline then you used to write: policy paralysis.

Just imagine, our country was counted in fragile five. Most of the countries of the world were of the opinion that they can tackle their economic crisis but these fragile five will not only sink themselves but they will drag them down too.

Today, where is India at global level, what's its situation? You are very well familiar with this thing. Be it a big or a small country, most of the countries of the world want to walk with India shoulder to shoulder. India has continuously been increasing its influence at the international level. Now we don't have to stop under any circumstances, we have to continuously march ahead.

Friends, when a country stands up with a self confidence then irreversible or reversible becomes immaterial. When a country moves ahead with self confidence, it takes its decision with self confidence then it becomes possible what did not happen in the last 70 years.

India's success in the election for International Court of Justice is reflection of the change in the thinking of the entire world. Brothers and sisters, when Yoga gets unanimous recognition at the United Nations then it reflects its Irreversible Rise.

When International Solar Alliance is being constituted as per an Indian initiative then it reflects her Irreversible Rise.

Friends, our government has linked diplomacy with humanism, with human sensitivities. When an earthquake strikes Nepal then India becomes the first country to engage in the relief and rescue work. When there is a flood in Sri Lanka then Indian navy becomes the first to reach there to help them. When Maldives faces water crisis then India sends ships full of waters. When there is a crisis in Yemen then India not only saves more than 4,000 of its citizens but it also safely evacuates 2,000 people of 48 other countries. This is the result of India's growing image and confidence that today every Indian living abroad has been able to talk to the person in front of him with confidence and pride.

When this kind of slogans like ‘this time Cameron government’ and ‘this time Trump government’ are raised then it’s the recognition of the strength of Indian Diaspora. Brothers and sisters, when every institution, every society, every individual will begin to bring about changes while recognizing its powers only then the dream of a New India will be realised. Today, the time demands that every institution engaged in the development of country makes a pledge while keeping in the mind the requirements and challenges before the country.

We will have to realise these pledges by 2022 when the country will celebrate 75 years of its independence. I myself can’t give you people any advice. But I would like to remind you people one thing said by our beloved former President Dr. Abdul Kalam. He had said:

“Why the media in our country is so negative? Why is it so that in our country we are so embarrassed about our own capabilities and achievements? We are such a great country, we have so many amazing stories of our successes but even then we refuse to acknowledge them. Why it is so?”

He had said this thing several years ago. If you intellectual people find it appropriate then you must discuss this thing in your news rooms, in your ivory towers. I’m hopeful that whatever changes you people will bring about they will be irreversible.

I’d like to urge upon the entire media industry from this platform that you yourself make a pledge and inspire others as well. As you have played an active role in converting the clean India campaign by considering it your own, similarly please come forward in this journey of realising the success through pledges.

With these words, I conclude my speech. Once again, many many congratulations to Hindustan Times Group for this event.

Thank you very much.

Jai Hind.

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