



# English rendering of the excerpts of the PM's address at inauguration ceremony of Ghogha-Dahej Ro-Ro ferry service and cattle feed plant in Ghogha, Gujarat

Posted On: 22 OCT 2017 4:20PM by PIB Delhi

My dear brothers and sisters present here in large numbers

Best wishes to all of you on the occasion of Deepavali and the New Year; and besides that we have just celebrated the festival of Bhai Dooj and waiting for the festival of Nag Panchami. And today the entire India is getting an invaluable gift from the land of Ghogha in the direction of building a New India, a New Gujarat with a new pledge. Today the first stage of Ro-Ro ferry service between Ghogha and Dahej is getting inaugurated. This is the first of its kind of project in India. It is also the first of its kind of project in the south-east Asia. I congratulate the people of Gujarat and the government of Gujarat for completing this project while using several latest technologies and at a cost of Rs. 650 crores. A big dream of 6.5 crore Gujaratis has been realised with the start of this project.

Brothers and sisters,

I also got the opportunity to inaugurate the cattle feed plant of Sarvottam dairy from this platform just a while ago.

My dear brothers and sisters,

This is a matter of contention. What is it? It is whether mankind first learnt how to swim or it first learnt how to make a wheel. But it is true that humans always considered it easier to swim across the river, from their village. Gujarat had a thousands of years old history of sea faring. Boats were made here. It was the tradition of this place to make boats and go around the world. Flags of 84 countries used to wave in Lothal. Phalphi University; students of several countries used to study here in Phalphi University around 1700 years ago. But no one knows what happened and all these things were buried under the soil like history. There was a period like that in our history.

Brothers and sisters, today's programme, today's inauguration is an occasion to bring back those old glorious days of Ghogha, Bhavnagar and the coastal areas of Gujarat. This ferry service between Ghogha and Dahej will not only make the lives of millions and millions of people of South Gujarat easier, but it will also bring them closer. The journey that used to take 7-8 hours now that will be completed in one to 1.25 hours. There is a saying in our region that the time is the most precious thing. It is being said that time is the money. Today, no one in the world can turn a day of 24 hours into a day of 25 hours. But this government of India and the government of Gujarat can give you a gift of 7 hours by converting the journey of 7-8 hours into a journey of one hour. As per a study, if the transportation of some goods costs 1.5 rupees by road then if we carry the same amount of goods by rail then it would cost one rupee and if we transport the same amount of goods by waterways then it would cost only 20-25 paise. You can imagine how much of your time will be saved. How much petrol and diesel of the country is going to be saved otherwise lakhs of liters of fuel is being wasted just because of traffic jam.

Brothers and sisters,

Nearly, 12,000 people travel daily between Saurashtra and south Gujarat. More than 5,000 thousands vehicles ply daily between these two places to connect them. But when this connectivity will be through the sea instead of the road then this distance of 307 kilometers will be reduced to 31 kilometers. One ferry can carry more than 500 people, or more than 100 cars and equal number of trucks on it. Friends, when a large part of this traffic will become dependent on this ferry service or when people will take their vehicles from this side to that then its impact will also be visible on the highways connecting Delhi and Mumbai. The number of vehicles in the most industrialized region of Gujarat like Dahej, Vadodara and in nearby areas will come down and their speed will increase and that speed will take the entire economic system of this place into the top gear.

Friends, we can't achieve the new results with old approach. Neither can we conduct new experiment through old thinking. Ghogha-Dahej Ro-Ro ferry service is a very big example of this thing as well.

When I became the chief minister and inquired about it, when I discussed the issue which was going on for several decades. But no one knew that this scheme was consigned to which corner. And when I started looking into it, when I started moving ahead; and after assuming the office I wanted to immediately start this thing. You will be surprised to know that the government had made so many several structural mistakes that this Ro-Ro ferry service could have never been materialized. What have they done during the old time? The problem was that the entity which was expected to operate the ferry, they urged the same entity to build the terminal as well. You please tell me if someone runs a bus on the road then do we ask the bus operator to also build the road or to build a bus station? An aircraft lands on the airport; do we ask the airlines to construct an airport? Government constructs the road, bus stations and airports. Private people come forward to run their businesses there. In case of this Ro-Ro ferry service, they said that you will have to build a jetty, its port and if you want to do it then please do that and see this is the sea shore and there is water, please come forward. Friends, who will come forward? Finally we changed the policies. We changed the approach of the previous governments. We decided that the government will build the terminal for this ferry service. After construction of the terminal, the work for operating the terminal and the ferry services will be awarded to a private agency. The soil sediment in the coastal area of this place is also a big problem and due to that it's difficult to bring ferries to the shores. Under the changed policy, the government decided that the government will bear the cost of dredging, cost of removing the soil and stones. We also made this arrangement that the government will have a share in the profit of the private agency that will run the service. And this new strategy succeeded and as a result of it this Ro-Ro ferry service is getting started between Ghogha and Dahej.

I came here in 2012 and I laid the foundation stone for this thing. But if we want to do something in the sea then we used to be dependent on the government of India. And at that time that kind of person were occupying the positions in the government of India when I was the chief minister of Gujarat that the development work from Vapi to Mandavi in Kutch in the coastal areas of Gujarat was completely blocked. All our industries have been threatened to be closed down in the name of environment. I know that with what kind of difficulties we were able to take Gujarat forward. But when you people gave me the opportunity to serve in Delhi then all the problems were solved one after another. And today the dedication of the first stage of this Ro-Ro ferry service; and it was a difficult project as the lord Varun Dev was also testing us. The history bears testimony to the fact that whenever there was a problem in constructing a bridge in the sea then the solution was found by churning the same sea.

Friends, today we have got this success, this water bridge due to the blessings of lord Varuna. I wish while bowing down to him that may the blessings of lord Varuna will always be with the people of Gujarat. And today when we have been launching this Ro-Ro ferry service then I also bow down to Veer Mokhara Ji Dada. And as my fishermen brothers and sisters step forward after offering a coconut to Veer Mokhara Ji Dada, today I will also follow their tradition. And may the blessings of Veer Mokhara Ji ensure the security of our travelers. May Bhavnagar and Saurashtra also develop on the lines of the parts of south Gujarat and may there will be so much progress and I'm fully confident that the blessings of Veer Mokhara Ji will be with us.

And this project was a challenge both for engineers and for the government of Gujarat. That is why all the people who have been related with this scheme are worthy of appreciation.

Brothers and sisters, the country's largest sea front is available with Gujarat. Our coastline is more than 1600 kilometers long. For the hundreds of years Gujarat has been attracting the attention of the entire world due to its strength and capability. The information obtained from Lothal port still surprises top marine experts even today. The place where we are present today, the ships from different parts of the world have been coming here for hundreds of years. I have been talking about the port led development in Gujarat by considering this sea as a heritage from the time when you people have made me the chief minister of the state. After taking into account this thing we have laid special emphasis on the development of infrastructure and other projects in the coastal areas of Gujarat. We made a new policy for ship-building, we developed ship building parks and encouraged smaller ports in the special economic zones and also brought big changes in the rules related to breaking of ships. The government placed special emphasis on building the specialized terminals like solid cargo, chemical and LNG terminals in Dahej, and coal terminal in Mundra. A new direction, new energy and new spirit was given to the port sector of Gujarat by construction of such specialized terminals.

In addition to these things, the government has especially encouraged the Vessel Traffic Management System and Ground Breaking Connectivity Project. The government has been working in a very detailed manner to set up a maritime university and a maritime museum in Lothal in the coming days. In addition to all these things, we have been continuously running the schemes like Sagar Khedu Vikas Karyakram for the development of my fishermen brothers and local people. We laid emphasis on this thing that the local youth will be trained for this shipping industry and only they will be employed in it.

We have prepared a complete infrastructure for their education, health, drinking water and electricity along with the coastal social security.

Brothers and sisters,

Recently Prime Minister of Japan has paid a visit. At that time we have signed an important agreement with Japan in the shipping sector. And under that agreement, the government of Japan and their financial agency JAICA will provide us money, they will give us financial assistance for the up-gradation, for the modernisation of Alang ship yard. They have agreed for this thing.

Friends,

The government has also been working on an alternative road from Bhavnagar to Alang-Sosiya Ship Recycling Yard. Around 15 to 25 thousand workers work in the largest Ship Recycling Yard of Asia. Alang-Sosiya Ship Recycling Yard is some 50 kilometers away from Bhavnagar. I think I don't have to tell about the condition of traffic jam on that route. The government has decided to widen and upgrade the alternative route connecting the Alang-Sosiya Ship Recycling Yard with Mahuva, Pipavav, Jafrabad and Veraval. Given the fact that the capacity of the Alang Yard will be enhanced in the future so it has become essential to modernize the link road. This route will also benefit the vehicles coming towards the Ghogha-Dahej ferry service.

Friends, this is the result of consistent efforts made by the government that the coastal areas of Gujarat are developing so fast. Today, Gujarat handles 32% of the total load of the cargo handled by the smaller ports of the country, it means one third is being handled by Gujarat. Not only this, this work has grown by several folds in the last 15 years. And I am hopeful that the way Gujarat has expanded the handling capacity of its ports by four times, in the coming days the work of handling the cargo will pick up more pace.

Brothers and sisters,

Gujarat is situated at a very strategic location from the point of view of sea routes. It's very easy to reach any part of the world through these sea routes. We should take maximum advantage of Gujarat's strength. And Gujarat's maritime development is also a model for the entire country. I'm hopeful that this entire project of Ro-Ro ferry service will act like a model 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 at least those states which want to follow this project will not encounter the same problems. This ferry service will kick-start a new era of social and economic development in this entire region. Thousands of new opportunities of employment will be created. A new chapter of coastal shipping and coastal tourism is going to be added with this thing. In the coming days when a dedicated freight corridor between Delhi and Mumbai will be constructed and when the work on Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor will be complete then the importance of this ferry service along with the other sea routes linking Gujarat will grow by many folds.

This project is going to provide a new strength to Dholera special investment region (SIR) that has been constructed to connect the industrial development between the areas of Ahmedabad and Bhavnagar. Dholera SIR is going to become the largest industrial centre of not only of India but of the entire world. It will create employment opportunities for millions of people. Due to the efforts made by the Gujarat government the infrastructure related work in Dholera has been going on at a fast pace. In a few years, Dholera will be able to leave its mark in the entire world; and only one land; this Ghogha-Dahej ferry service will also contribute in that thing.

Friends, in the future, this ferry service is not going to stop only at Ghogha and Dahej. In the future, we are going to move in the direction of linking Hazira, Pipavav, Jafrabad and Daman and Diu through this ferry service. I've been told that the government has been working to take this ferry service to beyond Surat and up to Hazira and then up to Mumbai in the coming years. The issue of starting a similar service in the bay of Kutch is being discussed at the primary level at this stage. I have been told that a pre-feasibility report has already been prepared to start a similar service between Vayu in Kutch and Rozi port of Jamnagar. It's not just that. When the use of this ferry service will go up then a lot of industries can also be connected through the river Narmada.

Friends, India's coastal boundary is 7,500 kilometers long and it is full of the potential for the investment. I believe that our ports are gateways for prosperity. In the last several decades, not much attention was paid to them at the level of central government. And the shipping and port sector of the country have been neglected for a long time. Now the government has started the Sagarmala project to reform this sector and to make it modern.

Under the Sagarmala project the work of modernizing the existing ports of the country and development of new ports is being carried out. Roads, railroads, interstate-waterways and coastal transport are being integrated. This scheme is playing an extremely important role in boosting the transportation of goods through the coastal transport.

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. And the maximum capacity addition has taken place in the last two-three years. And the situation of those ports and government companies have been improving which have been incurring losses. And the government is also focused on the development of skills related to coastal services. As per one estimate, there will be potential for creation of one crore jobs in different parts of the country in the future due to Sagarmala project alone. We have been working with this approach to make the entire framework of transportation modern and integrated.

The imbalances of the transport sector of our country have also been removed. You can understand the level of imbalance from the fact that even after so many years of independence our country only had five national waterways. This sector was neglected despite the water transportation was cheap and the rivers of the country were full of water. And now this government has constituted 106 National Waterways and the work is taking place on them at a

rapid pace. The total length of these national waterways is more than 17,000 kilometers. And these waterways have proved extremely helpful in removing the imbalances of the country’s transportation sector.

Our sea assets can provide a new dimension to our rural and coastal areas. The government has started Blue Revolution Scheme so that fishermen brothers can take full advantage of this asset. They have been trained about the modern techniques of fishing and value addition in the fisheries.

Today, under the Blue Revolution Scheme a scheme has been prepared to provide financial assistance to fishermen for procuring longliner trollers. Central government will provide a subsidy of Rs. 40 lakh per vessel. These longliner trollers will not only make the lives of fishermen easier but they will also provide a new economic strength to their business. The kind of trollers that have been used as of now they are meant for catching fish in the shallow water. These are very old in terms of technology and very risky as well. That is why when they go out in the sea on these trollers then often they lose the way. And they don’t even get to know that when they have gone beyond India’s maritime boundary and have crossed into the maritime boundary of some other country. Thereafter they have to face several difficulties. We can minimize those difficulties by maximizing the use of technology and that is why the government has made this scheme with the help of these Longliner trollers so that the fishermen brothers can go deep in the sea and also in the right direction to catch the fish. These modern Longliner trollers are also very energy efficient. It means they will increase both the business and profit of fishermen while ensuring their safety.

Friends, development of infrastructure is one of our top priorities. The kind of investment that has been made in the last three years in Highways, Railways, Waterways and Airways; this kind of investment was never made in such a short span of time. Besides, regional air service is being improved by making a new Aviation Policy. Small airports are being modernized. The work on the first bullet train of the country has been started a few weeks ago. All these works will become the basis for providing the country a transport system of the 21st century, such a transport system that will be as per the hopes and requirement of a New India.

Friends, today, I will go from Ghogha to Dahej through the ferry. And some differently abled kids, children will be with me. And the happiness on their faces will be my reward.

Brothers and sisters, perhaps, nobody can imagine how I have felt after completing the work that was my dream since my childhood days. The thing that I heard about during my childhood but which was never materialized and today when I see that thing through my own eyes and I myself got the opportunity to work on that, I think it’s a very fulfilling moment of my life. I consider it my good fortune. I will go to Dahej and will share my experience there. But today I would request you people to join us in this very important work and please consider that this ferry service is the first thing, it’s just the beginning and this is the first stage and private companies will forward at a later stage and a lot of ferry services, a lot of new routes will be started and development of tourism will also take place.

And the rich people of Surat will hire this and go out in the sea to celebrate their birthdays. There are immense opportunities for development. And that is why I have said once again that the fortune of Ghogha is about to be changed. The fortune of Ghogha is getting changed once again. And once again I congratulate all of you for the Ghogha-Dahej Ro-Ro ferry service and the cattle feed plant of Sarvottam Dairy.

Many-many thanks to all of you.

Bharat Mata Ki Jay (Victory to mother India),

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Jay Veer Mokhara Ji Dada,

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(Release ID: 1508159) Visitor Counter : 75