



Preliminary English rendering of PMs Speech at Chartered Accountants' Day at IGI Stadium, New Delhi on 1st July, 2017

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Namaste!

Greetings!

Shriman Nilesh Vikamse, President, Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley Ji, my colleagues from the Council of Ministers, dignitaries from the Chartered Accountants field who have joined me on live streaming from almost 200 locations countrywide, the Chief Ministers joining us from respective states, and the enthusiastic fraternity here braving the Delhi rains. A very warm welcome to you all!

The achievers being felicitated tonight on this auspicious occasion, all of you who have assembled here today from various locations, business and industry stalwarts, fellow citizens, youngsters connected through TV, radio, Ladies and gentlemen.

Today, we are celebrating the Foundation day of Institute of Chartered Accountant of India (ICAI). My heartfelt wishes to one and all on this momentous occasion. Serendipity indeed! Your Foundation day and the commencement of the new economic paradigm of India- the "Goods and Services Tax" coincide on this very day.

It is indeed a matter of happiness and privilege that I am amidst you on such a historical day. Let me tell, you have significantly contributed as Chartered Accountants over the past decades and you all have been given a solemn right by the government. It's only your fraternity which is authorized to Certify and Audit the entries in Account books and confirm whether they are correct or manipulated. The onus of maintaining a sound economic and financial health of the country rests on you in the same way as the doctors are concerned about the health of the society and people. At the same time, I am confident that there wouldn't be a doctor who would encourage unhealthy practices to make more people fall sick and enhance his earnings. The doctor is very much aware that if someone is sick, he can make more money, but he still endorses healthy practices and habits among the people.

Dear friends, you shoulder the responsibility of ensuring that the economic and financial system remains healthy and is not plagued by any malpractices. You are the pillars of a sound Economic and financial ecosystem of this country, and it is indeed a great honour to be a part of this conglomerate. In a way it is indeed a great opportunity for me to learn and share with you today. Chartered Accountants of India have earned laurels across the globe for their dexterity in Financial Skills.

Today, I got the opportunity to launch the new Chartered Accountancy Course Curriculum. This is the identity of your Dynamic Course and the Credibility of Examinations. I am hopeful that this new course will further consolidate the financial skills of new aspirants joining this profession. In the wake of globalisation, we have to focus now on developing dynamic systems so that our institutions are able to produce dynamic human resources. In order to remain relevant to the industry, we should design our courses according to the global requirements and benchmarks. Our courses must integrate technological requirements in the field of Accountancy. We should encourage innovation in the Accountant's Field. We should find ways to innovate Chartered Nutra Firms Technology. There is a huge opportunity in the market for new Software which is required in the field of accountancy.

Friends, our scriptures have laid down four Purusharthas-the objects of human pursuits. These include- Dharma (righteousness, moral values) Artha (economic values), Kaama (psychological values), Moksha (spiritual values). Has it ever occurred to you that whenever we discuss Dharma and Moksha, it is the saints and monks who cross our minds! In the same way when one thinks about Accounts and Finance, it is no one else but you who come first in our minds. It seems to call you the sages of economic world. You have the same important role of guiding the economic systems the way these saints and monks lead us to attain the ultimate truth Moksha.

It is the moral responsibility of all of you engaged in the profession of Chartered Accountancy to guide one towards righteous conduct and practice.

My beloved friends,

I deeply appreciate the love and encouragement you all have been bestowing on me today. I am indebted to you for having allowed me to share my thoughts with you. We share the same patriotic values and envision great accomplishments for the nation and its citizens. But, let us face some harsh realities! These often set you thinking. You might have heard from the experienced in the society that in case a house is engulfed in fire and there is complete loss of property, it is said that the family can get back on its own with its will power and perseverance. They cope up with the trauma but begin afresh with the same fervour. Within no time they bounce back. The elderly will say that it is possible to reinstate the house damaged in fire, but even if one person in the family is in the habit of stealing and theft, such families can never get back to their value systems. Even if one family member treads the wrong path, the family is shattered once and for all.

Dear friends, you are engaged in setting the accounts right. If we are righteous, the country can be salvaged from the biggest of crises. During the worst of the natural calamities like floods and earthquakes, the citizens have shown their capabilities to take care of the cause of the nation while supporting the administration. However, if some of the citizens of the country are into the habit of stealing and pilferage, it leads to an irreparable damage to the family and the nation. Dreams are shattered and it causes road blocks in the development of the nation. Government has cracked down heavily to nab such pilferers over the past three years. While new laws have been formulated, older laws have been made more stringent now. We have MOUs and agreements with several nations which have been amended accordingly. The latest statistics from Swiss bank accounts stand a testimony to the strict measures by the government on the Black Money issue. As reported by the Swiss Bank Authorities, the black money deposits of Indian Nationals have a hit a record all time low. Three decades back in 1987, these officials from Swiss Banks had started declaring how much deposits were being made by nationals of a country. According to the reports released for the last financial year, there has been a reduction of 45% in the deposits made by Indians in the Swiss banks..

Ever since 2014, the day you all entrusted us with the reins of the nation, we have put brakes on the trends. You will be shocked and appalled to know that in 2013 Swiss Banks had reported a 42% increase in black money deposits. Ladies and gentlemen, two years later when we shall start receiving real time data from Switzerland, imagine the plight of the black money holders. I am sure you do not have such money in your possession. However, I am sure the love for nation will make you sound those who have amassed black money.

Friends, while I am endorsing Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. I have also started the process of cleansing of the economic and financial systems of the country. I am sure 8th November is ingrained deep in your minds. Demonetization was a firm and landmark step to wipe out the black money and corruption from

our systems. Let me share with you, I have heard that since 8th November you all have been immersed in more work like never before in your careers. I have even heard that the Chartered Accountant fraternity were on Diwali vacations, hotels had been booked, but some cancelled their trips and were promptly back to their workstations which were functional 24x7. Now I am not aware if you all worked righteously or participated in malpractices! Well, was it in the interest of the nation or your clients? But you did burn the midnight oil in those days!

Friends, for the first time I would like to share my thoughts on this drive of eradicating the black money because you all are aware of the strength of this mission. The government has placed a massive system for data mining, for the money stocked with the banks, whereby the details of the transactions of money before and after 8th November have been extensively studied. We did not interrogate anyone but only analyzed the data. My dear friends, I have already said that your patriotism is no less than mine. For the first time I would like to reveal something to you that would startle the whole country. Whatever data mining has been done till now has revealed that the transactions of more than 3 lakh companies – registered companies are under the radar of suspicion.

A lot of data mining is still left; so I really don't know what will be the actual figure! Some serious things have come to light after this process began. I am telling you these things with the hope that you might connect with the thoughts of this government and the strength of the politicians. On the one hand, the government, the media, the entire business world were observing closely the night of 30th June and 1st July to know what transpires next, on the other hand, 48 hours ago, one lakh companies were struck off the list by the stroke of a pen. The names of those companies have been removed from the Registrar of Companies. This is not an ordinary decision, friends. People who take calculative steps only through the prism of politics, cannot take such decisions. Only those who live for the sake of national interest can make such decisions. The power to eliminate one lakh companies with the stroke of a pen can come only from the inspiration of patriotism. Those who have looted the poor will have to return that to the poor.

Apart from this, the government has already identified more than 37 thousand Shell companies who are engaged in hiding black money and hawala transactions. Stern actions shall be taken against them. More stringent actions are in store for the companies who will break the law in future. And I am fully aware of the fact that eliminating fake companies and taking action against black money can be politically incorrect and pose a risk to any political party. But someone has to take such tough decisions for the sake of the country.

My Chartered Accountant friends, I have come here on the occasion of the Foundation day of your institute. I want to ask you a light question. The power to keep the account right lies with you. After demonetization, someone definitely might have helped those companies. These thieves and robbers must have gone to some economic doctor. I know very well that those companies might not have come to any of you for this purpose. But they have definitely taken the help of someone who needs to be identified. Don't you feel the need to identify such people, who are sitting among you, who supported these companies? Friends, I have been told that there are more than two lakh 72 thousand Chartered Accountants in our country. You also have 'articled assistants' and their number is also close to two lakhs. And if we add all those chartered accountants and 'articled assistants' and all your staff then roughly these numbers will be more than eight lakhs. Your family is more than 8 lakhs in this field, I mean, in your profession. I would place some more facts for you since you grasp things quickly from the figures.

It is estimated that there are more than crore engineers and management graduates in our country. There are more than 8 lakh doctors. These professions are perceived to be the cream professions or are highly respectable jobs. There are crores of people in such professions in our country. Moreover, there are crores of palatial houses built in the cities of our country. Also, about two crore 18 lakh people had travelled abroad last year. These figures may astonish you; yet only 32 lakh people in our country say that their income is more than ten lakhs while filing tax returns. Can any one of you believe it? I am asking you, the corrector of the account books. Are there only 32 lakh people in this country who earn more than 10 lakhs?

This is the bitter truth of our country, my beloved companions. These numbers show that only 32 lakh people in the country reveal their income to be more than ten lakh rupees. I believe that most of the people in the country are salaried class, where people have fixed income and most of the salary is drawn from the government. Besides this, what is the actual situation in the country? And so brothers I do not want to project data further. But by this you will understand that crores of vehicles are purchased every year in the country. And yet the responsibilities towards the country are not getting fulfilled; it is a matter of grave concern.

Instead of referring to more data, I want to put my thoughts before you. CA brothers, a person or a client pays taxes only when the environment around him is conducive which motivates him to pay the taxes honestly. If he sees that the advisor himself is asking him to hide the truth then he will boldly traverse the wrong path. Thus it is equally important to identify such wrong advisors and take strict actions against them. And for that you also have to take tough steps. CA is an arrangement in which Human Resource Development (HR) is done only by you. Curriculum is made by you only; you conduct the exam; Rules and Regulations are also made by you, and your institute only punishes the culprits. Now the question arises that the temple of democracy i.e. the Parliament of India, which is the voice of 125 crore countrymen, has given you so much authority, then why is it that in the last 11 years, only 25 Chartered Accountants have been prosecuted. Did only 25 people make a mess? And I have heard that more than 1400 cases are still pending for many years now. A single case takes years to settle. Tell me my friends, is it a matter of concern or not, for such highly Qualified Professionals? Brothers and sisters, during the freedom struggle, many young people of the country embraced the gallows. Many great men of the country languished in prisons for the country's independence and at that time there were many professionals in the country who came forward and joined the freedom movement. Most of those professionals were lawyers. These Barristers, in large numbers, took the cudgel of freedom struggle. They knew the law. They were aware of the consequences of fighting against the law. Despite this, all the lawyers of that era who had well flourishing law profession left their advocacy for this country. Not only Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Dr. Ambedkar, Jawaharlal Nehru but also Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Motilal Nehru, C. Rajagopalachari, , Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Saifuddin Kichloo, Bhulabhai Desai, Lalalajpat Rai , Tej Bahadur Sapru, Asaf Ali, Govind Vallabh Pant, Kailash Nathkatju uncountable names in the law profession who had laid their lives for the country. Inspired by patriotism, they dedicated their lives for the country's independence. Many of them played a decisive role in framing of our constitution. And brothers and sisters, we cannot forget that these great men are indispensable part of our country's history.

Friends, today our country is at another crucial juncture of history. After the country's political integration in 1947, today the country is getting economically integrated. Our country is beginning a new journey this year, 2017, when the dream of 'One Nation, One tax, One market' has become a reality. On this historic occasion the most important role is that of the Chartered Accountants. Try to fathom my feelings, friends. During the freedom movement, the lawyers had placed their lives at stake for the freedom of India. Today, I am not asking you all to put your lives at stake. You do not have to go behind the bars. This country is yours; also the future of this country is your children's. Hence the reins of leadership of this new era have to be in your hands, just as the movement for freedom was led by those lawyers. Today the economic development will be led by the army of my Chartered Accountants. And you can see that no one but you can make this road to the greater economic development stronger. I request you again to take your clients to the path of honesty so as to end corruption. To eliminate corruption, you have to take the command.

Friends, Chartered Accountants are like ambassadors of any country's economic system. Your work is like that of an interface between the government and the tax-paying companies and individuals. Your signature is more powerful than that of a Prime Minister.

Your signature is a testimony to the trust in the truth. Companies may be small or big, however, if you certify their books of account then the government believes in that, people of the country believe in that.

And have you ever thought that once you have signed a balance sheet then no one questions the balance sheet of that company; files are not held up after that. Friends, a new chapter begins after that.

Today, I've come here to showcase that new life to you people. If you certify the account books of a company then the government officers trust in your

assessment. The company grows, it flourishes and you people also grow, flourish with that. Friends, however, the matter doesn't end there.

When you people certify the balance sheet of a company and when the details are placed before general public; when an old person invests his savings in a mutual fund; a poor widow invests her savings of the entire month in the share market, if, the correct situation of a company is not revealed, facts are concealed; and when the real position is exposed then not only that company sinks, my dear friends, the life of that poor widow sinks too, that old person's life too is devastated. They invest their lifetime savings only on the basis of just one signature of yours.

Hence I appeal to you, I appeal to all of you because one-hundred and twenty-five crore people of India have faith in your signature. Never ever break their trust, don't let anyone to even doubt that.

If you feel deep down in your hearts that trust has been breached, then please come forward, please take initiative to restore that trust. The first of July, the date of your foundation, gives you another opportunity to restore that faith. I invite you, I have come here to invite you people to join in this festival to celebrate integrity. Please look at the importance of your work and then choose your path. You yourself will realise the pride that the society will have in you.

Friends, there are different definitions for the term 'tax return'. However, I feel that whatever taxes are collected by a government whether those taxes have been utilised in the development of the country or not? This is the 'tax return'.

It plays an important role in curbing inflation. It provides a gas connection to a lady who has used woods for cooking food all her life. This fund is used in giving old age pension to those whose children shirked their responsibility of looking after them.

This money is used in providing self-employment to the youth who works hard throughout the day so that he can attend evening classes to complete his education.

This money is being used in providing affordable medicines to those poor people who don't have money for their treatment, who can't afford to take a break from their work despite illness lest their children should go to bed without a meal.

The money collected through taxes is being used for those brave soldiers who risk their lives on the border to protect us.

This money is being used in providing electricity to those households that don't have electricity supply even after seventy years of independence. Not a single bulb was ever illuminated in their homes; they have been living without electricity.

What could be a greater service than helping the country's poor in providing what is due to them. You could have never imagined that how just one signature of yours can help the poor people of this country.

You have huge responsibility in fulfilling the dreams of a common man of this country; you can play an important role in it. And once you decide then I'm confident that the 1st of July 2017 will certainly become a turning point in the history of ICAI.

And, friends, once you take a vow then I can say with confidence that nobody will try to evade taxes. People only break laws when they know that there is someone to protect them.

Friends, GST is going to become a medium for you to contribute in nation building; I urge you to reach out to the people. When I was on the way to this place, Neelesh told me that you people are going to help the traders to understand GST. I congratulate him, I offer my gratitude.

You please reach out to the people, enlighten them. Encourage them to join the mainstream of integrity. In a way, the government has provided a fresh opportunity to the people in the field of chartered accountancy. Please prepare yourself for this; I specifically urge the young professionals in this field.

Please come forward, Chartered Accountants have an extremely important role in the success and proper implementation of the laws recently passed by the government, particularly the insolvency and bankruptcy code.

Under this code when a company has been declared bankrupt then its control will be passed on to an insolvency practitioner. Chartered accountants can start a new career in this field by becoming insolvency practitioners. This is a new avenue opened by the government for you people. However, whichever path you people choose today, in that path, the term CA should mean Charter and Accuracy, Compliance and Authenticity.

Friends, our country is going to complete 75 years of its independence in 2022. The country has set some targets for the year 2022. New India has been expecting hard work and industry from all of us.

What kind of India we want to see when it completes 75 years of its independence as an institute, as a chartered accountant, as an individual and also as a citizen and play our role, contribute in making the country like that. The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India will complete 75 years of its existence two years after India completes 75 years of its independence in 2022.

You people should prepare the programme on the occasion of 75 years of your existence from today itself. You should prepare a roadmap for that historic occasion from today itself to scale new heights for the institution and its character. And decide what you will do for the country, for the future of millions and millions of aspiring youths.

Can't you help in providing a transparent and corruption free system for the country? What will you say? Will you look at the number of the people that you saved from paying the taxes? Or will you look at the number of people that were encouraged by you to lead honest lives by paying taxes? You will have to decide on this.

You set a target for yourself that how many people you will bring in the mainstream by honestly paying the taxes. Who can be a better judge than you yourself to set a target for this task?

Please also think how you can expand the role of technology in your profession. What could be the role of forensic science in the field of chartered accountancy, how to use that, how to cater that, if possible you should also set targets for these things too.

Friends, I have one more expectation from you since you can do it. I fail to understand why you lag behind. Friends, there are four highly respected Audit firms in the world and top companies and institutions entrust these four firms with their audit work. These are called big four. We are nowhere in these big four. You are capable of it and there is no dearth of talent either. All of my friends, can you set a target for yourself if India were to gain respect in the world then when India will celebrate seventy five years of its independence in 2022, then we will convert these big four into big eight.

And out of those big eight, four big firms will belong to the people who are sitting here before me. Friends this is our dream. And it's not difficult given the reputation and professionalism of our firms.

My friends you people must be respected world over in the field of chartered accountancy. In the end, I'd like to remind you of an advice by the most revered economist – Chanakya. He said: “Kalati Kramat Kal Avam Falam Pivati”, it means the time itself undermines the value of the success of something if it was not done in the right time. Therefore don't let your time go in vain.

Arun Ji was talking to you just a while ago; he was saying that India never had this kind of opportunity before. It is a rare opportunity for you people as well. Don't let this opportunity go past you.

I've come to invite you to associate yourself with the mainstream of India's development. Please don't lose sight of the fact this profession has the capacity to protect, to sustain the entire economy. I once again convey my best wishes to the entire faculty of the institute, to all the chartered accountants present here on the occasion of the foundation day of ICAI.

I also thank the people who are watching this programme through the video link and also to those chartered accountants of our country who are watching this programme in other countries.

I express my gratitude to you; I thank all of you with the wish that we should move forward in a new direction, with a new zeal and with a new pace to engage the common man of this country in a celebration of honesty. Many thanks my friends, many thanks.

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