



English rendering of the text of PM's address at the Foundation laying Ceremony of Various Projects of Kandla Port in Gandhidham, Gujarat

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Brothers and sisters,

Kandla can be perceived as a mini-India and today the way you all welcomed me all the way from the Airport to Kandla port, I feel extremely honoured and grateful to you all for this gesture.

My attachment with Kutch as a former Chief Minister need not be articulated into words; time and again I had to visit this place. There is some sort of a power in the soil of Kutch. Even if a person leaves Kutch to live in some other corner of the world, and even if he is the fourth or fifth generation of a family; when he falls ill he would still think of returning to Kutch in the hope that he would recover there. We, the people of Kutch have water resources but we have learnt to live without it. The people of Kutch understand the importance of water very well. Kutch possesses everything – the vast sea, desert, mountains, a glorious history of 5000 year old culture. Kutch has the power to open up its vast resources not only to India but also to the entire world, thus having an ability to attract the world like a magnet.

Just now, Nitinji was telling us that today the way the global market and economy is growing, we ought to take advantage of that competitive environment if India is to move ahead. If India wants to make its place in the world trade, then it is imperative for us to have the best quality ports. Can anyone imagine how Kandla Port with the things that are being manufactured here has made its place among the major ports of Asia in such a short span of time?

In the last two years, be it Liquid Cargo or Dry Cargo, everyone working in the Port Sector have realised that the growth of this sector is surprising for the people who know the economics of the Port Sector. This is a great achievement. And gradually people who work in the port sector, have started realising that workers' union will keep moving. But if we strive together to develop and strengthen this port – one strength is that of infrastructure, the second being that of the efficiency, and of transparency – then the country can achieve unbelievable results.

Right now, Nitin ji was telling us that we have taken a decision to develop Iran's Chabahar Port. Chabahar port will be directly linked with the Kandla port. The linking will mean Kandla will put its best foot forward like Angad in the world trade which promises to bring in a sea change. Today some steps are being taken to mechanize Kandla Port. Plans are being made for expansion and development of 14 and 16 classes for capacity Building. And in the changing era, plans are underway for Port City's concept and each and every economic activity for development. This way our transport infrastructure would get impetus and the traffic system will be smooth so that our goods reach rapidly in every corner of the country. The 'Turnaround Time' in the sea is calculated on a global scale. That means, the efficiency of the port is calculated on the basis of the time spent by a vessel – empty or loaded, at the port and how many days it takes to come and go. The less time it takes, the more it is efficient. Today, many Initiatives have been taken under the leadership of our Nitin ji to reduce that 'Turnaround Time' in India. There is another classification in reducing the Turnaround Time – how fast all your trucks move after you exit the port. If there is a bottleneck on the road and the trucks are delayed; then howsoever technologies we may apply for reducing the Turnaround Time in the port, the hurdle will continue. Hence Kandla may be a small town within Gujarat and even smaller within India, but today about Rs 1000 crore investment projects are being made here. 1000 crore is not a miniscule amount. Just think how fast we are inching forward.

He was just telling me that we have set the target for the road-project for 2 years. I was telling Nitin ji that India has never before witnessed such a rapid progress in the road sector which has been brought out by Nitin ji. I told him that Gujaratis should also get the benefit of your talent. He asked me, "what is to be done?" I said, "complete this work in 18 months instead of 24 months". And I believe that Nitin ji will definitely get that work done.

A Convention Center is also being established here covering a vast area, which will be named after Babasaheb Ambedkar. It is being established as per the requirement of the people. But on seeing the plan I felt that Ravi has made it hesitatingly thinking about how the project would get funds? How the job will get accomplished? So I told Nitin ji to think of some innovative ideas. He asked for some time. Kutch is one of the rapidly growing districts of India. Could anyone imagine that Kutch is the very district that was destroyed by the 1998 cyclone; the 2001 earthquake shattered it. But see the strength of this district and its people. Today Kutch has started off to the path of progress. And Kandla can not only be the focal point of Gujarat's economy but can also play a significant role in driving India's economy through the transport sector. We too want to move in that very direction. India's maritime trade legacy is thousands of years old. 5000 years ago, Lothal was such a great centre of maritime trade. There was Vallabhi University near it. Students from more than 80 countries used to study at Vallabhi University. People could see the flags of more than 84 countries in the Port of Lothal. Thousands of years ago in Kutch, the art of ship-building in the country has been the legacy of our ancestors. We used to provide ships to the world from here. It was our strength. This strength can be restored again.

Today, timber comes in a very large quantity at Kandla Port. And our brothers from Kutch are engaged in the timber trade in every corner of India. Kutch can provide value addition to this timber. We can add value to the wood that is being sent to other countries by adding art work on the wood. This wood can be exported throughout the world where it can be used for constructing buildings, temples etc. This can be a huge gift to the world. The more we trade in salt via sea route, the lesser will be the cost. India has a coastline of 7500 kilometres and water transport system; then why should we need to carry our goods via roads and railways? Why not send the goods from here to Kolkata via sea route instead of cutting across the land of whole of India? We are moving towards this change and bringing about this transformation in the whole system which shall soon bear the fruits in the near future.

Our Nitin ji talks of a vision to demonstrate the great power of India possessed by Lothal to the outside world. How to create such a museum? American University's work is important in terms of world trade; the work in Human Resource Development is significant. The Chief Minister was saying that the Maritime University bill has been passed in the assembly recently. My good wishes are with him in this venture. I strongly believe that this work of Human

Resource Development will not only benefit Gujarat and the coastal areas but will also emerge as a strong force for proliferating trade in India.

Brothers and sisters, in the year 2022 we will be celebrating 75 years of India's independence. Today, as I have come to Kandla, I want to appeal to the people of Kandla, to the people of Kutch, to the people of Gujarat and to the people of this country, as we will enter 75th year of independence in 2022, let us not forget those brave sons of the country, those great men who laid down their lives for freedom. Many great men died in prisons, faced the gallows. Many great men have sacrificed generation after generation for the freedom of our country. How should we celebrate 75 years of independence in 2022? As a citizen, we should take this resolution that even though we did not get the chance to take part in the battle of freedom, but we have got this great fortune to make India a world leader. Thus, we should do something constructive for the development of our country. As citizens we should do something by the year 2022 so that our contribution can take the country to a new pinnacle. Every institution should make this resolve - the municipality, the Panchayat, the state governments. We should move ahead with this resolution that we have five years to prove ourselves before we celebrate 2022.

We want to transform the lives of the poor of this country - whether by providing them with gas connection, or by bringing electricity to their huts. Our dream is to see that the poorest of the poor from India has his own house by 2022 with amenities like electricity, water supply and toilet in that house. Providing such a home to the poor is a great dream in itself that needs to be pursued.

This year is Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay ji's centenary year. How can we lift the poorest of the poor in India out of poverty? He gave a new vision to the country making this idea as the focal point. The country is celebrating Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay's birth centenary. So I want to suggest to the Kandla Port Trust, Nitin ji and to his department that why don't we rename Kandla Port as Pandit Deendayal Port Trust, Kandla because this work will be dedicated to the poor and Pandit Deendayal identifies with the poor people of our country. This will create a sense of 'fellow- feeling' within us and we can work with this feeling to bring about a change in the lives of the oppressed, exploited, and the deprived section of the society.

Once again, I had this opportunity to visit Kutch and be amongst you. You have assembled here in such large numbers and have showered your blessings. I am grateful to you all. Thank you Nitin ji for giving me the opportunity of being a part of this programme.

Thanks a lot!

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