



English rendering of the text of PM's address at the Inauguration of Supreme Court's Journey towards Digital Court

Posted On: 10 MAY 2017 7:49PM by PIB Delhi

All the hon'ble judges of Supreme Court present here in the auditorium, brothers and sisters and friends from outside.

Today is Buddha Purnima. I wish all of you and our countrymen on this auspicious occasion of Buddha Purnima. India is changing, today is holiday and we are working. The 10th May is important for one more reason; India's big freedom struggle of 1857 had started on May 10.

One more step towards modernity that too from the Judicial System of the country, is being taken today. I offer my sincere congratulations and respect to the Chief Justice of India and his entire team. CJI had presented a detailed account of the status of country's judicial system and pendency of the cases when we had met in Allahabad last time, he had also appealed to the judiciary to spare time during the vacation period. I was extremely happy to hear about the appeal, listening to the appeal while sitting there was very inspiring. I'm happy to note that several high court and Supreme Court judges are going to cut short their vacation to spare time for the country's poor, I am grateful to you people for this. Its outcome in the strict terms of the quantum of work done is a separate issue, however, this kind of commitment brings changes in the entire environment. It enforces a sense of responsibility and instils a new confidence in an ordinary person; and this new confidence is equally essential for a New India. I offer my sincere respect to all of you for this.

I have worked in both state and the centre. However, unfortunately, we had a very limited understanding of technology for governments or government related system, it was namely equated to hardware, procurement and installation of hardware and for us that was the technology. If you visit an office, during the earlier times, there used to be a flower-pot on the tables, flowers used to place in the pot during the visit of senior officers. Flower pot used to be a common feature then, there would be a smaller flower pot during the visits of junior officers. That era has changed, in modern time that flower pot has been replaced by a computer; it feels good even if we never open it or never use it. Therefore it's less of a problem of technology or budget; but the mindset is a problem. Today, on the occasion of Buddha Purnima there is a very inspirational story associated with Lord Buddha; He used to say that any change only begins when someone changes his mind, changes his opinion and changes his world view. It's a very inspirational message of Lord Buddha. And in that sense, we can experience this thing even today that people start looking for a new mobile hand set within six months of the purchase, and plan to buy a new one, irrespective of the latest model that he gets, he will always have a diary of contacts in his pocket. People keep diaries despite the full facility of contact list in their mobile phones. We want to keep good phones in our hands due to peer pressure even if we may not know more than two functions of green or red button. It's difficult to change old habits, sometimes we call the people after sending an SMS to them to find out whether they had received the SMS or not. Software is not a challenge, even hardware is not a challenge but we need to change ourselves collectively because the entire process comes to a standstill if just one link is broken. Someone may feel that....you see, many of us, including myself, don't enjoy reading news unless we have a print edition of the newspaper in our hand. Today's generation, despite the easy availability of printed edition of news papers, doesn't even bother about them but they are fully aware about all the news in the world. People need to connect with these changes and create conducive environment only then these things can be done. If someone does it due to personal interest then he will be isolated in the entire system.

That's why the Chief Justice of India informed me that you people are regularly discussing the issue of training so that it could percolate down. The power of technology is immense, whosoever experiences this, he would know that how to take advantage of it. People are afraid of technology in its early days. However, you must have experienced this when you buy a latest VCR or a television set and if you get stuck somewhere then you take help of your grandson to solve it; and he solves it, so there is a huge generational gap in this entire affair.

That's why it's difficult for a generation to cope-up with these changes, however, it's impossible for the technology to percolate down if that generation does not cope-up with this. And this is the biggest challenge with this problem.

According to me, how can we adopt this E-Governance; that is Easy-Governance, Effective Governance, Economical Governance, Environment Friendly Governance, in every sphere of our lives? According to some research, production of a single leaf of A-4 size paper consumes 10 litres of water in the entire process. 10 litres of water, it means that I will be doing a great service to the future generations if I move forward in the direction of a paperless world. How many forests will I save, how much electricity will I save, and I will be addressing a big environmental issue if I'm able to save electricity; this is the inherent power of the system. However, we tend to

ignore technology if we don't have a comprehensive knowledge of them; we simply leave them by saying that it's not for me. And there is no need to present it in a manner that whatever a particular person does only that is modern; and whatever was old was bad. This is extremely easy, extremely useful in a time when there is a paucity of time, technology takes less time.

In the government, there is a broad feeling that whatever we do or our departments do that is very good; there is a general feeling that we don't commit mistakes and don't have shortcomings either. It's natural that people broadly believe in these things in their area of work. I took a risk around two months back by asking all the departments to inform me about the difficulties faced by them, about something that was wrong that needed to be corrected or if there was a need to simplify a process. For a few days, they continued to deny the problems; they said everything was fine.

However, due to my relentless pursuit of the matter some 400 issues have been identified where there was a need for improvement or some intervention was required. Then, I gave this task to universities, specially, to the youth, in the age group of 18 to 20-22, it's given to college students in form of a nonstop hackathon of thirty six hours, they were required to find out the solution for the 400 issues of governance. More than 300 colleges and universities, forty-two thousand students participated in this exercise and they sat for nonstop thirty six hours under one roof to complete the exercise. I was surprised that they were able to sort out the most issues and gave solutions for the processes. Then they had an interaction with the government, they informed us that this is the solution for this, this is the solution for that problem. Several departments have adopted them and this was done in the last two months only. This means that if we make effort then we have immense possibilities. And if you ask our students in the field of technology, give them such problems and ask them to find solutions, to find a way, ask them whether a software can be developed, what technique can be used then I can say with confidence that they give us the best solutions that can be easily accepted by us, can be easily assimilated by us. I believe in IT+IT, and it doesn't require someone with expertise in arithmetic. When I say It+IT then I say it with confidence that IT+IT means Information Technology + Indian talent = India Tomorrow, this is the strength of IT+IT. How can we utilise this prowess in our development.

There was a time when our currency was made of terracotta; coins made of earth were used world over. With the changing time, coins made of copper, coins made of silver and gold were in circulation, even coins made of leather were used, but gradually they were replaced by paper notes. And we have accepted these changes; and the time for paper based currency is in its last days and we will have to adopt digital currency.

These days, particularly after November 8, I got the opportunity to take more interest in the areas hitherto unknown to me, like digital currency; the eighth November was the date of demonetisation. And I know that printing of currency, its security, its transportation involves expenditure of billions of Rupees; sometimes half a dozen policemen are deployed to guard one ATM. It's at a time when technology is available; you can survive without a single paper note in your pocket that kind of technology is today available. The government took initiative to develop BHIM App. You don't have to spend a single Rupee, you can just download in your mobile phone; if the other person also has it then you can start your business without any problem. If this saves the country billions of Rupees then this money will be utilised in providing housing to poor, in providing education to the children of disadvantaged people.

Technology is so powerful that it can completely transform the economy. We should make effort to utilise it, we should make effort to use the technology in every sphere of our life. I've experienced this thing first hand that people quickly understand its importance. If we can't do it ourselves, then we hire a youth, ask him to assist us, and he helps us out. Today we've been living in an era of such kind of technology; the modern technology developed in the last three decades has played thousand times more important role in the society in comparison with the role played by the technology in the last millennium. What could not be done in the last thousand years was done in just thirty years. Whatever technology is being used here today that may become redundant by the time we step out, this is the pace of technological development; that day is not far away when artificial intelligence will dominate the world.

The entire field of artificial intelligence is going to drive the mankind. It will be debated whether it will affect jobs; driverless car will be a reality; car driven by artificial intelligence is going to soon become reality. What will happen to driver? Whether artificial intelligence will result in creation of jobs? Experts say that artificial intelligence has a potential of massive job creation. The entire world is going to move towards a new thinking. A new generation is getting ready for that. This world is changing so fast, technology is driving mankind in such a manner that if we could not cope-up with these rapid changes then this gap will be so wide that would make us so irrelevant that we will lose our value; that day is not far away.

We have earned respect in the field of space technology, India is respected world over in the field of space technology and science. Nobody in the world succeeded in reaching to Mars in the first attempt; but we reached on Mars, India succeeded in the first attempt. And how much money we spent? Suppose today we hire a taxi on a rent of Rs 10-11 per kilometre, in this case we just spent seven rupees of global average on our Mars mission. India spent less money on its Mars mission than the budget of a Hollywood film; this is the miracle performed by our scientific talent, this is the prowess of Indian scientists. However, this is unfortunate that we lag behind in

utilising India's scientific prowess in the field of space technology in applied sciences. I conducted a department wise workshop with all the joint secretaries after coming to Delhi as how to utilise space technology in governance. Today we build roads with plenty of curves. You can build roads with minimum number of curves, a straight road by using space technology, you can design; you can do all such things. When I wanted to give land rights to tribal people, I resorted to the use of space technology. I did not require any proof, I could do it with the help of space technology that this is forest land that was used for farming; with the help of 15 year old photographs I could decide that we can give him the title of the land if he was cultivating the land.

Today, the potential for justice delivery has increased in the judicial system, particularly in the field of criminal justice due to the support provided by technology. A mobile phone provides such stuff that you people can get scientifically valid evidence easily. Forensic science is gaining importance these days. You can arrive at a decision in an accidental case by using CCTV footage of the incident; technology and forensic science can play a very big role in strengthening and simplifying the entire judicial system. Our decisions will be as better, and as accurate as fast we adopt these changes.

Could anybody imagine, earlier umpire used to decide who wins, who loses a cricket match. Now a days it is decided by the third umpire, he decides whether the ball was proper or not even if the umpire may have missed it, but the third umpire informs about this, he signals the light. Someone may say that umpire has lost his job, the umpire has not lost his job but has gained efficiency. According to me, if we adopt the technology easily, it will be equally easier for us to reap its benefits.

Ravishankar ji was just now talking about the pro-bono work. I must discuss this issue with you people. This mentality in our country that the people of this country, citizens of this country are only concerned with their self-interest is not correct. We must recognise the nature of this country; this country has a different nature.

Well, kindly pardon me. May be this is not the right occasion, but it is apt. hence permit me to share an example. During the 2014 General Elections my party had projected me as the Prime Ministerial candidate; you would recall that Congress had also organised a very high level meeting. Nation was waiting to hear their manifesto for 2014 elections. During their Press Conference they had declared that now people will be getting 12 cooking gas cylinders against the 9 that they were entitled to previously. Amazingly, for them election manifesto and gas subsidy seemed pitched against each other.

I am forced to remind you of that incident because, unfortunately, Lok Sabha was debating the issue of increasing the number of subsidised gas cylinders to decide the future of the nation. After forming the government, in my address to the nation from The Lal Qila, I implored to those who can afford- how about give up their gas subsidy? I had requested just as much! And, I am proud to say that more than 1.2 Crores of my dear citizens gave up their gas subsidy; and here, due to our polarised thinking, we were embroiled in the debate of 9 or 12 cylinders and disregarded the power of the citizens.

Once I had also appealed to our doctors that while you must be enjoying a flourishing profession, why not help me too! On 9th of every month, you must promise me that you will provide free consultation to any pregnant women who visit you on that day. You will be delighted to know that several conscious gynaecologists promptly declared this outside their clinics and hospitals and pledged to provide free consultation and medicines to pregnant women visiting them on 9th of every month.

When I was in Gujarat, the state had once suffered a devastating earthquake. Then I had requested the engineering students to dedicate six months to support in rehabilitating the state. The mission was strengthened by the overwhelming response from the students. Similarly, today I urge the legal fraternity of the country, especially my lawyer friends, to register in the *pro bono* app and pledge free legal aid to the poor community. Technology interventions in judiciary will help you register in these inclusive initiatives of the government by linking small organisations in nation development process.

When an old retired, widowed teacher stands in long queues to surrender the gas subsidy; a responsible gynaecologist is fervent to serve a mother-to-be on the 9th of the month; the young enthusiastic engineers apply their skills during disaster management; our IT professionals agree to brainstorm relentlessly for hours together to arrive at solution to a critical issue; if 42 thousand youth spend 36 hours looking for solutions of approximately 400 national issues, it definitely augurs well for the nation. I trust our lawyer fraternity will also, similarly, make good use of these technological interventions and contribute in the upliftment of the poor and deprived. Such endeavours are bound to alter the national fabric for good.

With this expectation, I extend my heartfelt wishes to the chief Khanvilkar ji. I believe that taking the Digital India forward, this intervention of technology in judicial system is itself a great service to the nation. Thank you very much!

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(Release ID: 1497015) Visitor Counter : 117

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