



English rendering of PM's speech at the inauguration of Kiran Multi Speciality Hospital, Surat, Gujarat

Posted On: 17 APR 2017 2:17PM by PIB Delhi

All my friends on the dais and all the people present here in large numbers,

I was in a dilemma whether I should speak in Gujarati or in Hindi. Then I thought that the entire country should know about your great accomplishment. All the donors here are being praised for their generosity. 500 crore! Everyone is appreciating! But I will not! They have not done anything. I know you all are shocked. Even if they donate 500 crores or 5000 crores of rupees, it won't matter as such. Let me tell you the reason. These are the people who grew up in the muddy agricultural fields of Gujarat. These are the people who used to play 'amli-pipli' game with their friends; climbing the branches of the trees was gym for them; enjoying the race with cycle tyres in their childhood. Throughout the year they just had one topic of discussion with their parents - hopefully this time their place will receive good rainfall. Nobody bothered about whether their children would study or not. The discussion revolved around only whether that year will see good rainfall or not. Secondly, they used to pray that their cattle shouldn't go hungry any day. So, these are the children belonging to such families. They have seen all the hardships. They have lived such a life since their childhood.

Even if there is deficient rainfall and consequently lesser crop yield for the family, the Khedu families would be the last ones to get the crops, after thieves and animals have taken away part of the harvest. Such values are inherent in them. They are never angered by the fact that part of the crops grown with tremendous hard-work is taken away by thieves. If the crops are eaten away by animals and birds, they do not complain. If a guest arrives, they would fill his bag with the crop yield and then the left over would be taken by the family for their kids and for their own survival. These are the values imbibed by my Gujarat's Khedu family. They are the children of those parents who would ensure that others do not go hungry even if they themselves have to go without food. For them 500 crores is nothing. They have inherent values to donate such huge amounts. They won't sleep at night till they donate. I have been brought up among these families. When I go elsewhere I get a feeling that people have broken relations with me. They look at me as a Prime Minister but one exception is Surat. Whenever I came here, I received the same love and belongingness. Nobody puts a Prime Minister tag on me.

You will be surprized to know, they are extremely rich families. They deal in millions and billions. When my Surat trip was fixed, those families with whom I had close relations are now millionaires and billionaires. Once I used to have chapatis and khichdi cooked by their mothers. So, I received a call, "since you are staying at the circuit house at night shall I send you Bajra chappatis? Shall I send you khichdi?" This morning too one family sent me Moti Bhakri from Saurashtra. They know what the Prime Minister eats. No issue with that. These are familial ties; their mothers are always concerned about me. I believe that it is difficult to have such a good fortune. A person doesn't become great by his power or position but by love and generosity. I am grateful to you all for this treatment to me.

Today a hospital is being inaugurated. It is a modern hospital. When I was here, I used to say that the foundation-stone of something laid by me should also be inaugurated by me. People used to think that I am arrogant. It was not arrogance. It was a commitment. The fashion of laying foundation-stone and placing plaques should be stopped. Something that has been initiated should be completed. If it cannot be accomplished, it should not be started in the first place. I feel happier than you all because it was the day of Vijaya Dashami. Bharatiya Janata Party had declared me as the Prime Ministerial candidate. I was running from one place to the other all over the country, yet I was observing my Vijaya Dashami and Navratri fasts. I was determined to come to Surat despite all the obstacles and I had come. That day, Lal ji Badshaah wanted to click pictures next to me and then to shovel for 'bhoomi-pujan'. I asked Badshaah to donate 50 crores, only then I would allow him for the same. I have worked among you with this authority and he agreed. And now when I see this hospital, I feel a deep sense of satisfaction. I congratulate the entire team from the bottom of my heart to complete this work in such an excellent manner.

This hospital was thus built not with the donors' money but with familial love and emotions and a lot of hard work. Hard-work is much more valuable than money. Those people sitting over there have not only contributed their wealth but also shed their sweat. They have consecrated their money with their sweat. Normally, in an inauguration ceremony of a diamond factory I would have wished them luck so that the business expanded; if it were a textile industry I would have given my best wishes but today I will throw a curse instead of best wishes. I would say that the need for visiting the hospital should never arise and even if someone happens to visit the hospital once he need not go there the second time. I wish that the person should leave the hospital with such a strong treatment that he need not visit it again.

Our country has a dearth of doctors and hospitals while medicines are expensive. Today, if a member of a middle class family falls sick, the entire savings of the family erodes. If they want to purchase a house or get the daughter married, they are not able to do so. In such a scenario, the government comes into the picture to provide access to healthcare facilities to everyone. The government is responsible for providing affordable healthcare facilities to everyone. The government of India has recently announced a New Health Policy. 15 years after Atal Ji's government, this government came up with a health policy. A lot of work was left unaccomplished that I am completing now. Talking of medicines, when I was in Gujarat I antagonised many people. Now that I am in Delhi, I am again antagonising many people in the country. Every day I do one such work that disappoints someone or the other. The pharmaceutical companies used to take Rs.1200 for injection or Rs.350-400 for tablets. I asked them, "What are you doing? What are the actual costs of these things?" I made a rule and reduced the cost of medicines that used to be sold at Rs. 1200 to 70-80; reduced the cost of some medicines from 300 to 30. Prices of about 700 medicines were fixed so that poorest of the poor can get cheap medicines for curing the most serious diseases. You can imagine how annoyed the pharmaceutical companies would be.

Today, every family is worried about heart diseases. Every family is discussing about proper diet on the dining table. They say, one should lose weight and eat less. Everyone is worried about heart attack. Discussion regarding this on the dining table is inevitable. We are not so knowledgeable regarding stents used for heart. The doctor says stents will cost 30-40,000 rupees. The patient asks whether the life would be saved. The doctor says that with the stents there will not be any problem for 4-5 years. Then some other doctor says that imported stent will cost 1.5lakh rupees. If this is inserted then you won't face any problem in your lifetime. The poor person thinks that instead of spending rupees 40,000 for 4-5 years, if I spend 1.5 lakhs, I shall be able to lead a problem-free life. I told the stent makers why you are charging so much for stents. The deliberation went on for a year. Ultimately, 2 months back we decided to cap the prices of stents. The stents that used to cost 40,000 rupees are now only 6 to 7000 rupees. The stents that used to cost 1.5lakhs should now be sold at 20 to 22000 rupees so that the poor can afford. Sometimes it used to cause so much trouble for the common man especially when he did not have enough knowledge regarding this. Now, due to this decision a large section of the society is disappointed with me. It is quite natural. But the government is taking steps to provide affordable healthcare facilities to the poor and the middle class. Just now Vijay Bhai was saying that we are starting Pradhanmantri Jan Aushadhi yojana to provide affordable medicines to the people in hospitals. I have seen that doctors do not make proper prescriptions. The poor patient doesn't understand. He goes to the chemist shop to purchase the medicines where the medicines are really expensive. We will bring a system by which the doctor will have to write generic medicines in their prescriptions and there is no need to shell out money. Only then, the poor person can purchase medicines at cheaper rates.

Just like we are worried about post-illness care, we should also think about preventive healthcare. My cleanliness campaign is directly linked to health care. All the surveys around the world emphasise that one of the major causes of death of crores of children across the world is - not washing hands with soap before having meal. Can't we make it a habit? Cleanliness for health. The people of Surat need not be taught the lesson of cleanliness. Surat has adopted cleanliness. Surat was once affected by a pandemic and since then Surat has adopted cleanliness. It is an inspiration for the country. I was conducting a Road-show yesterday. The officer who had come along with me from Delhi was not looking at the Road-show but was focused upon cleanliness. He remarked that Surat was so clean! He was impressed by the cleanliness. I asked him to let everyone know about this wherever he goes. Surat has made it a habit. If the entire India makes cleanliness a habit then millions and billions of Rupees can be saved on health care. If one poor person falls ill, for example, if one auto rickshaw driver becomes sick, then it's not only him but his entire family starves for 3 days. There is no other earning member in the family! Therefore I am spreading this movement of yoga and cleanliness across the world. Even Surat should put forth a grand yoga performance on 21st June. Today yoga is becoming an important part of our lives for wellness and health. Under the Indradhanush scheme we are searching for those mothers and children who were left out of the immunization programme. We are running this immunization campaign. We have found more than 2 crore mothers and sisters who were not covered under the immunization programme that was undertaken in their villages. The government has undertaken the responsibility to search and serve the people. But mass movement is necessary and public cooperation is necessary.

Sometimes we think that after independence an atmosphere has been created where we believe that the government will do everything but the nature of our country is different. Our country has never been ruled or created by the government. Our country has never been ruled by the kings either or by the politicians but by the power of the people and by the confidence of the people. Public service is the greatest religion and nature of the country. You tell me, you see Dharmashala in every village. There are innumerable Dharmshalas that can accommodate thousands of people who are on a pilgrimage. There is more number of rooms than that of the grand hotels of the world. There are Dharmshalas in our country that consist of 2000 rooms. Who built these? Not the government but the public. There used to be water scarcity in some villages, the people used to dig wells or make baolis. Did the governments make cow-sheds? No; it's the public. Libraries were made not by the government but by the people. This has been the special feature of our country. All the work in social life was done by the people. But after independence, this nature started changing. But now once again this nature has started developing. The people want to contribute to the social life for the welfare of the people. I have seen the people of Surat and especially the people of Saurashtra and even a small ratan artist come forward to contribute something or the other for their villages or the society. It is not a small thing. A small artist who has a meagre income and has a difficult livelihood but on any occasion if the villagers ask him to do something for a school or the village for example, he would do that despite all the hardships. Each person sitting here has done something or the other for his/her village, on the parents' names or on some relative's name. They have contributed for the development of their village. Even today they have continued with the same association with their village. If someone wants to visit Saurashtra on the day of Diwali it is difficult to get tickets of a bus. This attachment is a wonderful trait of this society. I hope that in the future generations too this trait should remain. It should not only be confined to the older generations but the future generations should also maintain the same association. This will become a great wealth for the entire Gujarat. Once again I am grateful to you all for being able to attend the inauguration ceremony of the hospital. Like Mathur Dasji was telling, I shall be going to Bayana from here. There I have a programme that is associated with water.

Gujarat has made water its strength and with this strength Gujarat is moving forward and will keep moving forward. With this, my best wishes to everyone. My best wishes for good health.

I am going to Israel in July. All of you have some association with Israel. I am the first Prime Minister of India to visit Israel. There is a direct link with Israel especially for Diamond business and therefore I am going there as your representative as well. I assure you that. Thanks a lot!

