



English rendering of PM's speech on the launch of SAUBHAGYA Yojana

Posted On: 25 SEP 2017 8:55PM by PIB Delhi

Petroleum Minister, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Energy Minister, Shri R K Singh, Energy Secretary, Shri Ajay K. Bhalla, Petroleum Secretary, Mr. Kapil Dev Tripathi, ONGC CMD, Mr. D K Sarraf, and other dignitaries present here and all the colleagues of ONGC connected with us through the video link,

Today, there is a convergence of three holy occasions. It is the 5th day of Navratri. On this day Skandamata, the goddess of the solar system is worshiped. During these auspicious Navratri days, with the blessings of Skandamata a very important scheme related to the safety and lives of women of the country is beginning. The birth anniversary of the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Ji also falls on this day and today the country gets Deendayal Energy Bhawan. I feel elated to inaugurate this eco-friendly and low-electricity consumption grid building. I have been told that thousands of employees of ONGC are connected with this program through video link. When I saw this building, an idea came to my mind. I felt I should have been here instead of being the Prime Minister but then there are so many other things which I am not lucky enough to get. I congratulate all of you for building this magnificent building. My best wishes.

Today, spirituality, faith and modern technology all happen to shine brightly here in this place.

Brothers and Sisters,

The Garib Kalyan Varsh began on this date last year. The government has decided that for one year it will celebrate the birth centenary year of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyayji as the Garib Kalyan Varsh. The welfare of the poor is integrally linked with the identity of this government. From Jan Dhan Yojna to Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, from Ujjwala to Mudra, from Start up to Stand up India, from Ujala to Udan you will see, all these are for the welfare of the poor.

Who would have thought that someday there would be a government that would open bank accounts of 300 million poor people? Who would have thought that someday a government would come that would provide Insurance coverage of one rupee premium per month and another for 90 paise per day to about 150 million poor people? Who would have thought that someday a government would come which would provide more than 3.5 lakh crore rupees loan to 9 crore account holders without bank guarantee? Who would have thought that there would be a government that would think that women must get rid of the smoke in the kitchen? Who had thought that someday a government would come that would think that a person putting on slippers could fly in airplanes? Who would have thought that a government would ever come that would reduce the prices of Stents for heart surgeries and knee implants and make them affordable to middle class people?

The dreams of the poor are the dreams of my government and reducing their troubles in everyday life is my government's biggest responsibility. Today, a very big, very important and essential scheme in this series is being launched for the women of poor families of the country.

Brothers and sisters, the name of this plan is Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojna i.e. Saubhagya.

Friends, even after 70 years of independence there are more than four crore houses in our country which do not have an electricity connection. The total number of families in India is 20 crores, out of which 4 crores is about 20 percent. You can imagine the living condition of the people of these 4 crore families. It appears as if they are living in 18th century. Imagine how your life would be without electricity.

Friends, it has been more than 125 years when great scientist Thomas Alva Edison invented electricity bulb. Showcasing his invention Edison had said, "We will make electricity so cheap that only the rich will burn candles." It is sad for all of us that till today, leave alone the bulb, even electricity could not reach four crore households of the country. Candles, lanterns are still being used in those households. Even today children in crores of those poor families face problems when they study after evening, even if they study they do it in light of those lanterns. When I was young I also used to study like that then our elders used to tell us, please don't study in the light of kerosene oil, your eyes will be ruined and even your breath can also stop. So I asked: what should I do? Then they advised me to use castor oil in the lamp and then study with the help of that lamp. We tried to take our life a little forward by using the light of Castor oil lamp during our childhood. Then it comes to our mind that what happens to those four crore families? Leave alone the things of pleasure, the women of these houses also have to cook in the dark and therefore most women are under pressure to finish the kitchen work before the day is over. There are no lights in homes, no lights on roads. It is difficult to get out of homes in the dark, especially for women. So, they have to remain in the house by themselves. It is necessary for us and for every such person who has electricity connection, to understand how the life would be without an electricity connection. When the electricity connection is provided to these homes then only their fortunes will shine.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana, Saubhagya, the government is aiming to give electricity connection to every household in the country, be it in a village or city, be it a shanty or a hut in any remote area. We are moving ahead with the resolve to connect those houses with a power connection. No fee will be charged from poor for any electricity connection. The government will come to the house of poor people and give them electricity connection. To get electricity connection, leave alone poor people even the heads of the villages once had to make rounds of the government offices. This government will go to the houses of poor and provide them electricity connection without even charging one rupee.

It will cost more than Rs. 16,000 crores to provide electricity connection to each and every poor family of the country. We have decided that this burden will not be put on poor people. We will definitely provide this facility to the poor people. It is not just a promise, we will implement it as well. Friends, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay had said: the success of economic plans and economic progress will not be measured by the person at the top of the ladder in the society, but by the person who is at the bottom level. Which means evaluation of the plans of the government should be based on how much beneficial they have been to the poor. Today, on the birth anniversary of Pandit Deendayal Ji, I am glad that such a great scheme that will fulfill the dreams of millions of poor families of the country has started. Acknowledging the kind of problems faced by the poor people in the absence of electricity in the house, especially by women and children, the government is determined to provide electricity to 18,000 villages where there was no electricity even after so many years of independence. I had promised from the Red Fort to complete this work in one thousand days. Out of these 18,000 villages, now only less than three thousand villages are left where the electricity is yet to be provided. From this graph you can see that our target will definitely be achieved within the stipulated time.

Brothers and sisters, I remember that after I became the Prime Minister when I took the first meeting of the officials of the Power Ministry, I sought information on this count they told me, Sir, it would take seven years to complete this work. I heard that and I asked that whether it could be done sooner? They had it in their minds that it would not be possible. I announced from the Red Fort that I will do it in one thousand days. It is like this that if you take the courage and exhort the officers they will finish the task. Today I can see that they have actually almost finished the job.

Brothers and sisters, in New India not only every village will have electricity, but every household in New India will also have an electricity connection. Launching Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana, Saubhagya is a symbol of the ambition of the government and it amounts to bringing in energy revolution in the country. Without solving the power crisis, improving the mechanisms and without modernizing the old system this kind of scheme could not be started. Things do not move with old systems, it cannot happen with old traditions. One has to make radical changes and move ahead in new direction with a renewed pace. This scheme is also a symbol of the efforts made by the Central Government in the last three years. People of the country cannot forget the days when big breaking news were aired on TV channel; you all are familiar with the breaking news. At that time such breaking news used to be aired - Power houses have been left with coal stock only for a day or two. The state of the energy crises was such that whole grids used to fail, one state after another were immersed in the dark. And I am not talking about that which used to happen several decades ago. Whatever I've been talking about had happened a few years ago, in the last decade itself. All this had happened during the previous government.

Now try to recollect, since when you have not heard any such breaking news that power plants did not have coal. Friends, now the country is moving towards being power surplus after leaving behind the era of power crisis. And all this has not been achieved by adopting a new approach and new policies. It has been achieved by taking multidimensional steps. To improve the power situation of the country simultaneous work on four different directions was undertaken - Production, Transmission, Distribution and Connection. If production is not there, transmission-distribution system is not strong then no matter how much discussion we can have for providing electricity but it will not be possible to provide electricity to all the households. Therefore, after the formation of government, first priority was given to increasing the production. The work has started to increase generation of solar energy, hydro energy, thermal and nuclear power.

1. Friends, we implemented a new Act for coal mines in year 2015 under which, for the first time, a reverse e-auction of coal mines was conducted. During the five year period from 2009 to 2014 coal production increased by only 34 million tons, while in the last 3 years, we have increased the production by 93 million tons to take it to 659 million tons per year. I am happy to inform you that the increase in the production of coal by PSUs during the three years of this government is more than one and a half times the increase in the tenure of the previous government. For those who do not want mines and just want the coal, the government has also introduced a new coal allocation policy with the name "Shakti" for them four months ago. Under this scheme the allocation of coal to electricity generating thermal plants will be done in a transparent manner by way of an auction. In February last year, the government has also issued a transparent auction policy for the re-allocation of coal linkages.

2. Friends, coal auctions in which there was a big scam worth crores of rupees, this government has given the nation a transparent and modern system of auction for the same coal. This indicates both the policies and intention of this government. This Government is working on 6 basic principles of providing easy, affordable, clean, well planned, safe and secure power in the field of electricity.

3. Due to the efforts of this government for the first time in three years the installed power capacity has increased by 60 thousand MW, which is 12% more than the target.

4. While ensuring the energy security of India, we also resolved that this work will be done by giving priority to clean energy. That's why the government had set a target of producing 175 Gigawatts of clean energy by 2022 which means solar, wind and hydro electricity.

5. Working towards this goal renewable energy capacity has been almost doubled in the last three years and there has been an increase of more than 27 thousand Megawatts in the capacity. The capacity of solar energy has been increased almost five times in the same period.

6. By promoting the competitiveness in the Renewable Energy sector, the government has also ensured that it is economical for the common citizens of the country. Reduction in the cost of renewable energy is being constantly monitored. In 2016-17, because of this thing we got solar energy at a minimum tariff of only 2 rupees 44 paise and wind energy at only 3 rupees 42 paise. I remember when I was in Gujarat and I went for Solar Energy, at that time Indian government was even ready to give 19 rupees. Then I made a policy of 13 rupees there. And Gujarat was the first state in India which created the policy for Solar Energy. At that time our people were a scared lot. Government of India is giving 19 rupees per unit and if you are going to give only 13 rupees for a unit then who will come forward to supply to us. I said that I will not give more than this, I will stay at this only and I believe that day is not far away when thermal and solar power will become equal, this was the speech which I gave at that time. I did not waver and it was a joy to see that people did not go for the 19 rupee plan but they came forward for 13 rupee plan because I had prepared the eco system, and at that time the biggest solar park in India was there. Today the country has bought the solar energy to two and a half rupees per unit.

Friends, the government has increased the investment in the field of power transmission, due to which transmission network in the country has expanded very rapidly. Over the last three years work has been done on projects worth over 1.50 lakh crores. This is 83 percent more than the last three years of work of the previous government. You can clearly see one thing, each and every thing tells you how the work is done. The transmission lines setup during this government are 12 percent more than the target. Due to this, now the country not only has a safe and balanced grid available today, but we are moving forward towards the goal of One Nation, One Grid, One Price with great pace.

For many years, due to the negligence of the country's power sector, power distribution had become a major weakness in the power sector. Because of this the electricity which was being produced in the country was not available to the people. Power distribution companies were also facing economic losses on every additional unit.

To break this weak link, in order to strengthen the Power Distribution System, the government started the Ujjwal Discom Assurance Yojana i.e. UDAY, in 2015. The purpose of the Uday Yojana was to establish better Operational and Financial Management in the companies engaged in the distribution of electricity. When companies have stability, when they are commercially strong only then they will be able to pay attention to distribution.

Today, due to the continuous efforts of three years, we can see an improvement in the health of the power distribution companies. The result of this is that by August 2017 the distribution companies have saved an amount of about Rs 23,500 crores, which earlier they had to pay as interest. You can see what kind of situation has been created. In comparison with 2016, annual losses of Distribution companies have decreased by about 42% in 2017 within one year of launch of UDAY. You can also see UDAY scheme as a spectacular example of competitive-cooperative federalisms for sake of development. Friends, this government is also working on two big plans to strengthen the power distribution system in the villages and the cities.

Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana is underway in the villages and Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS) in the cities. Projects worth over Rs. 69 thousand crores related to these two schemes have been approved. Work on these schemes is being done at a fast pace. The Central Government has also provided the state governments an amount of about 22 thousand crore rupees in the last three years under different schemes for distribution of electricity. This amount is more than twice the amount provided in the last three years of the previous government. Brothers and sisters, the decisions taken and the policies created by the central government in the Power Distribution Sector across the country have had a direct impact on the Ease of Doing Business. In the power sector, in terms of Ease of Doing Business, India was on 99th place in 2015. Whereas now its ranking has improved to 26. Imagine such a big jump from 99th rank to the 26th rank, it is a matter of great pride for people engaged in reforming the sector. The work done by India in the power sector has been pointed out by another international agency. Last year US Space Agency NASA took a picture of India from space during night. In this picture, India was shining. You can see it in this picture. One such image was taken in the year 2012, which looks dark. And this another picture shows a different story of the power sector which was taken in 2016. Friends, along with strengthening the power sector, this government is also emphasizing that modern methods of reducing the power demand should be adopted. In addition to saving the electricity these modern systems also reduce electricity bills of people.

Because of the government's effort, the LED bulb, and please keep this figure in the mind, the LED bulb, when I assumed office in May 2014, the price of the LED bulb was Rs 310 in February 2014 and today in September 2017, its price is Rs 40. Under the Ujala scheme, more than 26 crore LED bulbs have been distributed in the country so far. This has resulted in people having an estimated savings of more than Rs. 13,700 crore annually in the electricity bills. Rs. 13,700 crores! You can guess how many megawatts of power was saved and the amount to generate that much capacity was also saved. Which means it gives you an example of how the country's economy can be run. The private sector has also distributed more than 41 crore LED bulbs. In addition to this about 13 lakh energy saving fans and more than 33 lakh energy saving tube lights have also been distributed by the government. Under the world's largest program, more than 33.60 lakh LED street lights have also been installed as of now.

Friends, transparency and accountability are the top priorities of this government. Common citizen of the country, its poor people, every consumer of the country is paramount for us. The government is very serious about both taking suggestions from them at each level and giving information to them about the work. The progress of schemes is being made available to people through mobile app, web portal, dashboard and suggestions from people are also being taken.

Given the expansion of our economy it is also natural that our energy demand is going to increase in the coming years. In such a situation, we will have to move forward by maintaining a balance. Hydrocarbons also have a very important role. Current energy requirement of the country is mainly met by coal. In the coming days, we have to balance it with gas as well as renewable energy. Reducing Carbon-related emissions is part of our cultural heritage, it is a part of our tradition. We have been involved in this movement with publicly making commitments in the COP-21.

We need an energy framework in New India that runs on the principle of equity, efficiency and sustainability. It will depend on how much we can increase the domestic supply and how much we can reduce our reliance on imports. If by 2022 we can cut oil imports by 10 percent, then it will not only help the industries but it will also strengthen the economy of the country. In the past ten years, we have spent almost a trillion dollars on crude imports. This is almost three times more than our general budget. You can predict the amount which could be saved by reducing oil imports and when it would be spent on development schemes for our middle class families in rural areas of the country, then how much more social and economic development it will bring.

Friends, while reforming the oil and gas sector many major consumer centric initiatives have also been taken in the last three years. Like Prime Minister Ujjwala scheme, connecting LPG subsidy to direct benefit transfer scheme, expanding Piped Natural Gas Supply and City Gas Distribution Network, increasing LPG coverage etc.

Besides this many major decisions have been taken at the policy level also. Such as deregulating the price of liquid fuels, making new policies for gas pricing, finding new solutions to increase domestic production, creating HELP i.e. Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy, constituting a policy for auctioning of DSF i.e. Discovered Small Field and gas pooling in the fertilizer sector.

Brothers and sisters, the government is fully sensitive for the protection of environment. Keeping this in mind an extensive program like blending of ethanol in petrol, schemes related to biodiesel, and development of LNG terminals have been started. To safeguard the country's energy needs in the future, relations with major oil producing countries are being strengthened. In this regard an India-Russia Energy Bridge has been formed. There have been many such agreements abroad from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas which will keep our future interests in mind.

With the change in the work-culture of the government, the entire energy sector is getting stronger and with the energy sector getting stronger the country will also get a new work-culture. When people living in the remote areas of the country will get access to electricity and gas in their lives then their way of working and living will also change. I hope that "Saubhagya" scheme, just like "Ujjwala" scheme, will help to bring a new era of safety and health especially in the lives of women. This will also end one of the biggest imbalances of our society. In order to bring about changes in the lives of the poor people, a birder to remove the darkness from their lives, and for a New India, I extend my greetings to the country once again.

Just a while ago, in his speech Dharmendra Ji was saying that ONGC has planned Rs 100 crore for start up. Today I want you to take up a challenging task and I believe that you will do it. You see the electric cars, the world has moved towards them because it is a matter related to energy which is taking us towards the electric car. I can understand the troubles that electric cars will reduce and their benefits also. But there is a field that can bring a huge revolution. And I would like the ONGC to take this initiative and call upon the youth of the country, call upon them for innovation. And ONGC should organise a competition on innovation. And the task would be to make an electric stove on which every kind of cooking can be done. Whether you have to make Pakodas, or Chapatis or even sweets, every kind of cooking can be done on that stove. If such user friendly equipment are invented then that day will not be far away when people will use solar energy to cook food in their homes and there would not be any need of gas cylinders, LPG or Ujjwala. And after building the electric car, whatever will be the burden or savings, in comparison it will be much cheaper to inculcate the habit of cooking on solar energy.

I believe that to invite the young startups of our country ONGC must organize a big competition of this kind. I think Rs. 100 crore is sufficient for this work. Through this one task alone you can achieve the 10% reduction in consumption in one year that you want to achieve because there will be a big alternative to your consumption. Today, the kind of research that is being done on the electric cars, I believe that if this kind of research is done on electric equipments for cooking then maybe it will be more impactful for a country like India and therefore, today I am giving a challenge, on September 25, 2017, at 7:30 in the evening, you can write it down, it is eight o'clock now, So I hope that you will come to me with a plan in one month and just demonstrate this thing by doing it. And especially these thousands of ONGC soldiers who are listening to me, I would request them to think over and exhort the youth of country to focus their attention on innovation. I urge them to think how we can create simple and user friendly things and thereby start a new revolution.

Friends, thank you very much. I am sure all of you will do good job in this fine building. Many-many congratulations to all of you.

AKT/AK/KT/DG/AK

(Release ID: 1514042) Visitor Counter : 173

