

English rendering of PM's speech during 'Samudra se Samriddhi' programme in Bhavnagar, Gujarat

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The popular Chief Minister of Gujarat, Shri Bhupendrabhai Patel, my colleague in the Union Council of Ministers, Sarbananda Sonowal ji, C.R. Paatil, Mansukhbhai Mandaviya, Shantanu Thakur, Nimuben Bambhaniya, the dignitaries connected to this programme from more than 40 places across the country, Ministers from various States connected with all the major ports, senior officials, other distinguished guests, and my dear brothers and sisters, I extend my greetings to you all!

Bhavnagar has created an electrifying atmosphere. I can see before me that outside the pandal there is a sea of people. Such a large gathering has come to shower blessings. I am deeply grateful to you all.

Friends,

Though this programme is being held in Bhavnagar, it is an event for the entire nation. Today Bhavnagar has become the medium, and to mark how Bharat moves in the direction of 'Samudra Se Samriddhi', Bhavnagar has been chosen as the focal point of this important event. Heartiest congratulations to the people of Gujarat and the people of Bhavnagar.

Friends,

On 17th September, the good wishes you all sent to your Narendra Bhai, and the greetings I received from across the nation and the world—personally it is impossible to thank each one. Yet, the love and blessings I have received from every corner of Bharat and from across the globe are my greatest wealth and strength. Therefore, publicly, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the people of my country and the world. Here, a daughter has brought a drawing, and there a son has brought one as well. Please collect them, my friends. My blessings to these children. Thank you to those who have brought them. I am grateful for your affection. You have made such effort—thank you, my child, thank you my friend.

Friends,

From Vishwakarma Jayanti to Gandhi Jayanti—that is, from 17th September to 2nd October—lakhs of people across the country are observing the Seva Pakhwada (Fortnight of Service). I have been informed that in Gujarat too, although it is a 15-day Seva Pakhwada, in just the past two or three days many events have been organised. Hundreds of blood donation camps have been set up, and one lakh people have already donated blood. This is just the information I have received about Gujarat. In numerous cities, cleanliness drives have been organised, and lakhs of people have joined these efforts. More than 30,000 health camps have been organised across the State, a remarkable number, where people are being provided with diagnosis and treatment, especially focusing on women's health. I applaud and express my gratitude to everyone engaged in these activities across the country.

Friends,

At the outset of this gathering, I remember with reverence Shri Krishna Kumar Singh ji. Joining Sardar Patel's mission, he made a great contribution to the unity of Bharat. Inspired by such patriots, today we are strengthening Bharat's unity and reinforcing the spirit of "Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat".

Friends,

I have come to Bhavnagar at a time when the sacred festival of Navratri is about to begin. This time, due to the reduction in GST, the markets will be more vibrant, and in this festive spirit, today we are celebrating this grand festival of 'Samudra Se Samriddhi'. Brothers of Bhavnagar, forgive me, I must speak in Hindi today because people from all across the country are connected with this programme. When lakhs of people across the nation are part of an event, I must seek your pardon and speak in Hindi.

Friends,

Bharat of the 21st century views the sea as a great opportunity. Just a short while ago, to accelerate port-led development, projects worth thousands of crores have been inaugurated and foundation stones laid. To promote cruise tourism in the country, the International Cruise Terminal has been inaugurated in Mumbai today. Many projects linked to the development of Bhavnagar and Gujarat have also been launched. My best wishes to all citizens of the nation and the people of Gujarat.

Friends,

Bharat today is moving forward with the spirit of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam"—the world is one family. We have no great enemy in the world. In truth, our only enemy is our dependence on other countries. That is our greatest adversary. Together, we must overcome this enemy of dependence. We must always remind ourselves—greater foreign dependence means greater national failure. For peace, stability, and prosperity in the world, the country with the largest population must become self-reliant. If we remain dependent on others, our self-respect will be wounded. We cannot leave the future of 140 crore Indians at the mercy of others. We cannot allow the nation's development goals to rest on dependence on others. We cannot risk the future of our coming generations.

Therefore, brothers and sisters,

In Gujarati we say—there is one cure for a hundred ailments. That cure is self-reliant Bharat. But for this, we must face challenges head-on and continuously reduce our dependence on other countries. Bharat must stand strong before the world as a self-reliant nation.

Brothers and sisters,

There is no dearth of capability in Bharat. But after Independence, the Congress ignored all of Bharat's potential. Therefore, even after six or seven decades of Independence, Bharat could not achieve the success it truly deserved. There were two major reasons. For a long time, Congress governments entangled the nation in the licence-quota raj, isolating us from the world's markets. And with globalisation, they merely opened the doors to imports. On top of this, scams worth thousands of crores were committed. These policies caused immense loss to the youth of the country and prevented Bharat's real strength from emerging.

Friends,

The magnitude of the loss suffered by the nation can be seen clearly in our shipping sector. You know well that Bharat has for centuries been a great maritime power. We were once among the largest ship-building centres in the world. Ships built in Bharat's coastal States drove trade and commerce both within the country and with the world. Even fifty years ago, we were using ships made in Bharat. At that time, more than 40% of Bharat's imports and exports were carried on Indian-built ships. But the shipping sector too fell victim to Congress's flawed policies. Instead of strengthening ship-building in Bharat, Congress preferred to pay rental charges to foreign ships. As a result, Bharat's ship-building ecosystem collapsed, and dependence on foreign vessels became our compulsion. Where once 40% of our trade was carried on Indian ships, today that share has fallen to just 5%. That means for 95% of our trade we depend on foreign ships—a dependence that has cost us dearly.

Friends,

I wish to place some figures before the nation. Citizens will be shocked to learn that every year Bharat pays nearly 75 billion dollars—around six lakh crore rupees—to foreign shipping companies for their services. This is almost equal to Bharat's current defence budget. Imagine how much money we have paid to other countries over seven decades. With our money, lakhs of jobs have been created abroad. If earlier governments had invested even a small portion of this money in our shipping industry, today the world would have been using our ships. We would have been earning lakhs of crores in shipping services—and on top of that, we would have saved enormous amounts.

Friends,

If Bharat is to become a developed nation by 2047, when we celebrate 100 years of Independence, then self-reliance is the only way. There is no alternative. The resolve of 140 crore Indians must be one—whether it is a chip or a ship, we must make it in Bharat. With this vision, Bharat's maritime sector is undertaking next-generation reforms. From today, every major port in the country will be freed from countless documents and varied processes. “One Nation, One Document” and “One Nation, One Port Process” will simplify trade further. As our Minister Sarbananda Sonowal ji mentioned, in the recent Monsoon Session of Parliament we amended many archaic colonial laws. We have begun a series of reforms in the maritime sector. Our government has introduced five maritime laws in a new form. These will bring significant changes in the shipping sector and in port governance.

Friends,

Bharat has for centuries been expert in building large ships. The next-generation reforms will help revive this forgotten glory. In the past decade, we have inducted more than 40 ships and submarines into the Navy. With the exception of one or two, all of these were built in Bharat. You must have heard of INS Vikrant—this mighty vessel was built entirely in Bharat. The high-quality steel used in it was also manufactured in Bharat. This proves we have the capability and no shortage of skill. What is required for building large ships is political willpower, and I assure my fellow citizens of this determination.

Friends,

To strengthen Bharat's maritime sector, a historic decision was taken yesterday. We have made a major policy change: the Government has now recognised large ships as infrastructure. When any sector is recognised as infrastructure, it gains immense benefits. Ship-building companies will now find it easier to obtain bank loans, they will receive lower interest rates, and will enjoy all other advantages of infrastructure financing. This decision will ease the burden on Indian shipping companies and help them compete globally.

Friends,

To make Bharat a great maritime power, the government is also working on three major schemes. These schemes will make financial support for the ship-building sector easier, help our shipyards adopt modern technology, and improve design and quality. More than Rs 70,000 crore will be spent on these in the coming years.

Friends,

I recall that in 2007, when I was serving you as Chief Minister here, Gujarat organised a major seminar on ship-building opportunities. At that time we supported the ship-building ecosystem in Gujarat. Now, we are taking comprehensive steps for ship-building across the country. Experts here know that ship-building is no ordinary industry. Across the world it is called the “Mother of All Industries.” This is because it is not just about making a ship—numerous associated industries expand alongside: steel, machinery, electronics, textiles, paints, IT systems, and many more. The shipping industry supports countless sectors, including small and medium enterprises and MSMEs. Research shows that every rupee invested in ship-building generates almost double investment in the economy. Each job created in a shipyard leads to six to seven new jobs in the supply chain. That means if 100 jobs are created in ship-building, more than 600 jobs are generated in related

sectors. Such is the multiplier effect of ship-building.

Friends,

We are also focusing on essential skill sets for ship-building. Our ITIs will play a role, and the role of our Maritime University will expand. In recent years we have established new systems in coastal areas through coordination between the Navy and the NCC. These NCC cadets will be prepared not only for the Navy but also for roles in the commercial sector.

Friends,

Today's Bharat is advancing with a new spirit. The goals we set, we now achieve ahead of time. In the solar Bharat has been meeting its targets four to five years in advance. Similarly, in port-led development, the goals we set 11 years ago are being achieved with great success. We are building major ports for large ships and enhancing port connectivity through schemes like Sagarmala.

Friends,

In the last 11 years, Bharat has doubled its port capacity. Before 2014, the average ship turnaround time in Bharat was two days. Today it is less than one day. We are constructing new, large ports. Recently, Bharat's first deep-water container trans-shipment port was inaugurated in Kerala. In Maharashtra, the Vadhavan Port is being built at a cost of over 75,000 crore rupees. It will be among the world's top ten ports.

Friends,

At present, Bharat's share in global maritime trade is just 10 percent. We must increase this. By 2047, we aim to triple our share in global maritime trade. And we shall achieve this.

Friends,

As our maritime trade grows, so too is the number of our seafarers. These hardworking professionals operate ships at sea, manage engines and machinery, and oversee loading and unloading. A decade ago, Bharat had fewer than 1.25 lakh seafarers. Today their number has crossed 3 lakh. Bharat now ranks among the top three countries supplying seafarers to the world. This is creating new employment opportunities for our youth. Thus, Bharat's growing shipping industry is also strengthening the world.

Friends,

Bharat has a rich maritime heritage. Our fishermen, our ancient port cities are its symbols. This Bhavnagar, this Saurashtra, is a great example of it. We must pass this heritage on to future generations and showcase our strength to the world. That is why we are building a grand Maritime Museum at Lothal. This too will be the largest Maritime Museum in the world. Just like the Statue of Unity, it will become a new identity of Bharat. Shortly, I shall be going there as well.

Friends,

Bharat's coasts will become gateways of prosperity. With pride I can say—and I can see far ahead—that Bharat's seacoasts are destined to be the entryways of our wealth. I am glad that Gujarat's coastline is once again becoming a blessing for this region. This entire area is showing the nation a new path of port-led development. Today, 40% of the cargo handled by Indian ports comes through Gujarat's ports. Soon, these ports will also benefit from the Dedicated Freight Corridor. This will enable goods to be transported rapidly across the country and further enhance the efficiency of our ports.

Friends,

Here too, a major ship-breaking ecosystem is taking shape. The ship-breaking yard of Alang is a remarkable example of this, providing large-scale employment opportunities for our youth.

Friends,

To build a Viksit Bharat, we must work rapidly in every field, in every sector. And we all know that the path to a Viksit Bharat runs through a Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India). Therefore, we must remember: whatever we buy should be indigenous, whatever we sell should be indigenous. I urge all shopkeepers to display a poster in their shops reading—"Say with pride: this is Swadeshi." This effort will make every festival a festival of Bharat's prosperity. With this spirit, I once again extend greetings to you all on Navratri.

A small child has been standing here for long, holding a drawing; his hands must be aching. Please collect it from him. Well done, my son. Come, my child, your picture has been received. No need to cry, my boy—it has been received. If your address is written on it, I shall surely write you a letter.

Friends,

What greater treasure in life can there be than the love of such little children? Once again, I thank you for the grand welcome, hospitality, and honour accorded to me. I know well, when Operation Sindoor was carried out, the entire Bhavnagar was in the field. I am aware of your spirit, and I am deeply grateful for it. Brothers and sisters of Bhavnagar, raise your voices from the mandavi (mandap) of Navratri, so that the message of Atmanirbhar Bharat resonates across the nation.

Thank you very much, my brothers!

MJPS/VJ/AK/IG

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