

English rendering of PM's address to the Nation

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My dear countrymen, Namaskar!

Navratri, the festival of worshipping Shakti, is beginning tomorrow. Best wishes to all of you! From the first day of Navratri, the country is taking another important and major step towards the Self-Reliant India campaign. Tomorrow, with sunrise on September 22nd, the first day of Navratri, the Next Generation GST reforms will come into effect. In a way, a GST savings festival is going to begin in the country from tomorrow. This GST Savings Festival will increase your savings, and you'll be able to purchase the things you want more easily. The poor, middle class people, neo middle class, youth, farmers, women, shopkeepers, businessmen, entrepreneurs of our country, everyone will benefit a lot from this savings festival. This means everyone will have something sweet to eat during this festive season, and every family in the country will be blessed. I extend my heartiest congratulations and best wishes to crores of families of the country for the Next Generation GST reforms and this savings festival. These reforms will accelerate India's growth story, make doing business easier, make investment more attractive, and make every state an equal partner in the race for development.

Friends,

When India took the step towards GST reform in the year 2017, it marked the beginning of changing a shift in history and the creation of a new one. For decades, the people of our country, all of you, the businessmen of the country, were entangled in the maze of various taxes. Octroi, entry tax, sales tax, excise, VAT, service tax, there were dozens of such taxes in our country. If goods had to be sent from one city to another, one had to cross so many checkpoints, fill so many forms, there were so many obstacles, and everywhere, there were different tax rules. I remember, when the country entrusted me with the responsibility of the post of Prime Minister in 2014, then in that initial phase, an interesting example was published in a foreign newspaper, in which the difficulties of a company were mentioned. That company had said that, if it had to send its goods from Bangalore to Hyderabad, which was 570 kilometers away, then it was so difficult that they thought, and they said that they would prefer the company to first send its goods from Bangalore to Europe, and then send the same goods from Europe to Hyderabad.

Friends,

This was the situation back then, due to the complexities of taxes and tolls. And I am just reminding you of an old example, when lakhs of such companies, lakhs of countrymen, used to face problems every day due to the maze of different types of taxes. The cost that arose during the transportation of goods from one city to another was also borne by the poor and was recovered from customers like you.

Friends,

It was very important to get the country out of this situation. Therefore, when you gave us the opportunity in 2014, we made GST our priority in the public interest and in the national interest. We discussed with every stakeholder, we resolved every doubt of every state, found a solution to every question; by taking all the states along, such a big tax reform of independent India became possible. It was the result of the efforts of the Centre and the states that the country became free from the web of dozens of taxes, and a uniform system was created for the entire country. The dream of One Nation-One Tax came true.

Friends,

Reform is a continuous process. As times change and the country's needs evolve, next-generation reforms become equally necessary. Therefore, keeping in mind the current needs and future dreams of the country,

these new GST reforms are being implemented.

In the new format, there will now be only five percent and eighteen percent tax slabs. This means that most everyday items will become more affordable. Food items, medicines, soap, brushes, toothpaste, health and life insurance—many such goods and services—will either be tax-free or will only attract a five percent tax. Of the goods which were earlier taxed at 12 percent, 99 percent, i.e., nearly 100 percent, have now come under the purview of 5 percent tax.

Friends,

In the last 11 years, 25 crore people in the country have defeated poverty, conquered it, and by emerging from poverty, a huge group of 25 crore people is playing a significant role in the country today as the neo-middle class. This neo middle class has its own aspirations, its own dreams. This year, the government gave them a gift by making income up to Rs.12 lakh tax-free.

And it's natural that when there is income tax relief for the income of Rs 12 lakh, it brings about a huge change in the lives of the middle class. It becomes so easy and convenient. And now it is the turn of the poor, the turn of the neo middle class. Now, the poor, the neo-middle class, and the middle class are getting a double bonanza. Due to reduction in GST, it will now be easier for the citizens of the country to fulfill their dreams. Be it building a house, buying a TV, a refrigerator, or buying a scooter, bike, or a car, you'll have to spend less on all of these. Travelling will also become cheaper for you, as GST has been reduced on rooms in most hotels.

By the way, friends,

I am pleased that shopkeeper brother-sisters are also very enthusiastic about the GST reform. They are very busy in passing on the GST reduction to the customers. Signboards displaying the before and now prices are being put up in many places.

Friends,

The mantra 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', with which we are moving forward, is clearly reflected in the Next Generation GST Reform. If we add the exemption in income tax and exemption in GST, then the decisions taken in one year will save more than Rs 2.5 lakh crore for the people of the country. And that is why I am saying, this is a savings festival.

Friends,

To achieve the goal of developed India, we will have to follow the path of self-reliance. And a huge responsibility of making India self-reliant also lies on our MSMEs, that is, our small, medium and cottage industries. Whatever is needed by the people of the country, whatever we can make in the country itself, we should make it in the country itself.

Friends,

With the reduction in GST rates and simplification of rules and procedures, our MSMEs, our small-scale industries and cottage industries will benefit a lot. Their sales will increase and they will have to pay less tax, which means they will also get double benefit. Therefore, today I have great expectations from all of you, be it MSMEs, small industries, micro industries or cottage industries. You also know that when India was at the peak of prosperity, the main basis of India's economy was our MSMEs, our small and cottage industries. India's manufacturing, the quality of goods produced in India, used to be superior. We have to get that pride back. Whatever our small industries produce should be the best in the world by every standard, the best of the best. Whatever we manufacture should surpass all the parameters of being the best in the world with pride and prestige. We must work towards improving the quality of our products, enhance India's recognition in the world, and increase India's pride.

Friends,

Just as the country's independence was strengthened by the mantra of Swadeshi, similarly the country's prosperity will also be strengthened by the mantra of Swadeshi. Today, knowingly or unknowingly, many foreign things have become a part of our daily lives, and we are not even aware of it. We do not even know

whether the comb in our pocket is foreign or Indian. We will have to get rid of these also. We should buy goods that are Made in India, in which the hard work of our youth, the sweat of our sons and daughters are involved. We have to make every home a symbol of Swadeshi. Every shop has to be decorated with Swadeshi. Say with pride that this is Swadeshi, say with pride, I buy Swadeshi, I also sell Swadeshi goods, this should become the attitude of every Indian. When this happens, India will develop rapidly. Today, I also urge all state governments to accelerate manufacturing in their states with this campaign of self-reliant India, this campaign of Swadeshi, and to join with full energy and enthusiasm. Enhance the environment for investment. When the Centre and states move forward together, the dream of a self-reliant India will be fulfilled. Every state in India will develop, and India will develop. With this sentiment, I conclude my speech by once again extending my best wishes for this savings festival. Once again, I wish you all a very happy Navratri and the GST savings festival. Thank you very much!

MJPS/VJ/SS

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