



# English rendering of PM's address during inauguration of the Grand International Exposition of Sacred Piprahwa Relics related to Bhagwan Buddha

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 03 JAN 2026 2:59PM by PIB Delhi

Namo Buddhaya.

My colleagues from the Union Cabinet, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat ji, Kiren Rijiju ji, Ramdas Athawale ji, Rao Inderjit ji, the Chief Minister of Delhi had a prior engagement and had to leave, all fellow ministers from Delhi, the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, Shri Saxena ji, Excellencies, esteemed members of the diplomatic community, Buddhist scholars, followers of the Dhamma, ladies and gentlemen.

After one hundred and twenty-five years of waiting, India's heritage has returned, India's legacy has come back. From today, the people of India will be able to witness these sacred relics of Lord Buddha and receive his blessings. On this auspicious occasion, I extend a warm welcome and greetings to all the guests present here. On this sacred occasion, monks and dharma teachers associated with the Buddhist tradition are also present to bless us. I bow to all of you. Your presence is giving new heights and new energy to this event. At the very beginning of 2026, this auspicious celebration is truly inspiring. It is also my good fortune that my first public program of 2026 begins at the feet of Lord Buddha. My wish is that with the blessings of Lord Buddha, the year 2026 ushers in a new era of peace, prosperity, and harmony for the world.

Friends,

The place where this exhibition has been set up is itself special. The site of Qila Rai Pithora is a land of India's glorious history. Around a thousand years ago, the rulers of that time established a city surrounded by strong and secure walls around this historic fort. Today, in the same historic city complex, we are adding a spiritual and sacred chapter to our history.

Friends,

Before coming here, I observed this historic exhibition in detail. Having the sacred relics of Lord Buddha among us makes us all blessed. Their departure from India and eventual return are both significant lessons in themselves. The lesson is that slavery is not only political and economic, but it also destroys our heritage. The same happened with the sacred relics of Lord Buddha. During the period of slavery, they were taken away from India and remained outside the country for nearly one hundred and twenty-five years. For those who took them away, and for their descendants, these relics were merely lifeless antique pieces. That is why they attempted to auction these sacred relics in the international market. But for India, these relics are a part of our revered deity, an inseparable part of our civilization. Therefore, India decided that their public auction would not be allowed. Today, I also express my gratitude to the Godrej Group, whose cooperation ensured that these sacred relics connected to Lord Buddha have returned to his land of karma, his land of contemplation, his Mahabodhi land, and his Mahaparinirvana land.

Friends,

Lord Buddha's knowledge and the path shown by him belong to all humanity and are timeless, unchanged by time. We have repeatedly experienced this sentiment in recent months. Wherever the sacred relics of Lord Buddha travelled in recent months, waves of faith and devotion arose. In Thailand, where such sacred relics were placed at different locations, in less than a month, more than four million devotees came for darshan. In Vietnam, public sentiment was so strong that the duration of the exhibition had to be extended, and in nine cities, nearly nineteen million people paid homage to the relics. In Mongolia, thousands of people waited for hours outside the Gandan Monastery, and many wished to touch the Indian representatives simply because they had come from the land of Buddha. In Russia's Kalmykia region, in just one week, more than one hundred and fifty thousand devotees witnessed the sacred relics, which is equal to more than half of the local population. In these events across different countries, whether common citizens or heads of government, all were united in equal reverence. Lord Buddha belongs to everyone. Lord Buddha connects all.

Friends,

I consider myself very fortunate, as Lord Buddha has held a deep place in my life. My birthplace Vадnagar was a major centre of Buddhist learning. Sarnath, where Lord Buddha gave his first sermon, is my karmabhoomi today. Even when I was away from government responsibilities, I travelled as a pilgrim to Buddhist sites. As Prime Minister, I have had the privilege of visiting Buddhist pilgrimage centres across the world. Bowing at the sacred Maya Devi temple in Lumbini, Nepal, was an extraordinary experience in itself. At To-ji Temple and Kinkaku-ji in Japan, I felt that Buddha's message transcends the boundaries of time. I visited the Big Wild Goose Pagoda in Xi'an, China, from where Buddhist scriptures spread across Asia, and where India's role is still remembered. At the Gandan Monastery in Mongolia, I witnessed the deep emotional connection of people with Buddha's legacy. Seeing the Jaya Sri Mahabodhi in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka, was an experience of connecting with the tradition sown by Emperor Ashoka, Bhikkhu Mahinda, and Sanghamitra. My visits to Wat Pho in Thailand and the Buddha Tooth Relic Temple in Singapore further deepened my understanding of the impact of Lord Buddha's teachings.

Friends,

Wherever I travelled, I made it my effort to bring a symbol of Lord Buddha's legacy among the people there. That is why in China, Japan, Korea, and Mongolia, I carried saplings of the Bodhi tree. You can imagine the profound message for humanity when a Bodhi tree stands in the botanical garden of Hiroshima, a city devastated by the atomic bomb.

Friends,

This shared heritage of Lord Buddha is proof that India is not connected merely through politics, diplomacy, and economy, but through deeper bonds. We are connected through mind and emotions, through faith and spirituality.

Friends,

India is not only the custodian of Lord Buddha's sacred relics but also the living carrier of his tradition. Relics of Lord Buddha found in Piprahwa, Vaishali, Devni Mori, and Nagarjunakonda are living presences of Buddha's message. India has preserved and safeguarded these relics in every form, through both science and spirituality.

Friends,

India has consistently endeavoured to contribute to the development of Buddhist heritage sites worldwide. When the devastating earthquake in Nepal damaged ancient stupas, India extended support for their reconstruction. After the earthquake in Bagan, Myanmar, India undertook the preservation of more than

eleven pagodas. There are many such examples. Within India too, the search and preservation of sites and relics connected to the Buddhist tradition is continuously progressing. As I mentioned earlier, my birthplace Vadnagar in Gujarat was a major centre of Buddhist tradition. During my tenure as Chief Minister, thousands of relics linked to Buddhism were discovered there. Today, our government is focusing on preserving them and connecting the present generation with them. A magnificent experiential museum has been built there, offering an experience of nearly 2500 years of history. Only a few months ago, a major Buddhist site of the Buddhist era was discovered in Baramulla, Jammu and Kashmir, and its preservation work is now being accelerated.

Friends,

In the past ten to eleven years, India has also sought to link Buddhist sites with modernity. In Bodh Gaya, a convention centre and meditation and experience centre have been established. In Sarnath, a light and sound show at the Dhamek Stupa and a Buddha theme park have been created. Modern facilities have been developed in Shravasti, Kapilvastu, and Kushinagar. In Nalgonda, Telangana, a Digital Experience Centre has been set up. New facilities for pilgrims have been developed in Sanchi, Nagarjun Sagar, and Amaravati. Today, a Buddhist Circuit is being created in the country to ensure better connectivity among all Buddhist pilgrimage sites in India, thereby offering devotees and pilgrims from across the world a profound experience of faith and spirituality.

Friends,

Our effort is to ensure that the Buddhist heritage reaches future generations in a natural way. The Global Buddhist Summit and international events like Vaishakh and Ashadha Purnima are driven by this very thought. You all know that Lord Buddha's Abhidhamma, his words, and his teachings were originally in the Pali language. We are striving to make Pali accessible to the common people. For this reason, Pali has been accorded the status of a classical language, which will make it easier to understand and explain the Dhamma in its original essence and will also strengthen research connected to the Buddhist tradition.

Friends,

Lord Buddha's philosophy of life transcended boundaries and geographical regions, showing the world a new path. "Bhavatu sabba mangalam, rakkhantu sabba devata, sabba buddhanubhāvena sada suttī bhavantu te"—this is a prayer for the welfare of the entire world. Lord Buddha sought to save humanity from extremism and told his followers: "Atta dīpo bhava bhikkhave! Parīkṣya bhikṣavo grāhyam, madvacho na tu gauravāt." This means, "Monks, be your own lamp. Even my words should be examined and accepted, not merely out of respect for me."

Friends,

This message of Buddha is relevant in every era and every age. Becoming our own lamp is the foundation of self-respect and the essence of self-reliance—"Atta Deepo Bhava."

Friends,

Lord Buddha showed the world the path of walking together instead of conflict and dominance, and this has always been India's core philosophy. We have adopted the path of global welfare through the strength of ideas and the depth of emotions, always in the interest of humanity. With this very approach, India is contributing to the world of the 21st century. That is why when we say this era is not of war but of Buddha, India's role is clear: strength is necessary against the enemies of humanity, but where there are only disputes, dialogue and peace are essential.

Friends,

India is committed to Sarvajana Hitaya, Sarvajana Sukhaya. This is what Lord Buddha taught us. I hope that every visitor to this exhibition will also connect with this inspiration.

Friends,

These sacred relics of Lord Buddha are India's heritage. After a century-long wait, they have returned to the country. Therefore, I urge people across the nation to come and witness these sacred relics, to connect with the thoughts of Lord Buddha, and to visit at least once. I especially urge school students, college students, young companions, and sons and daughters to definitely see this exhibition. This exhibition is a great medium to connect the glory of our past with the dreams of our future. I appeal to people across the country to participate in this exhibition. With this appeal, once again, I extend my best wishes to all for the success of this event. Thank you very much!

Namo Buddhaya!

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MJPS/VJ/SR

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