



English rendering of PM's address during Somnath Swabhiman Parv in Gujarat

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Jai Somnath.

Jai Somnath.

Respected and popular Chief Minister of Gujarat Shri Bhupendrabhai Patel, energetic young Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi ji, Ministers of the Gujarat Government Jitubhai Vaghani, Arjunbhai Modhwadia, Dr. Pradyumna Vaja, Kaushikbhai Vekariya, Member of Parliament Rajeshbhai, other distinguished dignitaries, ladies and gentlemen. Today, millions of people from every corner of the country are connected with us, and to them too, I extend my greetings—Victory to Somnath.

Friends,

This moment is extraordinary, this atmosphere is extraordinary, this celebration is extraordinary. On one side, Lord of Lords Mahadev himself; on the other, the vast waves of the ocean; the rays of the sun, the resonance of sacred chants, the surge of devotion—and in this divine environment, the presence of all devotees of Lord Somnath makes this occasion both divine and magnificent. I consider it my great fortune that, as the President of the Somnath Temple Trust, I have been given the opportunity to actively serve in the Somnath Pride Festival. Please, that background sound should be stopped.

For 72 hours, the continuous resonance of Omkara, 72 hours of uninterrupted chanting of mantras. Yesterday evening, I witnessed a thousand drones accompanied by a thousand students from Vedic Gurukuls presenting the saga of Somnath's thousand years. And today, the valorous procession of 108 horses reaching the temple, with the enchanting presentation of mantras and hymns—everything is mesmerizing. This experience cannot be expressed in words; only time can preserve it. This celebration embodies pride, dignity, glory, and wisdom. It carries the heritage of grandeur, the essence of spirituality, the joy of experience, the warmth of togetherness, and above all, the blessings of Lord Mahadev. Come, join me in chanting: Namah Parvati Pataye... Har Har Mahadev!

Friends,

As I speak to you today, my mind repeatedly asks: exactly a thousand years ago, at this very place where you are seated, what must the atmosphere have been? Those who are present here today, your ancestors, our ancestors, staked their very lives. For their faith, for their devotion, for their Mahadev, they sacrificed everything. A thousand years ago, those invaders thought they had triumphed. But today, a thousand years later, the flag flying atop the Somnath temple proclaims to the entire creation the true strength and power of India. Every grain of soil in this sacred land of Prabhas Patan bears witness to valor, courage, and heroism. For this form of Somnath, countless devotees of Shiva, countless worshippers of culture, countless bearers of tradition offered their lives. On this Somnath Pride Festival, I first bow in reverence to every brave man and woman who dedicated their lives to the protection of Somnath, to the reconstruction of the temple, and offered everything to Lord Mahadev.

Brothers and sisters,

This land of Prabhas Patan is not only the domain of Lord Shiva, its sanctity is also linked to Lord Shri Krishna. During the Mahabharata era, the Pandavas too performed penance at this sacred site. Therefore, this occasion is also an opportunity to bow to the countless dimensions of India. It is a happy coincidence that today, as the thousand-year journey of Somnath's pride is being commemorated, it also marks 75 years since its reconstruction in 1951. I extend my heartfelt greetings to millions of devotees across the world on the Somnath Pride Festival.

Friends,

The Somnath Pride Festival is not merely a remembrance of the destruction that took place a thousand years ago. It is a celebration of a thousand years of journey. It is also a festival of India's existence and pride. For at every step, at every milestone, we see unique parallels between Somnath and India. Just as there were repeated attempts, repeated conspiracies to destroy Somnath, in the same way, foreign invaders tried for centuries to annihilate India. Yet neither Somnath was destroyed, nor India was destroyed! Because India and the centers of India's faith are inseparably bound together.

Friends,

Imagine that history—exactly a thousand years ago, in 1026, Mahmud of Ghazni first attacked and demolished the Somnath temple. He thought he had erased Somnath's existence. But within a few years, Somnath was rebuilt. In the 12th century, King Kumarapala carried out a grand restoration of the temple. At the end of the 13th century, Alauddin Khilji again dared to attack Somnath. It is said that the ruler of Jalore fought valiantly against Khilji's armies. Soon after, in the early 14th century, the king of Junagadh once again restored Somnath's sanctity. In the later years of the 14th century, Muzaffar Khan attacked Somnath, but that attack too failed.

In the 15th century, Sultan Ahmad Shah tried to desecrate the temple, and later his grandson Sultan Mahmud Begada attempted to convert Somnath into a mosque. Yet, through the efforts of Mahadev's devotees, the temple came alive once again. In the 17th–18th centuries came the era of Aurangzeb. He desecrated the temple and tried again to turn it into a mosque. Even after that, Ahilyabai Holkar established a new temple and Somnath was once more manifested.

Thus, the history of Somnath is not a history of destruction and defeat. It is a history of victory and reconstruction. It is the history of the valor of our ancestors, of their sacrifice and dedication. Invaders kept coming, new waves of religious fanaticism kept attacking, but in every age Somnath was re-established again and again. Such centuries-long struggle, such prolonged resistance, such great patience, creativity, and resilience in reconstruction—such strength, such faith in culture, such devotion—examples like this are rare in the history of the world. Tell me, should we not remember the valor of our ancestors? Should we not draw inspiration from their deeds of courage? What son, what descendant would pretend to forget the valor of their forefathers?

Brothers and sisters,

From Ghazni to Aurangzeb, countless invaders attacked Somnath. They believed their swords were conquering eternal Somnath. But those fanatics did not understand that the very name Somnath carries Som—the nectar of immortality. It embodies the idea of drinking poison yet remaining immortal. Within it resides the conscious energy of Sadashiva Mahadev, who is both the benefactor and the source of power expressed in “Prachanda Tandavaḥ Shivaḥ.”

Brothers and sisters,

The Mahadev enshrined at Somnath is also known as Mrityunjaya—the conqueror of death, the very embodiment of Time itself. Yato jayate palyate yena vishvam, tamisham bhaje liyate yatra vishvam! That is, the universe is born from Him, sustained by Him, and dissolves back into Him. We believe:

Tvameko jagat vyapako vishva roop!

That is, Shiva pervades the entire universe.

That is why we see Shankar in every particle, in every stone. Then how could anyone destroy the countless forms of Shankar? We are those who see Shiva even in the living being! How could anyone shake our faith?

Friends,

This is the cycle of time—that the religious zealots who came with the intent to destroy Somnath are today confined to a few pages of history. And yet, the Somnath temple still stands tall on the shores of the vast ocean, holding aloft its towering flag of Dharma. The spire of Somnath seems to proclaim: Chandrashekham āśraye mama kim kariṣyati vai yamah! — “I am sheltered in Chandrashekhar Shiva; even Time itself can do nothing to me.”

Friends,

The Somnath Pride Festival is not only a celebration of historical glory, it is also a medium to make an eternal journey come alive for the future. We must use this occasion to strengthen our identity and existence. You see, if any country possesses a heritage a few hundred years old, it presents that heritage to the world as its identity. India, however, has sacred sites like Somnath that are thousands of years old. These places have been symbols of our strength, resilience, and tradition. Unfortunately, after independence, those with a mindset of slavery tried to distance themselves from this heritage. There were malicious attempts to erase this history.

We know how the nation sacrificed for the protection of Somnath. The efforts of rulers like Rawal Kanhaddev, the valor of Veer Hamirji Gohil, the bravery of Vegda Bhil—so many heroes are linked to the history of Somnath temple. Yet, sadly, they were never given due recognition. Instead, some historians and politicians tried to “whitewash” the history of invasions. Books were written to disguise religious fanaticism as mere plunder. But Somnath was not attacked once—it was attacked repeatedly. If the attacks were only for loot, they would have stopped after the first great plunder a thousand years ago. But that was not the case. The sacred idol of Somnath was desecrated, the temple’s form was repeatedly altered. And we were taught that Somnath was destroyed only for loot. The cruel history of hatred, oppression, and terror was hidden from us.

Friends,

No person truly faithful to their religion would support such fanaticism. Yet, the contractors of appeasement always bowed before this mindset. When India was freed from the chains of slavery, when Sardar Patel took the vow to rebuild Somnath, even then attempts were made to stop him. In 1951, objections were raised even when President Dr. Rajendra Prasad came here. At that time, the most renowned ruler of Saurashtra, our Jam Saheb Maharaja Digvijay Singh ji, stepped forward. From land acquisition to security arrangements, he placed national pride above all else. In that era, Jam Saheb donated one lakh rupees for Somnath temple and, as the first President of the Trust, shouldered great responsibility.

Brothers and sisters,

Sadly, even today, forces remain active in our country that opposed the reconstruction of Somnath. Today, instead of swords, conspiracies against India take other malicious forms. That is why we must be more vigilant, we must make ourselves stronger. We must remain united, stand together, and defeat every force that seeks to divide us.

Friends,

When we remain connected to our faith, to our roots, when we preserve our heritage with pride and vigilance, then the roots of our civilization grow stronger. That is why this thousand-year journey inspires us to prepare for the next thousand years.

Friends,

At the historic occasion of the consecration of the Ram Temple, I had placed before India a grand vision for the next thousand years. I spoke of advancing with the vision of “From the Divine to the Nation.” Today, the cultural renaissance of India is instilling new confidence among millions of citizens. Today, every Indian has faith in a developed India. Today, 1.4 billion Indians are resolved toward future goals. India will raise its glory to new heights. We will win our battle against poverty. We will reach new pinnacles of development. First, the goal of becoming the world’s third-largest economy, and then the journey beyond—that path is now ready. And the energy of Somnath temple is blessing these resolutions.

Friends,

Today’s India is moving forward with inspiration from heritage to development. In Somnath, both development and heritage are being realized together. On one hand, the cultural expansion of Somnath temple, the establishment of Somnath Sanskrit University, the vibrancy of the Madhavpur fair—all these strengthen our heritage. The conservation of the Gir lions enhances the natural attraction of this region. On the other hand, new dimensions of development are being created in Prabhas Patan. The expansion of Keshod Airport will allow pilgrims from across the country and abroad to reach Somnath directly. The launch of the Ahmedabad–Veraval Vande Bharat train has reduced travel time for pilgrims and tourists. The development of the pilgrimage circuit in this region is also underway. Thus, today’s India is not only remembering faith, but also empowering it for the future through infrastructure, connectivity, and technology.

Friends,

The message of our civilization has never been to defeat others, but to keep life in balance. In our tradition, the path of faith does not lead to hatred. Our strength does not give us the arrogance of destruction. Somnath has taught us that the path of creation is long, but it is permanent, eternal. Hearts can never be won at the tip of a sword. Civilizations that seek to advance by erasing others are themselves lost in time. That is why India has not taught the world how to win by defeating others, but how to live by winning hearts. This thought is what the world needs today. The thousand-year saga of Somnath gives this lesson to all humanity.

So let us resolve—to move forward toward development, to walk step by step together, shoulder to shoulder, heart to heart, without losing sight of our goals, while staying connected to our past and our heritage. Let us embrace modernity while preserving our consciousness. Let us take inspiration from festivals like the Somnath Pride Festival and march swiftly on the path of progress. Let us overcome every challenge and reach our goals. This program begins today, but we must commemorate this thousand-year journey across the nation, introduce our heritage to the world, celebrate this new 75-year milestone, and continue this celebration until May 2027. Let us awaken every citizen, and let an awakened nation move forward to fulfill its dreams. With this wish, once again, I extend my heartfelt greetings to all my fellow countrymen.

Har Har Mahadev.

Jai Somnath.

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Jai Somnath.

MJPS/VJ

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