



English rendering of PM's speech during the concluding session of Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2026

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 12 JAN 2026 10:03PM by PIB Delhi

My colleagues in the Union Cabinet, all Members of Parliament, the winners of the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Challenge, other dignitaries, and my young friends who have come here from across the country including those who have come from abroad must all have had a new experience here. Aren't you tired? You have been engaged for two days now, so won't you feel tired listening once again? Anyway, from my seat at the back, I have already said as much as I needed to. When I first took the oath as Chief Minister, I believe that many of you had not even been born. And when I took the oath as Prime Minister in 2014, most of you would still have been children. But whether as Chief Minister or now as Prime Minister, I have always had immense faith in the younger generation. I have always drawn energy from your capability and your talent. And today, I see that you are holding the reins of the mission to build a developed India.

Friends,

In 2047, when India completes 100 years of independence, the journey leading up to that milestone is extremely important for the nation. At the same time, these years are also the most crucial period of your lives. This is a great golden opportunity for you. Your capability will become India's capability, and your success will take India's success to new heights. I congratulate all of you for participating in the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue. I will speak on this subject in greater detail later, but first let us reflect on the significance of today.

Friends,

Today is the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. Even today, his thoughts continue to inspire every young person. What is the goal of our lives? What is our purpose? How should we live with the spirit of "Nation First"? In every action of ours, the welfare of society and of the nation must be central. In this regard, the life of Swami Vivekananda serves as a great guide and source of inspiration. In his memory, every year 12 January is celebrated as National Youth Day, and inspired by him, this date has been chosen for the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue.

Friends,

I am pleased to see that in such a short time, the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue has become such a major platform, a platform where youth directly participate in shaping the direction of the nation's development. More than five million youth registered, over three million actively participated in the Viksit Bharat Challenge, and shared their ideas for India's future. Youth engagement on such a massive scale is unprecedented. Around the world, the term "think tank" is commonly used. Think tanks hold discussions and influence opinion-making. But after watching the presentations today and the manner in which you raised challenging ideas, I believe that this forum itself has become an institution- a unique global think

tank. When millions of minds brainstorm together on defined subjects with a clear goal, what greater exercise of thinking can there be? In fact, the word “think tank” seems inadequate. A “tank” may be small, but this initiative is vast broader than the ocean and deeper than it in ideas. The subjects you discussed today- particularly Women-Led Development and Youth Participation in Democracy- were addressed with remarkable maturity. Your presentations demonstrate how determined our Amrit Generation is to build a developed India. They also reveal the temperament of India’s Gen-Z: creative, confident, and committed. I congratulate all my young friends and everyone associated with the Yuva Bharat organisation for making this event a success.

Friends,

When I mentioned the year 2014 earlier, most of you here would have been only eight or ten years old. You would not have developed the habit of reading newspapers at that time. You did not witness the era of policy paralysis, when governments were criticised for delayed decisions and even when decisions were taken, they were poorly implemented. The rules and regulations were such that youth could not even imagine doing something new. Young people were burdened by restrictions at every step.

Friends,

At that time, something as simple as applying for an examination or a job required running from office to office just to get certificates attested. Paying fees meant visiting banks and post offices to get demand drafts. Starting a business required multiple guarantees even for a small loan. Today, these things seem unbelievable, but this was reality just a decade ago.

Friends,

You spoke here about start-ups, so let me explain the transformation of the start-up ecosystem. While start-up culture began globally decades ago, India saw very little discussion on it until recently. Until 2014, there were fewer than 500 registered start-ups in the country. Excessive government control dominated every sector, leaving young talent with little opportunity to pursue innovation.

Friends,

I have faith in the youth of my country and confidence in your capabilities. That is why we chose a different path. Keeping youth at the centre, we introduced one reform after another, and it was from here that the Startup Revolution truly gained momentum in India. Ease of Doing Business reforms, Startup India, Digital India, the Fund of Funds, and tax and compliance simplification — many such initiatives were undertaken. Sectors that were earlier completely dominated by the government were opened up for youth-led innovation and enterprise. The impact of these efforts has itself become a remarkable success story.

Friends,

Take the space sector as an example. Until five or six years ago, the responsibility for advancing the space sector rested solely with ISRO. We opened the space sector to private enterprise, created the necessary frameworks, and established supporting institutions. As a result, today more than 300 start-ups are operating in India’s space sector. In a short span of time, our start-up Skyroot Aerospace developed its rocket, Vikram-S. Another start-up, Agnikul Cosmos, astonished the world by creating the world’s first 3D-printed engine. All of this is the result of the power of start-ups. India’s space start-ups are now consistently demonstrating their capabilities.

Friends,

Let me now ask you a question. Imagine if there had been round-the-clock restrictions of every kind on flying drones -what would have happened? That was exactly the situation earlier. In our country, both flying and manufacturing drones were trapped in a web of laws. Obtaining a licence was like climbing a mountain, and the entire issue was viewed only from a security perspective. We introduced new rules and simplified them. As a result, many youth today have received the opportunity to move forward in the drone-related sector. On the battlefield, Made in India drones are defeating the enemies of the nation, and in the agricultural sector, our Namo Drone Didi sisters are using drone technology in farming.

Friends,

The defence sector earlier depended entirely on government companies. Our government changed this as well and opened the doors of India's defence ecosystem to start-ups. This has brought significant benefits to our youth. Today, more than 1,000 defence start-ups are working in India. One young entrepreneur is building drones, another is developing anti-drone systems, some are creating AI-based cameras, while others are working in the field of robotics.

Friends,

Digital India has also created a new community of creators in India. Today, India is witnessing unprecedented growth in the Orange Economy that is, culture, content, and creativity. India is emerging as a major global hub in fields such as media, film, gaming, music, digital content, and VR–XR technologies. A presentation here just now spoke about exporting our culture. I urge the youth present: we have such a vast treasure of stories and legends the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and so much more. Can we take these into the world of gaming? Globally, gaming is a massive market and a major economy. We can create innovative games based on our mythological narratives. Our Hanuman ji can capture the imagination of gamers across the world. In this way, our culture will be exported in a modern form, using technology as its medium. Even today, I see several Indian start-ups that are beautifully presenting India's stories through gaming, making it easier for children to understand India while they play.

Friends,

The World Audio-Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) has become a powerful launchpad for young creators. No matter which sector you belong to, today India is opening doors to infinite possibilities. Therefore, my call to all youth associated with this event, and to the youth of the nation, is this: move forward with your ideas, do not hesitate to take risks. The government is walking with you, shoulder to shoulder.

Friends,

Over the past decade, the series of changes and reforms we began has now turned into a Reform Express. At the heart of these reforms is you- our youth power. Next-generation reforms in GST have made processes even simpler for youth and entrepreneurs. Income up to twelve lakh rupees is now tax-free, which significantly increases the potential for savings for those entering the workforce or starting new businesses.

Friends,

You all know that today, electricity is not merely a source of light. From AI and data centres to semiconductors and manufacturing, every modern ecosystem requires abundant energy. That is why India is ensuring Assured Energy. Reforms related to civil nuclear energy- the Shanti Act have been undertaken with this objective. This will create thousands of new jobs in the nuclear sector and will also generate a strong multiplier effect across other sectors.

Friends,

Different countries across the world have different needs and demands, and their workforces are steadily shrinking. Our effort is to ensure that India's youth are prepared for the opportunities emerging globally. Therefore, continuous reforms in skill development sectors are essential and we are actively pursuing them. After the introduction of the new National Education Policy, regulations related to higher education are also being reformed. Foreign universities are now opening their campuses in India. Recently, the PM SETU programme was launched with investments worth thousands of crores of rupees. This initiative will upgrade thousands of ITIs so that youth can be trained according to the present and future needs of industry. In recent years, India has also signed trade agreements with several countries, which are bringing new opportunities for Indian youth.

Friends,

No nation can become self-reliant or developed without self-confidence. A lack of pride in our capabilities, our heritage, and our tools weakens us. We need commitment and a sense of pride, and we must move forward with strength and confidence. You must have read about the British politician Macaulay, who, during the colonial period, worked through the education system to create a generation of Indians who were mentally enslaved. This fostered an inferiority complex towards indigenous traditions, products, and capabilities. Being foreign or imported came to be seen as a guarantee of superiority. Is that mindset acceptable today? Together, we must put an end to this mentality of slavery. Ten years from now, two hundred years will have passed since Macaulay's actions, and it is the responsibility of this generation to wash away the injustice of those two centuries. We still have ten years, and I have complete faith that this young generation will accomplish this task. Every young citizen must resolve to free the country from this mindset.

Friends,

Our scriptures say and this was also mentioned in one of the start-up presentations here- "Aa no bhadrah kratavo yantu viśvataḥ", meaning let noble, auspicious, and beneficial thoughts come to us from all directions. You must learn from the world's best practices, but never allow the tendency to undervalue your own heritage and ideas to dominate. This is precisely what the life of Swami Vivekananda teaches us. He travelled the world, appreciated its strengths, yet continuously challenged the misconceptions spread about India's civilisation. He did not accept ideas simply because they were popular; instead, he confronted social evils and sought to build a better India. With the same spirit, our youth power must now move forward. And at the same time, take care of your fitness- play, laugh, and live fully.

I have unshakeable faith in all of you, in your capabilities and in your energy. With these words, I once again extend my heartfelt greetings to all of you on National Youth Day. One final suggestion, I want to give you: this dialogue programme should also be organised at the state level to discuss development within states. After that, we should move towards district-level dialogues. In this way, what we call a think tank can evolve into a think web. My best wishes are always with you.

Thank you very much, friends.

MJPS/VJ

(रिलीज़ आईडी: 2213982) आगंतुक पटल : 922

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