English rendering of PM's speech during interaction with the Security Forces in Bastar, Chhattisgarh

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Bharat Mata Ki Jai.

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My dear countrymen,

Today, crores of Indians across the country and in every corner of the world are celebrating the sacred festival of lights. People are travelling from far and wide to reach their homes. It is a great festival of meeting and spending time with family and loved ones. And I too have come among you to celebrate Diwali. Whether on the borders or within the country, all of you who defend the nation, all of you who stand guard over the nation, all you brave sons and daughters of Mother India, are my own people, a part of my family. From Kargil in the lap of the Himalayas to Lepcha, from Sir Creek on the seashore to INS Vikrant in the embrace of the sea, every Diwali spent with our brave soldiers has been memorable for me.

My brave soldiers,

This time, I have come to celebrate Diwali in the forests of Bastar, among all of you. This is the land where Naxalite terror once held sway, and because of your sacrifice, dedication, and perseverance, that very land has now been freed from the scourge of Naxalite terror and has begun a new journey of development.

And friends,

This Diwali of 2026 is truly special. After forty or fifty years, such a Diwali has arrived for all of you. This is the first Diwali when the country has won its decades-long battle against Naxalism and Maoist terror. This is the first Diwali when every district of the country is free from Naxalism. This is the first Diwali when crores of citizens have overcome the fear of Naxalism. This is an extraordinary achievement. A very large share of the credit belongs to you, to lakhs of brave personnel like you, to our soldiers, sons and daughters, and security personnel. Therefore, today I have come to celebrate Diwali with you. And I have also come to express, on behalf of 140 crore Indians, gratitude for your sacrifice, dedication, and spirit of service.

Friends,

Our visionary ancestors said: “Abhyantaram bhayam rakshyam, asaram bahyato bhayam.” This means that when a nation’s internal security is strong, external enemies cannot do much harm. But when internal security weakens, external enemies also begin to raise their heads. Therefore, the role that our armed forces play on the borders is the same role that all of you security personnel play within the country. You have made countless sacrifices for the unity and integrity of the nation. You have shown limitless dedication. The security forces engaged in preserving internal security, our CRPF, CoBRA, BSF, ITBP, every single jawan, the SSB, IRB, the police personnel of the states, the commandos of special forces such as the Bastar Fighters, and our women fighters, this nation is indebted to all of you for your service. Crores and crores of citizens are proud of you. With this feeling of gratitude and affection, I extend my heartfelt Diwali greetings to every one of you, wherever you are standing guard. I also convey my greetings to our soldiers deployed on the borders for the defence of the nation.

Friends,

This battle against Maoist terror and Naxalism was not easy. There was a time when more than 230 districts across nearly 20 states of the country were affected by Naxalism. After sunset, life would come to a standstill in these areas. It became impossible to step outside one's home. These Naxalites had even snatched away the people's right to vote. Bihar, Maharashtra, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh, a very large part of the country was affected by Left-wing extremism. Thousands of villages and crores of people were trapped by it. There were as many as two thousand Naxalite attacks in a single year. Just remember, in 2010, nearby in Dantewada, 76 CRPF personnel were martyred in an encounter with Naxalites. In the same year, another incident in Dantewada claimed the lives of 44 innocent civilians. This land was consecrated by the blood of our brave men. But not a single cry of grief was heard from those privileged leaders living in their palaces. Not even a single tear emerged from their eyes. Such attacks occurred repeatedly. This cycle continued for decades. During this period, more than one thousand security personnel sacrificed their lives in Chhattisgarh alone. Many soldiers lost their arms and legs in IED blasts. If you look at the figures from 2004 to 2013, every year more of our brave soldiers were martyred than the number of Naxalites eliminated. The leaders of Naxalite organisations considered this their victory and celebrated it. And unfortunately, the governments of that time had accepted Naxalism as an incurable disease and simply left it unattended. My tribal families were left to survive on their fate. It had been accepted that this would continue endlessly, bullets would keep flying, soldiers would keep dying, and innocent citizens would keep suffering.

Friends,

No nation can function with an attitude of “this is how things will continue.” To move a nation forward, its enemies must be crushed with determination, courage, and a clear strategy. The political will that was lacking in the country for this task was restored in 2014. You gave this Pradhan Sevak an opportunity to serve Mother India. And after 2014, we saw both the situation and the statistics begin to change. For years, discussions revolved around the number of security personnel being killed compared to the number of Naxalites. But after 47 years, for the first time, not a single CRPF jawan lost his life during

duty over the past year. This is the victory of the country's correct policies and firm resolve. This is the victory of your bravery, your courage, and your restraint. I repeat, this is the victory of your bravery, your courage, and your restraint.

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Victory to these brave soldiers.

Our security forces and police personnel remained steadfast even in the most adverse circumstances. This is the victory of that devotion to duty.

Friends,

Success requires the right intentions and the right policies. For national security, we took one tough decision after another. Many such steps were also taken that are still not known to the public. Through these decisions and efforts, a major blow was dealt to the funding networks of Naxalites and separatists. The nexus of fake currency was destroyed. This not only broke their financial backbone but also choked their entire supply chain. As a result, the supply of weapons stopped, and restrictions were imposed on the movement and recruitment of Naxalites.

Friends,

Previous governments had also tied the hands of the security forces fighting on the ground. Naxalite attacks kept taking place, but the security forces did not have the freedom to retaliate decisively. We gave the security forces the freedom to take every necessary decision. We also worked to stop the support that Left-wing extremism used to receive from certain people sitting within the government and the system.

Friends,

We were pursuing a very large goal. Our goal was that no mother's lap should be left empty, no family should be trapped in a cycle of destruction, no child should pick up weapons and walk the path of violence, and no young person's future should be ruined. Therefore, until this goal was achieved, we continued to work with determination. There was no publicity, no display. Working with sensitivity, we broke the backbone of Maoist terror. Through a spirit of service, we transformed lives in Naxal-affected regions. That is why people who had suffered from Naxalism also stood firmly with the government and the security forces. Even here today, there are citizens present who contributed greatly to this major victory. I express my gratitude to all of them as well.

Friends,

When we work with the spirit of Nation First, the country's peace and security are ensured, the nation reaches new heights of development, and the participation of every poor and deprived citizen in development also increases. Therefore, over the past twelve years, the country has not only won the fight against Naxalism and separatism, but it has also won a major battle against poverty.

Friends,

Just before Diwali this year, a piece of news emerged that is being discussed across the country and around the world. A few days ago, the World Bank stated in its report that in India, over the past twelve years, fifty crore people, fifty crore people, have risen out of extreme poverty. What decades of slogans about removing poverty could not achieve, the country accomplished in just twelve years. Just imagine how great an achievement this is. Think about how it became possible.

Friends,

During Diwali, we create rangoli designs. At first, only a few lines are drawn, and the initial patterns appear small and separate. But as one small part after another comes together, a beautiful and complete picture emerges. Over the past twelve years, something similar has happened in India. We created a rangoli of welfare schemes that continuously empowered the poor. Through the Jan Dhan Yojana, crores of people became connected to the banking system. Through the PM Awas Yojana, crores of families received permanent homes. Under the Mudra Yojana, we provided loans without collateral. Through the SVANidhi Scheme, street vendors also received support and opportunities to expand their businesses. Under Ayushman Bharat, we provided free healthcare to the poor. Crores of families received free food grains every month. Policies were created for children's education. In other words, we ensured free medicine, free education, and free kitchen support for every poor family. Not only that, schemes such as the Swachh Bharat Mission and Har Ghar Jal removed many basic concerns of daily life. As a result, crores of people have come out of poverty today. Families to whom poverty was once passed on as an inheritance are now inheriting the foundation of a better future. Families whose entire lives were spent in anxiety now have the confidence that comes from trust in the government and a renewed sense of self-belief.

Friends,

A major foundation of this victory against poverty is also linked to the country's fight against Naxalism and separatism. The people of Bastar and all of you know that wherever Naxalites held influence, their first agenda was to stop development and harm the lives of ordinary people. Schools for children were not allowed to function and were often set on fire. Hospitals for the sick were not allowed to be built, and doctors were prevented from entering. Facilities such as medical stores, which help save lives, were not permitted. These Naxalites even prevented children from receiving polio vaccinations. They did not allow mobile towers to be installed. You have seen for years how railway tracks were blown up with bombs and how industries and businesses were prevented from functioning. And the result was that lakhs of poor and innocent citizens, my brothers and sisters, and my young brothers and sisters, remained deprived of opportunities. Their lives never escaped the cycle of poverty. Therefore, when we began the fight against Naxalism, we simultaneously launched special campaigns for the development of Naxal-affected regions. We built more than 15,000 kilometres of roads in areas affected by Left-wing extremism, with complete security arrangements. More than 9,500 mobile towers were installed in these regions. Around 175 Eklavya schools were opened for the education of tribal children. Nearly 50 Industrial Training Institutes were established to connect youth with employment opportunities. Around 50 Skill Development Centres were created. Thousands of post offices, bank branches, and ATMs were opened. The PM Janman Yojana was launched for the development of the most backward tribal regions. Through this, facilities such as water,

electricity, and roads reached thousands of remote villages for the first time. Not only this, surrendered Naxalites were also given an opportunity. Special schemes were created for their rehabilitation.

Friends,

This campaign of “Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas” has given the country's fight against poverty new energy and new confidence. That is why, on one hand, 50 crore people have come out of extreme poverty, and on the other hand, Naxalite violence has also come to an end in the country. Just look at Bastar itself. Today, the Bastar Olympics is being held in Bastar. Children are no longer picking up guns; they are trying their hands at sports.

Friends,

Amid these achievements, we must remember one more thing. The Naxalites have been eliminated, but the danger has not completely disappeared. Armed Naxalites have vanished from the forests, but intellectual Naxalites have captured many organisations. Even today, they are provoking people against the Constitution and democracy of the country. These intellectual Naxalites have also infiltrated several political parties and various organisations. We must identify them, defeat them, and secure the nation.

Friends,

Today's achievements inspire us, but they are not a pause. I say again, they are not a pause. These victories, these successes, are platforms for a new flight. This flight will carry the dreams of the nation, dreams that our generations have cherished for centuries. These will be the dreams of those freedom fighters who made countless sacrifices for independence. These will be the dreams of those brave soldiers who laid down their lives for Mother India on the nation's borders. These will be the dreams of those courageous personnel who sacrificed their lives in the fight against Naxalism and terrorism. Every day, you live by this spirit: "May your glory remain eternal, Mother. May your glory remain eternal, Mother. Whether we live for a few more days or not, May your glory remain eternal, Mother." Now is the time for this spirit of yours to transform into a new confidence. Now is the time to live for the nation and to take the nation to new heights.

Friends,

Whatever resolve our nation takes, it also possesses the capability to fulfil it. We had promised that we would remove Article 370 from Kashmir, and we fulfilled that promise. We had promised that we would build toilets in every household, and we fulfilled that promise. We had promised to expand the scope of vaccination, and we fulfilled that promise. Therefore, when we speak today about eliminating poverty, when we speak about a drug-free India, a narcotics-free India, when we speak about a Developed India, when we speak about a Self-Reliant India, these goals too will certainly be achieved. We must witness these dreams becoming reality before our very eyes. I have faith in you. I have faith in the youth power of my country. I have faith in the people of my nation. The country will certainly reach these goals. Your sacrifice and hard work will become the strong foundation of the grand edifice of a Developed India. With this faith, I once again extend my heartfelt greetings to all of you on the occasion of Diwali. Thank you all very much.

Bharat Mata Ki Jai.

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Vande Mataram!

Vande Mataram!

Vande Mataram!

Vande Mataram!

Vande Mataram!

Vande Mataram!

Vande Mataram!

Thank you very much.

DISCLAIMER: This is the approximate translation of the Prime Minister's address. Original address was delivered in Hindi.

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