

# English rendering of PM's address at interaction with Heads of Indian Missions abroad and stakeholders of the trade & commerce sector

Posted On: 06 AUG 2021 10:30PM by PIB Delhi

Namaskar,

All my colleagues in the Union Cabinet, Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Central and State Government officials serving all over the world, all the leaders of different Export Councils and Chambers of Commerce & Industry, ladies and gentlemen! It is time for the Amrit Mahotsav of freedom. This is not only the time to celebrate our freedom in the 75th year of independence; it is also an opportunity to build a clear vision and roadmap for future India. Your role, involvement and initiatives for our export ambitions are very huge. I understand everyone here is aware of what is happening today at the global level. Today the world is getting smaller and smaller every day due to physical, technological and financial connectivity. In such a situation, new possibilities are emerging around the world for the expansion of our exports. I think that you are more experienced than me and better judges. I congratulate all of you for today's initiative and for the opportunity to exchange views from both sides. The enthusiasm, optimism and commitment displayed by all of you to achieve our ambitious goals regarding exports is also commendable.

Friends,

When we had the highest share in the global economy, it was due to India's robust trade and exports. We have trade links and trade routes with almost every part of the world. Today, as we try to reclaim that old stake in the global economy, the role of our exports is very important. In the post-Covid world, when there is an extensive debate on the global supply chain, we have to maximize our efforts to take advantage of the new opportunities. You are aware that our exports constitute about 20 percent of GDP. Considering the size of our economy and our potential, manufacturing and service industry base, there is a huge potential for exports to grow. At a time when the country is on the AatmaNirbhar Bharat mission, one of its goals is also to increase India's share in the global supply chain manifold. Today we have to ensure that we get access according to the international demand so that our business can scale up and grow. Our industry will also have to embrace the best technology, focus on innovation and increase its share in R&D. This can only result in the growth of our share in the global value chain. While encouraging competition and excellence, we have to prepare global champions in every sector.

Friends, four factors are very crucial for increasing exports. First, the manufacturing in the country has to increase manifold and it should be qualitatively competitive. As our friends said there is a new class in the world which focuses on quality more than price. And we have to address this issue. Secondly, there should be an end to the logistics problems of transport. In this regard, the Centre, state governments and private players have to play their part. Thirdly, the government has to walk shoulder to shoulder with the exporters. We will not get the desired results if state governments are not involved, if exporters' councils in the states are not involved and businessmen who remain in the isolated world and carry out exports in their own way. We need to collaborate. And the fourth factor, which is related to today's event, is the international market for Indian products. When all these four factors are integrated, only then India's local will be global, only then will we be able to achieve the goal of Make in India for the world in a better way.

Friends,

The governments both at the Centre and the states are trying to move ahead by understanding the needs of the business world. Under the AatmaNirbhar Bharat campaign, many relaxations have been given in compliances

which have made it easier to run economic activities smoothly. The Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme of Rs 3 lakh crore has provided relief to MSMEs and other affected sectors. Another Rs 1.5 lakh crore has been approved recently to encourage recovery and growth.

Friends

The Production Linked Incentive Scheme will go a long way in increasing not only the scale of our manufacturing but also the level of global quality and efficiency. This will greatly facilitate the development of a new ecosystem of the Made in India. The country will get new global champions in manufacturing and exports. We are experiencing its impact in the mobile phone sector. Seven years ago, we used to import mobile phones worth about \$ 8 billion, which has come down to \$2 billion. Seven years ago, India used to export mobile phones worth only \$ 0.3 billion, now it has increased to more than 3 billion dollars.

Friends,

The government's focus is also to resolve another problem related to manufacturing and exports. It has been and should remain the priority of both the central and state governments to cut down time and cost of logistics. In order to ensure this, we will have to move forward rapidly at every level whether it is policy decision or construction of infrastructure. Today we are moving rapidly towards multimodal connectivity.

Friends,

Bangladesh has just shared its experience that goods have started moving through the railway route and there has been a sudden increase in (the volumes). Friends, the government is making continuous efforts to minimize the impact of the pandemic and to keep the virus infection under control. Vaccination is progressing at a fast pace in the country today. Every possible step has been taken to eliminate every problem of the countrymen and the industry. You are also experiencing the results of the efforts made in the past. Our industry and our businesses have also innovated during this period and molded themselves according to the new challenges. The industry also helped the country deal with the medical emergency and played a role in reviving growth. This is the reason that today along with drugs and pharmaceuticals, our exports have reached a new level in sectors like agriculture. Today we are witnessing positive signs not only in economic recovery but also about high growth. Many of the world's major economies are also showing signs of rapid recovery. Therefore, I think this is a better time to have bigger targets for exports and achieve them. The government is also taking necessary steps at every level in this regard. Recently, the government made a major decision regarding exporters. With this decision, our exporters will get a boost of about 88,000 crore rupees in the form of insurance cover. Similarly, rationalizing export incentives and making them WTO compliant will also boost our exports.

Friends,

Our exporters doing business in different countries of the world know very well the impact of stability. The decision to get rid of retrospective taxation shows our commitment and consistency in policies. It sends a clear message to all investors that the decisive government of India is not only opening doors to new possibilities but also has the will to fulfill its promises.

Friends,

Every state has huge stakes in meeting our export goals and carrying out other reforms. The role of the states is very important, be it investment, ease of doing business or the last mile infrastructure. The central government is working closely with the states in minimizing the regulatory burden to give a boost to exports or investments. A healthy competition is being promoted so that export hubs are set up in the states. States are being encouraged to focus on one product in each district.

Friends,

Our ambitious target regarding exports can be achieved only through a holistic and detailed action plan. Not only do we need to accelerate our existing exports, we also have to work to create new market destinations for new products. I would like to give you some suggestions. Our missions abroad can determine, for example, if we are exporting to three destinations in the world, can't we add five new destinations on the occasion of 75 years of independence? I think we can do it. Can our missions decide to add 75 new products in addition to

the products already being exported to those countries? Similarly, the Indian Diaspora, which has become very proactive in the last seven years, has been supplementing your efforts. We can form groups of Diaspora in states and hold a virtual summit with the respective state on exports in this 75<sup>th</sup> year of independence. For example, the Bihar government organizes a summit related to its exports. There should be participation of the Indian government, exporters from the state and the Diaspora of Bihar living in the respective country and we can deliberate the items which can be exported there. I think the Diaspora will be emotionally attached with this initiative and can help in marketing and branding of those products. This way our products can reach many places. Similarly, the state governments can prioritize five or ten such products which can be exported to 75 countries. The states can set this target. We can make proactive efforts to find new destinations in the world during the 75<sup>th</sup> year of independence by adopting new methods. There are several products which the world may not be aware of. For example, the cheaper LED bulb developed by India. At a time when countries across the world are concerned about global warming and stressing on energy saving, we can export our LED bulbs at affordable prices. It will also be an act of humanity and India will also have access to a huge market. There are several such products. I just gave you an example. At present, almost half of our exports are limited to only four major destinations. Similarly, about 60 percent of our exports are related to engineering goods, gems and jewellery, petroleum and chemical products and pharmaceuticals. I understand we need to introspect that such a huge country, a country with so much diversity, a country with unique products is not reaching out to the world. We need to remove those anomalies. We need to sit together and find ways. We have to change this situation together, find new destinations and also take our new products to the world. With the opening of sectors like mining, coal, defense and railways, there are new opportunities for our entrepreneurs to boost exports. Can we devise futuristic strategies for these new sectors?

Friends,

I would also make a request to our Ambassadors, colleagues from the Ministry of External Affairs present in this program today. In whichever country you are representing India you understand the needs and demands of that country very well. You also have a better idea from which region of India that demand can be fulfilled. In the last 7 years we have carried out a new experiment. When the people posted in the missions abroad come to India, they are sent to the states where they hold discussions with the state governments for about two-three days so that the respective state has the advantage of exploring exports to that particular country. This practice has been going on. All of you are like a very strong bridge for our exporters and the commerce industry. I would also like that India House present in different countries should also become representative of India's manufacturing power. If you keep alerting and guiding the people in India from time to time, then it will facilitate increasing exports. I will also ask the Ministry of Commerce to develop a system so that there is constant contact between our exporters and our missions. And I believe that due to this virtual system, we can do these things very easily. Earlier it was difficult to travel and hold meetings. But after Corona, by and large this virtual system is being accepted all over the world. I believe there should be greater use of this virtual system so that our efforts for a combined initiative with all parties and stakeholders will become more decisive.

Friends,

We have to build a seamless and high quality supply chain within the country as well so as to derive maximum benefit to our economy from our exports. For this we need to forge a new relationship, a new partnership. I request all exporters to strengthen partnership with our MSMEs, farmers and fishermen and promote our start-ups. Our young generation can contribute so much to the world in the field of start-ups. Not many exporters would be familiar with this fact. If possible, the commerce ministry should take initiatives in this regard. There should be a joint workshop of our startups, exporters and investors so that they get to know each other's strengths, get introduced to the world market. Maybe we can do a lot. We should support them. As far as quality and efficiency is concerned, we have proven this to the world in terms of our medicines and vaccines. Another example of how we can improve quality by better use of technology is our honey sector. I am citing small examples because even small things can emerge as a powerhouse. Ensuring the quality of honey was essential to increase its recognition in the international market. We introduced a new technology-based test for honey. As a result, we exported honey worth about \$97 million last year. Can't we do new innovations like this in food processing, fruits or fisheries? There is an environment of holistic healthcare in the world today. There is an environment of Back to Basics. Yoga has made the world take note of India. In such a scenario, our organic agriculture products have a huge market potential in the world. How do we

promote our organic products?

Friends,

It is time for a new journey with new goals for Brand India. This is the time for us to establish a new identity of quality and reliability. We have to constantly try to add value to India's high value-added products for their exports in every nook and corner of the world. We need to constantly add value to our products so that there is a natural demand for them. We should try this. I also assure all the exporters and the industry that the government will support you in every way. Let us realize the resolve of AatmaNirbhar Bharat, a prosperous India together! I wish you all the very best. After a week, we will celebrate 15th August in our missions around the world and also in India. The Amrit Mahotsav of freedom will also begin formally. I want it to be inspiration for us. The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence is in itself a huge inspirational occasion for us to reach out to the world and leave an impact. The next 25 years are very valuable for us when the country will celebrate the centenary of independence in 2047. Let us move ahead with a roadmap from now on without losing a single moment. And I believe that we will fulfill and exceed this resolution after today's meeting. With this belief, I wish you all the very best. Thank you.

**DISCLAIMER: This is the approximate translation of PM's speech. Original speech was delivered in Hindi.**

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(Release ID: 1743434)