

English rendering of PM's address to the nation on the COVID-19 situation

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My dear countrymen, Namaskar!

The country is fighting a big battle again today against Corona. The situation was under control till a few weeks ago, but the second wave of Corona has hit like a storm. I am aware of the pain that you have suffered and continue to suffer. On behalf of all the countrymen, I extend my condolences to those who have lost their dear ones in the past. As a member of the family, I am involved in your grief. The challenge is huge, but together we have to overcome it with our resolve, courage and preparation.

Friends,

Before elaborating, I will appreciate all the doctors, medical staff, paramedical staff, Safai Karamchhari (sanitation staff), our ambulance drivers, security forces and policemen. You saved people by putting your life at stake even in the first wave of corona. Once again, you are working day and night to save the lives of others leaving behind your families, welfare and worries.

Friends,

It is written in our scriptures i.e., we should not lose patience even in the most difficult times. To deal with any situation, we should take the right decision, make efforts in the right direction, only then can we win. With this mantra, the country is working day and night. The decisions and the steps taken in the last few days will improve the situation rapidly. During this Corona crisis, the demand for oxygen has increased considerably in many parts of the country this time. Expeditionary efforts are on in this regard with complete sensitivity. Everybody, including the Central Government, the State Governments and the private sector, is trying their best to provide oxygen to every needy person. Measures are also being taken at several levels to increase oxygen production and supply. Every effort is being made to have new oxygen plants in the states, deliver one lakh new oxygen cylinders, medical use of oxygen being used in industrial units, oxygen rail, etc.

Friends,

As corona cases increased this time, the country's pharma sector has further increased the production of medicines. Today, the production of medicines is manifold in the country as compared to January-February. It is being boosted further. Yesterday also, I had a very long discussion with the important and top experts of the pharma industry in the country. Pharmaceutical companies are helping in every way to increase production. We are fortunate that our country has such a strong pharma sector which makes better and fast medicines. At the same time, the number of beds in hospitals is also being increased. Special and big COVID hospitals are being set up in some cities in view of high demand.

Friends,

Last year, when only a few Corona patients were reported in the country, work was started in India for effective vaccines against coronavirus. Our scientists have developed vaccines for the countrymen in a very short time. Today, India has the cheapest vaccines in the world. We have vaccines that suit India's cold chain system. In this effort, our private sector has excelled in innovation and enterprise. Besides the approval of vaccines and fast tracking regulatory processes, all scientific and regulatory help have also been extended. It is a team effort that India could launch the world's largest vaccination campaign with two 'Made in India' vaccines. From the very first phase of vaccination, it was emphasized that the vaccines reach as many areas and to the needy in the shortest possible time. India is the fastest in the world in providing vaccine doses to its

first 10 crore people, 11 crore and now 12 crore people. We are encouraged that a large section of our healthcare workers, frontline Corona warriors and senior citizens have been vaccinated in this battle against Corona.

Friends,

Another important decision has been taken yesterday regarding vaccination. From May 1 onwards, every person above 18 years of age can be vaccinated. Now, half of the vaccines produced in India will be available directly to the states and hospitals. Meanwhile, the Central Government's vaccination programme for the poor, the elderly and persons above the age of 45 years will continue at the same pace as before. Free vaccines will be available in government hospitals which can be availed by my poor brothers and sisters, middle class and lower middle class people.

Friends,

While we are making efforts to save lives, there is also an attempt at the same time that the economic activities and livelihoods are least affected. This should be our attempt. Open vaccination for people above the age of 18 years will ensure faster vaccines for our workforce in cities. With the efforts of the states and the Central Government, the workers will also be vaccinated quickly. I urge the state administration to instill confidence in the workers and urge them to stay where they are. The confidence given by the states will help them a lot that they will be vaccinated in the next few days in the city where they are in and their work will not be affected.

Friends,

The circumstances that were there last time were quite different from the present one. Then we did not have corona specific medical infrastructure to fight this global pandemic. You recall what was the situation in the country? There were not enough labs for Corona tests, no production of PPEs. We didn't even have much information about the treatment of the disease. But we improved these things in a very short time. Today, our doctors have acquired very good expertise in the treatment of Corona; they are saving as many lives as they can. Today, we have a large number of PPE kits, a huge network of labs and we are continuously increasing the facility of testing.

Friends,

The country has fought against Corona very strongly and patiently so far. The credit goes to all the countrymen. It is because of your discipline and patience in the fight against Corona that the country has reached here today. I am sure that we will be able to defeat this storm of Corona also with the strength of people's participation. Today we can see how so many people and social institutions are busy day and night in helping those in need. Whether it is providing medicines, or making arrangements for food or lodging, people are working with full attentiveness. I salute the spirit of service of all of them and appeal to the countrymen to come forward as much as possible in this hour of crisis and help the needy. We will be able to win this battle with this pledge of service by society. I request young colleagues to create small committees in their societies, localities and apartments and help others in following the COVID discipline. If we do this, then governments will not need to create containment zones, impose curfew or lockdown. There is no question of lockdown. During the cleanliness drive, my child friends had helped a lot to spread awareness in the country. The children who were studying in the fifth, seventh and 10th standards had explained to the people in the house and persuaded them. They had also given a message of cleanliness to the elders. Today, I would like to say one thing specifically to my child friends again to create an atmosphere in the house so that people don't leave the house unnecessarily without work or any reason. Your perseverance can lead to good results. I also request the media to speed up their efforts to make people alert and aware in this time of crisis. At the same time, they should also ensure that there is no atmosphere of fear and people don't fall for rumours and misconceptions.

Friends,

In today's situation, we have to save the country from lockdowns. I would also request the states to use lockdown as the last option. We have to try our best to avoid lockdown and focus on the micro-containment zones. We will also improve the health of our economy and take care of the health of our countrymen.

Friends,

Today is the last day of Navratri. Tomorrow is Ram Navami and the message of Maryada Purushottam Shri Ram to all of us is that we should follow discipline. Please follow all the protocols to avoid Corona. Never forget the mantra of medicines as well as strict adherence to protocols. This mantra is necessary even after vaccination. Today is also the seventh day of the holy month of Ramadan. Ramadan teaches us patience, self-control and discipline. Discipline is needed to win the battle against Corona. I request you to move out (of your house) only when it is necessary and follow COVID discipline. I assure you that with your courage, patience and discipline, the country will leave no stone unturned to change the conditions that are there today. May all of you be healthy, may your family be healthy. With this wish, I conclude. Thank you very much!

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

DS/VK/AK

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