

English rendering of the text of PMs speech at Community Reception in Israel

The arrival of an Indian Prime Minister here for the first time in 70 years holds a mixed feeling of joy and inquisitiveness. This is the human nature that when you meet a very close person after a long period, then the first sentence is a kind of confession that it has been a long time since we have met and then we move on to the question of how is everything. I want to begin my speech with this confession that indeed we have met after such a long time. Infact it took not 10, 20 or 50 years but as many as 70 long years.

70 years after India's independence, an Indian Prime Minister is seeking your blessings on Israel's land. My friend Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel is present here on this occasion. After coming to Israel, the hospitality, honor and respect that I have received from him, is an honor for 125 crore people of India. No one in this world can ever forget such love and respect. There is a special commonality in both of us. Both of us were born after independence of our respective countries; i.e. Benjamin was born in independent Israel and I was born in independent India. One interest of Prime Minister Netanyahu shall touch the heart of every Indian and that is his love for Indian food. I will always remember the hospitality given to me on the occasion of last night's dinner with Indian food.

We may have had full diplomatic relations between the two countries only for the past 25 years, but it is also true that India and Israel have been closely associated with each other for several hundred years. I have been told that the great Indian Sufi-saint Baba Farid lived in Jerusalem in the thirteenth century and meditated in a cave. Later this place was converted into a pilgrimage site. Even today, this place remains a symbol of Jerusalem and India's eight-hundred-year old relation. In 2011, the Pravasi Bharatiya Award was conferred on Israel's care taker Sheikh Ansari and fortunately I got the opportunity to meet him today. India and Israel share a bond of culture, traditions, mutual trust and friendship. There is also an amazing parallel between our festivals. Holi is celebrated in India and Israel celebrates Purim. While India celebrates Diwali, Hanukkah is celebrated in Israel. I am very happy to learn that the Maccabiah games of the Jews is being inaugurated tomorrow and I congratulate the people of Israel for this game. I am glad that India has also sent its team for this game and the players of Indian team are also present here on this occasion. I wish them good luck.

Israel's land is soaked by the sacrifice of its heroic sons. There will be many such families present in this event, who have their own saga of sacrifice in this struggle. I salute the bravery of Israel. Their bravery has been the basis for Israel's development. Development of any country does not depend on its size but on the citizens' spirit itself. Israel has proved that size does not matter. On this occasion I also pay tribute to the second lieutenant Elise Aston, who was awarded the certificate for gallantry by the Israel government for his contributions to nation building. Elise Aston is also known as 'The Indian'. During British period, he had worked in Maratha light infantry. Indian soldiers have played an important role in liberating the Israeli city Haifa during the First World War. And it is my privilege that I am going to Haifa tomorrow to pay tribute to those brave martyrs.

Last night I went for dinner at my friend Prime Minister Netanyahu's place. The atmosphere there was extremely homely. We were gossiping. According to the Indian Standard Time were gossiping till 2:30 am and while leaving, he presented me a painting. The painting was that of a very heart touching scene of Indian soldiers liberating Jerusalem during the World War I. Friends, in this episode of comradeship, bravery, I especially want to mention about the Indian army's lieutenant J.F.R. Jacob. His ancestors had come to India from Baghdad. When Bangladesh was struggling for its independence from Pakistan in 1971, Lieutenant J.F.R. Jacob played an important role in framing India's strategy and to compel 90 thousand Pakistani soldiers surrender. Friends, the population of Jews have been very small in India, but they have made their presence felt very proudly in whatever field they are in. The Jewish people have progressed by their hard work and have carved a niche not only in the army but also in the field of literature, culture and films. I can see that the Mayors of different cities of Israel have also joined today's grand programme. Their love for India and the Indian community has brought them here to be a part of this programme. I remember that about 80 years ago even Mumbai, India's financial capital, once had a Jewish Mayor. When Mumbai was called Bombay in 1938, Elijah Moses became the mayor of Bombay.

In India, very few people would know that the signature tune of All India Radio was also composed by a Jewish master, Walter Kaufmann. He used to be the Director of All India Radio in Bombay in 1935. As the Jews continued to live in India, they remained associated with the feelings of Israel even as they embraced the Indian culture. Likewise, whenever they came to

Israel from India, they also carried with them the impression of Indian culture and are still connected with India.

I am very delighted to know that a Marathi newspaper titled 'My Boli' is being published from Israel. Similarly, the people of the Jewish community who have come from Cochin also celebrate Onam with great pomp and show. It was because of the efforts of the Baghdadi Jewish community – who came from Baghdad and settled in India - the first International Symposium on Baghdadi Jews could be organized last year. Jewish community that came from India to Israel has also played a key role in the development of Israel and its greatest example is Moshav Nevatim. My Jewish brothers and sisters who came from India had made ceaseless efforts day in and day out to make Israel's first Prime Minister David Ben Gurion's dream of greening the desert, a success. The people of the Jewish community from Cochin helped make the vision of 'make the desert bloom' a grand success. Today, every Indian is proud of you all because of this tireless efforts made on the lands of India and Israel. I am proud of you. Friends, apart from Moshav Nevatim, Indian community has contributed in the agricultural development of Israel. Before coming to the program here, I met Israel's famous personality Bezalel Eliahu. In the year 2005, he was honored in Pravasi Bhartiya Group. He was the first Israeli to receive this honour. Apart from agriculture, the Indian community in Israel has left its mark in the health sector too. Israel's doctor, Dr. Lael Anson Best is from Gujarat, my home state and those who are familiar with Ahmedabad must have heard the name of West Height School in Maninagar. This year he was honored with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman. Dr. Lael Anson Best is a famous cardio surgeon here and his whole career is linked to several anecdotes of human service. I have come to know about Dina Samata of the Menashe community. Dina does not have the power to see, but has the same willpower that Israel also possesses. Dina Samata had inaugurated this year's Israeli Independence Day celebrations. She was one of the torch lighters of this ceremony. I wish all the best to daughter Dina Samata. I wish that she continues to move ahead. My blessings are with her. Today, on this occasion, I want to pay tribute to the former President of Israel and a great leader Mr. Shimon Peres. I had the privilege to meet Mr. Shimon Peres. He was not only a pioneer of innovation but also the statesman who worked tirelessly for the welfare of humanity. The training in innovation in the Israel defence forces started very early. Israel's defence forces became the source of many creative solutions to every little problem. Israel's sincerity towards

innovation is proved by the fact that till date 12 Israelis have won Nobel Prizes in different fields. Israel shows the significance of innovative thinking in the development of any nation. In the last decade, Israel has stupefied the whole world with innovation in almost every field and they have succeeded in leaving behind their impression. Israel has left behind the major countries of the world in many areas of innovation, whether it is thermal power, solar panel, solar window, agro-biotechnology, the field of security or the technology used in camera and computer processor. And Israel is called as a start-up nation due to these accomplishments. India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world today. My government's mantra is Reform, Perform, Transform. Goods & Services Tax has been rolled out in India from the first of this month. The decade old dream of one nation one tax and one market in India has come true today and I call GST a Good & Simple tax because now the same type of tax will be imposed on the same type of items all over India. Earlier, if all taxes were added, more than 500 tax streams were there in our country. The system of tax was confusing and everyone was facing hassles from the small business man to the big business tycoons. GST led to the India's economic integration just like Sardar Patel had integrated India by uniting the princely states. The mission of economic integration succeeded in 2017.

I want to touch upon auctioneering of the Natural Resources like Coal and Spectrum. However I do not want to go into what was heard about coal and the spectrum, but this government has made the auctioning process transparent by making the system computerized and today even after doing business of millions and crores, there is not a single doubt or a question mark yet. We have also tried systematic reform in the economy. Everyone in India believed that reforms in the Defence sector are not possible, but within three-year reforms have been made in the defence sector and the sector has been opened up to 100 per cent foreign direct investment. Now Israel's Defence Industry can invest in India and now we have decided to make private companies as strategic partners in Defence Manufacturing. In the last three years, many important decisions have been made in our country in the field of construction. The middle-class built houses and later complained. We have brought reforms in the construction sector by modifying the laws. We have also approved 100 per cent Foreign Direct Investment in the Construction Sector. We have also made a Real Estate Regulator separately. The real estate sector has been given the status of an industry by the government so that the companies of this sector can get loans on low interest

rates and that is my dream of 2022 ... 2022 should not be forgotten. The year 2022 will mark 75 years of India's independence. By 2022, we should be able to carry our nation forward to new horizons with new resolutions, carrying forward the dreams of the freedom fighters who laid down their lives in the struggle for India's independence. We have decided that by 2022 every poor person of India who does not have a home and every family in India must have their own houses with amenities like electricity and water. To fulfill this dream, we have given the status of infrastructure to the real estate as well as to the construction work so that the poor can build a house. Earlier the Insurance sector was primarily being dominated by public enterprises; now we have brought private companies into the sector to increase healthy competition. An atmosphere of competition has been created so that the common man benefits from an affordable insurance system. Under insurance sector reforms our government has decided to increase foreign direct investment from 26% to 49%. The Banking sector of the country has taken important steps to merge banks. The government has given special emphasis on strengthening the banking system. For appointment in the Banking Sector, we have created a separate Recruitment Board. An independent institution is recruiting them. We've ended the political or internal influence.

We have enacted two important laws in our country - Bankruptcy and Insolvency Code which will create a new faith in the industrialists and investors around the world and will give a new strength to the banks. Our country felt the need of such a modern Bankruptcy law for several decades. We have made every effort to simplify the rules in the government too. Changes are being made keeping in mind the motto of Minimum Government Maximum Governance so that the common man does not have to face hassles and the investors do not have to wait for small things.

Earlier it used to take at least 600 days to establish an industry or to take environment clearance. Today, we have ensured that all the work of environment clearance should be completed within six months. In 2014, it used to take 15 days or a month or two-three months to incorporate a company, however, the government has succeeded in bringing down this time to two-three weeks and the latest position is that it could be done in 24 hours. If a young person wishes to start his work through a start-up, then he can register the company in a day.

The countries who lost everything in the second world war, could become self-dependent only because they focused on the skill development of their youth. Now this golden opportunity has come to India which is the youngest country in the world. Today's India is a young nation. 65% population is below 35. If a country has such a large population of youths, then its dreams will also be like that and its efforts will be full of energy. And for the first time we created a separate ministry, Ministry for skill development to boost skill development. Earlier, this task of developing skills was scattered in 21 different ministries, it was scattered in 50-55 departments. This government has brought different programmes of skill development under one platform by creating a separate ministry to provide impetus to skill development as a comprehensive focus activity with a holistic approach. More than 600 skill development centres, at least one in every district, are being set up in the country. Indian Institute of Skill has been set up with a new vision. The idea is to train Indian youth as per the global standards. The government is creating a network of 50 India International Skill Centres. These institutes impart skills as per the international bench marks. It is imperative to impart training in our youth according to the needs of the industry. That's why the government has started National Apprenticeship Promotional Scheme. Under the scheme the government has set a target of providing Apprenticeship Training to 5 million youths. The government would spend Rs. 10,000 crores under the scheme. Along with providing apprenticeship to youths, one more objective of this scheme is to encourage those companies and villagers who hire these youths. Hence the government is providing financial assistance to employers. For the first time employment opportunities have been linked to tax incentives, an employer will get tax incentives if he creates jobs. We have started Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) to encourage innovation by youth. There is thrust on creating an ecosystem for innovation and entrepreneurship in schools and colleges throughout the country. It must be acknowledged that innovation played an important role in Israel's development. The progress in life halts if we stop innovating. Incubation Centres have been set up to encourage innovation entrepreneurship in Manufacturing, Transport, Energy, Bolter, Sanitation sectors. These centres will provide funds and right direction to start ups. The government has launched Mudra scheme so that these youths can start their own business. The mammoth task of providing bank loans to 3 lakh crore rupees to 8 crore account holders without any bank guarantee has been completed in the last three years.

Friends, sometimes, Labour Reforms have been equated with Reforms Labour. Sometimes lofty ideas become commonplace. However, this government has carried out labour reforms with holistic approach for the welfare and development of labourers. That is why we have been working with a holistic approach for Employer, Employee and Experience so that there are no hurdles in the growth of business. Earlier traders were required to maintain 56 registers under the labour laws, some months back, we brought it down to 5 registers only by reforming the labour laws. Now only 5 registers are required to be maintained for the compliance of the labour laws.

Similarly, the government has developed a Shram Suvidha Portal. This Shram Suvidha Portal facilitates instant compliance with 16 labour laws just by submitting one report. We have issued advisories to states to allow functioning of shops and establishments throughout the year. States have been advised to amend the Factories Act of 1948 so that they can allow women workers to work in the night. The active participation of Indian women will only strengthen India's developmental journey therefore this decision has been taken in the interest of women.

Even in the rich countries of the world, women workers don't get paid maternity leave of more than 12 weeks. My beloved countrymen, I assure you that India is providing 26 months of paid maternity leave. In a way, they will get leave for six months.

Sometimes, workers give up their money deposited in PF for the proves was very cumbersome; this money belonged to the poor workers of India. Hence the government assigned universal account number, you would be surprised to know that these laborers used to work in factories and when they changed their jobs, they also used to give up their money deposited in EPF. Government has unaccounted twenty-seven thousand crore rupees parked with it. However, we created a new system under which if labourer moves to another job then his account number will also go with him and he will get his money.

Today, India has been getting record foreign investment, the highest foreign direct investment, overseas Indians are sending huge amount of money to India. This has surprised global rating agencies and institutions. Make in India has surprised the world as a brand. India is emerging as a world leader in the digital field. India is becoming the global hub for World Digital Revolution. Friends, reform doesn't only mean enacting news laws. Repealing those laws that have become

obsolete and creating hindrances in the country's development is also part of reform. We have repealed 1200 obsolete laws in the last three years and moving forward in the direction to repeal 40 more obsolete laws.

Friends, Indian farmers are capable of doing wonders. It's their hard work that India has bumper crop production this year and we are going to have the record crop production since independence. It's become possible due to good monsoon and the policies of central government. This government is working in the direction to double the farmer's income by 2022. It has been formulating policies, taking care of all the problems of farmers from providing seeds to taking the produce to market. We have launched Prime Minister Agriculture Irrigation Scheme to provide water to every field. We are spending huge amount to finish 99-100 big irrigation schemes in a time bound manner that have been stuck for a long time. There is a separate monitoring system for them. We have been using Satellite Technology, Space Technology for this purpose. We have been using drones. The speed to bring cultivation area under the micro irrigation scheme has been doubled due to the Prime Minister Agriculture Irrigation Scheme. We have been working in the direction to provide good quality seeds to farmers, to inform them about the health of their soil. More than 8 crore farmers have received Soil Health Cards. Its good effect can be seen on the crop production. Similarly, 100 per cent neem quoting has increased the efficiency of Urea. The cost of farming has come down and grain production has gone up. A new scheme - Electronic National Agriculture Market or E- NAM has been implemented at a fast pace so that the farmers don't face any difficulties in selling their produce. A new national online market has been set up and 450 agriculture produce markets have been linked with it. The government is working to reduce the risks involved in farming activity and to provide easier loans to farmers. Prime Minister Crop Insurance scheme has been implement to protect the farmers from the damages caused due to unpredictable weather. Under this scheme, the government has reduced the premium amount and increased the compensation amount. The government is taking care of every sector of agriculture so that farmer's income can be supplemented.

Last month the government has launched Kisan Sampada Scheme to strengthen the Food Processing Sector. Even today, we lose farm produce worth Rs. 1 lakh crore due to poor quality of infrastructure and supply chain. Fruits and vegetables perish before reaching market. If the food processing sector is strengthened due to *Kisan Sampada Scheme*, then it will reduce the farmers' losses and help in boosting their income.

India and Israel can work closely in the field of technology. Israel's cooperation in the agriculture sector can help India in the second green revolution. Similarly, both the countries can immensely benefit by increasing cooperation in Defence and Space Technology. Therefore, it is imperative for both the countries to move forward with keeping in the view the hundreds of year old friendship and the requirement of the twenty first century. There are 600 Indian students in Israel completing their education in different fields. Some of them are present here in this event.

My young friends, you people are like a bridge of technology and innovation between India and Israel. My friend Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu and I both agree with Kwet San that Science Innovation and Research are going to be the foundation of relations between both the countries. Hence whatever you are learning here is going to be of use for strengthening India in future. Few hours ago, I met Moshe Hozaberg. It reminded me of Mumbai terror attack. However, I also saw in this meeting that how the enthusiasm towards life conquers the terrorism. Stability, peace and friendliness are equally important for Israel as they are for India. Friends, Indians living in Israel are symbols of service, valour and friendliness. Thousands of Indians are dedicated in serving old people here. I congratulate to all those who have come from Bangalore, Darjeeling, Andhra Pradesh and also from different parts of the country and worked hard with the dedication to service, for winning the hearts of every Israeli.

Friends, I also want to convey good news to the Indians living in Israel. I was told about the difficulties faced by Indians living in Israel in getting OCI and PIO cards. However, the cordial relations are not dependent on any card or document. India cannot refuse to issue OCI cards to you, it's not possible. Therefore, I wish convey the good news to you. If any Indian Jew is not able to get the OCI card, then it will serve the objective of issuing the OCI card. Brothers and sisters, I'd like to assure you that even those people of Indian origin who have done compulsory army service even they will be entitled for OCI card. You people were not able to convert your

PIO cards into OCI cards due to some rules related to compulsory army service. We have decided to simplify those rules.

One more thing, the need to set up an Indian Cultural Centre in Israel to promote cultural relations of the countries was felt from quite some time. I'd like to announce here that Government of India is going to set up an Indian Cultural Centre in Israel very soon.

India lives in your hearts and Indian Cultural Centre will always keep you connected to your Indian culture. Today, on this occasion, along with Indian community, I'd like to invite Israeli youths to come to India in large numbers. India and Israel are not only connected historically, but they are also connected culturally. Both are partners in human values and human legacy. Both the countries know how to respect their traditions and how to get out of difficult circumstances. And India has several examples of this and Israeli youth should keep coming to India to witness this historic journey.

I am confident that my country that treats its guests as gods will encourage you to come back only with fond memories. In the end, once again I express my heartfelt gratitude to the Jews community, to my friend Benjamin Netanyahu and also to all of Israel.

And brothers and sisters, Delhi-Mumbai-Tel Aviv air service will be started therefore I'm asking Israeli youth to visit India, I'm inviting them to come to India. Once again I express my heartfelt gratitude to the people of Israel, to the government of Israel and also to my friend Benjamin Netanyahu.

Many thanks to you all.

Thank You.