

English rendering of PM's address at the inauguration of three key projects related to the Petroleum sector in Bihar

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I have to share very sad news with you at the start of the programme. Bihar's veteran leader Shri Raghuvansh Prasad Singh is no more with us. I pay tributes to him. In the passing away of Raghuvansh Babu, a void has been left in the political sphere of Bihar and the country as well. He was connected to the roots, he is one who understood poverty, and he spent his entire life struggling for Bihar. He tried to live the ideology he grew up with throughout his life.

I knew him closely since the days when I used to work as a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party. In several TV debates, we used to exchange arguments. He was a Cabinet minister in UPA, I used to be in constant touch with him for developmental works as Chief Minister of Gujarat. He was in news for last 3-4 days. I was concerned about his health and kept myself updated about his health. I hoped he will recover soon and will be back serving Bihar; also there was a lot of churning happening inside him.

It was no longer possible for him to continue with ideals with which he worked, the people with whom he started off and his mind was in a tumult. And he had expressed his sentiments in a letter three-four days ago. But he was equally concerned about the development of his constituency, and therefore, he had sent a list of developmental works to the Bihar Chief Minister. His concern for Bihar and its people is evident in that letter.

I, request Nitishji that we try to fulfill the sentiments expressed by Raghuvansh Prasadji in his last letter, which was only discussing the development of Bihar. Once again, I pay my sincere tributes to Shri Raghuvansh Prasadji at the start of the programme.

Bihar's Governor, Shri Phagu Chauhanji, Bihar's Chief Minister Shri Nitish Kumarji, my colleagues in the Union Cabinet, Shri Dharmendra Pradhanji, Ravi Shankar Prasadji, Giriraj Singhji, R.K.Singhji, Ashwini Kumar Choubeyji, Nityanand Raiji, Bihar's Deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modiji, other parliamentarians and legislators and my brothers and sisters connected through technology.

My pranam to everybody. This function is being held in Banka, the land of martyrs and braves. The projects that have been dedicated to the nation today will benefit a large part of the eastern India, along with Bihar. The projects worth more than 900 crore rupees that have been either inaugurated or whose foundation stone have been laid also include an LPG pipeline and two big bottling plants. Many many congratulations to the people of Bihar for these facilities and developmental projects.

Friends,

A few years ago, when a special package was announced for Bihar, much of its focus was on infrastructure. I am happy that I am fortunate to inaugurate the Durgapur-Banka section of an important gas pipeline project. I had the opportunity to lay the foundation stone of this project about one-and-a-half years ago. The length of this section is almost 200 kilometres. I am told that it was very challenging to lay the pipeline on this route. It is not that easy to work where they are around 10 big rivers, forests spread over several kilometers and rocky terrain. The project could be completed in time because of the new engineering techniques, the active support of the state government, and the hard work of our engineers and labour friends. I congratulate everybody who is associated with this project.

Friends,

The Prime Minister package that was given to Bihar included 10 big projects related to petroleum and gas.

Almost 21,000 crore rupees were to be spent on these projects. This is the seventh project today whose work has been completed and which has been dedicated to the people of Bihar.

Before this, the projects related to the expansion of the Patna LPG plant and the augmentation of the storage capacity, the expansion of the LPG plant in Purnia, and the new LPG plant in Muzaffarpur have already been completed.

The portion of the Jagdishpur-Haldia pipeline project, which passes through Bihar, has already been completed in March last year. The pipeline related work on the Motihari-Amlekhganj pipeline project has already been completed.

Now, the country and Bihar are coming out of the period in which one generation used to see the start of the project and the other generation used to see its completion. We have to further strengthen this image, this work culture of the new India, new Bihar. And certainly, Nitishji has a very big role in it.

I am confident that we can take Bihar and eastern India on the path of development through our concerted efforts.

Friends,

It is written in our scriptures that -- ,

That is Capability is the foundation of freedom and hard work is the foundation of development of any nation. There is neither a shortage of talent in eastern India, including Bihar, nor this region lacks natural resources. But despite this, Bihar and eastern India continued to lag for decades in terms of development. Most of the reasons were political, economic and related to priorities.

The infrastructure projects remained victims of endless delays in eastern India or Bihar due to these reasons. There was a time when road connectivity, rail connectivity, air connectivity, internet connectivity did not figure in the priorities. Moreover, if one talked about building a road, it was asked that it is being built for those who own vehicles. What is there for the pedestrians? That is, there was problem with the approach.

A gas-based industry and petro-connectivity could not be imagined in Bihar in those old days. Being a landlocked state, resources related to petroleum and gas, which are otherwise available in states adjacent to the sea, could not be possible in Bihar. Therefore, the development of gas-based industries was a major challenge in Bihar.

Friends,

Gas-based industry and petro-connectivity sound to be very technical terms, but these have a direct impact on the lives of the people and their standard of living. Gas-based and petro-connectivity industries also create employment opportunities in lakhs.

Now that the CNG and PNG is easily available in several cities of the country, then it should also be easily available to the people of Bihar and eastern India. With this resolve, we moved ahead.

A huge effort to connect eastern India with Paradip on the eastern seaboard and Kandla on the western seaboard began under the Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga Yojana. Seven states are being connected through this pipeline, which is about 3000-km long, of which Bihar also has a prominent place. The Paradip-Haldia line has been completed till Banka. It is now being extended to Patna, Muzaffarpur. The pipeline coming from Kandla which has reached Gorakhpur will also be connected to it. When the entire project is ready, it will become one of the longest pipeline projects in the world.

Friends,

Big bottling plants are being set up in Bihar due to this gas pipeline. Two new bottling plants have been launched today in Banka and Champaran. Both these plants have the capacity to fill more than 1.25 crore cylinders every year. These facilities will be available to Bihar's Banka, Bhagalpur, Jamui, Araria, Kishanganj, Katihar, eastern Champaran, western Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Siwan, Gopalganj and Sitamarhi districts due to these two plants.

Similarly, these plants will meet the LPG requirements of Godda, Deoghar, Dumka, Sahibganj, Pakur districts

of Jharkhand and some areas of Uttar Pradesh. Thousands of new jobs are being created and there is possibility of many jobs in future due to the new industries that are being developed from the laying of this gas pipeline

Friends,

The work on the fertilizer factory in Barauni, which was closed down, will resume soon after the construction of this gas pipeline. On the one hand, while the fertilizer, power and steel industries will get a boost due to gas connectivity, on the other hand, the cheap and clean CNG-based gas line will reach the kitchens of the people easily.

As part of this, the supply of cheaper piped gas has begun in several districts in Bihar and Jharkhand today. It will further hasten the movement to connect every family in the country with clean fuels and smokeless kitchens.

Friends,

Today, eight crore poor families of the country have gas connections because of the Ujjwala scheme. We have seen the difference this scheme has made to the lives of the poor during the Corona. Just imagine, when it was necessary to stay indoors, what would have been the implication if these friends in the eight crore families and our sisters had to step out for collection of wood or other fuel.

Friends,

Crores of cylinders have been provided free of cost to the beneficiaries of the Ujjwala scheme in this period of Corona. This has benefited lakhs of sisters of Bihar and the poor families. I appreciate the efforts of the departments and companies of petroleum and gas and lakhs of delivery partners who are associated with them who are really Corona warriors. These are the friends who did not let people run out of gas in this difficult period, and continue to maintain the supply of cylinders despite the dangers of infection.

Friends,

There was a time when LPG gas connections in the country and in Bihar were a sign of affluent people. People had to get recommendations for each gas connection. There used to be long queues outside the houses of MPs. Those who had the gas connection used to be considered as affluent. Nobody used to take care of those who were at the bottom of the society, marginalized, deprived and backward. Their problems and sufferings used to be ignored.

But now this has changed in Bihar. About 1.25 crore poor families of Bihar have been given free gas connection under the Ujjwala scheme. The gas connection at home has changed the lives of crores of poor in Bihar. Now they are utilizing their energy for their development rather than making arrangements of wood for cooking.

Friends,

It will not be an exaggeration if I say that Bihar is the powerhouse of the talent of the country, the centre of energy. The impact of Bihar's youth and their talent is visible everywhere. There are several sons and daughters of Bihar in the Indian government who are doing service to the country and bringing positive changes in the lives of others.

You go to any IIT; you will find the sparkle of Bihar. You go to any institution, you will find the sons and daughters of Bihar are doing something unusual with dreams in their eyes and the passion to do something for the country.

Bihar's art, music and its delicious food is appreciated all over the country. You go to any state, you will see the strength of Bihar and the imprint of Bihar's labour in the development of any state. Bihar's cooperation is with everybody.

This is what Bihar is all about; this is the amazing ability of Bihar. Therefore, it is also our duty and I would say that we are indebted to Bihar and we should serve Bihar. We should have such good governance in Bihar, which is its rightful due.

Friends,

In the last 15 years, Bihar has also shown that if there is a right government, right decisions are taken and there is an explicit policy, then development happens and reaches every one. We are developing the growth of each sector of Bihar, are making efforts to resolve the problems of every sector so that Bihar can take a new flight of development. It should soar so high as its talents.

Friends,

There were some people in Bihar who used to say what will the youth of Bihar do after the education; they have to work in fields. This thinking has done great injustice to the talented youth of Bihar. It is because of this thinking that not much work was done to open higher educational institutions in Bihar. The result was that the youth of Bihar were forced to go out to study and work.

Friends,

Agriculture and farming is a great job involving hard work and pride; But to deprive other opportunities to the youth was also not a right approach. Today, many big centres of education are being opened in Bihar. Now, the number of agricultural, medical and engineering colleges is increasing. Now, IITs, IIMs, IIITs are helping to give wings to the dreams of the youths of Bihar.

During Nitishji's rule, a large number of institutions like two central universities, one IIT, one IIM, one NIFT, and a National Law Institute have opened in Bihar. It is due to the efforts of Nitishji that the number of polytechnic institutes in Bihar today has also gone up by more than three times as compared to earlier.

Schemes like Start Up India, Mudra Yojana have provided necessary funds for self-employment to the youth of Bihar. It is also the endeavour of the Government to train the youth of Bihar to increase their skills through skill centres at the district level.

Friends,

What was the power situation in Bihar is also well-known. It was considered very good even if the villages had two-three hours of electricity. The people living in the cities also would not get more than 8-10 hours of electricity. Today, the availability of electricity in the villages and cities of Bihar is much more than what it was before.

Friends,

The modern infrastructure that is being built in the power, petroleum and gas-related sectors and the reforms that are being carried out are making people's lives easier as well as giving a push to the industries and the economy. In this period of Corona, the work of petroleum-related infrastructure has gained momentum once again.

Whether it's the refinery projects, exploration or production-related projects, pipelines, city gas distribution projects; many such projects have either been restarted or launched afresh. The number is not small. There are more than 8,000 projects on which Rs 6 lakh crore rupees will be spent in the coming days. You can imagine how large-scale work is going on for the gas-based economy in Bihar and the country.

Not only that, the number of people who were working earlier on these projects have not only returned, but it has also created possibilities for new employment opportunities. Friends, such a huge global epidemic has brought problems to everybody in the country. But even after these difficulties, the country has not stopped, Bihar has not stopped.

The National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) project worth more than 100 lakh crore rupees is also going to help in enhancing economic activity. We all have to continue to work fast to make Bihar and eastern India an important hub of development and confidence. With this confidence, congratulations to the entire state of Bihar again for facilities worth hundreds of crores of rupees. I congratulate mothers and sisters, in particular, whose lives are going to be smooth.

Remember, Corona infection still exists among us. And, that's why, I keep on saying – unless there is no medicine, there should be no laxity! Listen again, no laxity until there is medicine.

Therefore, the distance of two yards, the regular hand wash with soap, no spitting anywhere and the mask on face ... we have to follow all these necessary things and have to remind others as well.

If you are alert, then Bihar will be robust, the country will be robust. On this occasion, I once again wish you all the best for these gifts which will energise the development journey of Bihar.

Many many thanks!

VRRK/KP

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