

# PM credits CMs for setting aside differences on GST

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**ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU**

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CREDITING STATE chief ministers for “keeping aside ideological and political differences” to arrive at a common ground, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday said that the consensus on Goods and Services Tax (GST)

would “go down in history as a great illustration of cooperative federalism”.

An official statement issued by Niti Aayog said, “The Prime Minister said that the Goods and Services Tax shows the strength and resolve of the federal structure. He gave credit to all chief ministers for coming on one

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# PM credits CMs

platform for this cause, keeping aside ideological and political differences. Thanking the chief ministers, he said consensus on GST will go down in history as a great illustration of cooperative federalism. He said GST reflects the spirit of 'One nation, One aspiration, One determination'."

Modi delivered the opening and closing remarks at the Niti Aayog's Governing Council meeting, held at Rashtrapati Bhavan, which was attended by several chief ministers and Cabinet ministers. Among the non-BJP chief ministers were Punjab's Captain Amarinder Singh, Bihar's Nitish Kumar, Tripura's Manik Sarkar and Karnataka's Siddaramaiah.

The Prime Minister also asked all chief ministers to carry forward debate and discussion on conducting simultaneous elections across the country, the statement said.

It quoted him as saying that a constructive discussion had begun on the subject of holding central and state elections simultaneously. India had suffered from economic and political mismanagement, and because of poor time management, many good initiatives and schemes had failed to deliver the anticipated results, the Prime Minister said.

The council, which is the apex body of Niti Aayog, is headed by the PM and includes all chief ministers and the Aayog's members.

According to the statement, Modi said that there has been a 40 per cent increase in overall fund allocation to states between 2014-15 and 2016-17, and urged them to speed up capital expenditure and infrastructure creation. He said that only 25 per cent of the enhanced fund allocation was tied to central schemes, declining from 40 per cent of the earlier allocation.

Chairing the third meeting of Niti Aayog's Governing Council since its inception, Modi said that the assembly of chief ministers was an opportunity for exchanging views on policies and implementations, apart from discussing and reflecting on ways to prepare India for changing global trends.

The Aayog in its statement also noted that Modi discussed the three-year action plan prepared by the Centre's thinktank at the meeting, at a time when there is no replacement for the country's development strategy in place with the twelfth five-year plan having ended on March 31.

In addition to the action plan, the Niti Aayog is also working on preparing a 15-year vision document, and a seven-year National Development Agenda.

At the meeting, the Aayog's vice chairman Arvind Panagariya presented a roadmap for the rapid transformation of India by outlining key aspects of the vision document, which comprises the seven-year strategy and the three-year action plan.

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