

An economic revolution: GST

Appreciating the Goods and Services Tax (GST), implemented since July 1, as a unique accomplishment in India's economic history, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his 34th *Mann ki Baat*, said that the execution of the new indirect tax system has brought positive changes in the economy of the country. Acclaiming the citizens, government officials and state governments for the smooth transition to GST, the Prime Minister extended his thanks to all the ministries, departments, and employees. While elaborating the benefits of GST, he said that it is more than just a tax reform as it also ushers in a new culture. "GST rollout is an example of cooperative federalism as states are partners in the decision-making process. GST is a fine example of the collective strength of the people of India. This is a historic achievement as it will not usher in economic prosperity but also effect change in India's social fabric," he said, adding, "And some day, the Pundits of Economics, Pundits of Management, and Pundits of Technology, will certainly undertake research and write about India's GST experiment as a model for the world. It will become a case-study for universities across the world." He said that the implementation and furtherance of such a phenomenal change on such a monumental scale, with the involvement of so many tens of millions of people in such a vast country, is in itself the pinnacle of success. "The world will definitely make a study of it. And this implementation has had all the states participating in it to share the responsibility. All decisions have been taken unanimously by the states and the Centre together. And as a result, one overriding priority for every government has been to ensure that there is no burden on the plate of the poor on account of GST," he further added. The Prime Minister also informed that he had received several letters from the countrymen, who expressed their happiness over the successful implementation of GST. "I have been observing how GST has impacted the transport and logistics sector; how the movement of trucks has increased. The time required to cover distances has come down drastically. Highways have become clutter-free. Pollution levels have come down with the increased speed of trucks. Goods are also being transported much faster," he said adding that the GST is indeed a convenience, but at the same time it is also bolstering economic progress. "Earlier, because of the multiple tax structures, maximum resources of the transport and logistics sector were expended in maintaining paperwork and that also led to the need for construction of new warehouses in each state. I call GST, Good and Simple Tax," he further said.

In the 34th version of *Mann ki Baat*, the PM also remembered the upcoming 75th anniversary of the Quit India movement and India's 70th year of Independence, thus calling August the 'revolutionary month'. Advising the young generation to learn more about India's freedom movement, especially the Quit India and Non-Cooperation Movement, the Prime Minister announced that the government will come out with a 'Quit India Quiz' to educate the youth about India's freedom movement. Providing mathematical manifestation of 2017, the Prime Minister said: "We became free in 1947. This is 2017. It has been almost 70 years. Governments have come and gone. Systems have been made, changed, nurtured, and expanded. Everyone has tried to rid the country of its problems in their own way. There have been efforts towards increasing employment, poverty alleviation, and development," he said, adding, "The way, the years from 1942 to 1947 were the decisive years for attainment through resolve. I can see that 2017 to 2022 presents itself as a new time segment of five years for attainment through resolve. We should celebrate 15th August 2017, as the Sankalp Parva or the Day of Resolve, and in 2022 marking 75 years of Freedom, we will certainly transform that resolve into 'Siddhi' or attainment." Identifying communalism, casteism, corruption, terrorism, poverty, and dirt as major problems plaguing India, he asked the people to work for their removal in the same spirit of 'Quit India'. The PM also talked about the floods in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Assam, and other parts of India mentioning how several governmental agencies including the Indian Army, National Disaster Response Force, and paramilitary forces, besides other volunteers have been contributing to allay the distress. He also said the farmers were primary flood victims and that his government is undertaking several steps to get them the compensation speedily in the case of crop loss through insurance. Speaking about the Indian women's cricket team's performance in the World Cup, he said that India's daughters had won accolades in every sphere of life including education, economic dynamics, social activities, and sports.