“Namaskaram! Good afternoon to you all!

I am pleased to visit Naval Physical & Oceanographic Laboratory (NPOL), a premier R&D establishment of the Defence Research and Development Organization and interact with all of you today.

Formed in the Southern Naval Command in 1952, NPOL later became part of DRDO in 1958. It will be celebrating its 70th year of inception in 2022. It is a matter of pride for the nation that during these last seven decades, NPOL has established itself as a leading Research & Development centre in the area of underwater surveillance systems.

I am told that NPOL-developed Sonar systems, which are the most critical equipment in the Anti-Submarine Warfare, have been fitted in all leading platforms of Indian Navy including ships, submarines and helicopters. The country’s flagship technology achievement, the strategic submarine INS Arihant also carries NPOL-developed sonar system.

I understand that NPOL’s services to the nation started with design and development of Hull Mounted Sonar systems for the Indian Navy’s frontline Frigates and Destroyers. Today, NPOL has diversified the Research and Development area to Submarine Sonars, Airborne Sonars, Diver Detection Systems and Underwater Communication systems. I am happy to note that state of the art R & D facilities have been established and many new technologies in electronics and transducers have been developed.

With NPOL emerging as a leading and high performing R&D laboratory working in the area of underwater surveillance systems, Sonar systems developed by it are being used in Indian Navy’s frontline platforms for last few decades and many of them have entered into third and even fourth generation products.

Dear sisters and brothers,

As you all know, India is strongly marching ahead well on its way to becoming a global superpower in the coming decades. In defence, space and other areas, our scientists from DRDO, ISRO, BARC and other leading R & D organizations are doing excellent work in strengthening India’s security.

But it is also a fact that our country is still one of the largest importers of defence equipment. In this context, the contribution of a small lab like NPOL in empowering the nation in its defence needs is truly commendable. I understand that the scientists here are working very closely with the Indian Navy, frequently sailing with them in ships and submarines in order to gain a deeper insight into their requirements and offer customized solutions. This is advantageous in four ways 1) The complete know-how and know-why, especially in critical areas like oceanography and transducer materials, remains exclusively with us and no foreign player can enter into the market easily; 2) These systems can be upgraded periodically with improvements; 3) Our scientists can address the problems of users in a quick and efficient manner, making maintenance and life time support of these systems easier; and 4) Most importantly, through indigenization of these systems, there will be a savings to the exchequer ranging from 20% to 75%.

I am glad to note that NPOL has also built strong relationship and network with industry for carrying out its charter of duties. The lab has been synergistically working with PSUs like BEL, KELTRON & HMT and is a key provider of technologies, contributing to their improved financial performance during the recent years. I am told that NPOL has also nurtured more than

100 local industries, including MSMEs and Start-ups, for developing niche technologies for underwater surveillance systems.

Keeping in view the geo-political scenario in our neighbourhood, I believe NPOL's role towards national security is paramount as all warships or conventional submarines in the fleet of the Indian Navy are installed with NPOL-developed sonars. Besides bringing in the socio-economic gains by stopping imports in this niche domain, NPOL has been able to master a very complex and critical technology that is giving a strategic edge to the Indian Navy in anti-submarine warfare capabilities.

I am informed that currently this laboratory is working on ambitious mission mode projects and technology demonstration projects, besides undertaking a major Flagship Programme, the INTEGRATED MARITIME SURVEILLANCE (INMARS) Programme for Indian Navy's future requirement for the next 15 years.

NPOL is also expanding its work to play a crucial role in establishing Underwater Domain Awareness for the nation.

Dear sisters and brothers,

Our mantra should be atma-nirbhartha—to make India fully self-reliant in all areas, including strategic domains. For instance, we need to keep increasing our indigenous content in the defence sector and cut down on imports. To achieve that, we need to not only give greater thrust to R & D activities, but also allow private collaboration, wherever it is possible and feasible, with stringent quality controls.

On this occasion, let me inaugurate the 70th Anniversary celebrations of NPOL. I am sure that NPOL will keep its flag soaring higher and higher by developing several critical technologies and provide solutions to the Indian Navy in protecting our long coast line. Today, as part of the government's AZADI KA AMRIT MAHOTSAV celebrations in connection with 75th year of Indian Independence, NPOL is commemorating a great visionary, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, who rose from a humble background to become a great defence scientist and finally the president of the country. I feel honoured to dedicate Dr APJ ABDUL KALAM MEMORIAL to the nation. Dr Kalam's memorial in front of this great laboratory is truly befitting and I am sure that it will inspire countless people from all walks of life every day.

Namaskar!

Jai Hind!"