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Poor need same energy rights, access as rich: PM Modi at G-7 summit

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Written by **Shubhajit Roy** | New Delhi |

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi with President of South Africa Cyril Ramaphosa, in Germany, Monday. (PTI)



on Monday invoked the need for the poor to be able to access energy as the rich.

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Speaking at the G-7 summit in Germany, during a session on ‘Investing in a better Future: Climate, Energy, Health’, Modi said: “All of you will also agree with this that energy access should not be the privilege of the rich only — a poor family also has the same rights on energy. And today when energy costs are sky-high due to geopolitical tensions, it is more important to remember this thing.”

“By taking inspiration from this principle”, Modi reminded the G-7 countries — the world’s seven richest economies — about India’s commitments on climate change. “We delivered LED bulbs and clean cooking gas door-to-door in India and showed that millions of tons of carbon emissions can be saved while ensuring energy for the poor,” he said.

The Prime Minister’s comments were in sync with India’s position that it is buying oil from Russia, which invaded Ukraine in February, to meet its domestic energy demand and control inflation, which affects the poor the most.

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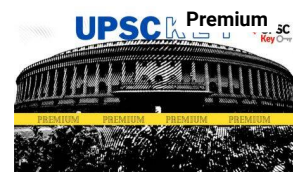
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Later, while addressing a session on food security, Modi referred indirectly to the Ukraine crisis and said: “We are meeting amid an atmosphere of global tension. India has always been in favour of peace. Even in the present situation, we have constantly urged for the path of dialogue and diplomacy.”



He said: “The impact of this geopolitical tension is not just limited to Europe. The rising prices of energy and food grains are affecting all the countries. The energy and security of developing countries is particular. **Epaper** In this challenging time, India has supplied food grains to many countries in need.”

Modi then put forward a series of suggestions. “First, we must focus on the availability of fertilizers, and keep the value chains of fertilizers smooth at a global scale. We are trying to increase the production of fertilizers in India and seek cooperation from G7-countries in this regard,” he said.

“Second, India has immense agricultural manpower compared to the countries of the G7. Indian agricultural skills have helped give new life to traditional agricultural products like cheese and olive in some of the countries of the G7. Can the G7 create a structured system for the widespread use of Indian agricultural talent in its member countries? With the help of traditional talent of India’s farmers, food security will be ensured to G7 countries,” he said.

At the session on climate, energy and health, Modi asked the G-7 countries to invest in research and manufacturing in “green energy technologies” and said that they can help India to take innovations in “digital technology in the health sector” to “other developing countries”.

“Unfortunately, it is believed that there is a fundamental collision between the developmental goals of the world and environmental protection. There is also another misconception that poor countries and poor people cause more damage to the environment. But India’s history of over thousands of years completely refutes this view,” he said.

“Ancient India has seen a time of immense prosperity; then we have also tolerated centuries of slavery, and now independent India is the fastest-growing big economy in the whole world. But during this whole period, India did not let its commitment to the environment get diluted even a single bit. Seventeen per cent of the world’s population resides in India. But our contribution to global carbon emissions is only five per cent. The main reason behind this is our lifestyle, which is based on the theory of coexistence with nature,” he said.



efforts. Today, a huge market for clean energy technologies is being created, he said.

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Asking G-7 countries to invest in research, innovation and manufacturing in green energy technologies, he said: "The scale that India can provide for every new technology can make that technology affordable for the whole world. The core theories of the circular economy have been an integral part of Indian culture and lifestyle."

The Prime Minister also said that G-7 countries can help India to take innovations in digital technology in the health sector to other developing countries. "During the pandemic, India found many creative ways to use digital technology in the health sector," he said.

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