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Adani Highlights India's Need for Self-Reliance Amid Tech Risks

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Kharagpur, India, Gautam Adani, chairman of the Adani Group, warned Monday that India's dependence on imported technology, energy, and defense systems makes the nation vulnerable to sanctions and geopolitical disruptions. Speaking at the platinum jubilee celebrations of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur (IIT-KGP), he stressed that the country must strengthen self-reliance, Atmanirbhar, to safeguard economic growth and national security.

"In 1947, we broke the chains on our land. Yet in the 21st century, a nation can be independent and still be bound by dependence. Just three days ago, we marked our 79th Independence Day, and it is clear we stand at a major inflection point," Adani said. He emphasized that the modern world is shifting from conventional wars to technology-driven conflicts, and India's preparedness will determine its future.

Adani described today's battles as often invisible, fought in server farms rather than trenches. "The weapons are algorithms, not guns. The empires are not built on land; they are built in data centers. The armies are botnets, not battalions," he said.

Highlighting India's technological dependence, he noted that 90 percent of semiconductors are imported, making the digital economy susceptible to external shocks. Similarly, India imports 85 percent of its oil, creating energy vulnerabilities. "A single disruption or sanction can freeze our digital economy. When our data crosses India's borders, every bit becomes raw material for foreign algorithms, generates foreign wealth, and strengthens foreign dominance," he said.

Military dependence was also a key concern. Adani pointed out that critical defense systems are largely imported, tying national security to the political will and supply chains of other nations. "This is the freedom we must now fight for the freedom of self-reliance if we are to be truly free," he added.

Addressing the students of IIT-KGP, Adani urged them to embrace innovation as a form of modern patriotism. "Your software code and ideas are today's weapons. You will decide whether India commands its destiny or surrenders it to others," he said.

Adani, visiting IIT-Kharagpur for the first time, described the current era as one of unprecedented transformation. He emphasized that India must secure technology leadership to remain competitive globally. "It is about redesigning every business, reimagining every industry, and rewriting every rule of the game so we lead, not just participate as low-cost players in the global race. In a world of robotics and AI, cost advantages vanish overnight, and our ability to compete can be quickly lost," he said.

He concluded by calling on India's next generation of engineers to prepare for the technological and economic battles ahead. "The age of industrial and intelligence revolution is unlike anything we have seen. It is now in your hands to ensure India stays at the forefront of global innovation," Adani said.