

# Digital India war against 'touts'

NEW DELHI, JUNE 15

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the "Digital India" initiative was a war against touts and middlemen, curbing black money and black marketing while creating job opportunities in small towns and rural areas.

Interacting with beneficiaries of various "Digital India" initiatives, the PM associated use of home-grown card network RuPay with nationalism and appealed to everyone to adopt it for digital payments. "We have to take Digital India forward. Touts are upset with Digital India. We can easily fight for our rights through Digital India," Modi said.

The PM said people made fun of him when he first spoke of digital payments in the country where people were used to stashing money underneath pillow and ration cards could not be obtained without middlemen.

But experiences narrated by beneficiaries of how services were now reaching them directly were a befitting reply to such naysayers, he said.

Middlemen were now spreading lies that money was not safe in digital transactions and it was a conspiracy to send money directly to bank



Prime Minister Narendra Modi shakes hands with Telangana CM K Chandrashekar Rao in New Delhi on Friday. PTI

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accounts that would shut down their business, he said. "Digital India has checked black money and black marketing and uprooted middlemen...middlemen are going to create trouble. Modi has created big problem for them. They will keep abusing from whichever platform they get but we have to take our nation to the forefront of the world," Modi said.

The government's digital payment application BHIM saw more than 91.5 crore transactions involving an amount of Rs 10,983 crore in 2017-18, from 1.78 crore transactions worth Rs 695 crore at the end of 2016-17.

Modi asked Digital India beneficiaries to press traders and shopkeepers to install BHIM app to facilitate paying for goods and services digitally. He said the development of villages, poor, farmers and Digital India was complimentary to each other.

He said under the Prime Minister Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan, 1.25 crore candidates have been trained, out of which 70 per cent belong to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Class. "This shows one big group of people which was left behind is now progressing because of Digital India," Modi said. — PTI