

Chh'garh polls: PM slams Cong over graft, blind eye to farmers

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday targeted the Congress over corruption and for ignoring farmers' interest, as he kicked off BJP's election campaign by asking people to elect a stable government in poll-bound Chhattisgarh.

He stressed that the BJP-ruled state has shown that development is possible with a stable government.

Addressing a farmers rally here, Modi said the only objective of the BJP-led governments at the Centre and in Chhattisgarh were the welfare of the poor and the common people. He said Chhattisgarh was earlier used to be identified with "jungles, tribals, terrorism and naxalism".

"If news used to come (from the state), they would be about abduction, bomb and pistols and those of bloodshed by misguided youth... But, the BJP-led Chhattisgarh government braved all these challenges with an aim to take the state on the rapid path of development," the Prime Minister said.

Modi said "our policies are clean and intention is clear" and whether it is Delhi or Raipur, the aim is to ensure *sabka samagra vikas*.

Referring to "lack of development" during the long Congress-rule in the country after Independence, he said in those times, Centre used to send money to the states, but it was not utilised for development works.

Modi said a former Prime Minister from the Congress had once said that if a rupee is sent from Delhi, only 15 paise reach the intended beneficiary. "Whose *Panja* (palm) took away the (rest of the) money?" he said, in an apparent reference to the Congress' election symbol.

"Now, all of 100 paise reach the beneficiary which is why

development is seen every where. My Government frames programmes and policies for all," he said.

Modi said whatever development is being seen in Chhattisgarh is under the BJP government and it is from that same rupee only.

He said the former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's idea of creating smaller states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand has resulted in development of hilly and backward areas in these regions.

"Had Chhattisgarh remained part of Madhya Pradesh and the Congress continued to be in power at the Centre, there would have been no development in the state," he said.

"Earlier, chief ministers would come here from Bhopal (when the state was part of MP) if they got time. You know and I know why they came here. The less said the better (about it)," Modi said cryptically.

He said Chhattisgarh has changed people's perception that smaller states suffer from political instability.

Modi said the NDA government did not believe in making schemes for vote bank or to win elections. "Programmes and policies framed by my government are for benefit of all, not targeted at a particular vote bank," he said.

Raman Singh is the longest serving BJP's chief minister of Chhattisgarh. He has been ruling the state since December 2003. "Despite allegations, rumours and misinformation, people of Chhattisgarh have been giving stable governments," Modi said, as he also asked them to elect a stable government in the upcoming Assembly polls this year.

He said *chawal wale baba* (man with a sack of rice) a term used to describe Raman Singh for distributing rice at a very low price to poor people will ensure development of all.