

# My govt. worked to build a New India: President

‘Demonetisation a defining moment in war against corruption; Rafale deal strengthened Air Force’

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President Ram Nath Kovind on Thursday described the current government as one that had worked to build a “New India” after assuming power in 2014 when, he said, the country was passing through “uncertain times.”

The President was addressing a joint sitting of Parliament before the last budget session of the government.

The address also gave a thumbs-up to contentious decisions of the government including demonetisation and the Rafale deal, which Mr. Kovind described as a move that would strengthen the strike capability of the Indian Air Force after a gap



**Report card:** President Ram Nath Kovind leaving after addressing Parliament in New Delhi on Thursday. ■PTI

of many decades. The government believes that neglecting the country’s defence needs even for a moment is detrimental to the present as well as future of the country, he said.

“Prior to the 2014 general

election, the country was passing through a phase of uncertainty. After the elections, my government assumed charge and vowed to build a ‘New India’. A New India with no place for imperfect, corrupt and inertia-

ridden systems,” Mr. Kovind said. He added that “demonetisation was a defining moment in the government’s war on corruption and black money.”

Mr. Kovind also referred to the Constitutional Amendment recently passed by Parliament enabling 10% quota in jobs for the economically weaker sections in the general category, the triple talaq legislation and the controversial Citizenship Amendment Bill in the speech that lasted over an hour.

## Opposition slams speech

The Congress called the President’s address a “summary of lame excuses for non-performance.” “It is unfortunate that the government,

through the President, tried to create credibility for its false promises,” Congress spokesperson Anand Sharma said at a press conference.

Senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel termed it a “summary of lame excuses for non-performance and unrealistic promises.”

CPI leader D. Raja said the President’s address was more like an election speech for the Modi government. “The government is trying to paint a rosy picture, which is diametrically opposite the reality,” he said.

The President’s speech, according to CPI(M) leader Mohammed Salim, did not say anything new and played the “same old record”.