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FACT CHECK, GROUND REALITY

From promises to work, PM's 4 I-Day speeches to 125 cr Indians

RAVISHTIWARI NEW DELHI, AUGUST 14

DESCRIBING HIMSELF as an "outsider for Delhi" who had been "isolated from the elite class" of the national capital till then, Prime Minister Modi had declared himself the "prime servant" in his maiden speech from the ramparts of the Red Fort in 2014. On Wednesday, Modi's last Independence Day speech before the 2019 elections will be viewed in the context of the promises he made during his previous four speeches.

Through his repeated invocations to Mother India (2014), Team India (2015) and New India (2017), Prime Minister Narendra Modi's referred to his fellow "125 crore" Indians 31 times during his previous four speeches from the Red Fort. A word cloud of these four speeches etches out his emphasis on words such as 'people', 'work', 'poor', 'government' and 'forward' among others.

2014

Having decimated the Congress in the 2014 elections, Modi's maiden Independence Day speech sought to acknowledge the contribution of political opponents. "Today if we have reached here after Independence, it is because of the contribution of all the Prime Ministers, all the governments and even the governments of all the states. I want to express my feelings of respect and gratitude to all those previous governments and ex-Prime Ministers who have endeavoured to take our present-day India to such heights and who have added to the country's glory," Modi said in 2014, assuring that "we are not for moving forward on the basis of majority, we are not

interested to move forward by virtue of majority. We want to move ahead on the basis of strong consensus".

Modi also used his maiden speech to contrast his government with its predecessors through a series of new initiatives. "It seemed as if dozens of separate governments are running at the same time in one main government. It appeared that everyone has its own fiefdom," Modi said, referring to the previous UPA regime, before he went on to announce seven initiatives — Jan Dhan Yojana, Skill India, Make in India, Digital India, Swachchh Bharat, Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana and abolition of the Planning Commission that paved the way for NITI Aayog.

2015

In his second speech, he announced fewer schemes — Start-Up India, Stand-Up India, electrification of 18,000 villages within the next 1,000 days, and abolition of interviews for job-seekers in groups C & D — but sought to project his government's success in resolving legacy issues carried over from the UPA government. In particular, he announced acceptance of One Rank, One Pension for the armed forces and dwelt at length on how he had managed to clear the mess in allocation of natural resources — coal, minerals and spectrum — by instituting an auction mechanism.

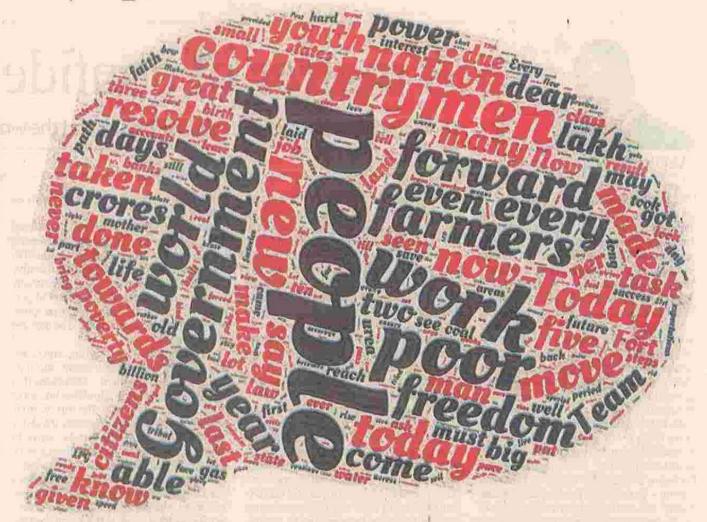
"It has been 15 months, there is not a single taint of corruption against your government," Prime Minister Modi asserted in his second Independence Day speech in 2015, as he referred to 'Team India' repeatedly. "Sometimes people are fond of sinking into despair. Until they talk of despair amongst people, they cannot sleep at night," Modi said.

2016

In his third speech, the Prime Minister refrained from new announcements and instead projected his government's record in delivery of his promises, "I can present before you a very detailed account of work done and also multiple issues regarding the performance of the Government. During the tenure of two years, the Government has taken innumerable initiatives and multiple tasks have been done. If I start giving details about them, I am afraid I will have to talk about it for a week from this very rampart of the Red Fort," Modi said from the Red Fort in 2016. 'Today, the government is not surrounded by charges and allegations, but by expectations," Modi said, promising efficiency in governance, Reeling out statistics, the Prime Minister sought to project that he has kept the bar high: 'The common man is satisfied only when something appears on the ground. We can't make things work on the ground at a slow pace. We will have to accelerate our speed, move at faster pace."

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His fourth speech from the Red Fort last yearhad only one announcement, the launch of a website to provide an account of the valour of the Gallantry Award winners in 2017. Modi chose to set out goals for a 'Majestic India' by 2022. These included pucca houses for the poor, doubling of farmers' earnings by 2022, enough opportunities for the youth and women, and an India which would be uncompromising with corruption and nepotism and be free from terrorism, communalism and casteism. As he goes for his final Independence Day speech, his supporters and opponents are expected to be all ears to get a sense of his 2019 pitch.



People, government, countrymen, farmers, and poor have been among the words most used by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his four Independence Day speeches so far. Word cloud of approximately 32,000 words of official English text does not include prepositions, articles, and several commonly used words, including numbers such as crore.