

'New India' in five years: PM

PROMISES REMOVAL OF CASTEISM, CORRUPTION, TERRORISM BY 2022

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In the penultimate Independence Day speech of his current term, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday looked beyond the Lok Sabha polls due in April 2019 to give a call for building a "new India" by 2022.

If in his previous three speeches, the PM had announced such path-breaking steps as the abolition of the Planning Commission and schemes such as Startup India and Stand-Up India, Modi's speech on Tuesday was devoid of new announcements except the launch of a website to honour gallantry award winners.

Instead, the PM focused on giving a report card of his government's performance in the past three years and spelt out his vision of a "new India". He indicated the lynchpins of his

ANTI-CORRUPTION DRIVE TO PICK UP PACE; 300,000 SHELL FIRMS IDENTIFIED

₹1.75-LAKH CR DEPOSITS AFTER DEMONETISATION UNDER SCRUTINY

“WHEN A COUNTRY IS CAPABLE OF REACHING MARS WITHIN NINE MONTHS, HOW IS IT POSSIBLE THAT IT IS NOT ABLE TO LAY 70-KM RAILWAY LINES FOR 42 LONG YEARS?”

“LOOTERS OF NATION'S WEALTH WILL HAVE TO ANSWER... THE WAR AGAINST CORRUPTION AND BLACK MONEY WILL BE MORE INTENSE NOW

NARENDRA MODI

Prime Minister

Lok Sabha campaign would be his government's efforts at curbing corruption, building modern infrastructure, and delivering welfare.

Modi said by 2022, the 75th anniversary of India's independence, he envisioned a country where each family

would have a pucca house, electricity, and power supply; farmers would earn twice of what they get currently; the country would be free of terrorism, communalism, casteism, corruption, and nepotism; and it would be clean and healthy.

The PM appealed to people to leave behind the *chalta hai* attitude, to think of *badal sakta hai*, or we can transform. Asking countrymen to take the "New India pledge and move ahead", the PM quoted from scriptures: "If we don't accomplish work within a stipulated time, we shall not be able to get the desired results."

Modi asked people to replicate between 2017 and 2022 the resolve Indians showed from 1942 (Quit India Movement) to 1947. He said if Quit India's slogan was *Bharat chhoro* today's slogan should be *Bharat jodo*.

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'New India'...

In his fourth speech from the historic Red Fort, the 17th century structure built during the reign of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, the PM had special words for the millions of new voters who would exercise their franchise in the next Lok Sabha polls. He said January 1, 2018, would be no ordinary day, as those born in this century will start turning 18. Modi said it would be "a decisive year of their lives", as they are going to be the creator of the destiny of the nation. "You have an opportunity to shape the destiny of our country," the PM said.

In his speech — at 57 minutes, the shortest he has delivered on Independence Day since 2014 — the PM side-stepped issues of external security such as the military standoff with China in Doklam, but referred to "the surgical strike" of September 2016 as evidence of India's capability and strength. It was only in passing that he referred to the death of about 60 children in a Gorakhpur hospital last week, reportedly because disrupted oxygen supply, clubbing it with other natural calamities.

But he spoke at length about the successes of his government, including demonetisation and the roll-out of the goods and services tax (GST). The PM also said he would ensure completion of 99 unfinished projects he announced last year by 2019.

On job generation, the PM said effort was on to make people job-creators and loans worth millions had been disbursed under the MUDRA

scheme. The government's record on employment generation has been abysmal, with Opposition reminding the PM his 2014 election promise of 20 million jobs a year.

Elaborating at length on his government's anti-corruption efforts, the PM said ₹800 crore worth of *benami* properties had been confiscated after the law was amended. He said his government, in three years, had confiscated black money to the tune of ₹1.25 lakh crore.

On demonetisation, the PM said the move led to ₹3 lakh crore coming into the banking system. However, the Reserve Bank of India is yet to release data on the amount of currency that was deposited during the note ban. Modi said more than ₹1.75 lakh crore deposited after demonetisation in banks was under the scanner and that black money to the tune ₹2 lakh crore has been deposited in banks.

Modi said his government's efforts had resulted in more taxpayers filing income-tax returns. The numbers, he said, had more than doubled from 2.2 million last year to 5.6 million this year. He said over 1.8 million people have been identified who earned more than their declared income. Of these, around 450,000 have come forward to try "tread the right path after accepting their mistakes". The PM said post-demonetisation data revealed there are 300,000 shell companies indulging in *hawala* transactions. Of these, the registration of 175,000 companies had been cancelled.

On the GST roll-out, the PM said it had increased efficiency by 30 per cent and brought corruption down.

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