

A full-page photograph of Prime Minister Narendra Modi standing in a grassy field in front of the massive, ornate Brihadisvara Temple in Thanjavur, India. He is wearing a white kurta and dhoti, with his hands clasped in front of him. The temple's towering gopuram (tower) is the central focus in the background, set against a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The text 'PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi INTERVIEWS' is overlaid in the bottom left corner.

PRIME MINISTER
Narendra Modi
INTERVIEWS



Prime Minister NARENDRA MODI INTERVIEWS

Edited by
Prof. Jasim Mohammad



Centre for Narendra Modi Studies (CNMS)
Bharat
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Prime Minister Narendra Modi I N T E R V I E W S

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Dedicated
to
Amritkaal's Viksit Bharat

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PREFACE

"Narendra Modi - Interviews" is a comprehensive compilation of interviews given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to various news organizations during the 2024 election campaign. These exclusive interviews, conducted in April-May 2024 , provide a deep dive into Modi's strategies, perspectives, and plans for the future of India. They cover a wide range of topics, including economic reforms, social justice, technological advancements, foreign policy, and more.

Throughout his career, Narendra Modi has been known for his dynamic leadership and ability to connect with the masses. These interviews, conducted during the 2024 Lok Sabha election campaign provides insights about the progress and development of India. They reveal a leader who is politically astute and deeply empathetic towards the needs and aspirations of the common people.

One of the core themes of these interviews is the emphasis on inclusive growth. Modi's vision of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas" (Together with

all, Development for all, Trust of all) is evident throughout. He articulates his plans for economic reforms, social justice, and infrastructural development with clarity and conviction. The interviews also explore PM Modi's thoughts on technology and innovation. He discusses the importance of digital transformation in driving India's growth and his initiatives to develop a robust startup ecosystem.

The Prime Minister's thoughts on foreign policy are also a significant aspect of this compilation. Modi's vision for India's role on the global stage, his strategies for strengthening international relations, and his efforts to enhance India's soft power are thoroughly explored. His emphasis on maintaining peace and developing global cooperation is evident.

Education and youth empowerment are subjects close to Modi's heart, and this book highlights his initiatives to transform the education system. His focus on skill development, innovation in education, and providing opportunities for the youth are recurrent themes in these interviews. Environmental sustainability is another important issue discussed. Modi's commitment in combating climate change and promoting sustainable development is evident. He talks about various green initiatives and his vision for a

cleaner, greener India. Cultural heritage and tourism also find a place in these conversations. Modi's efforts to preserve India's rich cultural legacy and promote tourism are discussed in detail.

The Prime Minister's thoughts on governance and administration reveal his dedication to transparency and efficiency. He discusses his efforts to reform the administrative machinery, making it more responsive and accountable to the people. Social welfare schemes and their impact on the underprivileged sections of society are also highlighted. Modi talks about various programs aimed at uplifting the poor and marginalized, ensuring that the benefits of development reach every citizen.

The interviews provide a glimpse into Modi's personal life as well. He shares anecdotes from his early years, his journey into politics, and the influences that shaped his leadership style. These personal reflections add a human touch to the political discourse.

The Centre for Narendra Modi Studies (NaMo Kendra) is thrilled to present this compilation of exclusive interviews of Prime Minister Narendra. As an independent global research center, NaMo Kendra

brings together eminent leaders, intellectuals, thinkers, social reformers, and educators to address the multifaceted challenges confronting the nation and devise a strategic roadmap for Bharat's emergence as a global power. This book reflects our commitment to analyze the dynamics and prospects of Bharat's governance and understanding the nuances of Bharat in its global milieu through the prism of its advancing civilization. By compiling these interviews, NaMo Kendra aims to provide readers with valuable insights into Modi's vision, strategies, and the core issues shaping India's future

As you read through these pages, you will gain a deeper understanding of Narendra Modi's vision for India. We hope this compilation provides valuable insights and inspires readers to contribute towards building a stronger, more prosperous India.

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250 Million Lifted Out of Poverty in Last Decade: PM Modi

PM Modi's Interview to Newsweek

April 10, 2024



A year after India overtook China to become the world's most populous country, its rapid upward economic trajectory and increasing diplomatic, scientific and military weight make it an emerging superpower of ever-growing importance to the United States and the world.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed Newsweek's written questions and followed up with a 90-minute conversation at his official residence with Newsweek President and

CEO DevPragad, Global Editor in Chief Nancy Cooper and Editorial Director, Asia, Danish Manzoor Bhat. Subjects covered ranged from the major economic advances made under Modi's leadership to the tension between infrastructure expansion and environmental concerns to India's relationship with China and criticism for allegedly curtailing press freedom and not bringing along the Muslims who represent some one in seven of India's population of 1.4 billion.

Here are Modi's answers, edited for space.

On the upcoming election

We have an excellent track record of fulfilling our promises. It was a big thing for the people, as they were used to promises never being fulfilled.

Our government has worked with the motto of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas," which means—Together, for everyone's growth, with everyone's trust and everyone's efforts.

People have the trust that if someone else has got benefits of our programs, it will also reach them. People have seen that India has raced ahead from 11th largest economy to the fifth largest

economy. Now the country's aspiration is that India soon becomes the third largest economy.

By the end of the second term, even the most popular governments start losing support. Discontent toward governments has also increased in the last few years in the world. India stands out as an exception, where popular support for our government is increasing.

There is no contradiction between our physical infrastructure building and our commitment to fight climate change."

On democracy and a free press

We are a democracy, not only because our Constitution says so, but also because it is in our genes.

India is the mother of democracy. Be it Uttaramerur in Tamil Nadu, where you can find inscriptions about India's democratic values from 1100 to 1200 years ago, or speak of our scriptures which give examples of political power being exercised by broad-based consultative bodies. As the largest democracy in the world, over 600 million people voted in the General Elections in 2019. In a few months from now, over 970 million eligible voters will exercise their franchise. More

than one million polling stations would be set up across India.

Constantly increasing voter participation is a big certificate for the people's faith in Indian democracy.

A democracy like India is able to move ahead and function only because there is a vibrant feedback mechanism. And our media plays an important role in this regard. We have around 1.5 lakh [150,000] registered media publications and hundreds of news channels.

There are a few people in India and in the West who have lost [connection with] the people of India—their thought processes, feelings and aspirations. These people also tend to live in their own echo chamber of alternate realities. They conflate their own dissonance with the people with dubious claims of diminishing media freedom.

On infrastructure and the environment

The pace of India's transformation in the last decade has been accelerated by the rapid overhaul of its infrastructure.

In the last 10 years, our National Highways network increased 60 percent, from 91,287 kilometers [56,723 miles] in 2014 to 146,145 kilometers [90,810 miles] in 2023. We have more

than doubled our airports, from 74 in 2014 to over 150 in 2024. Supported by our Sagarmala project, we have enhanced [the] capacity of our ports and improved the operational efficiency. We have started the tech-smart "Vande Bharat" trains for the comfort of our citizens and UDAN scheme to allow common people to fly.

Every road laid is a pathway to progress, every new airport opened provides a window to new opportunities, every railway station redeveloped energizes the local economy. We will further harness waterways. We will focus on building more metro lines across our cities to make urban transport more comfortable. We are building dedicated freight corridors for increasing efficiency of goods as well as passenger movement. Our airlines have ordered more than 1,000 planes recently, and this shows how fast our aviation infrastructure will grow.

There is no contradiction between our physical infrastructure building and our commitment to fight climate change. In fact, India offers a credible model of how to enhance physical infrastructure and yet be at the forefront of mitigating climate change: Be it lighting 10 million homes through [the] rooftop solar program or empowering farmers with solar-powered pumps, be

it distributing 400 million energy-efficient bulbs and ensuring 13 million efficient streetlights or having one of the fastest adoption of EVs, be it airports or railway stations or bridges, our infrastructure is leveraging renewable energy.

Since 2014, India has massively stepped up investments in renewable energy with solar energy capacity increasing from just 2,820 MW in 2014 to over 72,000 MW now.

India is also well on its way to meet the 500 GW of renewable energy capacity and the climate commitment made in the Paris conference by 2030.

We have launched a \$2.5 billion dollar National Green hydrogen mission which will contribute toward decarbonization and avert [a] further 50 MMT per annum of CO₂ emissions by 2030.

We are launching 10,000 electric buses in 100 cities of India at a cost of almost \$7 billion, giving a major boost to green urban mobility and reducing noise and air pollution.

India's per capita emission is already less than half of the global average. India will achieve net-zero emission by 2070 as announced.

The aim of rapid economic growth is to ensure empowerment of the poor and their social mobility."

On competing with China

India, as a democratic polity and global economic growth engine, is a natural choice for those looking to diversify their supply chains.

We have undertaken transformative economic reforms: Goods and Service Tax, corporate tax reduction, bankruptcy code, reforms in labor laws, relaxation in FDI norms. As a result, we have made significant improvement in ease of doing business. We are striving to make our regulatory framework, our taxation practices as well as our infrastructure at par with global standards.

We believe that when a country with one sixth of the world's population adopts global standards in these sectors, it will have a big positive impact on the world.

Our policies that encourage businesses and entrepreneurship, coupled with world-class infrastructure and availability of skilled talent have yielded results. We have major global manufacturing entities setting up shops in India.

We have initiated Production Linked Incentive schemes to strengthen manufacturing capabilities in India. These PLI schemes extend to 14 sectors such as electronics, solar modules, medical devices, automobiles, among others.

Given our strengths, India is now globally considered most suited for manufacturing world-class goods at competitive cost. Apart from producing for the world, the vast Indian domestic market is an added attraction. India is a perfect destination for those who want to set up trusted and resilient supply chains.

On digital payments and UPI, a Venmo-like system

I feel there are three important lessons from the success of UPI. First, technology should be open, interoperable, scalable and secure. Second, there should be democratization of technology. Third, people should be trusted to adapt quickly to technology and evolve.

UPI is a fine example of Indian innovation at its best. I see UPI as a simple tool that broke countless barriers, from financial barriers to geographical barriers. It has opened the world of digital transactions to the person at the last mile.

We have expansive economic ties with the U.S. In addition, we have a large Indian diaspora in the country, significant two-way tourist flows and over 300,000 Indian students pursuing higher education in the U.S. Given this robust connection, it would be mutually beneficial if UPI services are made available in the U.S.

Our talented people are filling skill gaps across the world.... They are acting as our ambassadors across the world."

On the challenge of sustaining and sharing economic growth

Today, India has a favorable demography. We are a young country with a median age of 28 years. We are committed to channeling this demographic dividend to transform India into a developed country by 2047.

I would not like to draw comparisons with China and Japan as each country faces unique challenges and has unique development models.

India has a unique cultural and social ethos. We have a culture of savings. There is also a unique model of family-oriented lifestyle which puts values at the center. In such a set-up, no family member is unproductive.

We are also focused on developing the full potential of our youth and also making them resilient and adaptive to future disruptions.

We are allocating a huge amount of money to facilitate long-term research in the sunrise sectors. India is venturing in areas like space, AI, green energy, semiconductors and other futuristic technologies.

The phenomenal growth of Indian startups is clearly visible. From hardly a hundred in 2014, we have over 1.25 lakh [125,000] registered startups today emerging from every corner of India. By constant skilling, reskilling and upskilling as well as becoming employment creators, our youth will ensure that they continue to lead even in the coming few decades.

For us, the aim of rapid economic growth is to ensure empowerment of the poor and their social mobility. You will be happy to know that the biggest beneficiaries of India's rapid growth in the last 10 years have been India's poor.

India has run the world's largest poverty-eradication drive in the last 10 years and has pulled 250 million people out of poverty. Only four nations in the world have a population more than

that. According to a recent research paper, India has eliminated extreme poverty.

As a result of the robust economic growth, we have been able to run unprecedented welfare schemes. These welfare schemes have ensured that the poor get 40 million houses, over 100 million clean fuel connections, around 110 million clean water connections, over 110 million toilets, 500 million people get free health care and the last remaining 18 thousand villages get electricity.

These welfare measures have not only improved the standard of living for our poor but have also ensured multiple second-order effects like improving productivity, monetary and time savings and health outcomes.

Our efforts at improving social mobility have also extended to different sectors and geographies which were previously ignored. With the aspirational districts program, we have brought about a transformation in more than 100 districts which were previously termed as backward. With the vibrant villages program, we are bringing about a transformation in border villages, which were previously ignored. The eastern and northeastern part of India, which was long ignored, has seen [an] unprecedented push on infrastructure.

On the Indian diaspora

My association with our diaspora goes a long way back, even before I came into politics. I have been involved with our diaspora since the time I was doing social work.

In those days, I traveled extensively across the U.S. I would have traveled to around 29 states even before I became the Chief Minister of Gujarat. There used to be a scheme from Delta Airlines which offered unlimited discounted travel for a month. However, there would be no luggage allowed and no reservation of seats. I planned my travels meticulously, often using a map. I would take red-eye flights to ensure seat availability and opt for longer flights to avoid the need for hotel stays. In the morning, someone from the diaspora would pick me up, and I would spend the whole day with the community. This way, I observed them closely and got to know them well over time. I understood their potential, strengths and desires, but they lacked support and guidance.

Our diaspora has been staying abroad for a long time, often two to three generations. It is natural for the older generation to feel a special connection to their roots. They want their children to also be connected to their roots and it is also our

duty to ensure that this bond remains strong. Our diaspora should feel that there is someone back home who cares about them and is there for them in any situation. Hence, we directed our efforts toward ensuring this.

Through hard work and commitment, they have earned name and fame for themselves. The success of the Indian diaspora is a global talking point today. Our talented people are filling skill gaps across the world. Whenever I go abroad, leaders of the country always have high praise for them. They are acting as our ambassadors across the world.

On religious minorities who complain of discrimination

These are usual tropes of some people who don't bother to meet people outside their bubbles. Even India's minorities don't buy this narrative anymore. Minorities from all religions, be it Muslim, Christians, Buddhist, Sikh, Jain or even a micro-minority like Parsis are living happily and thriving in India.

For the first time in our country, our government has come up with a unique saturation coverage approach when it comes to schemes and initiatives. They are not restricted for a group of

people belonging to a particular community or a geography. They are meant to reach everyone, which means that they are designed in such a way that there cannot be any discrimination. Be it amenities like house, toilets, water connection or cooking fuel or be it collateral free credit or health insurance, it is reaching every citizen irrespective of his community and religion.

Women are at the forefront of India's development story today. We have changed the lexicon from women's development to women-led development."

On the status of women

Women are at the forefront of India's development story today. We have changed the lexicon from women's development to women-led development. I am happy to see you also using it.

We passed the pathbreaking legislation to provide 33 percent reservation for women in our Parliament and State legislatures. In the forthcoming general elections, we have 15 percent more women enrolled as new voters.

Maternal mortality ratio has dropped from 130 [out of 100,000 live births] in 2014 to 97 in 2020, and the nutritional status of women has

significantly improved. We have among the most progressive maternity benefit laws in the world, offering fully paid leave of 26 weeks and have mandated compulsory creche [day care] facilities in any establishment with more than 50 employees.

Today, women are seeing increased participation across all sectors, including the armed forces.

We have opened 285 million bank accounts for poor women and provided collateral free loans to 300 million women entrepreneurs.

Millions of women are being benefited due to innovative schemes like Namo Drone Didi scheme, in which women are enabled to become drone operators in rural areas, and Lakhpati Didi scheme, in which 30 million women from self-help groups are being economically empowered to have annual household income of more than one lakh rupees [100,000 rupees or \$1,200].

Around 15 percent of all pilots in India are women, which is the highest percentage in the world.

These progressive measures have ensured that the female labor force participation rate has increased from 23 percent in 2017 to 37 percent in

2023, despite the enormous difficulties caused due to the pandemic.

I am the first Prime Minister of India who spoke about issues like toilets and sanitary pads. I spoke about respecting women and their choices in my Independence Day address from the ramparts of the Red Fort.

Be it India, or any part of the world, we all need to keep doing more to ensure the safety of women.

On China and the Quad

The U.S., Australia, Japan, India, China: All these countries are members of many groups. We are present in different combinations in different groups. Quad is not aimed against any country. Like many other international groupings, like SCO, BRICS and others, Quad is also a group of like-minded countries working on a shared positive agenda.

The Indo-Pacific region is the engine of global trade, innovation and growth and the security of the Indo-Pacific is important not only to the region, but to the world. Through shared efforts and implementation of development projects in the Indo-Pacific in the areas of climate action, disaster management, strategic technologies, reliable

supply chain, health security, maritime security and counterterrorism, the Quad countries are demonstrating their vision of a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific.

On the India-China border dispute

For India, the relationship with China is important and significant. It is my belief that we need to urgently address the prolonged situation on our borders so that the abnormality in our bilateral interactions can be put behind us. Stable and peaceful relations between India and China are important for not just our two countries but the entire region and world. I hope and believe that through positive and constructive bilateral engagement at the diplomatic and military levels, we will be able to restore and sustain peace and tranquillity in our borders.

On Pakistan

I have congratulated the Prime Minister of Pakistan on taking over office. India has always advocated for advancing peace, security and prosperity in our region in an atmosphere free from terror and violence. [In relation to the imprisonment of Imran Khan], I won't comment on matters internal to Pakistan.

On criticism of ending Jammu and Kashmir's special status

I would encourage you to visit Jammu and Kashmir to witness firsthand the sweeping positive changes happening on [the] ground. Do not go by what I or others tell you. I went to Jammu and Kashmir just last month. For the first time, people have a new hope in their lives. The process of development, good governance and empowerment of the people is to be seen to be believed.

People are reaping the peace dividend: Over 21 million tourists visited Jammu and Kashmir in 2023. There has been a significant decline in terror incidents. Organized bandh/hartals [protests], stone pelting, which once disrupted normal life, are now a thing of the past

Not only this, the youth are also excited about sports events being held here. Sports is being seen as a career path for many youth there.

A new dawn has also emerged for Kashmiri women, who now enjoy the same rights as their male counterparts when it comes to inheriting property or transferring property to their children, regardless of their marital status or residency.

Post the revocation of Article 370, [which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir] the

region has become a welcoming destination for global events, hosting significant gatherings like the Formula 4 racing event, Miss World and G20 meetings. Digital economy, startups, innovation and smart solutions are taking wings.

On the significance of the temple at Ram Mandir, which Modi dedicated himself

The name of Shri Ram is imprinted on our national consciousness. His life has set the contours of thoughts and values in our civilization. His name echoes across the length and breadth of our sacred land. Therefore, during the 11-day special ritual I observed, I made a pilgrimage to the places that carry the footprints of Shri Ram. My journey that took me to various corners of the country showed the revered place Shri Ram holds within each of us.

The return of Shri Ram to his birthplace marked a historic moment of unity for the nation. It was a culmination of centuries of perseverance and sacrifice. When I was asked to be part of the ceremony, I knew I would be representing the 1.4 billion people of the country, who have waited patiently for centuries to witness Ram Lalla's return.

During the 11 days leading up to this auspicious event, I carried with me the aspirations of countless devotees, eagerly anticipating this day. The ceremony itself brought the nation together into a celebration, akin to a second Diwali. Every home was illuminated by the light of Ram Jyoti. I see it as a divine blessing that I could experience the consecration ceremony as a representative of 1.4 billion Indians.

If they [every Indian] are able to live a life of dignity, achieve their dreams, I would consider my task done."

On his legacy

I think it is not my job to think about how I will be remembered, neither does this thought motivate me.

My motivation is the impact I could make in the lives of every Indian, whom I consider my family. If they are able to live a life of dignity, achieve their dreams, I would consider my task done. But till then, I am going to work tirelessly and devotedly to fulfill the aspirations of 1.4 billion Indians.

Modi on leadership

Listening is an important quality for leadership. I am God-gifted with this quality, and I have also cultivated it. Another quality that I have is that I am always in the moment. I am not distracted by phone calls, messages or anything else. When I am doing something, I am 100 percent involved and engrossed in that task.

For leaders, I feel it is important that they have a bottom-to-top feedback channel. A leader should have the ability to connect to the grassroots and get unfiltered feedback. There should also be multiple such channels of feedback, so that human biases and preferences get neutralized. I have spent at least a night in around 80 percent of India's districts. So I have direct connections almost everywhere, which helps me get direct feedback. At the same time, it is important that guidance or instructions efficiently reach from top to bottom.

Let me give you an example. When I was the Chief Minister of Gujarat, I received a call around 3 a.m. from someone in a town called Karjan. Normally, no one alerts a Chief Minister so early in the morning, but my staff knew my working style, so they alerted me. The person called to report a loud explosion in our town. He said I had come to

his home for a meal in my earlier days, so he had familiarity with me and the urge to call me directly. I asked him what could be the reason. He told me that the railway line passes close to his house and it could be something related to the railways. So, I called the district administration, railway officials and my staff to inquire about the incident. None of them had heard about it, but immediately the entire administration set out to work. It turned out to be a train accident. However, because we had a head start in terms of getting timely information, we were able to react promptly. Before sunrise, we had managed the entire situation: the injured were in the hospital, and the accident site was cleared.

I am also a firm believer in delegation of work. I spend long hours understanding and discussing important matters and developing consensus. Once there is consensus, I believe in empowering people to execute it.

I didn't even know that I am good at communication. People observed this when I joined politics. So I said to myself, let's make good use of this skill.

I get hundreds of thousands of physical letters every month. I manage to check many letters and see for myself the emotions expressed

by the people. It is from these letters that the thought of Mann Ki Baat [a monthly radio program] came to my mind. We have had 110 Mann Ki Baat episodes till now.

I feel negativity has a low shelf life. One needs to constantly churn out negativity for it to remain in people's minds. On the other hand, positivity is perennial. So, Mann Ki Baat is a medium for me to gain positivity from society and amplify it.

Source: Newsweek

“I have been working on 2047 for the past 2 years and have taken suggestions of more than 15 lakh people”: PM Modi

PM Modi's interview to ANI

April 15, 2024



Prime Minister Narendra Modi answered wide-ranging questions in an exclusive interview with ANI.

Here is the full transcript.

PM Modi: Namaskar. Namaskar. I wish you a very happy Navratri. In a few days, the country will celebrate Ram Navami. I wish you a very happy Ram Navami.

ANI: You too. My first question is that you have said in many speeches that 2024 is not your target, it is 2047. What is going to happen by 2047, and is this election just a formality?

PM Modi: I think that both 2047 and 2024 should not be mixed up. There are two different things. I had presented this to people from the beginning, one or two years before. And I used to say that in 2047 we will be celebrating 100 years of the independence of the country. Naturally, during such a milestone, it somehow brings new excitement and creates a new resolution.

And in that sense, it was my motto that there is a chance. We were at 75 years of independence, and we are going to reach 100 years. How do we make use of these next 25 years? In every institution, everyone should have a goal. I am the head of my village, and by 2047, I will do this much in my village.

I recently went to the RBI function where they celebrated 90 years, so I said that the next 10 years is very important. You will have completed 100 years. Think about it from now on.

So, in my mind, 2047 is the 100th anniversary of India's independence. And inspiration should arise in the country. And the

100th anniversary of independence is a great inspiration in itself. So, that is one part.

The second is 2024. 2024 is the year of our election. and I believe that elections are altogether different things. On the one hand, as you see in this election, in a democracy, elections should not be taken lightly. And so, I feel that it should be celebrated as an event. From that, like sports, when there are sports festivals and sports events, they create a sportsman spirit. When there is a game, the spectators, the players create an environment of sportsmanship. Which becomes our culture. If we turn this atmosphere of elections into a festival, turn it into a utsav, then in our veins, in the veins of the coming generations of democracy, it becomes a culture. And it is very important for democracy that democracy should not only be in the limits of the constitution. It should be in our blood. It should be in our culture and in that sense, I see 2024.

It is true that I have a vision of 25 years, and I have done a lot of work on that. And it is not like I am doing it today. Maybe when I was in Gujarat, I used to think in that direction. Now look at the 2024 elections. So there is an opportunity in front of the country that there is a model of Congress government and the BJP government. They have worked for five to six decades. I leave a lot of

room for them. They have worked for 5-6 decades, and I have only worked for 10 years. Compare these in any field. Even if there are some shortcomings, there will be no shortcomings in our efforts.

Secondly, in 10 years, at least 2 years, we lost to the battle of COVID. And there were many aftereffects, too. Even then, today, if we compare the country in terms of speed and scale, if we talk about all-encompassing development, then let's talk about that. On every parameter, you can see a model that yes, we will walk on this path with so much speed, and I have to increase the speed. In the next term, I have to increase the speed as well as the scale. That is my goal. Secondly, you will see that when the people of the country take on the responsibility of running the country, then we should have a single-minded focus on the country and the people of the country.

Unfortunately, the political culture of the past was focused on how to make the family strong, and not let anyone take away the roots of the family. Whereas, I am working with the aim of making the country strong. My government is working towards that goal. And when the country is strong, everyone experiences its benefits. Where something is happening, we are working hard, and

doing it with honesty, these things have an impact. So 2024 is an election, so we have taken our track record, and they have brought their track record.

ANI: Prime Minister, you have mentioned two things that I would like to ask about. When you say that there is a trailer, in your speeches, you say that there is a trailer and you are going to do a lot. So, there is a part of the population that gets a little nervous about what Modi ji is going to do. The other people who have complete faith in you think that more work is yet to be done and Modi is going to execute it. So for both of you, what is your vision for 2047? How will this vision be successful? What is your game plan?

PM Modi: When I say that I have a very big plan in my mind, and I have very big plans, most governments have the habit of saying, We have done everything. I don't believe that I have done everything. I have tried to do as much as possible. I have tried to go in the right direction.

Still, there is a lot that I still have to do. Because I see how much my country needs. Every family's dream, How will that dream come true? This is what I have in my heart. And that is why I say what has happened is a trailer. You liked it. But I want to do a lot more. In that sense, I say that.

The second thing is the question of 2047's vision. First of all, I have been the Chief Minister of Gujarat for a long time. And I used to experience that if there were elections again and again, then from my state, 30-40 senior good officers used to go as observers, for Election duty. So they used to stay out for 40-50 days. I used to worry how will I run the government? Because in the country, such elections keep happening and my observers keep going. Then I thought if I have an election, I will not take that period as a vacation. I give jobs to the officials in advance. I ask them to do this for the next government. So I used to plan for 100 days even at that time.

ANI: Yes, that's what I wanted to ask. Yes. The elections are still going on. There are no results yet. And you are making a 100-day plan?

PM Modi: I started before going to the elections. I have been working on 2047 for the past 2 years. And for that, I asked for opinions and suggestions from people across the country. I have taken suggestions of more than 15 lakh people on how they want to see India in the coming 25 years. And I contacted all the universities. I contacted different NGOs. And 15-20 lakh people gave their inputs. Then I took the help of AI and classified it subject-wise. I did a lot of technology work.

ANI: Artificial intelligence. Did you do a lot of technology work?

PM Modi: I did a lot of technology work. I made a dedicated team of officers in every department to work on this. How can it be done for the next term? For 25 years. And then I sat with them and they gave presentations for 2-2.5 hours.

And what are the things according to my vision? Which things are doable and which are not doable?

ANI: Can you give us a little trailer?

PM Modi: There is a model code of conduct on, if I say anything it may be taken in the wrong sense I don't want to get caught in it. But there is nothing hidden in it, it will be public soon. Secondly, I said that I want the document that I am making, which is my vision, but that vision is not of Modi. The thoughts of those 15-20 lakh people are somehow included in it. It is the ownership of the country. 15-20 lakh people give input, which means the whole country is giving. What I have done is that I am making it ready as a document.

As soon as the elections are over, it will be sent to the states. I would like the states to work on it. What does the state think? What can be done?

ANI: And it's not just BJP states?

PM Modi: No, the whole country. This is the country's work, not BJP's. Then I will hold a meeting of the Chief Ministers and NITI Aayog. I will discuss this with the Chief Ministers. And then a final thing will be made. Second, I have told the officials that the picture that has been made in front of us, whatever the input has come, I have given my input. Out of that, I have to work in three parts. One, the BJP's manifesto will come. Out of that, how can we do this work immediately?

I need critical input. I don't believe that I should be the only one who understands everything. I tried my best. I spent a lot of time on it. I divided it into three parts. One is 25 years. In light of that, my next five years. And in light of that, my first 100 days. So in this way, I made a design.

ANI: You made a time table.

PM Modi: I put the options to work. Because I don't want to lose even a minute. Now you must remember, in 2019, very few people pay attention. At that time too, I gave 100 days' work and went to the election field. And when I came back, Article 370, I did it in 100 days. With repealing of Triple Talaq, I made my sisters free. I

did it in the first 100 days. I plan ahead and put it on the basis.

ANI: Modi ji, you have coined a term which has become very popular, Modi ki guarantee. Now during the elections, many people are saying that the candidate is not important. The vote is only going to Modi ji because he is the guarantee.

PM Modi: The first thing is, not only the candidate the voter is also important, in elections, every candidate is important. In elections, the worker at the booth level is also important. The candidate is equally important.

As far as the question of guarantee is concerned, today in our country, I feel that politicians are not true to their word. In a way, it seems that... ..you can say anything you want. You don't have any responsibility. Now you must have seen these days... ..a politician's old videos... ..are going around. And his one statement is so contradictory to the other. Now people see it together and say... This man used to fool us so much. Now I heard a politician's speech. He said, 'I will remove poverty in a jiffy'. Now those who got to rule 5-6 decades, when they say today that I will remove poverty in a jiffy, then the people will raise questions.

So I feel that political leadership is becoming questionable. In such a situation, we should remember that we have a tradition of 'Pran Jaye par Vacchanna Jaye' I believe that politicians should take ownership. They should take responsibility. What I am saying is my responsibility. And I have given the guarantee from that. I also commit and I take ownership. Take the case of Article 370, it has been our parties commitment. When it was my turn, I showed courage. I removed 370. And today, the fate of J&K has changed.

Triple Talaq. So many things went through. Political leadership got scared. People said, why should we trust them? They say one thing and the other. But people started believing. Trust is a very big power. And in a country like India, I consider this trust as my responsibility. And that is why I say this again and again.

ANI: Modi ji, you talk about trust. Wherever our camera teams go, they always say that the candidate or the speaker, they all talk about trust in Modi. So have we come to this situation where earlier it was said that Indira is India, India is Indira, and now Modi is Bharat, Bharat is Modi. Have we reached that level?

PM Modi: And what I myself feel and what I think the people say, is that he is the son of Mother India. He is the child of Mother India. No one thinks of me or speaks for me more than that. He is serving Mother India. That's all there is to it.

ANI: I am talking about Ram Mandir Pran Pratishtha. It should not have been a political issue. But it has happened. And when elections have come, then whether it is the opposition or BJP, they accuse each other of being sinners. Congress says that BJP has done its politics, so they are sinners. BJP says that despite giving an invitation, you did not come to Pran Pratishtha, so you are a sinner. So how do you see this?

PM Modi: The first thing is that who are doing politics? And understand this in today's times. When we were not even born. When our party was not even born. At that time, this matter could have been dealt with in the court. There could have been a solution to the problem. When India was divided, then during the time of partition, they could have decided to do so and so. That was not done. Why? Because this is like a weapon in their hands, is a weapon for vote bank politics. Even, when the case was going on in the court, they tried to delay the judgement of the court. Why? Because for them, it was a political weapon.

They kept saying Ram Mandir will be built, they will kill you. It was a way to appease a vote bank. Now what happened? Ram Mandir was built, no untoward incidents happened and that issue has gone out of their hands.

Secondly, their nature. Look at the incidents from Somnath Mandir till now. What was the problem with Somnath Mandir? Dr. Rajendra Babu wanted to go. There was no Jan-Sangh, no BJP. But they refused to let him go.

ANI: The letter from Nehruji.

PM Modi: Yes. Whatever it is. That tradition is still going on, that the invitation of Pran Pratishtha should be given. And you reject it. Truly, you should be proud that the people who have built the Ram Mandir, those who have also struggled for it, they forget all your sins. They come to your house and invite you. And they want to start anew. You also reject them. Then it seems that for you, vote bank has made you helpless. And because of that vote bank, things like this keep happening. And this... showing someone down, insulting someone, this is their nature. Now if I go to the North East, if people there ask me to wear their clothes, I wear them. Making fun of that too. If I go to Tamil Nadu, wear a Lungi, you feel, look, he is

doing this, he is doing that. I am surprised, so much hatred.

This does not happen in democracy. It should not happen. Look, for us, I believe that this is neither a political issue for us, nor should it be, nor will it ever be. For us, this is a matter of tremendous faith. And this is not a relationship between Lord Ram and me. It has been for thousands of years and it is in many countries of the world. When the Trust came to me with the invitation of the Ram Mandir Pran Pratishtha, I started thinking that I am being given such a big responsibility, how do I make myself worthy? So I took advice from some saints and some people connected to my spiritual life. I don't take this action as a Prime Minister. I want to do it as a devotee of Lord Ram. What can I do? I got a lot of suggestions from them. But then I also did some research. And I decided that I will do an Anushthaan for 11 days. And I used to sleep on the ground. I used to live on Coconut water. And I decided that wherever Lord Ram had gone, wherever I could go, I would try to go there.

I went to Srirangam Temple in South India. And I studied Kamba Ramayana there. Then the people there told me, Sir, 800 years ago, when Kamba Ramayana was created, the first recitation

took place at this very place. And I saw that everyone had tears in their eyes. This experience that I have had, especially in the South, the people sitting here will not be able to understand. What kind of devotion is this? What kind of faith is this? And how much piousness is there in it? My trip was a personal one. But, the people supported me. I see this as a very important 11-days in my spiritual journey.

I had taken Pran Pratishtha very seriously. I had not taken it as an event. It was not an event for me.

ANI: It was a spiritual movement for you.

PM Modi: I used to see the 500 years of struggle. I used to see the faith of 140 crore people and their dreams. And the poor people of the country. They have built temples by giving money. This temple. I see three things. One, 500 years. Second, use of technology its excavation, evidence, this is a very big thing. And fourth, millions and millions of people in India have given whatever they can give, they have built this temple. This temple has not been built because of the government. These are such aspects, that the pride of India, the strength of India, the dreams of India,

the determination of India, and will inspire the future generation of India.

ANI: Let's talk about South India. First, I will talk about some issues of South India. BJP leader has come to Tamil Nadu, for whom there is a lot of media attention, and that is Mr. Annamalai. He is very confident that BJP will get a double-digit figure in Tamil Nadu. Do you share this?

PM Modi: I would say that five generations of our party have been working here. So continuous work has been going on. When people were disappointed with the Congress, they went towards the regional parties. Now people are disappointed with these parties. In this atmosphere of disappointment, they saw the model of the BJP government in Delhi. They saw the model of the BJP government in other states in India. The Tamils who live across the country, they went to their homes and said that this is happening in the state where we live. So people naturally started to compare. Like I did, the Tamil Kashi Sangam.

So in Tamil Nadu, the people of the DMK party used to make fun of us calling us Panipuriwallahs. But when the people of Tamil Nadu came to the Kashi Sangam and saw the form of Kashi, they said, this is not what we used to

hear. This looks very developed. There is a lot of progress.

And because of that, a lot of anger has arisen against DMK. That anger is diverting towards the BJP in a positive way. And Annamalai is a very good leader, articulate. He is young. He has left a very famous job in his IPS cadre. Other people think that he left such a big career and came here. If he goes to DMK, he would have become a big name. He didn't go there. He came to BJP. People think that he has gone to BJP because he has faith in the party. So it has become a source of attraction. And the specialty of my party is that we give an opportunity to every level, every small and big worker who has the capacity. We don't have any family-based party. There is no party that is run by the family. The parties that have of the family, by the family and for the family. And that's why everyone gets an opportunity here.

ANI: If we talk about family-based politics, then in Tamil Nadu, DMK has given a lot of statements against Sanatan. And they have been doing this for a long time. But now, people seem to be a bit agitated. So, what do you think, is it because of awareness that people are turning towards BJP? Or is it because of his statements

against Sanatan that are spreading in other states as well?

PM Modi: I look at this question in a different way. The question should be asked to the Congress. The Congress with which Mahatma Gandhi's name was associated. The Congress where Indira Gandhi used to wear a garland around her neck.

ANI: Rudraksha garland.

PM Modi: Indira Gandhi used to wear a Rudraksha garland around her neck. The question should be asked to the Congress. What is your helplessness? Why are you sitting with people who are so vicious against Sanatan? Will your politics remain incomplete? What is this Congress thinking? This is the topic of concern. The birth of DMK must have been born in this hatred.

The question is not theirs, the question is of a party like Congress. That has it lost its original character? When the people who were sitting in the Constitutional Assembly, most of them were Gandhian people, most of them were people associated with Congress. And the first Constitution was made. The painting on every page of it, they are connected to the tradition of Sanatan. So your constitution was made. In that constitution,

Sanatan was a part of the government. And today, if someone has the courage to abuse Sanatan so much, and if you do the politics of elections with him, if you support that party it is a matter of concern for the country.

ANI: And the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and some other there are ministers and chief ministers of the South. They say that the South is a separate unit and the North is a separate unit. The South India and the North India. And BJP can't meddle in the South India. Rahul Gandhi had also said in the parliament that if you look at it from the East, from Bengal to Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, BJP won't be able to meddle in the whole area. Are there two separate units, South India and North India?

PM Modi: The first thing is that India is very beautiful. India is a country full of diversity. There is a desert here, there is a sea here, there is the Himalayas here, there is the Sahyadri here, there is the Ganga here and there is the Cauvery too. So seeing India in pieces is a misinterpretation of India. If it was the same feeling, if you see in India, where are the villages associated with the name of Lord Ram, then it is Tamil Nadu. There are so many village names that there must be Ram in it. Now how can you call it separate? But there

is a diversity in India. Nagaland will not be like Punjabi. Gujarati will not be the same as Kashmir. So diversity is our strength. We should celebrate diversity. We have such a quality of India that every flower in the bouquet of India blossoms. This should happen.

ANI: Congress says that BJP and especially Modi ji don't appreciate this diversity. They want to put it potray it as one colour. And if BJP wins 400 then there will be only one language and one religion and that too what Modi says.

PM Modi: I don't understand that a person who goes to the UN and for the first time praises the oldest language of the world, Tamil, on what basis are you accusing that person?

I have a thinking and when I wear clothes from different states, they are the ones who have a problem. They want to put the country in a singular structure.

We worship diversity we celebrate diversity. And I tell everyone, like I said, to become a doctor, to become an engineer why can't you become one in your mother tongue? When I talk about becoming a doctor or engineer in the mother tongue, what does it mean? I was celebrating the mother tongue, i was increasing its importance.

I was sitting with all these children who are gamers. Someone asked me for a message. So I said, do one thing, whenever you sign a letter, sign it in your mother tongue. Be proud of it. Now I am trying to bring diversity. Now they have to make accusations. What will they do?

ANI: There are some Chief Ministers who say that they don't get support from the Centre. There are some Chief Ministers from the South as well. You have also been the Chief Minister. Now you are the Prime Minister in the last 10 years. Have your thoughts about cooperative federalism changed when you were the Chief Minister and now you are the Prime Minister? Actually... And don't they get support?

PM Modi: Regional aspirations should be given the most attention. This is the philosophy of my party. If you reject the regional aspirations, you can't make the dream of a developed India come true. I have been the Chief Minister in Gujarat for a long time. And I am fortunate that I am the first Prime Minister in the country who has such a great experience of being the Chief Minister of the state.

So as a Chief Minister, what are the expectations from the Central Government? What are the problems faced by the Central

Government? I have experienced it well. I have understood it well. And that is why I will never want that if there is any obstacle in the development of my country, if I can remove that obstacle and I can help them in that, I will do that too. Because I want to make a country.

Secondly, when I was in Gujarat, even then I had a mantra. The government here was of UPA. Even then I had a mantra, for the development of India, Gujarat should be developed. I will develop Gujarat. Why? Because I want to develop my country. There should be an environment in our country. And we imagined an aspirational district. In every state, we said that this is equal to the parameters of the state. We made a 12-hour plan to help it. All the states are working together in our aspirational district and aspirational box. And we are seeing very good results.

Now look at Corona. I have met the Chief Ministers of states so many times, maybe 20-25 times, and we used to make joint decisions on everything. So we came together and we managed to win the war against Corona. And I say this publicly, that in the fight against Corona, India's success is the same as that of all the states. I recognize this. And that is why I have always said that we have to take the country forward. then we

need competitive, cooperative federalism. We should have a competition, a strong competition for development.

See G20. I could have hosted G20 in Delhi. I didn't do that. I did a G20 summit in every state of India. Because in every state, G20 got the most opportunities. People should get the opportunity to see that state. The state should get a global platform for its exposure. Why? Because for me every corner of my country is my country.

ANI: Mr. Modi, I wanted to ask you two questions about G20. One is about the classic shot of President Biden and Prince Salman, the handshake shot. Secondly, there were a lot of articles in the Western media at that time that there will be no consensus, there will be no declaration. But there was a declaration. So, tell us the back story of these two things. First, how did you get that handshake done? And secondly, how did the declaration happen?

PM Modi: When we work for the global good, there are no personal ifs and buts, then you can take the world on board. And my attempt was that tell me how G8 and G20 were born. The issues for which these were formed we should never divert from those issues. And in that, everyone was

convinced by me. For some people, I needed to talk personally. I did that too. Secondly, my intention was that I will not bring the resolution on the last day, in the last session. I will do it so soon that people will be surprised. And so I completed the declaration work on the second day, on the first day itself. So that was my strategy. And that strategy worked. And I am happy.

As far as why and how did it bring those countries of the world together? Look, we have been hearing about the Silk Route for a long time. Who made the Silk Route? How was it made? There is no history available. The Silk Route evolved.

We have worked on the IMEC which is going to be a big game changer like the silk route was a game changer. There was a positive and proactive role of the Gulf countries. India got an opportunity to play a good role. The US and Europe were with us. And everyone thought that there would be a concrete positive outcome. So we used to meet on that. So there was an opportunity to get the Saudi King and President Biden together, and I had a good friendship with both.

ANI: There is also personality politics in this. Because if we talk about foreign policy, our

relations with Gulf have improved. For that, many people say that it is because of your personal intervention. You were also given respect there. So, whether it is East Asia or West Asia, how important is personality politics in this? Whether it is President or PM, you vibe with them, you talk to them and it gets filtered down. How far is there personality politics in this? What type of equation PM has with President....

PM Modi: I understand that there can be different views on this, and they can all be correct. One is strong, that personality cult, or personal relations, they are very much in these things. There is a strong feeling on this. I feel that if our diplomacy is stuck in the protocol, then we will not be able to perform. The power of diplomacy is also there in the informal. It is not the same in the protocol. There is more positioning in the protocol, who will come first, who will shake hands first, etc.

That is what we understand. So I saw from the beginning that my oath was very interesting. I decided that I will make SAARC countries. In the oath of 2014. And there was no reason behind it because I had only one objection in my election campaign. That this Modi has come from a state. What will the politics of this country understand?

What foreign policy will he understand? First day. We didn't even have a foreign minister. And I was completely new to all these things. I decided to go to the gate to receive them. So the whole system was shaken. Will our Prime Minister go to the gate? For the whole world of protocol of my MEA, that first day was amazing.

And for me, that one action opened all the doors for me. And that's why instead of being stuck in protocol, I focused on performance. I have tried to shift the level of diplomacy. And I have succeeded in that.

ANI: President Obama, President Biden, President Trump, you have worked with these three. And the US-India-US relations are on an upward trajectory. But there are many countries that are troubled by the upward trajectory of India. It is understood that it is like China, because They used to think that it will be a group of two. One side China and the other side America. There will be two power centres. I am giving China as an example. But the countries around us are also in a dilemma that India's trajectory is going up so fast. Can't we make our neighbourhood a part of our success story?

PM Modi: You asked a good question. We have a policy from day one. One, Neighbour first. Second, Act East. In the eastern part of our ASEAN country, we have taken the Act East policy. Here, Neighbourhood first. But secondly, today even if there is country hundreds of miles away from the world. They feel that we have some benefit in the progress of India. So why won't the neighbours see? Today the neighbours are the happiest. Because India is one of their best. Like in the era of Covid, there is no neighbouring country that we have not helped. Natural calamity. There is no such country like Nepal where there was an earthquake. We were the first responders. There was a huge crisis in Sri Lanka. During that crisis, we have done the most work to get them out of trouble. They recognize it publicly. They say it. And that is why, I am experiencing another thing. They expect a lot from us. And I say it in a positive way. They look at it in a good way. And India has also said that we want to see our neighbouring countries strong and prosperous.

ANI: You had extended the hand of friendship with Pakistan in 2014 ...You had done the same with China. But when you talk about success stories or your neighbourhood first, then

Pakistan, China, Maldives also come. And if you talk about them, there are some issues?

PM Modi: In that, their internal policy is important. More than the relations between India and those countries, some things are important for their internal politics.

ANI: Foreign media always says that Modi is the most popular Prime Minister in India. There is no doubt about this. But it also says that a strong Modi means democracy starts sliding. That is, there is a danger for democracy if Modi becomes stronger. But there is something else in India. The same ratings, the same agencies say that the people are happy that if Modi becomes strong. So these are their ratings. What would you say about this?

PM Modi: The first thing is that what is their terminology and what is the basis of their coming to this conclusion. This is a matter of research in itself. But I don't understand this. that in a country where 6 lakh panchayats are run by the elected people, and where elections are held on a regular basis, there are so many states and so many party governments. In our country, there might hardly be a political party that is not in power somewhere. So despite all this, if he says that someone is becoming the supreme leader, then I

think he has a lack of knowledge. Secondly, if Modi lives in the form of the supreme leader, then he would have hosted G20 near him

ANI: There was a question. When the war was going on in Ukraine, the students of India were brought back to India safely. This was heartbreaking. In this, you had done a personal intervention to stop hostilities. I have come to hear this. Will you tell us something about this?

PM Modi: Look, there has been a lot of discussion about Ukraine, but I have seen many such incidents since 2014. If you have seen an interview with Sushma Swaraj, you will see how we brought the people of India from Yemen. And I spoke to the Saudi King and told him that I want to bring people from Yemen there.

So your bombarding is going on, we are not able to do it, how will you help us? So he said, please try to understand me. And Sushma ji has said all these things in her interview. There used to be a period on the request of India in which there was no bombarding. And at that time, we used to take our people out in aircrafts. We brought about 5000 people from Yemen. It was the same in Ukraine. I have a similar relationship with Russia. I have been very friendly with both the presidents. I

can publicly say to President Putin that this is not the time for war. I can also say publicly to Ukraine that we should follow the path of dialogue.

And this is because, I have credibility. And when I said that so many people from India our youths are trapped. And I need your help. And what can I do for you? Then I said, I have arranged so much. You help me so much. They helped. And the strength of the Indian flag was so much that even a foreigner used to hold the Indian flag in his hand. So there was a place for him. So my flag became my guarantee.

ANI: Modi ji, I will come back to domestic politics. One question is about electoral bonds. Rahul Gandhi says in every speech and the opposition leader also says that there is a flaw in this. People of your party also say that if there is a fault, if there is a possibility of improvement, then they can do it. Was the decision on electoral bonds wrong?

PM Modi: The first thing is that there has been a discussion in our country for a long time that black money in elections is a very big and dangerous game. The country's elections should do something to get rid of black money. This discussion has been going on for a long time. There

are costs in elections. No one can refuse. My party also does this. All parties do this. Candidates also do this. And money has to be taken from people. All parties agree. I wanted to try something. How can our elections be free from this black money? How can there be transparency? I had an honest and pure thought. We were looking for a way. We found a small way.

The same was an absolute route we didn't claim it even at that time. How did we work? For example, we used to finish the notes of Rs. 1000 and Rs. 2000. These notes were used in large quantities during the elections. Why? So that the black money gets finished. There was a ruling that political parties can take cash up to Rs. 20,000. I changed the rules Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 2,500. Why? Because I didn't want this to be a cash business. Then I said that the electoral bond is for donors who want to maintain secrecy.

Earlier in BJP, we decided to take money from cheques. So all the businessmen came to us and said, Sir, we can't give money from cheques. We said why can't you give? They said if we give with cheque then we will have to write. If we write, then the government will see that we have given so much money to the opposition. So they will trouble us. They said we are ready to give money but not

with cheque. I remember during the elections in the 90s, we had a lot of problems. We didn't have money. And we had a rule that we will take with cheque. They were ready to give, but they didn't have the courage to do so.

Look, if there were no electoral bonds, then in which system of power would they have been able to find out where the money came from and where it went?

This is the success story of electoral bonds. If there were no electoral bonds, then how are you getting a trail of money. Which company gave it? How did they give it? Where did they give it? Now, it could be a matter of good or bad. The concern I have is that I never say that there is no shortcoming in decision making. In decision making, we learn and improve. It is very possible to improve in this too. But today we have completely pushed the country towards black money. And that is why I say Everyone will regret it. When they will think honestly, everyone will regret it. Now see, the speciality of the electoral bond, see how the lie is going on.

In total, 3000 companies in the country have given electoral bonds. Out of those 3000, 26 companies are such, on which investigation has

been done. They say, ED-VD etc. There are 3000 donors out of which only 26 were being investigated and out of those there were 14 where there were raids, at that time, the bonds were bought.

Can someone correlate this? ... it is believed that out of the 16 companies that bought the bonds, an amount of 37 per cent was donated to BJP. 63 per cent went to BJP's opposition parties. I am talking about these 16 companies who were being probed by EDI, CBI, etc. at some point got accepted and a bond was also issued.

BJP has 37 per cent amount. 63 per cent to the opposition.

Will the EDI raid and do the work of donating to the opposition? Will BJP do this? This means that 63% of the money should go to the opposition and you put up an appeal but they have to say that it is cheap and run away.

ANI: When we talk about transparency, the opposition says that ED, CBI, IT, all the institutions, they also join the election commission, BJP is in control of all the institutions and there is no level playing field. Meaning they are already making the ground that elections It can't be fair.

PM Modi: None of the laws in this have been made by my government. Whether it's the ED, the CBI or the Election Commission. On top of that, we have improved in the Election Commission.

If the Election Commission is formed today, then the opposition is also in it. Earlier, the Prime Minister used to sign a file and form the Election Commission. And those who were close to their families, such people became election commissioners. Such people became election commissioners, who after leaving from there, became members of the Rajya Sabha, became ministers of their government. Such election commissioners were chosen who became Congress candidates. And that is why we cannot play at that level. So our level play cannot happen, we cannot become like this. We want to go on the right path, we don't want to go on the wrong path.

Secondly, how did the CBI and ED come about? You will see about the ED or the election commission, there is a saying—Naach na jaana angan tera.

That's why sometimes they will make excuses for the EVM. Basically, for the defeat,

they have started to set some reasoning from now. So that the loser doesn't fall into their trap.

ANI: They say, how did they fight? Either you are putting opposition leaders in jail, or if they come to your party, then all the sins are washed away.

PM Modi: How many opposition leaders are in jail? No one tells me. And is this the same opposition leader who used to run their government?

ANI: Or is it the fear of jail?

PM Modi: There is fear of sin (paapkadarhai). What fear does an honest person have? They had put my Home Minister in Jail when I was CM.

Now on ED: the country should understand that political leaders are involved in only 3 per cent of the ED cases and 97 per cent of cases are registered against the ones who do not belong to the politics. They are either drug mafia, officers who are involved in corruption, against some of the officers who have created benami assets and they have been sent to jail.

Shouldn't we let the ED work independently when it is supposed to do so? Before to 2014, the ED attached only Rs 5000 cr. Who used to stop it

to take actions and who were getting benefitted. In my tenure, assets worth Rs 1 lakh crore has been attached. Is it not the money of the people of the country?

Before 2014, the same ED had recovered Rs 34 lakh in cash, the money that can be kept in a school bank from across the country. In the last ten years, we have recovered Rs 2200 crore in cash. Rs 34 lakh can be carried in a bag while 70 small trucks (chotahaathi) will be needed to keep Rs 2200 cr. It means that the ED is doing its job well. They have captured people and cash as well and I am convinced that the corruption has destroyed the country. We should fight against corruption with our full strength. And this is my personal conviction.

ANI: On the issue of wealth that when Elon Musk is going to come to India and when he met you in America, he said that he is a fan of yours. Will we see Tesla cars, Starlink in India? And one question related to this was that when such companies will come to India, will the jobs increase? Because a lot of people want, and there is a little fear that when International companies will come to India. So will there be jobs in India or not? I want to ask both of them.

PM Modi: Look, the first thing saying that Elon Musk is supporter of Modi is one thing, basically, he is a supporter of India. And I just met him. It's not like that. I went to see his factory in 2015. He was out somewhere and returned especially after cancelling all his work. He showed me everything in his factory. And I understood his vision from him.

I went there just now and met him again. And now he is about to come to India.

See, in India, in the last 10 years, all over the world, in every region, lot of money is being invested. Now our EV market, the electric vehicle market is so big. You will be surprised to know that how much change has come that people are unable to catch.

In 2014-15, in our country, there were 2000 electric vehicles. In 2014-15, 2000 electric vehicles were sold. In 2023-24, 12 lakh electric vehicles have been sold. Not 2,000, but 12 lakhs. This means a network of such a big charging station has been created. It has helped the environment and we have made policies regarding this.

We have told the world that India is moving very fast on EVs. If you want to do manufacturing, you should come. Come. Not just that. I want

investment to come in India because in India, Doesn't matter who has invested money, that work should be done by our own people. there should be smell of our soil so that our youth in the country will get jobs You can see the example of Google, Samsung came here. Apple came here in a very large quantity. In our Vadodara, work started for the manufacturing of the aircraft. For the semiconductor, a very good statement of a leader of Taiwan has also come. That means we are in every field. We want people to transfer technology.

We want people to invest in capital. We want the youth of our country to get employment. I do not agree with this. that my country's wheat should be exported and we should buy bread from abroad. I will not do that. Whatever I do, I will do it in my country. I will do it for the benefit of my country. And I also make policies for this. I make it with courage. And people are trusting me.

ANI: Prime Minister, I would like to ask two questions at the end. Firstly, what is your message for the first-time voters? And secondly for the millions of honest middle class taxpayers what can **Modi 3.0** do for them?

PM Modi: Look, the developed India that I am talking about, who has a simultaneous future

with it? Those who are 20 years old today, is in 2047. This is the time frame of his entire life, in a way. he will be 40, 45 years old. This means that the process of India's development and the process of his life are both the same. There is a golden opportunity for him. This is the biggest beneficiary of the current first time voter. He is going to be the biggest beneficiary of 2047. This is what I am explaining to him. That I am making your future. You join with me. And I believe that they will join. Secondly, the first time voter wants to come out of the traditional things.

Now you see, there is a manifesto of opposition. This manifesto completely fails the economy. In a way, the manifesto of opposition, destroys the aspiration of the first time voter of the country. If you do the complete analysis, then the biggest loss is for the people who are less than 25 years old. This manifesto will destroy their future. I want to make their lives better. I want to give strength to innovation in the country. Look at the patent that has been registered in the country these days. There is a historical record of patent.

The young generation thinks that our lives are getting better. Today, the data of my country is so cheap. I know that there is a financial loss to my country. But, the result of cheap data is that I have

given strength to my youths to bring digital revolution in the country. Today, I just met the gamers. They say, sir, we go to play in the country of the world. Data is so expensive there. We have so many opportunities for us in India. Education. Today, because the data is cheap, how much benefit should it have? Long distance learning. Yes, in everything. In telemedicine.

The way we have controlled these things, it has been very beneficial. There is a big revolution happening.

ANI: And for the middle class tax payers...

PM Modi: Look, as far as tax payers are concerned, there should really be respect for tax payers. There should be respect for tax payers. will keep abusing every taxpayer on the way. Then how will the country run? I don't understand what kind of thinking this is. See what has changed. I will talk about taxpayers. In the last 10 years, the number of ITR file holders has increased by two times. Earlier, less than 4 crore people used to file ITR. Today more than 8 crore people are filing ITR. Tax collection has increased three times. That means earlier the net tax collection used to be 11 lakh crores. Today the net tax collection is 34 lakh crore. Why is this happening? It is because of trust.

that the money he is giving is being used in the right place. For the sake of development, not for theft and looting. That is why he has come to give because of his faith.

Secondly, we have not taxed the income up to 7 lakh. Even then the tax collection is increasing here. Isn't it? And that is why I believe I thank every taxpayer with all my heart. Because whatever dreams I have to fulfil, the money that the taxpayer gives me, is going to be from that. And I believe that for the progress of the country, the number of tax payers should increase and the burden of the tax payers should be reduced.

I want to move forward towards this strong philosophy. I will also make a request to the tax payers. that for the sake of the country, what can a tax payer do for a developed India? I will tell them that you should inspire at least three people who do not pay taxes to start paying taxes. Every taxpayer should inspire only three people. And I explain to them that when I build a house for the poor, the bricks that are put in it, that is paid by some taxpayer. His virtue, the family that lives in it, the happy person, his virtue goes to that taxpayer. When I give free ration to a poor person, when he cooks food and feeds his children, then if any taxpayer thinks that he gave the tax, that hungry

child is eating food, he will be happy to give the tax.

And that's why I want to co-relate the wealth of the taxpayer with the welfare of the people. So that the giver is satisfied that this is happening with my money. This is a very big necessity. And I say it again and again that this plate of the poor's house, the wealth of its satisfaction, someone is entitled to it, someone is the taxpayer of the country.

ANI: Mr. Modi, you took out your time during the elections and spoke to us about so many things. Thank you for that.

PM Modi: Thank you very much. And I appeal to my countrymen, the first-time voters, to vote in the name of the country. I am not asking them to vote for politics. Vote in the name of the country. They should vote for the future of the next 25 years.

I will urge them to do so. Secondly, I will tell the people of the country I would also like to say to all the political party workers that there is a lot of heat. All the party workers are running in the sun. I would say to all the party workers, drink a lot of water. Drink a lot of water. Run a lot, but drink a lot of water. So that in this heat, I would also say to the voters, that you must vote, enjoy the

elections in the form of a celebration. This is my request to the citizens of the country.

ANI: Do the next elections in the winter and the one nation one election.

PM Modi: You have raised the right point. One nation one election is our commitment. We have spoken in the parliament as well. We have also made a committee. The committee report has also come. So in terms of one nation one election, many people have come on board in the country. All parties. Many people have given their suggestions to the committee. Very positive suggestions have come and very innovative suggestions have come. And the country will benefit a lot if we are able to implement this report.

Source: ANI

“The unemployment rate has gone down from 6% to 3.2%”: PM Modi

PM Modi's Interview to the Times of India

April 29, 2024



TOI: What is your assessment after two rounds of polling? Are you still hopeful of crossing the 400 mark?

PM Modi: I have done more than 70 rallies and roadshows so far, after the announcement of polls. Everywhere I have gone, I have seen an unprecedented display of love, affection and support. It is this support of the people that gives us confidence that we are on track to cross the 400 mark. The people have seen what we can deliver

and we believe that the people want a better tomorrow, and they know that a vote for BJP means a vote towards development.

The opposition is down and out after two phases of polling. In the first phase, it was out and after the second phase, it is out. For us, one of the main reasons we want to win 400 seats is to protect the rights of SCs, STs and OBCs in our country. We want a thumping majority so that the evil designs of the opposition to take away their reservation and rights, and give them to their vote bank are foiled.

TOI: But the opposition says you are aiming for a super majority because you want to change the Constitution?

PM Modi: It is ironic that people who have changed the Constitution the maximum number of times are saying that we will change the Constitution. But before asking such a question, you should analyse my track record. You should study my work and actions right from the time I became CM and see if you find any such thing done by me. It is unfair to me if someone makes an allegation and you take that allegation on face value and start asking me questions on it.

TOI: When you set 370 seats as the target for BJP and 400 for NDA, did you do so because you were concerned that complacency may set in among party cadres and even voters? You seem to have enlisted voters, setting a target for them as much as for yourself. But the optimistic ‘AbkiBaar 400 Paar’ pitch and target of 370 seats for BJP also carries the risk of generating cadre complacency. Did you ever think that it might harm the party?

PM Modi: The party’s slogans reflect the sentiments of the people. It is the collective voice of the citizens who recognise our efforts and want to see even further change. But the genesis of this ‘Abki Baar, 400 Paar’ slogan is very interesting and emotional. Article 370 has been a very emotional issue for us, our karyakartas and the people of India. People have waited for generations for this to happen. Abrogation of Article 370 has been a driving force for our karyakartas for decades. When people saw that our govt did this, it made them very emotional and the feeling among people was that we should give 370 seats to the party which abrogated Article 370. And hence, the slogan, ‘Abki Baar, 400 Paar’ for the NDA emanated from among the people. It was an organic and a never-seen-before phenomenon

where people are themselves setting a target for our victory

As a karyakarta myself, I can attest that no complacency sets in within BJP. All top leaders of our party are constantly in the field, among the people. Our karyakartas are putting in huge efforts. In fact, in several places, you would find only BJP karyakartas at the booths. We are also seeing a large number of people who are passionate about the country taking time out to volunteer for BJP in cities as well as villages. This kind of support from society is helping us immensely. A new phenomenon that is being seen is the beneficiaries not only voting for us in large numbers, but also motivating others in their circle to do the same.|

TOI: Rahul Gandhi has said that it is too hubristic and BJP is headed for the ‘India Shining’ moment of 2004 when it had crashed to a shock defeat. Your comments? Unlike in 2004, when BJP pushed away allies, the party has this time enlisted new ones

PM Modi: The Congress party’s Yuvraj should be the last person to be talking about hubris. But it is true that now the Congress party is dependent only on shocks and surprises. Their only hope is that there will be some miracle to make

them win the elections. Even their most veteran and important leaders have given up and conceded the elections. Each election is based on contemporary issues and, so, comparing them is not correct. In 2024, not only have we got new allies but we have unprecedented support of the people, which gives us the confidence of a spectacular win.

TOI: How do you assess your prospects in south India? You have made a big push in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

PM Modi: The prospects are very good. It is not I who made a big push, it is, in fact, the other way round. The people of south India have made a big push to create space for BJP. Wherever you go in the South, the acceptance and affection shown by the people has been unprecedented. People in south India have seen govts of only Congress or regional parties. They have seen how these parties have perpetuated only corruption, nepotism, misgovernance, divisiveness, vote-bank politics and a very regressive approach to governance. People have also seen their hate for Indian culture and heritage. As a result of these reasons, people are fed up of Congress and regional parties.

On the other hand, people have seen our governance at the Centre and have also seen the impact of our welfare schemes reaching them. They see a ray of hope in BJP and are seeing BJP as a credible alternative. BJP was the single largest party in south India in 2019 and this time it will be the single largest party by a huge margin. The results from the South will see multiple myths broken this time. Our mind-share has already increased and you will see that our vote share and seat share will also increase in a huge way.

TOI: Last time, BJP swept Karnataka but it suffered a big setback in the assembly polls. The talk is that your tally from the state will shrink. What is your assessment?

PM Modi: We have been hearing this talk in every election. People who are talking about our tally shrinking have shrunk to 50-odd seats themselves. People of Karnataka and BJP have a special relationship. The support for BJP saw a massive increase in 2019 and this time, our 10-year record of delivering strong economic growth, strong national security and strong welfare programmes will ensure NDA will win all 28 seats in Karnataka. NDA has been further strengthened by the addition of JD(S).

Congress leaders are busy fighting to become CM while the state is suffering. The Congress govt has deceived the people of the state through faulty and half-baked implementation of their promises. People of Karnataka are fed up with the increasing lawlessness in the state and with the halt in progress of important infrastructure projects. They are fed up with the increasingly long power cuts and lack of water. People of Karnataka are repenting their vote to Congress in the state election. They will once again place their trust in the proven Modi guarantee.

TOI: Congress's guarantees played a big role in its victory in the assembly polls in Karnataka and Telangana. Do you think 'Modi ki guarantee' can trump them?

PM Modi: For me, guarantee is far more than a word. It is a very sacred expression for me. It is linked to my hard work and my credibility. It is an outcome of my entire life in public service. When I speak about guarantee, it pushes me to work even harder for the people. When I attach such importance to my guarantees, naturally people also realise it. People see that whatever guarantee Modi gives, he fulfils it, no matter what the circumstances. From providing tap water connections to rations, from building houses for the

poor to expressways, Modi is delivering on the guarantees made to people. There are no ifs and buts to Modi's guarantees. For the Congress party, their promises are just a way to fool people to gain their votes. They have neither credibility nor the intention to fulfil their promises. They had given many guarantees since Independence. Look at what happened to the biggest guarantee given by their tallest leader: the one of removal of poverty in 1971. Successive Congress PMs had spoken about removing poverty but nothing happened for decades. The poor were living without basic necessities like a house, toilet, water connection. Corruption continued unabated. Countries which became independent around the same time as India marched way ahead of us in terms of their economies. India was considered as one of the 'Fragile Five' nations before we came to power. So, for the people, there is no comparison between Modi's guarantees and Congress's broken promises.

TOI: Congress has accused BJP of attempting communal polarisation in Karnataka and elsewhere while BJP has charged it with appeasement. How is this playing out?

PM Modi: Media should look at actions and not allegations. Look at what all has happened

in Karnataka. Bomb blasts, brutal murder of a daughter, attack on people doing bhajan-kirtan... During bomb blasts, the state govt tried its best to mislead people. In the murder of the daughter, the media is showing how the father is going around asking for justice. He is from the Congress party, but still he is not getting justice. If this is not appeasement, what is it? It is not polarisation to show that Congress has violated the Constitution and enacted laws providing reservation on the basis of religion. Our Constitution clearly prohibits reservations based on religion but the Congress govt in Karnataka reversed the law passed by BJP to provide reservation to OBCs and gave it to Muslims, classifying all Muslims as OBC. Even the National Commission for Backward Classes, a constitutional body, criticised this as against principles of 'social justice'.

The Congress govt in Telangana has recently said that it will replicate this move. This proves that Congress wants to reduce the reservation provided to SCs, STs and OBCs across the country and give it to minorities. What else can one expect from a party whose prime minister said that minorities have the first right on resources of this country?

TOI: Is one nation, one poll going to be on the top of your 'to do' list in the third term? What about UCC? Will the Centre be an enabler or leave it to states?

PM Modi: For the longest time, govts have been driven by electoral considerations rather than national considerations. Every year, there would be some or other election taking place and the priority would always be to win the next election, even if it meant trading off the long-term interests of the people of India. It is a matter of concern for us. One nation, one poll is going to ensure that as a nation, our time, effort and resources get invested more productively towards nation-building. A high-level committee, under the chairmanship of former President Ram Nath Kovind, has already submitted a report to President (Droupadi Murmu) prepared after extensive consultations with stakeholders and experts and research on implementing one nation, one poll. In our third term, one will see concrete steps being taken on the matter.

Uniform Civil Code, too, is one of the core agendas of our party. Already, BJP govts in states are mulling over its implementation. Uttarakhand has become the first state to implement UCC. It is clear that separate laws for communities are detrimental to the health of society. We cannot be a

nation where one community is progressing with the support of constitutional norms while the another community is stuck in a time warp due to appeasement. We will do everything in our capacity to make Uniform Civil Code a reality in India.

TOI: Your opponents in Karnataka and elsewhere have raised the issue of a NorthSouth divide, claiming the Centre discriminates against southern states. Do you see merit in it or is it driven by their need to fund their guarantees?

PM Modi: Raising the false bogey of discrimination is their way of diverting and distracting from their corruption and misgovernance. People of Karnataka proudly sing Jaya Bharata Jananiya Tanujate, Jaya he Karnataka Maate (Victory to you Mother Karnataka, the daughter of Mother India). Does Congress really think its move to further divide India will be accepted by the immensely patriotic people of Karnataka? Every patriotic Indian will reject this artificial and false divide that Congress is trying to create. Congress, in partnership with the Left, has left Kerala nearly bankrupt and is now seeking to do the same in Karnataka and Telangana. It has just been one year since Congress came to power in Karnataka and they have already done serious

damage to its thriving economy. Debt incurred by the state govt has massively increased and their empty promises have not resulted in providing welfare to people. In fact, their misgovernance has spooked investors and led to flight of capital from Karnataka. There has been a 46% reduction in FDI and 80% reduction in funds for startups compared to last year in the state.

TOI: What is your worry about the current pitch for redistribution of assets? You have said the govt should not be expropriating wealth and assets of people and that a plan to do that is a reflection of the Maoist vision which has caused havoc in so many countries. Do you see this as a real threat?

PM Modi: We should not consider this sinister plan of the Congress party like an idle threat, the threat is very real and stands to hurt our nation irreversibly. This is a clear example of Maoist thinking and ideology. It is saddening to see the Congress party and its Yuvraj carrying forward such Maoist vision which is a recipe for disaster. You would have seen the Yuvraj saying that we will do an X-ray. This X-ray is nothing but raiding every home. They will raid farmers to see how much land they possess. They will raid the common man to see how much wealth he/she has earned through hard work. They will raid the

ornaments of our women. Our Constitution protects the property of all minorities. This means that when Congress talks of redistribution, it cannot touch the properties of minorities, it cannot consider waqf properties for redistribution but it will eye the properties of other communities. This will sow complete and irreversible communal disharmony.

This is something we have to be very careful about, we cannot let anyone harm the country and its people, whatever reasons they may have. Our nation, the welfare of each and every one of our citizens is our first and foremost priority. Our govt doesn't design policies to benefit a majority, we do not make policies that will benefit minorities; we make policies that benefit our nation and its 140 crore citizens without discrimination.

TOI: As the size of the Indian economy grows, there are discussions about equity and inequality. You don't seem to see wealth tax and inheritance tax as solutions.

PM Modi: I do not think they are solutions by any stretch of imagination. These are actually dangerous problems disguised as solutions. Would you work day and night if the govt will take away your money in the name of redistribution? Today,

we are empowering 3 crore women to become LakhpatiDidis. Such policies will ensure that women don't become Lakhpatis and their aspirations don't progress. If someone has taken a Mudra loan and is progressing, his growth will be stunted. Our street vendors who are now growing due to our policies will also not be able to grow. Today, we are the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world. Such policies will kill the startup revolution by our youth. This policy is a way to please their vote bank.

If we really want to ensure people's growth, we just need to remove barriers and empower them. This unleashes their entrepreneurial potential as we have seen in our country; even in tier 2 and 3 cities, which are giving rise to a lot of startups and sports stars. These reasons are why wealth redistribution, wealth tax etc have never been successful: they never removed poverty, they just distributed it so that everyone is equally poor. The poor remain stricken with poverty, wealth creation stops and poverty becomes uniform. These policies sow discord and block every road to equity, they create hatred and destabilise the economic as well as social fabric of a nation.

TOI: Barring Ram Mandir, there has been no emotive issue in play this time around. You

seem to be optimistic that people will consider improvements in their lives and prospects and give you a 'positive' vote. Cases relating to Kashi and Mathura temples are in court. Rather than wait for a lengthy legal process, can these issues be sorted out by discussions between religious leaders of both communities?

PM Modi: Yes, Ram Mandir is an emotive issue for the people of our country. It is a civilisational struggle of 500 years which has been resolved and the prayers of generations of Indians have been answered. But you are wrong in saying there is no other emotive issue. A 'mahila' getting a tap water connection, LPG connection, toilet and becoming a Lakhpati Didi and having the power to dream of a better future is an emotive moment for her and her entire family. For a youth who wants to start his own business and provide for his family and has aspirations to further expand his operations, getting a collateral-free Mudra loan is also a big emotive moment. A 'kisan' getting his 'samman', a father being able to provide the best treatment to his child due to Ayushman Bharat Yojana, a street vendor opening a second cart due to PM-SVANidhi and transacting entirely on UPI: all these mark emotive moments for the entire country. Improvement of living standards is an

emotive issue which is resonating strongly in this election. For a large number of people of this country, they are seeing for the first time that they can have a better future and achieve their dreams, which is an emotive issue for them.

As far as Kashi and Mathura are concerned, I will not comment much as the cases are sub judice. But we are committed to developing our cultural heritage. Our manifesto speaks about the aim to boost cultural tourism across the country and develop temple spaces and cultural spaces of all religions in India as world-class destinations for pilgrimage and tourism. The massive development taking place in our temple towns will not only help the pilgrims but also the local economy.

TOI: In 2019, welfare schemes ranging from Ujjwala to PM Awas Yojana had reached people for the first time on a big scale. Voters endorsed the schemes and voted for BJP. This time, the schemes are not so new or unique. Will delivery of schemes still be a factor that will influence voter choice the same way?

PM Modi: If you look at our manifesto this time closely, you will observe that we have not only expanded our schemes but have also reinvented them as per the current aspirations of

the poor. Take Mudra Yojana for example. We brought around an entrepreneurship revolution through this scheme and now we will double the loan amount to match the aspirations and requirements of our entrepreneurs. Take electricity for example. We ensured electricity reaches more than 3 crore households and 18,000 villages for the first time. Now we have come up with the PM Suryaghar Muft Bijli Yojana to ensure that people get free electricity. Take startups for example. We brought proactive policies and ensured that startups get all support. Now we want to make India a startup hub.

So, you can see that there is continuity because we don't want to change our direction when we are successful. But we are reimagining the scale and scope of schemes. The poor who are exiting poverty should not lapse into poverty again. The progress achieved should continue. This approach will ensure that people's aspirations are also fulfilled and also help achieve a Viksit Bharat. Our manifesto has only things which are achievable. We don't believe in making false and unrealistic promises that cannot be delivered.

TOI: Sections of the opposition like INDIA consistently raised questions over the credibility of

EVMs. They had alleged tampering in 2014 and, again, in 2019...

PM Modi: I think our Supreme Court has given a good closure to this issue. The Supreme Court judgment speaks in detail about the importance of EVMs and the transparency they bring. The opposition always wants to drag the nation towards the era of booth capturing, which is only possible through paper ballots. I don't think the members of INDI Alliance have ever been bothered about logic and reason when it comes to EVMs. For them, EVMs have always been the convenient scapegoat after defeat. Let us see if it will be any different this time.

TOI: Opposition often alleges that there is threat to democracy and also that the country is moving towards being an 'electoral autocracy'. The charge has found takers in many foreign capitals. Do you see it as a challenge?

PM Modi: This is an example of the scorched earth policy that our opposition is following. Because the opposition is not able to get power, they start defaming India on the world stage. They spread canards about our people, our democracy and our institutions. India does not become an electoral autocracy if the Yuvraj cannot

automatically get power. Just because he has to fight elections and the people of India are not impressed by him doesn't make India less democratic. I don't think there are many takers for such charges in foreign capitals. They often are more in sync with reality than the 'certificate shops' in their countries. When I engage with world leaders, I see genuine admiration for our democratic process and our institutions. When they deep dive into the scale and speed of our electoral process, they are awed by our efficiency.

TOI: The govt has been accused of misusing investigating agencies, particularly ED and CBI, to harass political opponents. It has also been alleged that 'tainted' politicians turn clean as soon as they join BJP.

PM Modi: It is my request to the media to first do research on these allegations. Instead of introspecting why its functionaries are leaving in hordes, Congress is making such excuses. There are many politicians with no ED or CBI cases against them who have left Congress and joined us. The fact is that just a small fraction of the agencies' cases is related to political figures. Of the corruption cases probed by the ED, only 3% involve politicians. The remaining 97% are linked to officials and criminals. Action is being taken

against them too. Over the last 11 years, out of 10,622 preliminary inquiries and regular cases being investigated by the CBI, only about 1-1.5% of the total cases involved politicians. This debunks the claim of a politically-motivated modus operandi. Another interesting fact is that before 2014, the ED attached assets worth only Rs 5,000 crore, whereas in the last 10 years that amount has increased to more than Rs 1 lakh crore.

Most importantly, no ongoing investigation has been closed simply because the person involved has joined a particular party. Corruption is a serious problem, and we're dealing with it seriously. We have come a long way in our battle against corruption in the last 10 years and are now at an inflection point. Investigations by our central agencies also extend to high-profile bureaucrats, resulting in the identification and attachment of proceeds worth over Rs 16,000 crore. These numbers show the agencies' commitment to being fair and effective in tackling economic offences.

TOI: In Delhi, we have a situation of a sitting CM being in jail. Although the law is silent on this, it is against convention. Do you see this becoming a precedent?

PM Modi: I think it is the media's responsibility to show the people the full perspective on this issue, how people of Delhi are suffering, and what the courts have said about the case. I am optimistic that this will not become a precedent. I feel other politicians won't be so lacking in morals and will not go to this extent.

TOI: NDA-appointed governors have been at loggerheads with some opposition-governed state govts which have accused Raj Bhavans of interfering in their work. How would you respond to these allegations?

PM Modi: Congress party, which converted Raj Bhavans into Congress Bhavans, has no right to speak about the sanctity of the governor's post. Before I took on the role of prime minister, I was chief minister of a state for more than a decade. In those years, I worked under Congress governors. I respected them and they respected me, despite our differences, and this was the case for many years. Perhaps for the first time since India's Independence, we're seeing this level of unprecedented attacks on our governors in various states. We must understand that the governor acts as a bridge between the Union and state govt, bringing in much-needed balance in administration to an otherwise diverse and vast

nation. It is very unfortunate that in certain states, we are hearing about workers of political parties stopping the governor's convoy, and in some states, even throwing petrol bombs at the Raj Bhavan. This kind of behaviour is alarming and unacceptable. When such incidents happen, they raise serious concerns about the overall law and order situation in the state. It indicates a breakdown of authority and respect for the rule of law.

As far as Raj Bhavan's interference in state affairs goes, we need to take a look at history. Which party and people in power misused Article 356 the most to paralyse state machineries that they disagreed with? Which prime minister used Article 356 fifty times to topple elected govts led by opposition parties? And this begs the question: How many elected state govts have been toppled unethically since 2014? None. Instead, there has been a rise in cooperative federalism, with efforts to foster better relations between the Centre and states. The governor represents the constitutional authority of the state, and their position should be respected by all parties, regardless of political differences.

TOI: You have attempted to expand the concept of employment beyond govt jobs to

selfemployment. Do you see your attempt succeeding in view of the entrenched bias for govt jobs?

PM Modi: Our efforts have been to expand the spectrum of opportunities for the youth, be it public sector, private sector or entrepreneurship. Our 10 years will be remembered for creating the maximum number of opportunities across all three segments. Rather than argue that one kind of job is better or another, we have focused on improving the overall pool of opportunities available for the youth. The results are visible. The annual Periodic Labour Force Survey data shows us that between 2017 and 2023, the labour force participation rate has increased from 49.8% to 57.9%. The unemployment rate has gone down from 6% to 3.2%. Between 2017 and 2024, over 7 crore new EPFO subscribers have been added. Over 8 crore new businesses have been started with Mudra alone and each business has supported 1-2 people. This means more than 15 crore opportunities have been created. Now add to this Startup India, Stand-up India loans and SVANidhi loans, the entrepreneurial sector itself has completely transformed. We have opened several new avenues for the youth. Space sector, which was not even thought about some years ago, is flourishing today.

Our gig economy is thriving and employs lakhs of people, with over 20% engaged in highly skilled jobs. Our digital economy is also growing exponentially with over 6 crore jobs generated till 2019; a number that may double in the next few years. A recent report has said that in the past decade, the real estate sector has seen the creation of over 3 crore new jobs. I regularly attend Rozgar Melas which is the largest-ever drive to give govt jobs where we have given recruitment letters to lakhs of youth.

TOI: Your vision of ‘Viksit Bharat’ in 2047 is still 23 years away from becoming a reality. By the time it is realised, you will be close to 95 years. Still, to your supporters and many others, you are central to that vision.

PM Modi: India becoming Viksit Bharat is not Modi’s vision. It is the vision and will of 140 crore Indians that when the nation celebrates the 100th year of Independence, it should be a developed nation. I find myself extremely fortunate that I have been an instrument to realise the dreams and aspirations of my countrymen. The speed and scale of our work reflects our eagerness to take the nation to new heights. Our model of saturation shows our commitment to open the doors of prosperity for every family. Our push towards

technology and newer opportunities is ensuring that our yuvashakti reaches its full potential. Our borders today are more secure than ever, our narishakti is the one leading social change, our infrastructure is acquiring global standards and our economy is turning more and more aatmanirbhar. In the last 10 years, we have built a solid foundation for the nation's growth to take flight. That is why I say that what you have seen till now is only a trailer. There is a lot that I want to do. Let me assure you, Modi is blessed by 140 crore Indians. He will not stop till the dream of Viksit Bharat is achieved.

TOI: You have been credited with raising India's global stature with a more assertive and ambitious foreign policy. Tell us about your experience of having steered India in a conflict-ridden world in which the pursuit of our national interests seemed, at least to some of our partners in the West, to be at odds with the rules of the international order?

PM Modi: Shouldn't the goal of our foreign policy be to advance our national interest? Our approach to foreign policy is 'nation first'. And when we talk about our rise through a 'nation first' approach, it doesn't threaten the world. The world feels the rise of India is good for the world.

The world only respects those who stand for themselves. No one respects those who cannot even stand for their national interest. So when we conducted our foreign policy as per our national interest, initially it would have come as a surprise to many. For example, when we went into trade deal discussions looking at our interests in mind, our partners and even the media were surprised to see us doing so. Our partners have realised that it is normal for nations to stand for their national interest. Doing so, in fact, increased their respect for India. They came to terms with a new reality where India is very cognisant of what is good for its people and what is not. Today, the world respects India for being able to ensure that fuel and energy prices for its citizens stayed in control despite the global conflicts.

Whenever I meet world leaders, I see that their interest and attraction for India is increasing. They see the situation in their countries and compare it with how India is a nation brimming with optimism and opportunities. I see genuine respect for India and Indians. Yes, the world is today filled with conflicts and chaos, but there are islands of calm and growth like India. India's role is more important in the world than ever before.

TOI: If your assessment is proven right, you will equal Pandit Nehru's record of scoring three straight wins. Your views on this rare feat also in view of the contrasting backgrounds you both came from.

PM Modi: To be honest, I do not know about these records. It is your work to analyse such trends. I just keep doing my work. But since you have asked this question, I would urge you to do an analysis of this. You could look at the political landscape at that time, the opposition parties and their leaders. You could look at the level of awareness among people for their rights as well as their education levels. You can look at the media presence. An analysis should be done comparing how the country progressed in Nehru ji's 10 years versus our 10 years. We are at a very important juncture as the country is preparing a roadmap for the next 25 years and it would enlighten the public.

Source: The Times of India

**“I do not live for myself..... I should
work for my country every moment”:
PM Modi**

**PM Modi's exclusive Interview to News18
Network**

April 29, 2024



Rahul Joshi: Modi Ji, thank you for giving this exclusive interview to News18 Network. You took time out from your punishing schedule. We'll do this interview a bit differently. In the beginning, we'll ask some big picture questions. With me are my two colleagues – News18 Lokmat anchor Vilas Bade and News18 Kannada Editor Hariprasad. Maharashtra and Karnataka are two crucial states

in the Lok Sabha Elections, so we thought they could also ask you a few questions.

PM Narendra Modi: Namaskar to you and your viewers. I am happy to see that you have (interviewers from) Karnataka and Maharashtra with you. In a way, you have helped me. Otherwise, I would have had to give more time for three separate interviews.

Rahul Joshi: Modi ji, we have been touring the whole country. We were in the south, went to Bihar, and Maharashtra too. Whether we talk to the Opposition or your candidates, they say that ‘when Modi ji comes here, everything will change’. They say ‘nothing can be said right now’. ‘If Modi ji comes here, it is possible that there will be a sweep, it is possible to bag the seat’. So can this 2024 election be seen as a referendum on Narendra Modi?

PM Modi: Now that’s the business of the media, how and when to analyse. But I would say this much that I do not run any election-time government. If you see my record of 10 years, then on an average, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, I went to some corner of India. I have been among the people and that is why my visits continue. I believe elections are the festival of democracy and

as such it is the duty of all political parties to go among the people as much as possible. They should engage in dialogue and discussion. So, whether it's election time or not, I consider it my duty as a worker in the political field to meet the people.

As far as these two phases of elections are concerned, I have seen such public support in very few elections. In a way, the people are fighting these elections. They are fighting for good governance. They are fighting to fulfil their dreams. I feel perhaps I am just the medium. I am more enthusiastic to go among the people this time because when the people are so enthusiastic to take up such a big responsibility, I feel it is my duty to bow down to them and seek their blessings. When the first round of elections took place, I had told some friends that people who were campaigning against us were finished. After the second round, they are demolished. First, people finished them, now they demolished them.

Rahul Joshi: Modi ji, you started the campaign on a very high note. You introduced the entire work of the government. You moved forward with the development agenda. You shed a lot of light on the economy and a lot of work has been done on it. Now, after a couple of rounds, you

made a direct attack on the Congress manifesto in a rally in Rajasthan. You even said that they have a scheme through which they want to distribute wealth. They want to find out who has how much savings, who has how much money, who has how much gold, silver and they want to distribute it among Muslims and infiltrators. Is this threat so real? Do you see it like that?

PM Modi: I feel that maybe your team has not tracked my entire campaign. There are many good developmental things which may not be fitting in terms of TRP. But you must have seen that my entire election campaign is focused on two things. One, we have done work for the welfare of society. The biggest difference in this government [compared to previous ones] is that last-mile delivery is our specialty. See, no government is formed to do bad, it wants to do good. Some people know how to do good for others, some people wait for good things to happen. I am a person who believes in working hard and getting things done.

Now see, I am continuously saying in the elections that we have built four crore houses for the poor. I tell so many people that when you go for this election campaign, please help me by sending a list of people whose houses have not

been built. As soon as my third term starts, I want to take this work forward. I want to build three crore more houses. Now, the Ayushman Bharat Yojana is the world's largest health insurance and health assurance scheme. This is the assurance of treatment to 55 crore people. It is an assurance that Modi's government is with you. This time, we have said in the manifesto that no matter which class, society, background a person belongs to, whoever is above 70 years of age --- both men and women -- will get free treatment up to Rs 5 lakh. This time we have also said in the manifesto that we will give this benefit to ASHA workers. We will give benefits to transgenders, no matter what their age is.

Now you have seen, in our country, banks have been nationalised, and they are playing these games of confiscation. This has already been done in the past. All the banks were private, they have looted and are taking money in the name of the poor. The condition of banks in our country was miserable. More than half of the population of the country was such that it gave money to open accounts in banks but the banks never opened their accounts. Then Modi came and opened 52 crore bank accounts, and I took the biggest advantage of it. I took the trinity of Jan Dhan, mobile and

Aadhaar and encouraged Direct Benefit Transfer. A sum of Rs 36 lakh crore --- the figure is very big --- has gone into people's accounts [via Direct Benefit Transfer]. This huge financial inclusion has happened in our country [due to opening of accounts]. This is more than the number of accounts that would have opened in the world in a year. There is Jal Jeevan Mission in our country. In India, 3-4 per cent of the villages would get water from taps in their homes, that too in urban localities. Today, tap water has reached 14 crore rural families.

Now all this work is what helped 25 crore people come out of poverty. We have empowered them, and my strategy is that we give so much strength to the poor, so much power, that the poor themselves overcome poverty. And when the poor overcome poverty with their hard work, after that they do not want to go back to poverty. It becomes a commitment, and they become the strength of the country. Today, we are benefiting as 25 crore people have come out of poverty. It is a very big achievement, the world is praising it, and this will become a model for the developing countries.

You see, what was the situation before 2014? Fragile 5 used to be the headline. Today, we have become a vibrant economy. In IMF, there is a

group of 150 countries of the world --- which includes China and India --- which we can call developing countries or countries with an emerging economy. They analysed such a group by classifying them together. It is a very interesting observation.

Now see what the analysis is. In 1998, India's per capita GDP was around 30 per cent, compared to others in the peer group. At that time, Atalji's government was in power. From 1998 to 2004, Atal ji took this figure from 30 per cent to 35 per cent. It was a good progress. But unfortunately, in 2004, this khichdi company came and this khichdi company ruined the work of Atal ji. They brought the number down from 35 per cent to 30 per cent. All these countries [in the peer group] performed better than India. During the UPA regime, India became poorer compared to the other countries in the developing world. Those poorer than us went ahead.

But in 2014, after the formation of the government, till 2019, you will be happy to know that we took the figure to 37 per cent. And when I reached the year 2024, this figure was 42 per cent. That means our income has grown very fast as compared to other countries of the world. If you look at the inflation rate in the period of ten years,

which is discussed so much, then these ten years have seen the lowest inflation. What I am saying is on the basis of reality. We have achieved this after a lot of hard work. We have mobilised the entire government, and we have put in our best efforts to achieve the target. Despite that, what does Modi say? Modi says this is just a trailer, I have to go further. I want to move very fast, taking the country along with me.

So far as the Congress manifesto is concerned, someone please tell me, are the manifestos of political parties during elections a mere showpiece? This is the work of the media to read the manifestos of every political party. I was waiting for the media to comment on it. I had commented on the manifesto on the first day. After seeing the manifesto, I feel that it has the stamp of the Muslim League. I thought that the media will be shocked. Those who do analysis will be shocked... But they just kept saying whatever is presented by the Congress. Then I thought that this seems to be a big scam of the ecosystem and I will have to bring the truth. I waited for 10 days that the evils in the manifesto would be brought out by someone or the other because if it is brought out in an unbiased manner, it is good. Finally, I was forced to bring out these truths.

You see, when one of their mahashay gave an interview in America where he brought up the issue of inheritance tax, about 55 per cent tax on your property. Now I am talking about development and inheritance and they are talking of plundering that inheritance. Their history till date is about doing what they have mentioned in the manifesto. It is my responsibility to tell the countrymen that they are taking the country in this direction. Now you decide whether you want to go or not. But it is my responsibility that on the basis of facts and importance, I should tell you [the truth].

Rahul Joshi: Sam Pitroda ji spoke about inheritance tax on the wealth we save for our family when we give it to our next generation. This tax could be very high. Will you say that if BJP comes to power, it will never implement this tax?

PM Modi: What the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) plans to do is written in our manifesto. How does the thought that we will carry forward their plan even come to your mind? The ideology of the Bharatiya Janata Party is clear. We go before the country with our manifesto and work. Please don't impose their great thoughts on us.

Rahul Joshi: Rahul Gandhi has spoken about a national X-ray or socio-economic survey, along with caste census. The institutional survey will look at which sections are behind and will redistribute the wealth accordingly...

PM Modi: People who consider themselves political experts should ask such people that if the conditions you (Congress) describe are real, then you have been in power for 50-60 years. You gave birth to this. Why did you let it come to this? Secondly, X-ray means raiding every household. If any woman has hidden gold where she stores grains, even that will be X-rayed. The jewels will be confiscated. Land records will be scrutinised. And these will be redistributed. This Maoist ideology has never helped the world. This is an entirely 'Urban Naxal' thought. This is why the Jamaat, which usually keeps writing, kept quiet about the manifesto even after 10 days, because it will help them. They kept quiet to protect them. It then becomes my responsibility to awaken the country to the fact that they are planning to loot you. The next part is Dr Manmohan Singh has said clearly who has the first right on the country's resources. They have clearly stated their intentions.

Rahul Joshi: A video of 2006 is going viral in which Manmohan Singh ji has said that poor

Muslims have the first right on resources. He has clearly said this. You have also pointed out this in the Manifesto that he would like to take a part of OBC reservation and give it to Muslims and between 2004-2014, he has tried to do this four-five times.

PM Modi: You have asked a very interesting question. The answer will be long but, for the sake of the country, I will have to tell you.

You see the history of Congress; this demand (for reservation) has been raised since the 1990s. There is a huge section of society in the country which felt that something should be done for them, there were protests for it. Before 1990, Congress completely opposed it and suppressed it. Then whatever commissions they formed, whatever committees they formed, their reports also started coming in favour of OBCs. They kept denying, rejecting, and suppressing these views. But after the 90s, due to vote-bank politics, they felt something must be done.

So, what was the first sin they committed? In the 90s, they decided to classify Muslims as OBCs in Karnataka. So they were rejecting and suppressing OBCs earlier, but for political gains, they labelled Muslims as OBCs. Congress was

ousted from the Centre. This plan remained stalled till 2004. When Congress came back in 2004, it immediately decided to give OBC quota to Muslims in Andhra Pradesh. The matter got complicated in court. The India Parliament had decided to give 27 per cent reservation to OBCs in line with the basic spirit of the Constitution. Now, they tried to loot this 27 per cent quota.

In 2006, a meeting of the National Development Council was held where there was a huge uproar over the statement of Singh. They remained quiet for two years. In the Ghoshana Patra of 2009, they mentioned it again. In 2011, there is a Cabinet Note on this where they decided to give a share from the OBC quota to Muslims. They tried this in the UP elections too but to no avail. In 2012, the Andhra High Court cancelled it. They went to Supreme Court, even there they did not get any relief. The 2014 Manifesto also talked about reservation on the basis of religion. When the Constitution of India was made, no RSS or BJP people were present. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Pandit Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and several great men of our country were present, and after long contemplation, they decided that reservation cannot be given on the basis of religion in a country like India.

See their manifesto for the 2024 elections. It has the imprint of the Muslim League. The way they are flouting the Constitution, the way they are insulting Ambedkar... There is a sword of danger hanging over reservation for SCs and STs. They will make life difficult for OBCs. Should I not inform the people of the country about this? I believe that it is the responsibility of all the learned people, who are rich in knowledge, who are unbiased, to educate this country, to tell it the right things.

Rahul Joshi: Congress says that they have not said this specifically. What they have said in the manifesto is written that they will encourage and assist students belonging to the minorities. They have said that they will ensure minorities receive their fair share of opportunities. If they have said this, then how do you read it?

PM Modi: I don't need to read it. I have given you the account from 1990 onwards. When you see the account from 1990, what will you say to me after that? Now I don't need to analyse it. If you look at all the things from 1990 till Manmohan Singh ji's 2009 statement on a table, what exactly will you conclude from this? I am not concluding this, anybody will conclude this, that this is what they will do.

Rahul Joshi: They talk about partnerships in institutions, no OBC judges or no representation for the OBC in the media. How do you see this?

PM Modi: Now tell me, when we came in 2014, did we make any policy that will stop anybody? These are their sins. It is their (Congress's) sins that the country is paying for. If they had followed secularism in the true sense, had done social justice in the true sense, not done vote bank politics, then they would not have had to roam around with fake papers today. I believe that whatever I have been doing for the past 10 years, the results will be such that whatever questions are asked, we will be able to answer them, based on our actions. We will give justice to everybody. How did our country get the first Adivasi President? Through our thought process. We got three chances to make the President of India. Once during Atal-ji's time, twice during my tenure. Who did we elect the first time? First, we made a member of the minority community, Abdul Kalam. Then I made a Dalit (Ramnath Kovind), then an Adivasi woman (Droupadi Murmu). Our actions show our thought process.

Rahul Joshi: Modi-ji, you have said one more thing and I want to connect this to a longer question. You have said that if their alliance forms

the government, then they will have PMs by rotation. They are not able to decide who will be made the PM, so everyone will become PM for one year. My question is a bit larger. Do you think that the stage of development India is in, a coalition government will work or a stable government will be more effective?

PM Modi: These are two different questions. See the character of the Congress. In Rajasthan, there was an internal conflict within the party. They made a formula that one would be the chief minister for 2.5 years and the other would be the chief minister for the next 2.5 years. It is a known formula. There was fight within the party in Chhattisgarh. They made the same formula there too that one would be the chief minister for 2.5 years and the other would be the chief minister for the next 2.5 years. They somehow resolved the matter and kept it going. It is also true that after 2.5 years, they backtracked. They betrayed their own party. They have a tendency to betray their own party. That is one thing. It is proven that the Congress thinks of such a formula. I just read somewhere in the media that they had a small meeting. I read in the media that it was asked that when Modi is repeatedly asking that to whom should we hand over such a big country, a name

should be there, when it comes to such a big country? You will have to give a name, give anybody's name. Even for a cricket team, you have to have a captain, even for a kabaddi team, a name is given. You are not telling who will handle such a big country. That is when they have come up with a 'One Year One PM' formula. Every year, one new leader will take oath as the PM, make a new government and new cabinet. For five years, they will stay busy in the swearing-in events, while the country will be busy in difficult events.

Now can any country run like this? It is such a big country. The country has seen instability for 30 years. We have seen the era of coalition governments. Today, the prestige of India has increased in the world because the 140 crore people of India have formed a stable, strong and majority government. So anyone can trust us, this government has the mandate. No one trusts a coalition government. Such a big country cannot function like this. But today the politics of the country is such that no matter how big a majority a party wins with, it has to honour regional aspirations.

And that is why even when we got absolute majority, we still formed the NDA government, with the help of NDA allies. Because even after a

party gets an absolute majority, for the bright future of the country's politics and aspirations of the people of the country, regional aspirations should be given the same respect and share. This character has been developed by the NDA and the Bharatiya Janata Party has shown it can be put into practice.

Rahul Joshi: Opposition parties, Rahul Gandhi, Congress and others, all say that Modi-ji is doing match fixing. On this election, he has said that without ED, CBI and EVM, you cannot win elections. What will you say?

PM Modi: The answer to the EVM claim has been given by the Supreme Court of the country. In 2014, they had ED and CBI, then why did they lose? They even put my Home Minister in jail, then why did they lose?

If elections could have been won by ED-CBI, then ED-CBI's work has been done by the Congress for years, then they would have won. You cannot fix the election of such a big country, even for a municipality you can't fix this. Try it. Is this fixing possible? They are just fooling the world. The sad thing is that instead of asking those people, the media asks us.

For the past few days, the people of INDI Alliance have become so disappointed that they are looking for excuses. Because even after defeat, you need to go in front of the people. That is why I think that maybe they are already looking for all these excuses. This is probably their internal exercise.

Rahul Joshi: Two states are important in this election – one is Karnataka and the other Maharashtra. In Karnataka, you recently lost the assembly elections, and Maharashtra because there is a strange mess there due to a split in two parties. Two of my colleagues are with me, let's start with Karnataka first. Hariprasad ji, who is our editor there, wants to ask you some questions.

PM Modi: Hariprasad ji, you are welcome.

Hariprasad: Let's talk about the Neha Hiremath murder case, which is being widely discussed. She was killed on a college campus by Fayaz; even (BJP national president) JP Nadda rushed to her house. Do you think that the focus of the elections in Karnataka is shifting to such issues?

PM Modi: Nadda-ji was attending a programme in Karnataka, when this incident took place. Who belongs to which party, or he belongs

to the Congress; his daughter was murdered. These are not my values or mindset. And it is a matter of human sentiment, and I believe that even in the midst of the election rush, what he did was the human thing to do. I don't remember which election it was. Rahul-ji's (Rahul Gandhi) aircraft faced some issues. I called him immediately to ask if he was in distress. I was the chief minister of Gujarat when, in Daman, a helicopter carrying Sonia-ji (Sonia Gandhi), Ahmed Patel sahab crashed. I told them that I am sending an air ambulance, but Ahmed Patel sahab told me that they are all fine and not in any kind of emergency. Once Sonia-ji went to Kashi for an election campaign and she fell ill, so I immediately sent people over to see what the matter is and, if required, send an aircraft to carry her. So, these are my principles and this is beyond politics. So, for me, whenever any problem arises in any family, this should be resolved by rising above politics.

Hari Prasad: The Congress in Karnataka promised five guarantees and, after they came to power, they delivered on that. Whereas the BJP lost the last election there. Now again, there is too much focus on the leadership of BS Yediyurappa and his son due to which some within the party are

also upset. How many seats do you think the BJP can win in Karnataka?

PM Modi: Number one, the people of Karnataka are regretting that they have committed such a big mistake by electing them (Congress). Our public support has not gone down; in fact, it has increased. But, in such a short time, they still have unresolved issues like the post of CM. While the CM has taken oath, it has not been settled who it really is. There are a lot of people who consider themselves as the CM. If you look at the law-and-order situation, there are blasts and murders taking place; the economic condition is in a state of complete bankruptcy. They made big promises and then said, if this happens, you will get this; if that happens, you will get this. This means you are cheating the public. When we said we will give Ayushman Bharat cards to certain people, we will do it, and there will be no dishonesty by adding ifs and buts. Now, if we have said we will give Ayushman card to anyone over 70, across all classes, then we will give. You should have that courage. They cancelled the scheme for farmers, and there was no reason for it. Look at Bengaluru, it has played a big role in raising India's reputation across the world. Bengaluru used to be known as the tech hub and now, in no time, it has been turned

into a tanker hub. And tankers also have a mafia culture. People are yearning for water. When it comes to scholarships for the youth, they have reduced the amount as well as the number. One after the other, they have taken such negative decisions. The issues they sought votes on, they are unable to deliver on those. Look at the deputy CM. He is asking for votes for his brother so that he can become CM; so everyone is playing games. There are games being played to remove the CM. As far as the BJP is concerned, we work with team spirit. My team may have projected me as the leader but all of us are working together. Just like that, Yediyurappa is one of our tall leaders, but the whole team is working together and working hard to move ahead.

Hariprasad: In the nation, it's the third phase of the Lok Sabha elections but for us in Karnataka, it's the second phase for 14 seats; these are in the northern part of Karnataka that is majorly drought-hit. Now, regarding this drought, the Congress is claiming that it went to the Supreme Court and, now, the central government is forced to give a rightful compensation. What's your opinion on that?

PM Modi: Let's consider the previous government led by Siddaramaiah. When there was

a drought back then, I called their entire team as a prime minister and held discussions with them. We sat together and figured that we must first create schemes for water conservation. Now, as far as the state disaster relief fund is concerned, our government has already given the Centre's share to the state in their bank account. Our inter-ministerial team has also, under the rules and practices laid down before, visited the affected areas and conducted a survey. And it is the same process every time. When the earthquake happened in Gujarat, I sent a memorandum to the central government that sent a team for a survey to take stock of the situation. Now in the middle of this process, the model code of conduct came into force. So I told the Election Commission about this and asked for permission. According to NDRE, we have even released ration.

Rahul Joshi: Modiji, News18 Lokmat anchor Vilas Bade has joined us from Maharashtra and wants to talk to you about the state.

Vilas Bade: Modi ji, Namaskar from Maharashtra. This time, the BJP has to retain the 23 seats it won in Maharashtra in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. But it's a complete mess in Maharashtra. Shiv Sena and NCP have split, their two partners are with you. Are you seeing any

wave of sympathy for Uddhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar?

PM Modi: Namaskar to all the people of Maharashtra. I am pleased to be discussing Maharashtra separately with you. It's true that the state has been seeing coalition governments for a considerable period now. There was Vilasrao Deshmukh...Even when Sharad Pawar became the chief minister, he was not able to do so alone with absolute majority. Secondly, it has been Maharashtra's misfortune that for some time now, no CM has been able to serve the five-year term. Devendra Fadnavis was the first person after a long time who served the entire term. The government then was clean and spotless. It was a government that worked for the welfare of the people.

Now, there should be sympathy with us. Those who fought elections with us, those who asked for votes from the people of Maharashtra with us, developed an ego due to their personal ambition of becoming the chief minister. Because of his ego and ambition, you (Uddhav Thackeray) betrayed this partnership that dated back to the days of Balasaheb Thackeray. People are angry about it and there is sympathy for BJP because of this.

Secondly, the storms that erupted within the Shiv Sena or the NCP clearly show what happens when you give importance to only your family members over other leaders it leads to difficulties. The trouble in Sharad Pawar's house is their family dispute. Should the daughter get the reins or the nephew? Similar is the tussle in Shiv Sena like the Congress – should a deserving leader be promoted or the son?

These are their disputes. I believe our country hates such dynasty politics. If someone tries to use the word 'sympathy' to evoke sympathy among people, I say even that attempt will fail. People hate such things. They cannot accept such things. These are your family disputes, resolve them within your home. Why are you ruining the state of Maharashtra over this?

Another thing is that the BJP has sacrificed for Maharashtra. Some people thought that we want the CM's seat. No. We could have taken the CM's seat, but didn't. We convinced the people of Maharashtra that we live for Maharashtra, not for ourselves. And in this election, this sympathy is in our favour that such a big party, with a chief minister who has been successful is now a deputy chief minister, has sort of put its self-respect on the backburner for the bright future of Maharashtra.

I believe in our country, Bengal has been ruined, Kolkata was once leading the economic growth, but is ruined by politics. Bihar and Uttar Pradesh were earlier reduced to unstable conditions. Maharashtra should not be allowed to go down that route. Mumbai is the economic capital of the country. We should move ahead strongly in Maharashtra for the benefit of the country. We are conveying this sentiment to the people of Maharashtra, we are convincing them and the people of Maharashtra are giving us a very positive response.

Vilas Bade: In Maharashtra, there is the grand alliance (Mahayuti) of BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP, but there is a lot of tussle for seats till the last moment in these elections. The distribution of tickets has also not been done in many places. Does this not raise a big question mark for the Mahayuti?

PM Modi: I think the problems you mentioned apply to the opposition. They have not been able to decide seats, they are unable to take decisions, parallel elections are being fought there. There is nothing of such sort on our side. We have joined hands and are out to fight unitedly. We have prepared well in advance. Shiv Sena, BJP and NCP

have done it. There is no harmony among the fake parties of the opposition.

Rahul Joshi: How many seats do you expect in Maharashtra?

PM Modi: We are moving ahead with a lot of strength. Votes will go up and the seats will too.

Vilas Bade: In 2017, your government had bestowed Sharad Pawar with the Padma Vibhushan, the country's second-highest civilian honour. But last Tuesday, Sharad Pawar said, "Modi is becoming the country's new Putin." How do you see this comment?

PM Modi: I respect him a lot. It doesn't matter whether people who have been in public life for long are with us or against us, we respect them. But this means that he is proud of receiving the award from a government headed by someone he sees as Putin. This is a big contradiction.

As far as my party's and my opinions are concerned... We gave the Bharat Ratna to Pranab Mukherjee, Narasimha Rao, Chaudhary Charan Singh, Karpoori Thakur. Nobody in this country questioned our choices. Everybody understood it was long due and well-deserved. They were from opposition parties and had even criticised us in the past, but our decision was not based on such

things. Consider the Padma awardees -- Mulayam Singh, Tarun Gogoi, PA Sangma, SM Krishna... were all from other parties but we gave them Padma awards for their contributions to their respective fields. It is the country's award to give, not a party's. It's not Modi's personal property. BJP doesn't have a copyright on it.

If you are interested, a story to look at is how Padma awards have changed in the country. We have transformed it. We should be lauded for the thought behind such decisions, not questioned about the choice of recipients.

Vilas Bade: But even after receiving the award, Sharad Pawar gave such a statement...

PM Modi: But the fact is there is no condition to the award that they cannot speak against me. There is no such agreement. This is not a give-and-take formula.

Rahul Joshi: Modi ji, let's talk about Uttar Pradesh. It is the biggest state with 80 Lok Sabha seats. Will you be able to break the record of 2014? The BJP had won 71 seats back then, and the NDA 73. This time, Akhilesh Yadav and Rahul Gandhi are fighting the election together. Akhilesh ji has fielded the whole family; he himself is fighting from Kannauj. Dimple is fighting from Mainpuri.

His family members are fighting from Firozabad to Azamgarh. There are speculations that the Gandhis will fight from Amethi and Rae Bareli. How do you see it?

PM Modi: Rahul ji, even though you are repeating proudly that everyone is the election fray, is it a compulsion or not? They are forced to field family members. It is their compulsion. That's their main character. They don't have anything else. To fight for family members and to make family members fight in elections: that's the game.

Also, didn't they join forces before? They have united before, many times. But the people of Uttar Pradesh understand what is good for them. I said in Parliament that today the situation in Uttar Pradesh and country is such that big leaders are withdrawing from the Lok Sabha race and trying to take the Rajya Sabha route. And that's what it is. Big leaders are not ready to fight the elections. But we are working responsibly, taking everyone along and performing our duties. And I think nothing will be left of them this time around. Nothing.

Rahul Joshi: One more question. You have already answered it partly. So, I will keep it short. The Opposition, the Congress says the government is misusing the ED, CBI and intelligence agencies.

You have said that the ED is independent. A newspaper did an analysis that when 25 opposition leaders joined the BJP, cases against 23 of them were either shelved or dropped.

PM Modi: First, not one case has been dropped. Whatever the courts decide will happen. They are independent. Second, how many such cases pertain to the political leadership? Only 3%. Even big bureaucrats are in jail. After all, why were these agencies formed? If these agencies were formed with a purpose, won't they fulfil that? Our courts are supreme anyway... The courts must be examining it. And let's not take the matter of corruption lightly. There should be a debate around this. There was a time when even accusations would shake things up. And today, even after conviction and punishment, some are waving and having their photos taken. Are they glorifying corruption? This should be criticised. Corruption shouldn't be treated as a new normal. Otherwise, it will hurt the country a lot. This is not about BJP vs others.

I see that slowly an environment is being created where it is being thought: 'Oh, that's alright. That happens.' [But] Poor people are dying. We have to rid the country of corruption. That should be the country's resolve. I believe in

making the system policy-driven. Use technology. Earlier, a prime minister used to say a rupee goes [towards the people] but only 15 paise reach them. Today I say when a rupee goes out, the full 100 paise reach – Direct Benefit Transfer. How? By improving the system! We launched the GeM portal, a big step towards reducing corruption. Second, we have to awaken society. Let society also be made conscious that corruption cannot be tolerated at any level. That environment is getting created in the country. But political people are not afraid. Someone would support them [the corrupt] just because they would want to oppose us. This is not correct.

Rahul Joshi: You accomplished a lot of big achievements in your last tenure. You scrapped Article 370, you brought in the CAA. But, in their campaign, opposition leaders are saying that they will repeal the CAA if they form the government. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is saying that she will not allow the implementation of CAA. How do you see this?

PM Modi: First of all, whoever understands the Constitution of India, whoever knows the federal structure of India, and whoever knows what is in whose jurisdiction, won't ever say such things. Because this is not in their jurisdiction. If

Modi is the chief minister of a state, he can't do such things. The central government will do what is in its ambit. A state government will do whatever is in its ambit. But fooling the people is a trend nowadays – to keep them in the dark. That's why they keep saying anything at all.

Second, I challenge the Congress party to hold a press conference and say they will restore 370. They talk big about the Constitution. They talk about Babasaheb Ambedkar. They abuse us so much. But Babasaheb Ambedkar's Constitution was not applicable for the entire nation. For 70 years, the Indian Constitution was not applicable in Jammu and Kashmir. There, Dalits are getting reservation for the first time [after the Article 370 move]. The Valmiki community is getting reservation for the first time. What are they talking about? Do they have the courage to hold a press conference and say 'we'll bring back Article 370'? Can any party dare say that?

Rahul Joshi: Modi ji, let's move towards Bengal. The election there is being fought with full vigour. Last time, in 2019, when you won 18 of the 42 seats there, people were surprised. This time, one of your leaders has said that you will win 36 seats. Rajnath Singh ji told me in an interview that

the BJP could win 36 seats. How do you assess the situation?

PM Modi: The problem with these people, who you say were surprised, is that they — even after 10 years — are not ready to believe that citizens of this country elected someone named Modi as their prime minister. There is a section that is not willing to accept the mandate of the country. It's a reality — the people of the country are supporting us. You thought that it wouldn't happen. It's your fault. I was in Malda recently. I was surprised; the atmosphere was electrifying. People believe that there is a strong and stable government at the Centre, and that Bengal too should benefit from it. Women are facing atrocities in the TMC rule. The events of Sandeshkhali have jolted the nation. People have the right to vote, and they will vent their anger in the process. So, the outburst is natural. You have seen the piles of banknotes seized. Have you ever seen such big stashes of money getting caught earlier? In recent years, you have seen stashes of Rs 50 crore, Rs 300 crore, Rs 250 crore, Rs 200 crore. The nation is shocked. No matter how much you try to hide it, the nation now understands that these people are looters.

Rahul Joshi: So, you expect a bigger victory this time (in Bengal)?

PM Modi: Absolutely, it will be a clean sweep.

Rahul Joshi: How do you see Odisha? You have not gone with the BJD (Biju Janata Dal).

PM Modi: Bharatiya Janata Party has operated separately there. The BJD has given us issue-based support at the Centre, as have many other parties. That was our relationship with BJD... At the state level, Odisha is losing its self-respect. Odia language is under threat. I don't think that the people of Odisha will be able to tolerate this for long. It has such a lot of resources that today Odisha could have been the richest state of India. But what kind of condition has been created? The common people of Odisha have aspirations. And I think we (BJP) should get a chance to serve. We will take Odisha to great heights.

Rahul Joshi: Let's talk about Bihar. In Bihar, you have once again formed a coalition with Nitish ji [Nitish Kumar] and are fighting together. How do you see it? Last time, you won 39 seats out of 40. Can you repeat that performance?

PM Modi: First, we fought the assembly elections together. Later, they went somewhere and then came back. So, we are together as per the mandate of the people. As far as public support is

concerned, I was in Bihar just recently, and I can see it clearly. Even when there is no tent overhead or anything in this heat, still lakhs of people are connected to us. I can see it clearly. Earlier, we used to lose one-odd seat in Bihar, but this time maybe we will not lose even one.

Rahul Joshi: 40 out of 40?

PM Modi: We will not lose even one.

Rahul Joshi: It is a very big statement.

Rahul Joshi: Modiji, I would like to ask you a personal question. You have seen many elections. You have been in Gujarat for a long time. This is your third election at the Centre. I have seen that from time to time, during elections, personal attacks are often made against you. Sometimes it is said that PM Modi should be shot, sometimes it is said that his head should be broken. Recently, Rahul Gandhi also said some words which can be considered personal attacks. Why does this happen to PM Modi?

PM Modi: I do not have an answer to this but why should Modi be asked this question? This question should be discussed in the country and in public life. After all, what is Modi's crime? He became the prime minister, that is his crime, isn't it? That means whatever abuses you are hurling,

you are hurling them at the prime minister. To say things like we will bash the prime minister's head or to abuse my mother... I am shocked that even the President of India was insulted. I am ashamed of this. I have always considered voters and the country my family. I am going forward with a positive attitude, but I leave the responsibility on people like you and the voters to deal with such people as they deem fit.

Rahul Joshi: Modiji, I want to ask how your third term will be different from the first and second.

PM Modi: How was my first term? I wanted to address the basic needs of the common man. I worked in that direction. At that time, there was an atmosphere of despair in the country, an atmosphere of hatred towards the government. I had to in still confidence. I worked on that. In the second term, I showed some results, filled people with confidence that we can move forward. A level of confidence has come in the country. That confidence is a very big strength.

Now, after the expectations have been transformed into confidence, into aspirations, I want to make the country the third economic superpower in my third term. This will be a

continuity — after bringing the country from the 11th to the fifth spot [size of economy in the world]. During Manmohan Singh's tenure, we were at 11, we brought it to five after a lot of effort, and now we will put in some more effort and take the country to the third spot. So, we want to maintain continuity in every sector.

For instance, we started a big campaign to provide electricity — and successfully provided it. Now my aim is PM Surya Ghar Yojana and zero electricity bill. I want solar panels in every household. And I just don't want electricity bills to be zero but I want three things. One, every household's power bill should be zero; second, we should sell surplus electricity and earn money; and third, I want to be self-reliant in the energy sector as the era of electric vehicles will come. This is why I would like that whoever has a scooter or car should be able to charge it at home through solar energy. This means the transportation cost of Rs 1,000-Rs 2,000 per month for the person should also become zero. This will benefit the citizens and the country will get the benefit of clean environment. The billions of dollars that are being spent on importing petroleum will stop. So, it's a scheme with multiple benefits. I want to make a start-up hub, manufacturing hub, innovation hub. I

want to take the country to a completely new area with a lot of confidence. My vision is clear, I have no doubts. After June 4, I am clear what I have to do in the next 100 days as well as by 2047. I am clear of a Viksit Bharat by 2047. That is why I say 24 by 7 for 2047.

Vilas Bade: You have faced a lot of difficulties in your journey. But, even in such situations, you make tough decisions. How are you able to do this?

PM Modi: I don't make tough decisions, I make the right decisions. Decisions are not tough, decisions should be right; some find them tough. But, sometimes, I do think about how all of this is possible. Just as you are surprised, I too wonder how Modi does this. Then I think, no, maybe God has sent me for this work. Whatever I am doing is inspired by a divine power. This could be God's gift, God wants me to do this work and has sent me with a purpose here. And, that's why, I remain far from the storm.

Vilas Bade: But how do you remain calm in this storm?

PM Modi: I remain far from it. God has shown me this path, that you should not get entangled in other things and you have to do some

big work and must remain engaged with that. So, it is God's direction, God's wish, God's plan, and, perhaps, their influence. I am only an instrument.

Rahul Joshi: I want to ask you something related. We see you, we get your schedule; you are travelling so much, holding five to six rallies from one state to the other. In all of this, how do you stay fit? What is that power that gives you this strong resolve to move forward?

PM Modi: First of all, as I said, I am not doing anything. God has decided this, and God has probably sent me to do this work. I was born in a family, where my mother was uneducated, had not seen a school. I do not have any political background, and it's such a big country. So, if this is not God's will, then what is it? And for me there are two Gods – one that we cannot see and the other is the public. I consider the public a form of God. And I have faith in the Almighty, who has sent me for this work while the public has blessed me. As to the question of how I am able to work so much, I do not live for myself. I always keep in mind that whatever time I have, I should work for my country every moment. As far as I have been running around, this is a big celebration, like a

festival. It is an opportunity to reach out to the public, to visit them and talk to them. We should see it like that and take advantage of it, meet the public and visit people. It is a celebration of democracy in which we should be involved. So, I consider it like we do when there's an important puja at home and the way we are involved in it. This is a time for prayers for me as I am worshipping 140 crore gods. I move with this feeling, which keeps me going. I never get tired because I return home after seeing God.

Rahul Joshi: Modiji, thank you so much. You took out so time for us. Like your slogan, we too have a slogan this time – ‘agli baar, sirf News18 par aar paar’. Thank you very much for giving us your time.

PM Modi: Thank you very much. Namaskar. My greetings to everyone.

**“I have a habit of taking many
important decisions within the first
100 days of our government”:
PM Modi**

PM Modi's Interview to Lokmat Media Group

May 12, 2024



What will be your priority after getting a clear majority in this election and what will be the first item of your agenda?

Our agenda is clear and has been stated upfront by us -- we will make every effort to ensure we move closer to the goal of a Viksit Bharat. For this, we have already prepared a plan

for the next five years as well as the action items for the first 100 days of the new government.

When you talk about Vision 2047, the first 100 days, what exactly do you have in mind?

Those who have observed my work keenly would know that I have a habit of taking many important decisions within the first 100 days of our government, setting the pace and momentum for the rest of the five years. We have already been working on a big milestone -- making India the world's third largest economy. This will further impart momentum towards our goal. As I have said, we will work 24X7 for 2047. Every moment of my time will be devoted to ensure that the people of our country are able to fulfil their aspirations.

You are right when you talk about 2047, please shed some light on the last five years too?

In 2019, within the first 100 days, a number of important decisions were taken. Action was taken against Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Anti-terror laws were strengthened through the amendments to UAPA. The Bill against triple talaq became an Act. Bank mergers were announced to ensure that the health of our banks was improved. Many sectors saw FDI

reforms. A strong law against unregulated deposit schemes that cheat small investors was brought in. MSP hikes were announced. PM-Kisan which was originally only for small and marginal farmers was extended to all farmers. Pension schemes for farmers and traders were brought in. The Jal Shakti ministry was formed. There are many more such steps that were taken.

Will your announcement of making India prosperous and developed by 2047 be a national issue in this election?

What we must understand is that this dream of building a Viksit Bharat by 2047 is not one man or one party's dream. This is a goal that the people of India have themselves taken to their heart. It is the development trajectory of the last 10 years that has enabled our nation to dream of creating a Viksit Bharat. Remember the times before 2014.

Can you please elaborate on this a little more?

The underprivileged sections of society, farmers, banking system and economy had all suffered greatly under the mismanagement of the UPA's decade-long government. People were frustrated by corruption and policy paralysis. The work done by us after that is in front of people.

What changes has your government brought about?

We embarked on a dual mission: empowering the poor with essentials like sanitation, electricity, financial inclusion, etc., while also revitalising the economy of our country through comprehensive reforms. In the last 10 years, not only did our nation help 25 crore people rise above poverty but we also jumped from being the 11th largest economy to the 5th largest one. Our reforms breathed new life into various sectors, from manufacturing to startups and even space exploration. From small toys to Chandrayaan, from Vande Bharat trains to mobiles, from drones to aircraft carriers, our country is developing new capabilities in our mission to become atmanirbhar.

You talk about developed India. Is the vision of Viksit Bharat resonating with people?

Our true national character came out when faced with a once-in-a-century challenge of Covid-19. The country came together to save lives, take care of the poor, produce vaccines, vaccinate not only our own country but also the other countries. We did all this while managing the economy much better compared to the rest of the world.

Further, India's rising importance in the post-Covid world has instilled a newfound confidence in people, both in India and abroad, that this is India's time. This is why I said, "Yahi Samay Hai, Sahi Samay Hai." After decades of fighting for even the basic things, now, finally, 140 crore Indians are able to look towards the future with hope and confidence. This is why the vision of Viksit Bharat is resonating with everyone, especially the younger generation. Wherever I go, I see people inspired to realise this dream.

We are from Maharashtra. So, how will Maharashtra benefit from this?

Our long-term vision is of Viksit Maharashtra for a Viksit Bharat. In the next five years, this will mean a massive thrust for the development of Maharashtra across many sectors. Maharashtra is a state that has everything -- from financial hubs to information technology, from hardworking farmers to an industrial base, from a long coastline to a great history of courage and social reform. Our mission has been to enable these natural strengths of the state with appropriate policies and infrastructure to make the lives of the people better. Every project, whether it is an irrigation project, a new hospital, a new industry, a highway, a metro or an airport, has been aimed at

ensuring a better life for all sections of society. This focus will continue with an even greater momentum. We will continue to build top-class infrastructure across Maharashtra which will not only help the existing growth hubs such as Mumbai and Pune but also create more such growth hubs. We will empower the farmers of the state with every facility, be it insurance or irrigation or market access.

Maharashtra has set an example before the country in the cooperative sector!

True. This is also a state with a strong cooperative sector. Our newly formed cooperative ministry will further empower this sector to transform lives at the grassroots level. We will help the cooperatives adopt digital technologies. At the same time, we will also enable the cooperative model to help even sectors such as fishing, agro-processing and services, etc.

While there are so many opportunities for tourism in Maharashtra, do you think they get due justice

What you say is correct. Maharashtra has a huge coastline. I think there is still a lot of scope for tourism, which our infrastructure building drive will help. As tourists arrive in greater numbers,

local economies improve and local incomes increase. Maharashtra is also very rich in terms of having many traditional textiles, handloom and handicrafts, art and culture. We will ensure bigger platforms to showcase these unique things, which in turn will improve the lives of those involved in such sectors. The land of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is famous for its legendary forts. There are so many pilgrimage spots, natural hotspots and beaches in Maharashtra. There is still a lot of scope for tourism.

Which new industries and sectors are on your priority for Maharashtra?

Let me tell you, Maharashtra has immense potential. Our manifesto is clear about the steps we want to take in semiconductor manufacturing, green energy, EV manufacturing, AI, electronics and fintech services. Maharashtra has an advantage in all these sectors and will become a key player in them. We want to see every section of society in Maharashtra to progress and fulfil their aspirations.

You created jobs through schemes like startup and Make in India. How do you plan to create more jobs in future?

It is heartening to note that a media house like yours has looked at the facts related to job

creation and acknowledges the progress we have made on that front through various initiatives. When we talk of employment or jobs, often only false narratives are seen rather than factual conversations. Whether it is the public sector, private sector, entrepreneurship or newly created sectors, we have worked on a multipronged strategy to ensure opportunities for our youth. Take government jobs for example. Before the model code of conduct came into effect, I was regularly holding Rozgar Melas. Lakhs of youth have received their recruitment letters. In the private sector, the growth of our manufacturing sector and startups has been phenomenal.

Did startups boost exports?

I always believe that youngsters should be mentored to launch startups. We have become the third largest startup hub in the world. From a mobile importer, we became the second largest manufacturer of mobile. From a toy importer, we have now come to a stage where our toy exports have grown considerably. Our defence exports have grown over 20-fold in the last 10 years. These are just some snapshots of our phenomenal manufacturing sector. Lakhs of youth are running startups or working in them. It is a matter of pride that a big chunk of these is led by young women.

The number of formal jobs should also increase. Do you think it has increased?

When it comes to formal jobs, reports say that around 6 crore new EPFO subscribers have been added. Each of these is not just a number -- it is a dream of a youth being fulfilled in terms of career growth. Over the last 10 years, the number of colleges, universities, IITs, IIMs, AIIMS, etc., have grown exponentially. Such a big addition of social infrastructure can only happen along with the creation of jobs.

You talk about MUDRA Yojana. But what did your government do for the youth who become entrepreneurs?

It is good that you asked about MUDRA Yojana. When it comes to encouraging entrepreneurship, the MUDRA Yojana gave rise to 8 crore new, first time entrepreneurs. While this is already crores of self-employed youth, many of these entrepreneurs would also be employing more people. Now we have promised that we will double the amount of MUDRA loans -- this again will surely be reflected in the jobs that are created in the coming years.

Which new areas are you focussing on?

This is a very important question. To ensure job creation even in the future, we are already taking many steps. We opened the space and atomic sectors for the youth of India. Similarly, we also liberalised drone and mapping sectors. Enterprising youth are already capitalising on this and creating startups in these sectors, adding more jobs into the economy. Moreover, we are working on creating new capabilities in a number of sunrise sectors. Climate-friendly energy generation is becoming an important part of the economy. Sectors such as green hydrogen, renewable energy such as solar, wind, etc., are going to create many green jobs.

Artificial Intelligence is a topic of discussion worldwide. What is India's position in this sector?

There is a curiosity over Artificial Intelligence. We are giving a big thrust on sectors such as Artificial Intelligence and gaming. These are the opportunities of the future, which also make the future. Our talented youth are best placed to make the best of such sectors. India is taking important steps in electronics manufacturing and especially semiconductors. These are important sectors not only for job creation but also for our self-reliance in the future. So, our vision for the

future is clear and involves many exciting avenues for our youth.

Maharashtra gave you 41 seats last time. What is your expectation from Maharashtra this time?

The people of Maharashtra have been greatly supportive of the NDA's development-oriented vision. I am deeply grateful to them for their blessings and have worked to uphold the faith of the people in the form of initiatives that further the welfare of the people. The inauguration of Latur-based Marathwada Rail Coach Factory, a wagon repair workshop at Badnera and Vande Bharat chair car maintenance-cum-workshop depot in Pune are creating jobs for the youth while also making the country self-reliant. The Atal Setu, one of India's longest sea bridges, was finally delivered, and the people appreciate the efforts put into boosting Ease of Living

The opposition criticises you. There are many parties in Maharashtra at present. So why do you think people will vote for your party?

We launched several welfare schemes for the people and also implemented them successfully. We have ensured free healthcare benefits through Ayushman Bharat, access to affordable medicines

through Jan Aushadhi, homes under PM Awas Yojana, clean drinking water through Jal Jeevan Mission, direct income support to farmers through PM Kisan scheme and much more.

Congress alleges that a division is being created in the country?

We have done several commendable works. On the other side we have the INDI Alliance which is completely bereft of any constructive ideas and is only looking at ways to divide, discriminate against and loot people. They have gone to dangerous lengths in their appeasement politics, so much so that they are even looking to take away the constitutional rights of SC, ST and OBC communities for their vote banks. People know that our vision is Viksit Bharat. You tell me, is even a single party of the INDI Alliance speaking of creating a Viksit Bharat?

You always say the opposition does not have a PM candidate...

Our alliance has a clear Prime Ministerial candidate. Does anyone know who is the leader of the INDI Alliance? I am confident the people of Maharashtra do not want to put the future of our country in the hands of an unknown, untested person, or maybe even persons!

Politics and family are different. You are the elder one. Did you not realise that joining hands with Ajit Pawar will split his family? Did you ever have a discussion with Sharad Pawar to be an ally of BJP?

Sharad Pawar is a very senior and experienced leader. Moreover, whatever has happened within the NCP or within their family is something that only they can tell. However, the NDA has always been open to anyone who believes in putting the nation first and pursuing development-oriented politics. Whether it is Ajit Pawar or Eknath Shinde, they have come to the NDA because they were tired of the Opposition's negative politics and believe that our nation is progressing in the right direction.

Sharad Pawar has said that smaller parties would merge with Congress in future. What is your view on it?

I was surprised to hear about Sharad Pawar saying that small parties should merge with the Congress in the future. Is this an indication of the result of the elections in Baramati? Or is it nervousness about the way the whole state is voting? Otherwise, why would Sharad Pawar, who once walked out of the Congress and formed his

own party, now think of merging his party into the same Congress again?

Uddhav Thackeray has said he does not need fake affection. So a straight question: Will the BJP and Thackeray ever come together again?

I have great respect for Balasaheb Thackeray and we are the ones working to take his legacy forward. He is one of the most important and influential leaders in the history of our country. Throughout his life, Balasaheb stood for politics that furthered national interest and was against appeasement politics. I have also maintained decorum and dignity with every member of Balasaheb's family, irrespective of the political dynamics. But as an admirer of Balasaheb, I am pained by certain things. Today, it pains every admirer of Balasaheb, including me, to see the actions of those who claim to be torchbearers of his legacy. Mumbai and its people were so close to Balasaheb's heart. What would he have felt if he would have seen these people using those convicted in Mumbai bomb blasts for their campaigning? What would he have felt about these people allying with those who openly say they want to destroy Sanatan Dharma? What would Balasaheb have felt looking at these people aligning with those who celebrate Aurangzeb and

abuse Savarkar. Can anyone claim to be upholding the legacy of Balasaheb after doing such things? Balasaheb always put principles above power. But now, it seems, power is everything for these people.

Devendra Fadnavis was a little disappointed after Eknath Shinde was anointed as the chief minister. He accepted the post of deputy chief minister following your intervention. What is your future plan for him?

The BJP is a cadre-based party where workers come together due to a shared commitment for national interest and people's welfare. So, the first identity of everybody in our party is that of a 'karyakarta' who is willing to do any work that the party asks him to. Even recently, you saw in many states that many tall leaders who have led some states for a long time took up different roles because the party wanted it.

Devendra Fadnavis as a 'karyakarta' of the BJP, took up the role of chief minister when the party wanted him to do so. He served the people of Maharashtra in an excellent way. In many decades of Maharashtra's political history, Devendra Fadnavis is the only chief minister to have completed the term of 5 years. And during those 5

years, the state witnessed growth in all sectors. Now, when the party asked him to contribute in a different role, he is doing so with his heart and soul. This is the culture of the BJP. Devendra Fadnavis' primary goal has always been to ensure good governance in Maharashtra, irrespective of the position he holds. Whether as CM or deputy CM, he has been successful in ensuring good governance in the state.

The BJP got less number of seats in Maharashtra due to Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar. Did it hurt the sentiments of loyal BJP workers aspiring to contest the election?

The BJP has always believed in accommodating alliance partners. This is the reason that NDA is one of the longest standing alliances in the history of Indian politics. We believe that our alliance partners help represent the diversity of aspirations in our democracy and therefore, we go out of our way to ensure that they also feel adequately represented. This is something that our 'karyakartas' understand as well. Therefore, when we sat down with our partners to discuss seat sharing arrangement, it was about what could benefit the state and the country, and that is how our alliance works.

Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray claim their party is real...

When you look at the picture in Maharashtra, there is one more thing that comes out clearly. It is clear that the actual NCP and Shiv Sena of Balasaheb are with the BJP. Yet, there may be political leaders on the other side who try to create undue confusion. But when it comes to the way BJP is perceived, there is absolute clarity -- this will also improve our strike rate in the seats we are fighting and work out as an advantage the BJP brings to our alliance.

The Opposition thinks that Mahayuti will not last for long!

Despite having sufficient numbers on our own both in 2014 and 2019, we have made our alliance partners part of the government at the Centre. Look at the example of Maharashtra itself. We are the single largest party but the CM is from Shiv Sena. This is our track record. This is in sharp contrast to the Congress, which has always believed in weakening their alliance partners even while they are with them. Even today, look at the INDI Alliance. The Congress' Shahzada is fighting against his own alliance partners in Kerala. His party is fighting against its own alliance partners in

West Bengal. If one compares the dynamics within the NDA with the dynamics within the INDI Alliance, it is clear who can take everyone along and offer a strong, stable government.

People are asking that if the BJP was confident of victory, why did it join hands with Raj Thackeray?

I have already said that we welcome anyone who believes in putting nation first. In the last 10 years, we have had a majority on our own but we have always accepted new alliance partners. We see this as good for our democracy that more political parties can come together to work for the people. Raj Thackeray is not new to us. He had supported us earlier too. He believes we have done good work for the country. He also supports our ideology and vision for the future. We believe that he, too, can contribute to the betterment of Maharashtra. So, this coming together is neither about power nor political calculations. It is about working together to serve people. In fact, we welcome everyone who wants to work for the country to come with us.

You are seen targeting regional leaders in the election rallies these days whereas earlier, you would attack only national leaders?

If people analyse my speeches, they will find that I spend more time actually laying out facts about the good work we have done. First of all, I do not target any leader. I only raise questions about the actions and ideologies of political leaders. Secondly, this is a rather funny analysis that I do not think is rooted in facts. When I go to Telangana, I expose the misdeeds of the Congress and at the same time also make the people aware of the role of the BRS in changing Telangana for the worse. When I go to Tamil Nadu, I expose the misdeeds of the DMK as well as the Congress. Similarly, when I come to Maharashtra, I speak about the misdeeds of the 'Nakli Shiv Sena', 'Nakli Rahstra wadis' and the Congress.

Who do you target in your rallies?

Across the nation, one party and its misdeeds are common. That is Congress. Because, it is clear that they are at the root of most of India's current problems and they are also a magnet for all such forces that want to keep India backward. Why is the opposition raising only the issue of reservation? After 2014, people in India have realised one simple thing. That our 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' mantra has brought everyone from every community together on the platform of development. We have served everyone through

our approach, which is the antithesis of the discriminatory politics of the Congress and its friends. Congress knows it can no longer divide the voter using caste and creed. And that is why they see the need to create false fears around reservations. In fact, if anyone has committed a sin against reservations, it is the Congress which has taken away the rights of OBCs and given it to their vote banks.

What is the main difference between the outlook of BJP and Congress?

To understand the motives of the opposition, you will have to understand their politics. Before 2014, their politics was all about dividing the people on caste lines while consolidating some religious vote banks. Development was never their priority and that is precisely why our poor people, especially SC, ST and OBC communities, had to struggle for toilets, tap water connections and a roof over their head for over six decades. People want 'Vikas'. They are not willing to be tied down to this party or that party and are willing to go with anyone who works for them. Such politics naturally favours the BJP because we are focussed on development. So, we are also receiving the support of every community that Congress used to earlier exploit for votes. They are unnerved by this.

The issue of development dominated the first phase of Lok Sabha elections. So what happened later that issues like Hindu card, mangalsutra and Pakistan started dominating the campaigning?

I said earlier too, if you analyse my speeches, you will find that most of it is dedicated to the work that we have done. But the media is interested in the other parts and runs their headlines based on the part where I expose the evil designs of the Congress and INDI Alliance. But I want to ask you. If Congress puts it in their manifesto that they will survey the wealth of common people to snatch it away from them, is this something I should speak about or not? If people who have been influential ministers in Pakistan support the Congress party, should this be pointed out or not? If the Congress has unconstitutionally given reservations on the basis of religion, should this be spoken about or not?

You are consistently attacking Congress' manifesto...

You saw their manifesto which has dangerous ideas, you know their track record of appeasement, and you are seeing how the

Congress' Shahzada is speaking like a Maoist ideologue. Is it not the duty of the media to point out the problems in this? The opposition is claiming that if the BJP comes to power, it will change the Constitution. Many senior BJP leaders including you have rejected this claim. But the opposition party is continuously raising this issue. Why so? First of all, we need to understand that whatever Modi is today, it is because of Babasaheb's Constitution. Without such an empowering Constitution and without democracy, someone like me could have never risen to the post of PM. So, even if you look at it from the lens of logic, it is in my own interest that our Constitution and democracy are kept safe, which I am doing.

But which is the only time that our Constitution and democracy were violated? It was under the Congress. If one speaks of dismissing state governments without any regard for democratic values or due process, the Congress party is the champion at it with nearly a 100 such instances in their name. People have not forgotten the history of the Congress. So, nobody is believing in the Congress party or INDI Alliance's propaganda against us in this regard.

While India is on the verge of becoming the third largest economic power in the world, it is still providing free grains to 80 crore people. What plan do you have to reduce this gap?

In the Parliament, I had spoken in detail about this topic. But for the benefit of your readers, let me explain it again. It is true that we will soon become the third largest economy in the world. It is also true that in the last 10 years, 25 crore people have come out of poverty. I have seen poverty from close quarters and know how it works. Even if you have managed to rise above poverty, without a safety net, even one harsh turn of fate is enough to push you back into it again. If you pay close attention to our welfare schemes, many of them focus on ensuring that people do not fall back into poverty. Take the Ayushman Bharat scheme for example. When a family that has just managed to come out of poverty faces a medical emergency, this scheme ensures that they get top quality treatment for free. Not only does this save a life but it also helps avoid financial burdens that push them back into poverty. Now, we have also said that this will be extended to every senior citizen above the

age of 70. It will also help middle class families in the future.

Are people benefitting from the free foodgrain scheme?

The free foodgrain scheme is another such scheme which protects people who are poor from going hungry. At the same time, it also provides food security to those people who are just above the poverty line. These people need support not just to cross over from poverty but even beyond that. This free foodgrain scheme reduced the probability of people going hungry. Moreover, it also lowered the need to borrow money to keep the 'chulha' burning, which means it saved people from getting into debt traps just to avoid hunger. As more and more people move out of poverty, into the middle class and find a firm footing for their future, the demand for such a scheme will organically reduce.

Agriculture and cooperative sector are the two main identities of Maharashtra. But both these sectors are in crisis at present. What plan do you have for that?

The farmers of Maharashtra are hardworking and industrious. Yet, it is a tragedy that before

2014, subsequent governments greatly neglected the farmers of the state, despite the fact that one of the important leaders from Maharashtra was holding the important agriculture-related portfolio at the Centre for a long time. When we came to power in 2014, I asked for a list of irrigation projects that are stuck, so that they can be expedited. You would be surprised to know that among the 99 projects, a big chunk was from Maharashtra and some of them were stuck for decades, since even the 1970s! We have completed most of these stuck projects, started new projects and completed them too. Whenever I meet the farmers of Maharashtra, they tell me that PM-Kisan's direct income support and Fasal Bima Yojana's crop insurance at inexpensive rates are extremely beneficial. Further, we have also done a number of reforms in the sugarcane farming sector which is extremely important in Maharashtra. Today, almost all of the arrear payments for sugarcane farmers are cleared in quick time. We are building a new farming ecosystem based on farmers' interests. At the core of this is a focus on irrigation, insurance, access to markets abroad via

exports, green initiatives like ethanol and many more.

Why was a separate ministry for cooperation set up?

As the chief minister, I had the opportunity of working closely with the cooperative model. Therefore, after becoming PM for the second term, I ensured that the power of cooperatives is tapped for national welfare and set up a separate ministry for it. We believe in the vision of 'Sahakar Se Samriddhi'. We launched a comprehensive national cooperatives database. Additionally, we initiated the digitisation of thousands of primary cooperative societies, district cooperative banks, and state cooperative banks, fostering greater accountability and transparency. We are establishing multipurpose cooperative societies in 10,000 villages, promising a significant boost to rural incomes. Long-standing Income Tax disputes haunting sugar cooperatives have been resolved, resulting in a substantial Rs 46,000 crore worth of benefit for them. The cooperative sector is very close to my heart and we will work for the welfare of Maharashtra's farmers with even greater momentum in the coming years.

“We have more than doubled the number of airports from 74 to more than 150 in 10 years”: PM Modi

PM Modi's Interview to Hindustan Times

May 12, 2024



Your government did not announce any major populist schemes in the interim budget before the elections, perhaps confident in its own delivery record? How has this played out in the campaign, especially with the Opposition focusing significantly on freebies?

People realise that we have worked hard for them in the last 10 years. People have seen the difference in their lives. Due to our track record,

we did not need any populist measures going into elections. People also see this as a sign of our government's earnest behaviour.

The people have seen the speed and scale with which we deliver our promises. They saw that this government inherited a country that was one of the 'Fragile 5' economies at the time and scaled it up to become the fastest-growing economy of the world. We have kept the average inflation at its lowest in one decade. Our unemployment rate is the lowest in the world.

The work that has taken place in the last one decade is more than the work done in seven decades since Independence. We have more than doubled the number of airports from 74 to more than 150 in 10 years. The length of national highways has gone up from 91,000 km to 1,45,000 km within a decade. India was once a cash dependent economy. Today, we are dominating the real time payments globally with a lion share of 46%. Our defence exports have crossed the ₹21,000 crore mark.

We have liberated the country from legacy issues. Be it huge NPAs endangering the Indian banking system or abrogating Article 370 ushering a new era of peace in Jammu & Kashmir.

Today, we've built a strong economy that will serve as the base for India's next 25 years. In fact, our Sankalp Patra isn't just about the next five years. It's about making long-lasting changes and outlining the roadmap that will lead to a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

In these 10 years, we've shown the world that true progress is about empowering every citizen and giving them the tools they need to succeed. Our focus has been on empowering the poor, creating opportunities for them to thrive.

We've made sure that 80 crore people have access to free ration, more than 50 crore people have their own bank accounts, 11 crore toilets are built and 60 crore people have access to quality health care without shouldering the immense financial burden.

Our policies are centered around uplifting the poor, ensuring that they're at the heart of everything we do. In fact, in the last 10 years, 25 crore people have come out of poverty in India.

The Opposition's agenda is either to snatch people's wealth or ensure faith based reservations by denying the rights of SC, ST and OBC communities. All they want is 'Modi Hatao'.

People will not fall for such regressive and communal politics.

Which are the states where you can see the BJP making gains from its 2019 tally? And why?

It is the overwhelming will of the people across India to bring us back with a historic mandate. I have held public meetings and roadshows across the country and wherever I go I see a tsunami of 'Jan Samarthan' (popular endorsement) for our party. Across India, people have witnessed how a strong, decisive and sensitive government has secured the nation and solidified its position in the world. People are fed up of corruption, dynastic politics, minority appeasement, ruining state after state wherever there is (a) INDI Alliance (government). Therefore, they want NDA again. Our gains will come from all parts of the country and some of the gains will come from areas that will surprise political Pundits.

You will see Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala register a significant increase in our seats.

You focused a lot on the southern states this time. Especially, Tamil Nadu and Kerala are seen

as the last peak remaining for the BJP to conquer. What do you think needs to be done?

We do not subscribe to a mindset of conquest. We are working with a feeling of service towards 140 crore Indians. For us, every part of India has to be served.

Our connection with the people of South India, including Tamil Nadu and Kerala is not new. We've dedicated ourselves to serving the people there, regardless of whether we are in government or not. Our karyakartas have been working selflessly for decades, many even sacrificed their lives in the process.

People are tired of the corruption, appeasement, and family-first politics of the INDI Alliance seen in various southern states. In Andhra Pradesh, there is a breakdown of governance threatening the future of the youth in the state. In Telangana and Karnataka, too, a nexus of corruption has been established with Congress in the lead. In a matter of a few months, Congress has managed to hollow out the public treasury and bring the states closer to a state of bankruptcy. Same is the case in Tamil Nadu, where there is corruption and dynastic politics.

On the other hand, people have witnessed how effectively Modi ki Guarantee works. They have seen our work, our commitment to their well-being, and our dedication to bring inclusive development, clean governance, and transparency. This time around, our performance will be unprecedented.

I see a strong sense of positivity and enthusiasm for the BJP. Our message of development and progress is resonating strongly with the people of South India.

The BJP is going into the 2024 elections as a clear favourite. How are you ensuring that there is no complacency within your ranks?

Our party was born out of years of struggle and with only one ideology i.e. of Nation First. It grew from a party which only had two members in the Lok Sabha to a party that won full majority twice and is now going to come back for a third term with an even bigger mandate. We did not build the party thinking that we have won one election and now, we can relax till the next election. We treated every win as our duty to live up to the trust people bestowed on us. Our karyakartas are always on a mission-mode to serve

the person at the last mile. Our vision is crystal clear i.e. 24x7 for 2047.

Therefore, there is hardly any scope of complacency within the BJP. We are here to fulfil the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Let me explain to you in cricket terminology. If in a test match, a team has a massive lead over the other in the first innings, still the team with advantage plays the match with full spirit to create new records. Similarly, we know that the opposition has conceded defeat and has given a kind of walkover to us but still our karyakartas are energised and our party is fighting this election with full sportsman-like spirit.

For us, elections are a festival of democracy. Every citizen gets the opportunity to be part of this celebration and hence, as a party, we try to reach out to each and every one. It is also a time for people to evaluate our performance and our karyakartas make sure that people have all the information and awareness on the kind of work that has taken place in the last decade.

In this election, the energy and liveliness in BJP booths is palpable. I tell our party karyakartas that on the day of election take everyone along while going out to vote and create a festive and

jubilant atmosphere. The world should see how joyfully and collectively India celebrates its democracy.

There's been a lot of controversy over the Prajwal Revanna tapes in Karnataka. While the law will take its own course, and the elections are over there, as the PM, is there something you wish to say on this controversy, especially since the JD(S) is your ally and you addressed an election meeting in Hassan.

I firmly believe that every Indian citizen is equal in the eyes of the law. Be it Sandeshkhali or Karnataka, whoever committed such heinous acts, whether they belong to any party, must face severe consequences, must face the strictest punishment. And it's the duty of the state government to ensure law and order, whichever part of India it is.

Do you think our election campaigns have failed to keep pace with the times? We are still talking about religion and caste, and freebies and reservation, when there are far more important issues that need to be discussed.

Please do a detailed analysis of the speeches by people from all parties and you will see who is speaking progressive points and who is only focussing on regressive issues. Today in the world

of Artificial Intelligence, you can do this comparative analysis very quickly.

If the Congress party's agenda is to take away the reservation of SCs, STs and OBCs, and give it to their vote banks unconstitutionally, on the basis of religion, then it will have to be questioned. In such a situation, being silent would be incorrect.

It is the Congress party that is bringing religion and divisive issues, agendas into the picture.

The people of these communities are raising questions about their dangerous agenda and as a party that represents the people's aspirations, we will also reflect their concerns.

These are important questions that need to be answered by the Congress.

As for keeping pace with the times, if you observe our party's manifesto or the speeches of our leaders, it is clear that we are the only party speaking about creating a developed India, about a net-zero future, about becoming the third largest economy, etc.

In some states the BJP is also fighting against parties that have been supporting your legislative agenda in Parliament. How different is it from fighting an ideologically hostile Opposition?

Ours is a strong and vibrant democracy with many different ideas, ideologies and schools of thought. They are all welcome.

There can be differences in ideology but I do not think there should be hostility. And, there must always be a consensus on some basic issues affecting the unity and integrity of our nation.

Non-Congress parties, especially those like the BJP, have been in the Opposition benches for a long time, at both Centre and state levels. So, these parties have a certain level of maturity, pragmatism and constructive attitude.

For most such parties, fighting elections against each other but agreeing on certain issues in terms of legislation and governance has been a common experience. This has been the norm for most of our democratic history, not an aberration.

The aberration is the behaviour of the Congress party in recent years. It is only when the Congress party went out of power and into the Opposition that they resorted to creating a bitter, hostile and unrelenting atmosphere. Even some Congress leaders themselves feel this is not correct, but do not express it out of fear for their political future within the party.

I think it is mainly because the top leadership of the Congress has not yet come to terms with being out of power. They have not been able to accept the fact that the country has moved on from them. But the more time they spend in Opposition, hopefully, they will also learn.

The BJP has been very open and welcoming of leaders from other parties, including those whose ideologies were once very opposed to the party's. Do you think this is, in some way, weakening your own ideological core?

See, in 2019, the BJP got nearly 23 crore (230 million) votes. This is far more than we ever got in history. Many of these people would perhaps have voted for us for the first time in 2014 or 2019.

Earlier, there used to be a lot of misconceptions about us and our ideology. But in the last few years, more and more people are seeing our work and finding our ideology and mission appealing.

So, there is a general movement towards the BJP in larger society itself. The political sphere, too, is not immune to this. So, we welcome anyone who wants to come with open arms, as long as they believe in our vision and mission.

Given that the Communists have become just a shell of their past self, we are perhaps the only ideological and cadre-driven party in India. Therefore, today young people are attracted towards our party and BJP is their first choice. They also know that in dynasty based parties, their talent gets strangled and to get ahead in the party they have to indulge in sycophancy while in BJP even a normal Panna Pramukh can become Prime Minister of the country. Being cadre-driven means that no one group or family decides the party's future. So, anyone who is in our party will have to win the trust of the cadre by working with the principle of 'Nation First'.

What next for Narendra Modi?

I am nothing but a sevak of Ma Bharati. I never think about what is next for me. I am thinking what all I can do to fulfil the dreams and aspirations of my family of 140 crore Indians. The last 10 years have only been a trailer. There is a lot that I want to do.

Before entering the election fray, I had asked all the government departments to prepare a 100-day plan. Our Sankalp Patra provides a roadmap of the next five years. We are also laying out the vision for Viksit Bharat by 2047, the foundation for

which has already been built. So, we have our task cut out.

Having filled the gaping holes left by 60 years of Congress rule in our first term and putting India on a fast track of growth in our second term, our third term will be an era of accelerated development at a scale never seen before.

I am committed to strengthening and structuring the GYANM model that empowers our Gareeb, Yuva, Annadata, Nari Shakti and Middle Class in such a way that they become the architects of Viksit Bharat.

Most analysts predict a third term for your government, with the only question being the size of the majority. What would be the big theme of this third term? Alternatively, what do you see as the biggest task remaining to be done after two terms in office?

When we came to government in 2014, we had to make sure that the mistakes of the past were rectified and a strong foundation was built.

Whether it is the poor or farmers or the banking sector or the economy, each of these were in deep trouble.

On the one hand, we took basics like toilets, bank accounts, gas connections, electricity, etc to

the poor and on the other hand, we rescued our banking sector and economy with multiple reforms.

Our country raised crores of people out of poverty and also became the fastest growing economy.

Due to our reforms, many sectors have attained a life of their own – from manufacturing to start-ups to space.

Due to our good work, the people gave us a second term, with an even bigger mandate in 2019.

In the second term, the people saw India becoming the fifth largest economy in the world.

Whether it was in terms of action against Article 370 in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, or successful management of Covid-19, or sending vaccines and medicines to various countries, or the foreign policy successes in the post-pandemic world order, many such developments have given the people of India a new-found confidence in themselves and the country's future.

Earlier, the people of our country were shackled due to poverty, corruption and misrule. Due to their daily battles with these problems, they could not aspire towards a larger vision for their future or the country's.

But our work of the last few years has given wings to the people's aspirations and organically given rise to the vision of building a developed India by 2047.

The big theme of our third term is about imparting momentum across sectors towards the realisation of this vision.

From plans for the next five years to the plan for the first 100 days of the government, we are ready with many targets and are raring to go.

A lot needs to be done and will be done. This is going to be one of the most exciting periods in the history of independent India.

Your third term is going to see the delimitation exercise that will serve as a precursor to the redrawing of seats in the Lok Sabha, and also the implementation of the women's reservation. Both are going to be challenging, with there being a lot of insecurity about what the changes could mean. How do you plan to tackle these?

Delimitation is not happening for the first time in our nation. These are established processes which have happened on various occasions. I do not think it needs to be seen with the lens of politics. I was the chief minister of Gujarat when

the last delimitation exercise happened. Not once did we raise any issue. In fact, whatever was required from us as a state government, we cooperated to the fullest.

In any case, taking people into confidence, winning their trust and building consensus is something that is part of our track record.

GST was brought in through consensus, by taking everyone's views into account. Going above partisan considerations, we addressed everyone's concerns. Today, the GST Council is a wonderful example of how different stakeholders work together.

Since you mentioned women's reservation, remember that this was a topic that had seen a lack of consensus for decades. But we showed the ability to take everyone into confidence, bring about a consensus and pass this historic bill.

I can give you many such examples. I am sure our clean intent and clear track record will help us in many such issues even in the future.

You gave a sharp response to the Sam Pitroda comment last week. The issues of PrajwalRevanna, the unbelievable amounts of money recovered from aides of Jharkhand minister Alamgir, the issue of the mangalsutra, mandir-

masjid have all been raked up. Don't they distract from real poll issues?

Everyone knows that this person (Pitroda) is very close to the shahi (royal); first family of the Congress. Hence, if the Congress reaches close to power, then the approach of looking at inheritance tax or appearance of Indians using a divisive and racist lens will be dangerous for the country. Hence, these issues have to be brought to the public and discussed.

They have reached the stage of giving reservations on the basis of faith and insulting the Constitution. Shouldn't there be a discussion on this conspiracy to snatch reservation from SCs, STs, OBCs and give it to others?

The Congress's track record of vote bank politics, its prominence and its statements are in public. When they say that they will X-ray people's property and redistribute it, what does it mean? Shouldn't there be discussion on the dangers of such a mindset

Actually, I am surprised that the media has not delved deeply into the dangerous statements of Congress's prince and the destructive thoughts in its manifesto. Hence I had to raise these issues.

Look at their hypocrisy. On the one hand, the Congress's prince is talking about X-raying ordinary people's property, and on the other, trucks full of cash are being recovered from people close to their party. These issues are connected to the elections and I have to raise them.

Now that you have raised Prajwal Revanna's issue, let me make it clear, we have zero tolerance for such issues. There is a need to take such allegations extremely seriously and there should be strict legal action against such criminals.

But tell me one thing, have these reprehensible incidents happened now? These happened over many years and during this time, the Congress also tied up with Prajwal Revanna's party. This means that they knew everything and they kept quiet for years. Now they are using these only for the elections, even though the state government is theirs and they could have acted against this earlier, but didn't.

This shows their severe lack of commitment towards women's safety and dignity. It is despicable that for the Congress, such an important issue is just a political game.

The Opposition may have failed to stitch together a national coalition but regional parties

and the Congress have fielded joint candidates in more than 300 seats. Do you sense any challenge from this?

For many decades, India saw the problems arising from unstable governments, where there was no common agenda other than power. The Congress was at the centre of all that instability.

The scams of that era, the policy paralysis, surrendering to terrorism, the poor state of the economy are all fresh in the public's mind.

Other than this, people are seeing that the INDI alliance has no common vision other than 'Modi Hatao'. Day and night, they abuse each other in a way even opponents don't. But they're sharing a stage for opposing Modi.

In contrast, for the last 10 years, the nation saw the benefits of a strong and stable government. In a rapidly changing and challenging world, people know that India needs to be stable, secure and strong. Hence, I don't think that the Congress and the INDI alliance can win people's confidence, no matter how many seats they may contest.

Many observers feel there is no worthy discussion on unemployment and inflation. What is your opinion?

Our government's track record on controlling inflation and creating employment is excellent. Everyone knows that during the second term of the UPA government, yearly average inflation was in double digits. Where the UPA gave the public double digit inflation, the NDA government controlled inflation despite the churn of the Covid pandemic.

If we talk about employment generation, there has been very good work on this too.

Take the example of government jobs. The employment fairs that we are conducting are ensuring the creation of lakhs of jobs. I had earlier mentioned that this campaign is to create 10 lakh government jobs. I am a part of many such employment fairs myself.

You also focus on the development work done in the last 10 years.

Earlier, we were nowhere in mobile manufacturing but today, we are the world's second-largest mobile maker. The most important thing is that we have become an exporter of mobile phones from being an importer.

Whether you talk of Vande Bharat trains or toy manufacturing, many things are being made in India.

In this time, many sectors such as start ups and electric vehicles have taken flight. Today, we are the world's third-largest start-up ecosystem. In 2014, we only had 100-or-so start ups, today, the figure is close to 100,000. In all these sectors, there has been large-scale employment generation.

Apart from this, we have run the biggest mission of infrastructure development in independent India. Every year, there has been record investment in the infrastructure sector. The number of airports has doubled. Highways are being constructed at a record pace. The number of cities with metros has quadrupled during our government's tenure. The expansion of infrastructure at this large scale has boosted employment generation in several sectors.

We have also encouraged small and medium industries. Crores of people have used the benefits of Mudra loans to start their business for the first time.

Yearly PLFS data shows clearly that between 2017 and 2023, the number of workers increased by 56%. At the same time, unemployment remained at a historic low of 3.2%.

Today, our country is the world's fastest-growing major economy. And this growth is due to sectors that are generating employment.

I am only sharing some facts and figures. I also want to remind you that if you look at the tenure of the Congress government before 2014, there was neither any sign of growth nor any jobs.

You have done several experiments in politics and administration. In your third term, what will be your first step?

This is an interesting question. But does anyone who runs a successful restaurant tell you what his recipe for success is? It's always a surprise. So you wait a bit. The moment our government is back, we will be back to work, and not just the first step, but our every step will be dedicated to the public, the poor and the benefit of humankind.

One more thing, you have acknowledged that in the last 10 years, we have done several innovations and experiments, with great results. But as I have said before, this is a trailer. We have to take many big decisions in realising the dream of a developed India. A glimpse of that may be visible in the first 100 days of the third term.

“Politics should not be done for all five years”: PM Modi

PM Modi's Interview to Aaj Tak

May 16, 2024



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during an interview with AajTak, spoke on a range of topics. Speaking to the journalists, PM Modi shed light on why elections should not be a 5-year agenda. Further, he also said that questions should be raised on which family misruled the nation initially and who was the first one to tamper with the Constitution and Democracy.

Anjana Om Kashyap: Hello, you are watching Aaj Tak, I am Anjana Om Kashyap with you...

Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, these are the lines of a poem written by you, you have set a target of crossing four hundred, to discuss this, my three colleagues are with me, Shweta Singh, Rahul Kanwal and Sudhir Chaudhary, all four of us will ask questions.

PM Modi: Welcome to all of you and my greetings to the viewers of AajTak. I am happy that during this election I got the opportunity to meet the people of AajTak many times at some place or the other but this Chatushtkon (Quadrilateral) is complete when four of them get together. There are many types of proverbs, I cannot use them all. I will tell you the good ones.

Anjana Om Kashyap: When Prime Minister ji prepares for elections, he makes a list of candidates. Who will be our star campaigner, all this is decided in the manifesto. But you have started preparing the agenda for the next 100 days. That is why my first question to you is that when you came in 2014, within 100 days you formed SIT on the alleged black money. When you came in 2019, on the 62nd day you brought freedom from triple talaq and in Kashmir, on the 66th day you brought freedom from 370 in Kashmir. If you come to power in 2024, what will you do in 100 days? What big and tough decisions can you take?

PM Modi: One is probably a part of my working style. I do things very well and advanced. When I used to work for the organization, I was very predictable that I have to do this at this time that is why I divide my time properly. I can also decide priorities very easily. I have not been a student of any management school, but perhaps this has developed while working. When I was in Gujarat, I and generally the critics or observers look at the initial period. Even when a daughter-in-law comes to the house after marriage, she is watched closely for the first five-seven to ten days, this is the nature of the world. So I felt that I should also address this. And I moved in that direction. Now let me tell you a very interesting incident. On January 26, there was an earthquake in Gujarat. It was a terrible earthquake. I was working for the party at that time. On October 7, I suddenly had to become the CM. After taking the oath of CM, I came straight to the earthquake-affected area. I stayed there for two-three nights, saw everything. Earlier I used to look after it as a volunteer, now I was looking after it as CM. Then I came and took a meeting of my officers, everyone told me that this will be done by the month of March. I said first of all this is your budget Ledger of March, keep this paper aside. Tell me what will

you do before 26th January? I said the world will come to see on 26th January. What did you do in one year? Postpone everything, tell me. Then I mobilized the entire machinery? And I came here probably on 24th January during the day and did a press conference and gave the report card to the country. And at that time as per my estimation, a large amount of media had reached Gujarat and that media had reached there which wanted to skin us alive. But you will see the fun, the report of 24th, 25th and 26th January was nothing but applause and one reason for that was that I preponed the deadline of March. So the enthusiasm of my team increased, successful work is being recognized, so I understand its power and that is why I do not want to think that the government will run by its own(without deadline) randomly, we will see if some good thing comes. No, I have to run the government. People have not appointed me to run the government not only to run for the sake of running.

I have to run some things in the country. I have to change some things and that is why what I did plan.

In 2014, I thought for 100 days, I had a manifesto for 5 years. In 2019, I also saw this and along with that I drew some attention from the

global picture. In 2024, my thinking is a little big and long. I have been working for the last 5 years. And the work is going on for 5 years. I can say that there are more than 20 lakh people from the country from whom I have taken inputs and I have prepared a vision document based on them, two generations of officers must have retired and while working on this, many new people have come. Now I said, I had just organized a big summit a month before the announcement of the elections. I consulted all of them and everything came true.

Then I said, brother, tell me about the priority in 5 years keeping in mind 2047. Then I made a map for 5 years. Then I told them to give me 100 days of actionable points from this. Then I will tell you that my priority one will be this, second priority will be B, priority C, and priority t2 will be this.

Do it on that basis. So they are working. They have prepared it. I am yet to sit with them. I will take out some time and sit with them. So this is ready. But now while working, a new idea has come to my mind. Which I am telling you for the first time. When I was thinking of 100 days, now I have been forced to think of 125 days and I have also become excited. I saw that in this entire campaign, be it the first time voters or the young

generation, I am seeing their madness. I am feeling their inspiration, so I am probably going to announce today that I want to work for 125 days. I have made a plan for 100 days. I want to add 25 more days. And I want the youth in that, you give me ideas, you tell me your priority, so I want to dedicate 25 days in total to the youth of my country, I will do it, I am moving ahead from 100. 25 days

Sudhir Chaudhary: so it is possible Sir, after watching our program the youth will involve themselves only

PM Modi: People will like it very much.

Sudhir Chaudhary: Sir, look, it is such a big thing that the elections are not over yet and we are talking about your next term. People feel that you are going to come back. When BJP tickets were being given, people used to say that it is not a ticket, it is a certificate of election. Everywhere, the biggest asset of BJP is your face and your work. Did you ever feel that this time during the third term, the candidates also thought that they have to win on your name only? You have done so well in your work that they do not need to work hard. So according to that, you are seeing that there

is lack of participation or more winning surety is required in the candidates rather.

PM Modi: Firstly, the Election that I am going to win, Government will be formed by us. You are very late in coming to this conclusion, very late. I got a call from President Putin. For the invitation of the September meeting. I got a call from G-7 that we need a meeting, the world is fully confident that this government will be formed. You are very late. But still it is better late than never. As far as the election is concerned, I had told my party a year ago. In a big meeting, I had said that don't wait for the candidate, your candidate has been declared. And that is Kamal(Lotus). Kamal(Lotus) is your candidate and there is no one else, so for one year I have decided to work only for Kamal. I had refused my party in that way. So we all are working for Kamal. I am also working for Kamal. My colleagues are also working for Kamal and our opponents are also working for Kamal. Because the more mud they throw, the more the Lotus blooms, so they are doing that work and we are talking about Lotus.

Sudhir Chaudhary: But, you feel that this is your most comfortable Election.

PM Modi: We should never go into the comfort zone. If this is comfortable then I will challenge myself. See, you must have noticed that there are more accidents on straight highways and where there are curves, there are fewer accidents. I want to keep my team alert and awake. I want to keep them running, so I do not accept a world of comfort zone.

Sudhir Chaudhary: People also say that if everything is so easy then why are you working so hard?

PM Modi: Hard work, I consider this an opportunity. For me, I am meeting the people. Understanding their feelings is my life force and my energy. Secondly, in a democracy, we should not take elections in the limited sense of victory or defeat. It is a very big open university in a way. You have the opportunity to take your thoughts to the people. And when you take your thoughts directly, then there is neither dilution nor diversion, that is, you can convey the message perfectly. Like, I had gone to Kashi. I was in Kashi mode, but when I went to Koderma and saw the scene there, I changed the topic of my entire speech. Earlier, I used to go. I used to think differently because I felt that I have to talk to these people. And I believe. It is the duty of all political parties to make full use

of elections. Educate the voters, educate them with your working style, and educate them with your programs. Everyone should do this work. I would like to do it even now, there are still fifteen to twenty days left.

Sweta Singh: This is your third Lok Sabha election that I am covering. I have seen that everywhere you stand up with the responsibility to vote in the name of Modi because there is a fear in it which perhaps you do not feel. But you have started with the slogan of crossing four hundred(400 Paar), which means that at that time everyone had dominated you that how will four hundred be achieved and even today the same issue, the same discussion is there.

PM Modi: They are your family members. If your child scores ninety marks, you must have told him that he has to score ninety-five (95%) next time, you must have said that. If he scores ninety-nine, you must have said that it is difficult to score hundred but still look at it. You must have said that. We already had 400 in nineteen to twenty-four (2019-2024) as NDA and NDA Plus, it is my duty as a guardian that if we have to go beyond four hundred, then it is my responsibility because we should keep moving ahead. The second thing is that as far as responsibility is concerned, it is the

duty of the leadership. Today it is the misfortune of the country that the blame is put on others. The leaders run away, save their skin. This is the most disappointing and sad thing for the country. There is at least one person who is ready to take responsibility, who does not run away. Who says yes, I say it is my responsibility. And in the political life of the country, there should be people who take responsibility in every party. There should not be such people who run away after putting the blame on their colleagues, it does not look good.

Rahul Kanwal: Prime Minister, when the 2014 elections were held, there was a lot of anger in the country against Manmohan Singh, Congress and UPA. People wanted change. The 2019 elections were held. Before that Pulwama Balakot happened. There was a feeling of nationalism across the country and people wanted to give you another chance. This time analysts are saying that do voters have the same kind of enthusiasm and passion that they had in 2019. The voting percentage has decreased a bit. How do you see the decline in voting percentage and do you think that in a way voters do not have the same kind of enthusiasm that they had in 2014 and 2019. How do you see that?

PM Modi: Some people's livelihood depends on this, what do they have to do to remain relevant, some things have to be left out, else it will become a perception that he has won the election, friend, it will be useless for them (analysts). So this is also a reason.

I remember I used to work for the party in Gujarat, so maybe that election would be some election prior to 1995 probably. So before that municipal elections had come and in municipal elections, people did not fight on symbols. Mostly people used to fight independently, but BJP started that no, we should fight on symbols, so that people get used to it because responsibility is fixed. BJP workers also used to fight independently, so we fought on party symbol, but naturally independents won more. Journalists who used to come from Delhi with files and the election was a family election. They used to ask, "You lost the family election. How will you win the election just now", so I said friend you people don't have any work, both of you do some homework, how are these municipal elections held? You should study it, it is like that. Instead of looking at voting, politics of voting, party performance etc. in terms of things, one should see that voting is very important in democracy, indifference is not good for democracy.

Our narrative should be such that the democracy of the country becomes strong, instead of that we start looking for results in it and that too is not a fact but just an argument, now what will we do by wasting time on those arguments? I go down to the ground and I have never claimed before. You must have seen that the complaint against me is that I do not claim about winning or losing. This time also I did not claim, in the House people were saying that it crossed four hundred (400), I myself did not claim but I come to know that. Yes I prepare, what I will do in hundred days (100 days).

Sweta Singh: Questions are raised on institutions, opposition parties make very serious allegations against the government, Election Commission on which people have faith, so I want your answer to that allegation that when the first phase of elections took place, it took eleven days to get the voting figures.

PM Modi: You asked a very good question and I expect at least from Aaj Tak and India Today that the Election Commission has reverted with a letter. So there should be a debate among scholars on that letter. There should be a debate between experts who know this subject and whether they did right or wrong because it is not right for me to comment on the EC. Secondly, the Election

Commission has been a single member for about fifty-sixty years. And the funny thing is that the people who came out of the Election Commission sometimes became governors. Sometimes they became MPs. Sometimes they went to contest the Parliamentary elections in front of Advani ji, that is, they are examples of how opposition had made people sit on EC Chair. The Election Commission of that era, who retired, still tweets promoting the same political philosophy. They give their opinion and write articles, which means that now the Election Commission has become completely independent and I would like AajTak and I am sure that you people will do it, that there should be an analysis on the journey of the Election Commission of India. My second point is that we have different things for branding India in the world. Like when I tell the world that I have nine hundred TV channels, what those TV channels do to me is not my issue. I tell the world that this is my country, nine hundred TV channels. Having nine hundred TV channels is the strength of my country, so I took it in front of the world. Election Commission of India, election process of India is a great wonder for the world. It is the duty of all of us to brand our country. I want that you people should invite different media houses from all over

the world. Two helicopters should be taken for them during elections (Laughing...). There is nothing wrong in it.

Sudhir Chaudhary: you gave me a good idea for the next time.

PM Modi: This will also make you a global figure. Like this time many people from political parties came here from all over the world. Some people come as observers, to watch. It is really a celebration of India's democracy and the society of the common man of India and what a huge management it is, lakhs of people are involved and the time limit is amazing, I believe that this is a study for the universities of the world. This is a very big achievement of India. We should be proud.

Anjana Om Kashyap: Did you see AajTak's helicopter shot or not?

PM Modi: No, I did not get time but I was definitely worried because in such a rush, whether you will get good helicopters or not, whether you will get one for landing or not and if there is any VIP movement, you will face obstruction in flying there. There will be weather problems, which means it is not easy, it is very difficult.

Sudhir Chaudhary: we were talking about narrative. Sir, whenever you contest elections, whether in Gujarat or here, people say that you are going to lose, but then you win and win more seats. Ever since you told people about your Uniform Civil Code and made this promise, there is a different narrative on that too. Now people say that there will be one nation one dress. There will be one nation one food, there will be one nation one language. And its future is that now there will be one nation one leader and we are moving in that direction.

PM Modi: have you ever had the opportunity to counter those who say such things? Do it at least once, where did you get this narrative from? You are telling a serious thing. Tell them whether you have read UCC? It is your responsibility to tell the country what UCC is, answer me. You should also do your homework but at least this country has an example. Goa has UCC. Tell me, do the people of Goa wear the same type of clothes? Do the people of Goa eat the same type of food? What a joke this Uniform Civil Court is, it has nothing to do with it. The Supreme Court of India has said at least two dozen times to bring UCC in this country. I remember that when I went on the Ekta Yatra, I was going from Kanyakumari

to Kashmir and in Maharashtra, probably in Aurangabad, most likely, there was a program scheduled in one chilli market in evening And Dr. Joshi ji was allergic to it. So he suddenly fell ill. They did not even know whether we should do the program there or not further, so I had to take charge. I was very junior. So I was going there, all the children were studying in one of our schools. I said stop the chariot, let's talk, so I went to talk to the children. Such video must be available somewhere at that time, I told the children, "there are five people in your family. Your parents have one set of rules and regulations for the elder brother and another for the second brother and third one. How can this run? No. I said brother (bhaisahab), I had asked ten questions, those children said, it should definitely be done in uniform. And these were the children of the eighth class. What the children of the two-tier city of Maharashtra of my country understand, the country's leaders do not understand. Then a question arises in my mind, these false narratives and these false narratives do not work for any person, sorry, it is the irresponsible behavior of the media house of this country that gives strength to such wrong narratives. What power does one person have, he will keep on speaking, who will

ask? This is of the country, for the country, it is not a matter of any political party, it is written in the constitution of the country that India should move in that direction. Did our people at that time (congress regime) think that everyone will have to plant roses (without naming Nehru)? That is why UCC was about to come. This came in the Constituent Assembly.

Sudhir Chaudhary: Now look at the narrative, it seems as if a new trend has started that the constitution is going to be changed. And he suddenly said this and it got popular.

PM Modi: If it was picked up, I don't believe it. But such lies can also be spread in this country. The question that should be asked is who first messed with the constitution in this country? Pandit Nehru did it. The first amendment he brought in the constitution was to restrict freedom of speech, which means it was against democracy as well as the constitution. The second amendment was brought by his daughter, she was the prime minister, and what did she do? The court gave a judgment that you cannot remain a member of parliament, so she (Indira without naming) overturned the court's judgment. There was a movement in the country, so she imposed emergency and closed all the newspapers. One

benefit of emergency for Aroon Purie was the birth of India Today. At the same time India Today was born. After that her son(Rajiv without naming) came and Shah Bano's judgment came, he overturned the judgment of the Supreme Court. He changed the constitution, then he brought laws which were about restrictions on media. The opposition became a little stronger across the country. The media also started becoming vibrant. Everybody it came out saying that we will not let emergency come again, out of fear he had to withdraw it. Then his son (Rahul Gandhi Without naming) came. So the government was running by remote control. The remote control government is gone. The Prime Minister was also in office. The government was formed from the womb of the constitution. I like the government or I don't like it, it was a constitutional government through the democracy of India. The cabinet was formed from the womb of the constitution.

That cabinet took a decision and a prince called a press conference and tore apart the cabinet's decision. Not only this, the cabinet then reversed its issue. This means that four people from the same family have torn apart the constitution at different times. The time of those people doing such dirty acts for the constitution is

over and that is why today I tell people boldly that as long as Modi is alive, the basic sentiment of the Constituent Assembly is that there will be no reservation on the basis of religion. I will fight for this. I will sacrifice my life for this. Reservation on the basis of religion.. You have divided the country on the basis of religion once, will you do this again on the basis of religion? Will you keep watching this game just to keep your position and keep getting the chair? The country will not accept it and I will be able to devote my life to educate the country.

Rahul Kanwal: Modi Ji, during this election and even before that, opposition parties have accused India of democracy being in danger. They say that the democratic institutions have become weaker than before. You have even been accused of being a dictator. How do you view this?

PM Modi: See, the first thing is that we have been repeatedly telling them to come to the Parliament for a debate but they feel that they have nothing to say, they don't even have people to say anything. All their new MPs come and tell me that Sir, our five years have been wasted and we could not speak a single word in it. I am talking about the opposition, I also told their leaders to do this, give an hour to your young first time MPs, then disturb

(parliament) later. My effort is that these people do something but unfortunately for this Congress family, democracy means their being in power. They are still not ready to accept that since 2014, some other government has been elected for the country, other Prime Minister who has been elected by the country. They are not able to accept it from their heart and that is why they feel bad even if you are implementing their issues, promises, and their manifesto. If you are implementing their words today, they (opposition) should be happy that their work are getting completed, it is a good thing, Pranab Mukherjee used to say, you must have seen in his book that the work he did with me, how democratically he worked and how much we have raised the prestige of the President's institution. Tell me about the Supreme Court, Government is being accused of having no say in the Supreme Court, this is the allegation on us. And in that we are being questioned for our ability. It means that earlier there were some capable people who used to manage the judiciary and that institution was fine. I believe why I should manage. The law will do its work.

Anjana Om Kashyap: Prime Minister Ji, an allegation is made against your government regarding the investigation agencies. The

opposition shouts that ED, CBI and Income Tax, all these departments take strict action against the opposition people but become soft on those opposition leaders who join the NDA.

PM Modi: Don't avoid the issue by saying this, this is the way,... like I say that it is a family party, then our media people ask me questions about Rajnathji's son. There is a difference between the two. At least the media should not help these people in diverting the issues in this way. I will request them. When I say family party, it means party of the family by the family for the family. I don't think it is bad if ten people of a family come into public life. I don't mind if four people come forward with great enthusiasm, but they don't run the party, the party takes decisions, similarly, the steps taken by the ED, you tell me what news used to be there twenty years ago, there were searches on the black market, raids were conducted, so many things were seized, so much sugar was seized.

Now do those news come or not? Why? Because whatever work that institute did at that time, there was a change in the law. When taxation rules changed, the world of black market, theatre, black market wala is not heard in the public life of

India. Not because it's gone to the parliament but because of the work done by Institutes.

In theatre, one does not find black marketer anymore. The way it disappeared, corruption can also go. Why? If the person who has the responsibility works, then it will go away.

One should really ask, that ED was given so much salary for ten years, what work did they do? Why did they not work from 2004 to 2014? It was their duty.

Tell me, there is a railway ticket checker. If he will not check tickets, then what is the need to keep him. He is there for that work only.

If you are in the media, if you keep roaming around with Modi's flag with devotion, then who will keep you in Aajtak? Tomorrow you will be removed, that is your job, find ten things and bring them in front of the world, whatever seems right, take it to the world. It is your job and you people do it. Similarly, it is ED's job, let them do it, what the figures say, before 2004 to 2014, the system was the same. The law was the same. I did not make the law. I did not even make ED. They were totally useless, they did no work. They only confiscated Rs. 34-35 lakh, in ten years we were in opposition, who stopped them? My government

has confiscated Rs. 2200 crore. Your TV people have shown heaps of notes. How can you defame them that ED? Money found from MP's home. How can you refuse this? You tell me, If I confiscate a huge consignment of drugs, will you praise me or not? If ED confiscates it, then instead of praising, why makes them look like criminal, what kind of a method is this? Why? Because it was confiscated from a politician's place?

Rahul Kanwal: Speaker: and you want it should be implied equally be it NDA or opposition...

PM Modi: No matter who it is, this is what should happen. My fight is against corruption in the country and it is destroying the country a lot.

Sweta Singh: Modi Ji, We have seen that in Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, you people fight elections with great vigor. Be it the assembly elections or the Lok Sabha elections, BJD, YSR Congress, everyone will fight against the Bharatiya Janata Party. But when there is some bill in the Parliament where you need them, they stand with you. What kind of friend and enemy (frenemies) relationship is this?

PM Modi: I always say that elections should be held only for three or four months. Politics

should not be done for all five years. We should sit together for four and a half years and run the country from wherever we are. Fight elections for six months with full strength. You must have seen friendly matches in sports, but when the match actually happens then there is a face to face fight for victory and defeat. Sportsmanship comes in to the picture then. In politics also, I believe that four and a half years should be spent together in the interest of the country on the basis of issues.

Anjana Om Kashyap: So you are committing to One Nation One Election in the third term

PM Modi: It is like this that my party has always been of the opinion on One Nation One Election and there is nothing new. You see what the situation is, I am surprised. I feel very sad that when elections are being held in a state. And the Prime Minister of the country is going to that state and giving a speech against the Chief Minister of any party. How will the country run? It is my compulsion that I have to go to that state and speak. And it is a political compulsion. It will be good if there are simultaneous elections, then whatever they want to say, will say. Whatever nectar (Amrit) comes out of it, we will come out

and move forward. This will save the logistic expenditure.

When I was in Gujarat, even during Manmohan Singh ji's government, the Election Commission used to take the maximum number of officers from my place. Seventy-eighty of my officers used to go and were engaged in some election or the other for about a hundred days in a year, so I say my state is such an active state. If eighty people go, then how will I do it? Stop this, I will not give the observer, but the laws were such that I had to deploy them as per their need. This is the problem of every state. So many observers go, then the code of conduct is followed, everyone gets a vacation for forty-five days, everyone enjoys themselves, how can such a big country stop. There is a big crisis in such a big country.

Even earlier, there was One Nation One Election in our country, it has discontinued somehow post 67, so now we have set up a commission. The report of the commission has come. We are studying the report. After studying it, actionable points will come out of it. We have a commitment and the commitment is not only a political commitment. This is very important for the country.

Anjana Om Kashyap: Employment versus beneficiaries (Rojgar Banam Labharthi) is a debate going on in the country. The opposition says that the Congress party has come up with its Nyay Patra that promises 30 lakh jobs. They will give one lakh jobs to educated youth. Your focus remains on the beneficiaries. Now they (congress) are saying that we are dealing with the issue of unemployment in a more aggressive manner. This is the claim of the Congress.

PM Modi: If they are so honest then why do they keep mum where their governments are in states. Why don't they speak there? Secondly, if the government is responsible for employment, then why just only Government of India, the state government, the local government also have similar responsibility. This way I will have very little responsibility. Still, if you talk about fulfilling the promise, According to the recent employment records, the employment that has been provided by this micro finance in last 10 years, will you not consider that as employment?

There are ten to twelve schemes of the Centre on the basis of which they have analysed that when a house is built, how many person hours would be employed. Now 5 crore person per year has been reported. That means these much

employment has been generated... this figure is very big.

If we look at it in terms of person hours, then someone should tell me how earlier if a hundred kilometres of road was built, today its gone to two hundred kilometres roads, then respective manpower would have been deployed or not.

Same comparison can be done with electrification and number of Airports built. 4 crores houses of poor people have been built. 11 crore toilets have been built. 5G has been rolled out at the fastest pace in the world. Infrastructure is required for this. It doesn't happen just like that. This require towers. People who make small things are required for that. This means that if we add all these things, then in six seven years, you are getting six crore new jobs, this is on record. There has been an increase of hundred and sixty seven percent (167%) in the people covered by EPFO in ten years. Now whether you will accept this or not, Mudra loan is about forty three crore loans separately. In that, seventy percent are those who are getting employment for the first time. Now a person must be giving employment to at least one person. Some running business must be giving employment to one person. All this is not just boasting. The problem in our country is that the

process of recruitment is so difficult. The advertisement will come out. The department will ask the finance, that is, its process. It takes one year before any person gets to know that a job is coming. I have made it so short. Today, it is getting finalized in two and a half to three months to complete the recruitment process for jobs. Complete the process in 2.5-3 months. These much reforms I did? But employment is such a wide subject that anything can be said. You can say anything. There are some people. Now like you, you have work here but you are thinking inside that I should be the chief editor, so according to that he is unemployed because he is not an editor.

Rahul Kanwal: Prime Minister, recently a report of international economists came in which they said that income inequality is increasing in India i.e. the rich are becoming richer. The poor are becoming poorer. The situation in India is that people at the top are becoming richer and people at the bottom are becoming poorer. How do you see this, which is the issue of income inequality?

PM Modi: so should everybody be poor? Everyone should be poor, then there will be no difference. This was the case in the country earlier. Now you say that everybody should rich, so it will happen gradually not overnight.

Some will come, they will bring those who are below. Those who will come a little higher, they will pull up others. So there is a process.

So either we decide that we all want to remain poor. There are two options, one if everyone gets ten rupees, and you have to survive on ten rupees. Other one is that We should try and move forward. Today we will make ten tomorrow it will increase to hundred, then day after tomorrow it will become five hundred. There were a few hundreds start-ups and now there are 1.25 lakh start-ups, so progress is happening.

Earlier the number of people boarding an airplane was few, today an order has been booked for one thousand new planes. Today we have around six hundred- seven hundred planes government and private combined together, now there are one thousand new airplanes got booked, which means the prosperity has increased.. Today tell me people are paying for Badrinath Kedarnath Yatra. From where do they get the money? Yes, they must be getting from somewhere, if I have money then I do it, that number has reached crores. People are going abroad for marriage. If there were only five rich people then how the people of India would get so many marriages done abroad and that is why I said Wed in India.

Because that they are prospering they feeling like going abroad. They feel they have not seen Chennai and want to see Singapore now. So we should see it in the right way.

Rahul Kanwal: People are scared in to getting married in India thinking if Modiji gets report of their plan to get married abroad.

PM Modi: People are getting married in India is naturally is media's version. But many people are writing letters to me and saying this that, I had booked, I have spent money but I never thought of this side of it.

Sweta Singh: Even these small places are worth getting married, people are getting ideas now

Sudhir Chaudhary: Even destination wedding is happening in Kashmir.

PM Modi: Let me tell you, they have earned a huge income from Badrinath and Kedarnath. Earlier they had religious tourism only , they had infrastructure for building though. Now they get wedding in off seasons also.

Sudhir Chaudhary: Now the Rahul spoke of Rich and poor

PM Modi: Which Rahul?

Sudhir Chaudhary: Ours Rahul

PM Modi: That Rahul is not yours

Rahul Kanwal: Today sir is in form...

Sudhir Chaudhary: But I want to talk about the other Rahul. Sir, the image of you is that of a messiah of the poor. We have seen how women start crying when you go there. Poor women associate so much with you. All your schemes help 25 crore people come out of poverty line. But the allegation that the other Rahul is making against you is that you are friends with big industrialists. For the last five years, an attempt is being made to paste a sticker on your image and that sticker is that you are friends with Adani and Ambani. This is like black and white,..what do you says

PM Modi: There is a problem of the family. That the family is burdened. Nehru ji used to face abuses. Birla -Tata ki Sarkar Billa, you will see in parliament, Tata Nehru ji used to hear it continuously. Now the problem of this family is that the abuses that my maternal grandfather faced, Modi should also face them, then why did he bring Rafale? They thought if I will raise Rafale issue, it will wash away the sins of Bofors, so that is why it is a psychological problem. In this election, so much effort has never been put in efforts before,

why are they doing it. They think that if Modi becomes the Prime Minister for the third time, then my father will not have any respect. My maternal grandmother will not have any respect, he will become equal to Nehru. They complete everything with him and that is why they have borrowed all these abuses from somewhere.

Now the second thing that I say from the Red Fort. I am not ashamed. I say from the Red Fort that in this country wealth creators should be respected. The reputation of the capable people and the powerful people in my country should increase. I include sportspersons and achievers in the guest list of my 15th August. If the country doesn't worship achievers, the country is not valued, then from where will the people doing PhD come from in my country? Where will the scientists come from? There should be a voice in every field of life.

If tomorrow AajTak becomes a global channel, I will be the first one to clap. I know what work AajTak does with me, but I will clap for it. You are my country's AajTak which has become global. I am saddened by this, that CNN, BBC becomes global channel, Al Jazeera came overnight and became a global channel.

Now someone will say that you are helping the wealthy Aroon Purie, but I am not helping the rich. Why shouldn't the multinational companies of my country be the pride of my country? Why shouldn't the companies of my country have shops in the world? Why the people from around the world should not come to my country, why you feel ashamed?

But yes, if I have done dishonesty, then should be hanged, if done in the wrong way, then should be hanged, but I will respect the wealth creator in my country. For the bright future of my country, as much as I worry about the sweat of the labours, the same way I worry about the wealth of wealth creators/capitalist. For me, it should be the money of the capitalist. The brain of management, the sweat of hard workers. I see all three as a family, only then development happens.

Sweta Singh: Yes. But since you have talked about this money, I remember something you said in one of your rallies about the heaps of money seized from ED raid and searches. I have done a Shwet Patra on this, where the money seized by ED goes. It was very sad to learn that till the time case goes on money remains seized. So I said that this money which goes to the corrupt will reach us and will be returned.

PM Modi: Very good question. It will also help the viewers. I have talked about a couple of types of corruption, one that is done in big businesses in which the taker does not tell anything, the giver also does not tell anything. This is a problem but most of the people are innocent like in Bengal, in the recruitment of teacher's case, it is known that this man got the job with money. He has nothing in hand, mortgaged land or house and gave money from that only, so there is a trail, so now we have done a lot of seized a lot of money. So yesterday we seized 1.25 lakh crores.

In Kerala, the Communist Party runs a racket of honesty. Money of poor and those who are salaried is kept in cooperative network, so that the money will be use for daughter's marriage and son's house when they grows up. But what kind of people are these, they have swindled this money in the name of their personal business partnership and they have done a fraud of thousands of crores.

You people are afraid of the Kerala file (film) but you can work on this. Now there is a trail in it. The money that they kept and somebody's money got lost, now we have seized the property. I want to know how I got cash from that property and how I returned that money by investing. Till

now I have returned 17000 crore rupees whose trail was found.

Now Lalu ji has got the land written in his name when he was the railway minister in exchange for giving jobs to poor people, so trail is found but poor is afraid of giving affidavit. Now that poor man is not ready to give the trail due to fear. But they are getting the trail because his land was lost on this date. I am trying to think of making a deal of it and returning the land to that poor, so I am putting a lot of mind in this because I feel from my heart that these people have looted poor`s money by misusing their position. They should get it.

Sweta Singh: Making Changes

PM Modi: I will have to. If I have to make legal changes, I will do it. I am taking the help of the legal team right now because I told the people of the judiciary that tell me at night what do with the keeping money lying around. The new “Nyay Sahinta” we brought has some facilities. When I was the Chief Minister of Gujarat, in Bhavnagar A very large quantity of black jaggery was caught, it meant for making illegal liquor. Now it is kept in the police station. Even if it rains, mosquitoes and flies will come. It has become difficult to pass

through that road. Now the law says that you cannot do remove this, so face the consequences.

Anjana Om Kashyap: Your track record of ten years says that as you just talked about the fact that if someone has given land in bribe, we will work to get it back. You have a very big scheme for the beneficiaries. When the beneficiaries get the land, no one looks at whether they are Hindu, Muslim or from which community, so there is secular rule in the country prevails. But if this is so then in the election rallies, why do you need to bring in Mangalsutra, infiltrators, more children. the opposition repeatedly attacks you on this issue that in the campaign you do Hindu-Muslim

PM Modi: You have asked a very good question and I want to explain this properly. They say this. You went completely on communal agenda. And I exposed it. I ripped it apart. I accused it. So the actual issue was removed by their ecosystem. You people also live under the pressure of the ecosystem that even you don't touch it. Then you take my words and run with it, then you think that I said 'Muslim Muslim', but that is not the issue. The issue is that they have written in their Manifesto that now they bring minorities in the contract system. The contract will be given to the minority, and if I oppose the

system, then I am doing that secularism. But just because I am having to use the term minority, 'Muslim' you think I am attacking them but I am not attacking them. I am targeting those political parties who are destroying India's secularism. Who are doing politics of appeasement, destroying the spirit of the constitution of the country -- now I have proof that I do not do it, because I say 100 per cent saturation? Imagine seven hundred people live in a village and there are hundred beneficiaries of a certain scheme, then they should get it. Then whether this caste gets it or not. Yes, it is possible that someone will get it on Monday or Wednesday. Someone will get it in January, someone will get it in July, but everyone should get it, so there should not be any discrimination among the governance. You see the entire debate, from our side, we have not said anywhere what is Hindu Muslim. We are explaining to the people their manifesto. Now we do not hesitate in that. If we call a Muslim a Muslim, then who knows, we will be labelled. I am explaining to the Muslims that they are making a fool out of you for 75 years, why are you being a fool and I tell the intelligent Muslims, just understand brother, what did you get? Well, they took over the country on the basis of religion. Will that run the country? Don't they want an

administrator? Don't they want a doctor? They don't want an engineer. If you are a doctor, you will have to take up the post. Yes, if you are an engineer, you will have to wear some paper on your hand. This is what I want to say to the Muslims.

Anjana Om Kashyap: they are listening and voting for the BJP

PM Modi: the habit of doing things for votes should be DONE AWAY within the country. Will you do everything for, not for country? I am against doing things for power, whatever I do, I will do it for the country. Note is the by product, cannot let down the country for votes and I do not want such power which ruins my country. I do not accept such power.

Rahul Kanwal: so you said you will never do Hindu Muslim.

PM Modi: I never done Hindu-Muslim and will never do it. But if I say that triple talaq is wrong, then I am anti-Muslim. If you label me like this, then it is your compulsion, not mine.

Sweta Singh: An attempt was made to label Kashmir the same way when Article 370 was repealed. Modiji, I have covered Kashmir even before 2014 and even after that. And not just one

city and downtown but even up to the border where people felt that they are getting included, they are joining the mainstream, then Article 370 came. There has been no stone pelting since then. There was no strike. What amazing voting happened in Srinagar this time, but there is a very big group that says that tell me, they have taken away our statehood. Would you like to say something to the people of Jammu and Kashmir?

PM Modi: First of all, I would have liked to have asked my questions in this election, but you people did not ask. But I have taken out my subjects, so I also create questions from them. I answer them. In this entire election, which is the moment of satisfaction for me? For me, the moment of satisfaction is the voting of Srinagar because it has given a stamp on this point. My policies are right. I do not discriminate. My government does not discriminate on the basis of religion. As far as the fear of the state is concerned, we have promised in the parliament and we are committed to that. Yes, we want to succeed. Not in political power, but in situations. And what abuses we used to face earlier. You shut down the internet, we used to go to all the media. You people used to meet in meetings, but you shut down the internet. What kind of democracy is this, we were abused,

but I have done good for Kashmir. I could see the long distance. You used to watch the channel 24 hours a day. I used to look after the country and that is why even after facing abuses on the internet, by shutting down the internet, I was successful in saving the youth from the wrong path. Secondly, I am satisfied now take ten years' time, think about it, from 2004 to 2014, how many mothers would have lost their children. From 2014 to 2024, how many mothers' sons were saved. What can be more satisfying than this in life? And that is why the state is also our own Commitment. We will do whichever way is possible for success. I would like to grow wheat crop but if I do it in the right season, I will get wheat. If I do not do it in the right time, then my seed will also get wasted.

Rahul Kanwal: my father was the in the army. Since childhood we have been visiting Kashmir during every summer and winter vacation. This time when I went to cover the elections, I saw that campaigning was going on in places like Baramulla and Anantnag. People were joining the celebration of democracy where earlier when an army vehicle used to pass by, people would look up so that bullets don't fire from the window. There leaders are campaigning in the open. Lal Chowk is

open till 9-10 pm at night. Shops are open, shopping is going on. What next for Kashmir?

PM Modi: First the media should accept it. When I am sitting in front of you, I am not saying this to you. I want to say this to your entire community. I had a program a few days ago. Such a big rally was held in Jammu Kashmir after perhaps forty years. What was the matter, they brought government officials and made it bigger. Do you want to do good for the country or not? Now their mouths will be shut when tomorrow someone will see forty percent voting and they will say, Sir, my wish is that the election should be stable. I was not watching the election after going there. There was a festive mood in Srinagar, people were serving tea. People were clapping. People were singing songs, that is, it was a day for me.

Rahul Kanwal: Prime Minister ji, you always say that you are very close to the Sikh community. There is a picture of the Golden Temple where you are sitting. But it is also true that your popularity in Punjab is less than in the rest of the country and many people in the Sikh community look at you with suspicion. You recently went to Kanpur, you went to Patna, there you bowed your head in the Gurudwara. Do you think that there is a distance and perceived gap

between Your efforts, your thinking, your intentions and the way that community looks at you and how do you find the success to bridge the gap.

PM Modi: I don't know what information you have about it exactly. If you look at it in terms of elections, then I have no answer. I have out of it. It would be better if you have a Punjabi channel or Punjabi people analysis this. So let's see what have been the basic issues of the Sikh community of this country. And which government has addressed those issues and how? And then take out the list and you will give me hundred marks out of 100. Now it is possible that I could not reach them. I have worked in Punjab. I have lived in Punjab for years. And during the emergency, I used to live in the guise of a Sikh. I was underground so I used to live in the guise of a Sardar and I was comfortable. I lived here in Delhi, even then sometimes I used to go to eat langar. Not because its free, it's my devotion rather, I still believe that sikh have made a very big contribution to the country. Even today, wherever they are, it is unfortunate that crime has spread a lot in Punjab, otherwise they are a society with a disciplined life. We should be proud, such was the time. Whether they accept me or not, what can I say about that.

Sweta Singh: I want to come to the topic of women because there are many things that were done in the 26th January parade. Initially it was said that only indications are being given that at the time of flag hoisting a female officer will be standing with you but gradually we have seen the deployment of entire platoons of women across the LOC. You have given a lot of importance to the women of your cabinet in the Parliament but the reality is that there is 33 percent reservation whose effect will be seen after a few days. There is a male dominated political system, so is the Parliament. How do you see that changing? Do you see women coming there in such large numbers?

PM Modi: Firstly, you must have seen one of my works in G 20. Even in the western countries, people are thinking this is a very big thing. When I say that here, PREGNANT women have 26 weeks of leave. Then they look at me AND IT DOESN'T GO DOWN THE DRAIN. Here, a perception has been created that women in India are domestic. You can see the family of India. Even today, I say that sixty percent of them are WOMEN in the agriculture sector. They do that but now the image of our country has not been made. The right thing has not reached the people. Even today, fifteen percent of the commercial flight

pilots in the world are women pilots from India. Now, this would not have happened overnight. Therefore, to say that this is happening with the women of India, then we have become victims of the kind of thinking that has been formed about family and business. But I believe that how should we move ahead,? Firstly, we need to break the psychological barrier. It EGYPT President was sitting with me on 26 January. President said to me, West talks about women empowerment but I see women empowerment only. He is from Muslim country though.

Secondly, in G-20, I brought up the topic of women led development, this is a very psychological barrier. If women work in our country, what do they do? All the public rallies of my party are being conducted by women. This is my party`s decision. Secondly earlier what is the work of village women SHG (Self-help group) ? To make papad, Badi, soap, agabatti and sell it. I made them drone pilot. Some of them told me they never rode a bicycle. Today the whole village knows me a drone pilot.

When I was in Gujarat, I decided, if there is a government, what does it mean? Policemen USED TO BE SYNONYMS OF the government. I want to change this psychology, so I told the

Anganwadi and Asha workers that the government will provide uniforms. That is why they voted for me and informed me. I called the fashion designer. I said I want good clothes better than the air hostess. This is for the Anganwadi workers and I did it and then what did I do. Whenever the Chief Minister or any minister goes, Anganwadi workers should be there in the reception. The situation of the village became such that Anganwadi Asha workers are standing, it means the government is standing. This is my commitment, you can see the dairy work. When I was in Gujarat, I decided that The money of the milk will not go to the men. Women's account will be opened, it will go to their account and daily two thousand crore rupees are delivered. Daily two thousand crore rupees and the money goes to the women's account, I have just started a dairy in Kashi. I said the dairy will start only when the money goes to the women's account. They rear the cattle. They take care of the milk. They fill the milk and someone else take the money, I said this will not work. When I built earthquake houses. In Gujarat, the houses built by the government, I said that they will be given only in the name of women, and when I came here and built four crore houses. I said the first one will be of the woman. Then I made a rule that when a child

gets admitted in the school, the father's name is written, I said the mother's name will also be written. I have made these changes. Today the mother's name is also there. In the school, there is not only the father's name with the child. So your thought process works for you. You have to bring this power from the bottom, small. When power comes from the bottom, then you get it at the top. I did one thing, it is very interesting to listen to. But I will not be able to show it to the media.

I went to Gujarat as a new Chief Minister. So Panchayat elections were held. There were elections for fifteen hundred Panchayats. I did not pay much attention as I was busy with the earthquake work. After becoming the Chief Minister, one day I got a chance that all the members of the Panchayat of Kheda District village want to meet me. I said ok. Please introduce me to the Panchayat Minister, they must have some work. They said that all the members are women. The village decided that this time the Pradhan is a woman, so make the number also a woman, then they said that there is no Male, so those women want to meet, so I agreed. I said call him, there is a village near Dakor.

Eleven member women group came and the one who became the Pradhan had probably studied

up to the 8th standard. The rest were not educated. So I asked him what work they had come for. She said no, we all women have come to greet you when we get elected. Was there any other work also? I said what will you do if you get five years? What wish do you have in your mind? What the Pradhan told me, no other economist in the world could tell. That Pradhan told me that Sambhar village is small and my wish is that in five years there should not be a single poor person in my village left. That Pradhan has the understanding of the economy. I got an idea from her and then when the elections came I said we will make the village prosperous. I was familiar with this because Vinoba Bhave had one associate named Doctor

Dwarka Joshi who was from my village and he, his wife Ratanbehan, were social worker. They had spent their lives with Vinobaji. So I had heard his speech in my childhood. I don't remember whether I heard Vinobaji, or Dwarkadas Joshi.

I did not remember but in my childhood I had heard that every time Lok Sabha elections are held, then there is no mutual hatred. Even when there is a Assembly election, it does not happen. So when there is an election in the village, the village gets divided. The daughter also said that she is sent back from her in-laws because she didn't vote for

someone, so she said that there should be a unanimous election in the village. I had heard this in my childhood,. My brain started working, so I made a scheme Samradh Gaon (prosper village). The village which will hold the election by consensus, I will give five lakh rupees to that village for development because my printing, minting and all the expenses were covered. Then I thought, the village which will elect all the women, I will give seven lakhs. Then I said that if all the women in the village will be women, then the government officers there will also be women. If possible, the police also. I will keep women there and I will also pay them and till Tehsil level. After this 45% villages started having consensus. And this is continuing even now also.

There are many villages where when there is a woman Pradhan then the village decides that all the women should be there and let me tell you that they perform so well. Small things have to be done.

I remember the day the Obama came, all the women were standing in Rashtrapati Bhawan to honour them, the ones who lead them also also a woman. Obama asked all women and I said yes, I know how I want to showcase my country at right my place.

Rahul Kanwal: Hamari best anchors yahan...

Sudhir Chaudhary: look here also we have 50% women and 50% men..

PM Modi: actually when I call it developed India, I see two principle foundations of developed India - one is Eastern India where there is a lot of wealth. But Poverty is the highest in my eastern Uttar Pradesh, my Bihar, Jharkhand, Bangal, and Odisha. If I take it on par with the West in terms of strength, means Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Punjab, they all are prosperous. It is my nature and secondly, the power of my women. These are the two areas in which I see a lot of potential and I am absolutely convinced that this will give me success in 2047, and this is what will give me results. And I will get it.

Anjana Om Kashyap: Next question to you because earlier it was believed that women will vote for whatever the man in the house says. But now women use their own minds and I also went to Basirhat, Baramati, Garhwal and families are fighting over it also because women they are voting somewhere else and husband voting somewhere else. But is it really happening because

of this? All the political parties are trying to get women towards themselves and wherever they want. How do you understand this?

PM Modi: This is not a women's issue. Should political parties empty their coffers to win elections? Do I have the right to loot the treasury? I have rights to make plans /schemes for empowerment, but is it correct if I waste money for the sake of election. Is it appropriate? And we have examples of the countries in the world where this has happened. Now see what happens. You build a metro in a city. And to win the election in the same city, you say that you will give women free ride in the bus. That means you are taken away fifty percent of your metro passengers. So metro will be viable. Now the metro will be built in the future. The concern is that it will not be built, no one discusses this concern with this understanding. Now we also get into political arguments. I am not doing that. I will talk about what happened because of this. You have messed with traffic and environment too. You have made it free and here you emptied the metro as well. Now how will the metro move forward? How will the country move forward?

Rahul Kanwal: If we step out of politics for a minute and talk about global order, the eyes of

the world are on India and its elections. At this time, the fight between Russia and Iran is going on. It is not coming to an end. The fight between Israel and Hamas is going on. Tension with Iran is increasing. In the last five years, India's comprehensive national power has grown a lot. India has moved from the number eleven economy to the number five. What do you think will be India's role at the global high table in the next five years?

PM Modi: Why do we see things in this way? What is the basic thing? Till now what we used to think, what was our narrative? We are so far away from this, we are so far away from that. That is, seeing us maintaining equal distance, it used to be used in diplomatic language. I said nothing to do. My language is how close we are. So the world is competing how to how to come closer, before staying away. When it changed, everyone is competing to come closer. Now see, yesterday a very big decision of mine was made in Iran. It is the headline of India. It is all over the TV media for 24 hours. And my minister was out yesterday. He was in Iran, my final agreement of Chabahar port was done, and it is a very big work which has been done. But now I don't know what happens here, if the Chabahar agreement is signed

in the middle of all these fights. Secondly, we will not make our decisions on the basis of any party or the second or the third party. We will make decisions for ourselves. If I feel bad, or what if you will not like it. I will talk to everyone. If President Putin praises me a lot, it does not mean that I cannot meet President Putin and tell him that it is not the time for war, then he will also respect me. I have at least one friend who tells me clearly that this is right, this is wrong. Ukraine also has the same trust in me, on India. That India will say the correct thing and till now we just said what is correct till date.

It was the month of Ramadan in Gaza, so I sent my special envoy to Israel and asked to convey and explain the Prime Minister that at least do not carry out bombing in Gaza during Ramadan. And they made every effort to follow it. In the end, there was a fight for two-three days. But I had sent a special envoy.

Here you keep on cornering me on the Muslims issue but, I didn't publicize it. Some others (COUNTRIES) have also tried and they may have got the results too. I have also tried., I went to Israel but what was the fashion before? Go to Israel, Go to Palestine. Do secularism and come back. But I said nothing will do. I went to Israel, I

will come back. I do not need to pretend, if I went to Israel. When I got to Palestine, it will be a standalone visit. I did not go before, see the fun, when I went this time, I was to be taken from here to the places where helicopters would take me further, and then the President of Jordan came to Know that I am not going to go over the Jordan.. Now he is the Prime Minister directly from Mohammed Saheb. He is his direct heir. He said, Modi Ji you cannot go like this. You are my guest and will use my helicopter. I have gone to his home for dinner, but helicopter was of Jordan, destination Palestine and I was escorted by Israeli flight. You see, in the world, all three are different but for Modi all are together in the sky. I believe that all this happens when your intentions are good. If I need Oil from Russia for my country , I will take it and I don't hide it either. it is not done secretly, I tell America by telling them, , my country needs petrol at cheap rates., so I don't hide it and I follow the rules of my country in my time.

Sudhir Chaudhary: Sir, you are not only the most popular leader of India, but now you are the most popular leader of the world as well. And to remain on top, as they say in English, always stays on top, and to remain on top has its own pressure. Do you ever feel that pressure? When

you discuss about exams, you tell the children how to keep stress away. Do we ever feel such pressure with you as well?

PM Modi: yes. What happens is that your problem is that you have lived in that world. You have grown up so you have examples for everything from that world. I am not a person of that world, you should consider me a different case. Whatever things you see in practical life, I am above that. And hence there is nothing in my life, whether Modi is sitting here or Modi has become a leader or India has become I am probably the means. And hence please and I am indifferent, nonchalant v. Nothing to do with it.

Sudhir Chaudhary: You think like a sanyasi

PM Modi: I am again a human being. I am indifferent, nonchalant. I have nothing to do with it.

Rahul Kanwal: Prime Minister ji, all the people who are watching this interview till date will agree with me. It was a very solid interview. Meaning, all the difficult questions that could have been asked to you were asked to you.

PM Modi: I have a complaint with you all, these difficult words are not yours. One ecosystem

has kept you afraid and scared. And you are sitting like a coward. You are roaming around with the question to set their agenda. You may feel bad if I tell the truth that all of you are living under pressure and I agree that when I also go then at least I ask the journalists about their wellbeing etc. I don't indulge in conversation of serious nature. (Serious sawal jawab nahi karta hun, sirf puchta hun) I ask them, but there is something else lying in their hearts. Their experiences are something else. But these ecosystem has raised some question answer in a way that you are not a journalist or neutral until you ask them. I also have to get you out of this problem. And I am working on it.

Rahul Kanwal: you were the Chief Minister of Gujarat. Many times we got your interview? Now that you have become the Prime Minister, you don't do the press conference and vwe get very opportunity to interview you. People ask now when modiji can answer all question why doesn't he hold press conference. So why don't you do it?

PM Modi: First thing is that if maximum people watch me in this election, they will watch me on AajTak. I have never refused to do it. Second thing is that mostly media has been used

here and a culture has been formed. That, don't do anything, just handle them and tell your point, it will work in the country. I don't want to go on that path.

I have to work hard. I want to go to the poor's house. I can also cut ribbons and get my photo taken in Vigyan Bhavan. I don't do that. I go to a small district of Jharkhand and work for a small scheme. I have brought a new work culture. If that culture feels right, then the media should present it correctly, if not, then they don't. Second thing is that I am answerable to the parliament. I am ready to answer all questions.

The third thing I want to say is that media today is not what it was before because earlier I used to talk to AajTak but now the viewer's know who I am talking to, Rahul? Rahul tweeted this day before yesterday. Meaning, he writes in Modi's name. Meaning, he will talk about the same thing. So today media is not a separate entity.

Like many others, you have also made your views known to people, so that situation has not arisen for you. Earlier media was a faceless, it had no face. Who writes in media, what are the views of the writer? People used to believe that its

analysis, but today the situation is not the same. Third thing is that earlier communication was their only source, you could not go without media. Today if you want to talk to the public, communication is two way. Today public can also make its voice known without media. Even a person who has to answer can express his views well without media. Thirdly, when I was in Gujarat, I used to have public meetings. So in public meetings I used to ask. I used to try like this, then I would ask why you have made such a program. No black flags are visible. Hey, keep two-three people with black flags, then it will be published tomorrow. Modi ji had come here. If ten people showed black flags, then at least it will be known THAT Modi ji had come. Who will ask about my meeting without black flags? I gave such speeches for ten years? I had a daily programme in Gujarat. One day people from a village came to meet me. They came to thanked me. They said that our village now has 24 hour electricity. Then anyone was allowed entry to my place on Tuesday. At my place in Gujarat, I said that its not possible to have 24 hour electricity as I didn't not read the news anywhere. I said you are lying, there cannot be 24 hour electricity, tell me sir, I said I have not

read in any newspaper that it has been 24 hours in your place, it neither came on the radio nor on the TV nor in the newspaper. No, he said sir, the radio and the newspaper people will not tell you. It has been 24 hours, it has happened. Then I said lets have sweets.

Sudhir Chaudhary: I will remember your one liners.

Anjana Om Kashyap: how do you want to leave your legacy

PM Modi: I was asked a question few years back in UK. I AM SURPRISED why a person who is living for the country think about himself would. I believe that I don't work for anyone to remember me in history. If anyone remembers me, then remember the democracy that happened in my Kashmir`s voting of 40% after forty years. People should celebrate democracy festival. If People wants to remember India`s role in G 20, they can remember that. Some can also remember that My India is going to become the 3rd economy in the world. People like me will come and go.

Anjana Om Kashyap: Prime Minister Narendra Modi says that he does not discriminate on the basis of religion, but he will not allow

reservation on the basis of religion. And when there is politics of appeasement, he will not hesitate to say anything against the opposition,. Thank you very much Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, you took a lot of time to give us this interview amidst your busy schedule.

PM Modi: thanks a lot

“I have my own philosophy in governance, I call it 'P2G2- Pro People Good Governance’’: PM Modi

PM Modi's Interview to NDTV

May 19, 2024



In an interview to NDTV, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke on a range of subjects. He gave 'Four-S' mantra for the country to achieve big targets. "The scope should be very big, it shouldn't be in parts, and the second thing is scale, which should also be large. The speed should be in sync with these two. So, scope, scale and speed, and then there should be skill. If we can get these four things together, I believe, we achieve a lot," the PM said.

Sanjay Pugalia: A special welcome to NDTV viewers. We have brought this extremely special meeting with India's Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for you. Sir, you took time out from your busy schedule for us, thank you for that.

PM Modi: Namaskar Sanjay ji and Namaskar to all the viewers of NDTV.

Sanjay Pugalia: Sir, now we have become a big network of six channels and seven digital platforms. We recently launched NDTV Marathi and there's a business channel too. We are now emerging as a new network. We will use this opportunity to distill the things you have said so far. So, my first question to you would be that you said two things, one in Ayodhya that now the foundation of 1000 years is being laid and that a 100 year agenda is being made which will be reflected in the third chapter of the Modi era and you keep talking about 2047. What is going to be your biggest focus this time in governance?

PM Modi: "I don't think in bits and pieces. I have a very comprehensive and integrated approach. Secondly, I don't have the habit of working for media attention. I think in every nation's life, there are some turning points. If we spot them, it can be very beneficial. In personal life

as well, we celebrate birthdays because it excites us and marks something new. Similarly, when we were celebrating 75 years of independence, for me, it was not limited to the 75th year, I was thinking about 100 years of independence. Every institute I went to, I asked what will you do when our country turns 100 years old. I went to an event at RBI where they were celebrating 90 years. I asked what they will do for 100 years of RBI and when the country turns 100 years old, I mean 100 years of independence.

Keeping in mind the next 25 years, keeping in mind 2047, we did a lot of brainstorming, we took inputs from lakhs of people. I received some 15-20 lakhs suggestions from the youth. We have done a very big exercise, a mega brainstorming. I have been doing this exercise for so long that some officers who were a part of it have retired. We have taken suggestions from ministers, secretaries and experts. I have segregated that too into 25 years, 5 years, 1 year and 100 days in a stage-wise manner. There'll be additions to it, we might have to drop a thing or two too, but we have a big picture with us. We have added 25 days to this plan because I have seen that the youth is very excited and if we channel that excitement, we can get extra benefit and that's why, I have added 25 days to 100 days.

We have launched 'MYBharat'. In the coming days, I want to focus on how to connect the youth, how to instill a habit of dreaming big in them, and how to bring a change in their habit to make big dreams come true. I believe these efforts will bring results.

I take Virasat (heritage) and Vikas (development) together. I said this from the Red Fort too and I am saying this again today. There have been incidents which compelled us to live in a distracted manner in the last 1000 years. What's happening now will take India towards a brighter future for the coming 1000 years. In my mind, it is clear that this is our time, this is India's time and we must not lose the opportunity.

Sanjay Pugalia: You are absolutely right and about your building blocks in this direction, one thing that emerged was the work on infrastructure. Over 60 percent more bridges and highways have been built. Airports have doubled and people are traveling a lot. In fact, despite everything being built so fast, it still feels less. So, do you see it as incremental growth now or is there a new focus in your mind in this also?

PM Modi: After independence, we compared ourselves with the countries that became independent at the same time as us. We wonder

how they have progressed so much and why are we behind. Secondly, we made poverty a virtue. We didn't think big, we didn't think ahead - maybe due to the burden of slavery or maybe because people were not in that mood. I believe infrastructure has been misused a lot in our country.

Earlier it meant the bigger the project, the more the 'malai' (cream - a metaphor for corruption). So, the 'malai' factor got stuck with the infrastructure and that destroyed the country. For years, I saw infrastructure either on paper or on the foundation stones. When I came, I started a regular programme, PRAGATI, and I started reviewing the projects.

Regarding bureaucracy, Sardar Sahib (Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel) made some efforts and had he lived long enough our government machinery would have been better. But that didn't happen. The government officer should know what is the purpose of his job. It cannot be limited to the next promotion or when I will get a better department. So, our work is on how to bring technology into government for human resource development.

Even in infrastructure, there's physical infrastructure, social infrastructure, and technological infrastructure. There is one more

thing in my mind. Firstly, the scope should be very big, it shouldn't be in parts, and the second thing is scale, which should also be large. The speed should be in sync with these two. So, scope, scale and speed, and then there should be skill. If we can get these four things together, I believe we will achieve a lot. In my endeavour, I try to not let any scope go, be it skill, scale or speed.

We saw the need for this in the cabinet. Earlier, it took three months to prepare the cabinet note. I asked them to tell me what are hindrances. Slowly and gradually, I have brought that period to about 30 days. Maybe I will reduce it further in the coming days. To me, speed does not mean the speed of construction, there should also be speed in the decision-making processes as well. I concentrate on all these aspects.

Very few people will pay attention to this thing, And I believe you can do a full program about this on your channel - 'Gati Shakti'. The world talks about our digital infrastructure but not much is said about our Gati Shakti. Be it any infrastructure project in India, we need to reduce logistics spending and increase logistic support. Gati Shakti is one such platform. When I first launched it, the chief secretaries of the states were very happy. The data that is there in our Gati Shakti

platform, there are 1,600 layers to them. It's a unique thing. It helps in infrastructure development. I feel we are progressing with speed.

Now UPI. This is a big thing in the fintech world. I think we are spending 10 or 12 lakh crore to strengthen the infrastructure sector. That's a big jump in spending from the earlier government's ₹ 2 lakh crore.

In the railway, we are working towards modernising the railways. Unmanned crossings have been reduced to almost zero. Look at the improvement in the cleanliness of the railway stations. We pay attention to details. We have achieved nearly 100 percent electrification. Then, the use of railway tracks. Earlier, there were either goods or passenger trains. I have added yatri (tourism) trains to that. For example, the Ramayana sector trains- once a passenger goes in, he can avail all the facilities, and undertake the entire journey of 18-20 days. A lot has been done for senior citizens- trains of Dwadashjyotirlinga circuit, Buddha circuit are running. I mean, you can't just build infrastructure and leave it at that. We plan for its optimum utilisation simultaneously too. We are working in that direction.

Sanjay Pugalia: You have already made many changes in bureaucracy. You also cited Sardar Patel. So, I think to accomplish all this work, you are going to have to make bureaucratic changes in the governance structure on a large scale.

PM Modi: The first thing is that training is the biggest thing, recruitment process is a very big thing, and I have given a lot of emphasis to this. We have brought about a big change in training institutions. And we are giving technology a lot of focus. Now in recruitment too, I have finished the lower-level interviews in bureaucracy. It had become a den of corruption. The poor man was being looted. Now the computer decides on the basis of merit. Time is also saved. It's possible that 2-3% of people who the system would have been better off without will also come. But due to dishonesty, this percentage becomes 15%.

There is another thing. Nowadays, there is an important thing in my cabinet, whenever any bill of my Parliament comes, a note of global standards comes along with it. In the world, which country is doing best in that field? What are its legal rules? If we want to achieve that then how should we do it? That means now every cabinet note of mine has to match the global standard. And

because of this, it got into the habit of bureaucracy. I am not one to talk about what is best in the world, tell me how far away we are from it. What is our plan to get there?

India has approximately 1,300 islands. I was surprised to know that we did not have a record or survey of these islands. With the help of space technology, we surveyed them and some islands are the same size as Singapore. It means for India, building new Singapores is not difficult if put our mind to it. That is, change in bureaucracy, change in decision making, we are working to execute the big plans.

Sanjay Pugalia: The Singapore example is very interesting. Then it would not be wrong to guess that, now we are talking about infrastructure or development, so something will happen very soon which perhaps we are not even able to think about right now.

PM Modi: We are actively promoting the vision of a digital embassy. We are witnessing a digital revolution in the country. It's the biggest tool to empower the poor and bridge the inequality gap. Therefore, the digital revolution will play a big role in bringing change. I believe India will lead the world in the field of Artificial Intelligence

and we have that talent, our youth can do so much. Also, there is power in data because of India's diversity.

I recently met gaming content creators. I asked them how online gaming is trending in India, and they said the internet is very cheap in India while it's expensive in the rest of the world. They told me if they go to the world's gaming competitions, it is so expensive. When people from outside come to India, they are surprised.

Because of this, a new industry is blossoming in India. Today everything is accessible online. There are over 5 lakh common service centres in India, which means every small village has one and big villages have 1-2 common service centres giving access to people even in the rural area. Nowadays, if even a common man has to make a railway reservation, he gets it done from the common service centre in his village itself. These citizen centric arrangements have been made.

I have my own philosophy in governance, I call it 'P2G2- Pro People Good Governance'. I met Nobel Prize winner Professor Paul Romer in New York, we discussed technology and he suggested that we need software for keeping documents and I

showed him Digi Locker (a government to keep digitised versions of documents) on my phone. He was surprised by it and said India has excelled in digital infrastructure even more than the world thinks. You must have seen it in G20 also. There was a discussion in the whole world about India's digital development during the G20.

Sanjay Pugalia: You are absolutely right about the public digital infrastructure India has created. Countries around the world are trying to copy from us. And let me tell you my own experience. Nowadays, if you want to give cash to small entrepreneurs, then nine out of ten people refuse that they will not take cash. This is a big change.

PM Modi: Look, these are street vendors. The banks did not give him money. Due to digital infrastructure, they got loans from banks. Their money gets deposited with us only. Every street vendor has a QR code and they trust it. If they're not well-read, now there's an audio system which tells them their money has been deposited. So they have faith in the system.

Sanjay Pugalia: The success of PLI in shifting people from agriculture to manufacturing was very good in many sectors. But we feel that a

lot of work needs to be done so that people can now produce in India. iPhone is an example and there is a need to extrapolate it. What do you think about this?

PM Modi: People who have studied Baba Saheb Ambedkar, they would know that he used to say Industrial revolution is very important in this country. The politicians of our country have ignored it. But Baba Saheb Ambedkar said that because the Dalit and tribals of our country are not the land owners, they cannot do anything in agriculture. It is very important for them to be a part of the industrial revolution.

And that is why I believe we need to reduce the burden on agriculture. There is a lot of burden on agriculture today. There is a need to reduce that and any law won't do that, diversification will. Diversification happens when you decentralize industrial networks. Like if there are two sons, one son will go to work in the industry and the other son will take care of farming, then the burden on farming will be reduced. So, to make agriculture viable and strong, industrial development is necessary.

The more we grow the industry that evaluates agriculture, it has direct benefit,

otherwise if we move towards diversification, it is also beneficial. In my experience of Gujarat, it is a state which does not have any minerals of its own. Gujarat has nothing except salt at best. At such time, Gujarat became a trading state. Firstly, we were poor in agriculture for seven out of ten years. We would take something from someone and give it to someone else and that's how we survived. Out of that came a revolution, in agriculture and in industry. That experience of mine is very useful to me here.

We should 'cluster develop' our industry. I have a small scheme called 'one district one product'. This scheme is becoming an identity of districts and there's value addition and technological addition happening as well.

There is a lot of potential for the automobile industry in India. We have opened up a lot of space for electric vehicles. I saw so many startups coming up in this space and all these startups are leading technology.

We were mobile phone importers, today, we have become the world's second largest manufacturer of mobile phones. We are exporting iPhone across the world today. One in seven iPhones in the world is manufactured here.

Today, eight out of ten diamonds in the world pass through the hands of an Indian. The next stage of the diamond industry is 'green diamond', of lab grown diamond. A very big market is opening in the world. This started when I was in Gujarat and now it's spreading. In the coming days we will progress in this also.

We will bring semiconductor chips in a few days and I believe that we can become a hub in the chip business related to transportation.

We are working very fast in defense manufacturing. Defense production worth about one lakh crore rupees has started in my country today. We have exported defense products worth about 21 thousand crores. We used to bring every small thing from outside. Now, our entrepreneurs also feel we can manufacture things and the world is buying from us. Let me tell you, India is on the take off stage in the industrial revolution.

Sanjay Pugalia: You are absolutely right that India is on the take off stage and because of the innovations you have made, now there is a lot of curiosity and interest among global investors to invest in India. But they think that some bold decisions will be necessary from your side and from the new government so that their investment

can come and can make disruptions of scale that you have only imagined.

PM Modi: When people from industry come to India, they do not just look at the central government. There should be uniformity in policies at both state and local self- government level.

Suppose the Indian government brings a policy and a foreign industry comes to us. The Government of India does not have land, what will it do, it will tell some state to look into it. Now, the policies of that state must also align with that industry's requirements. Then the laws of the village or city where that industry is going to build should also be favourable. So, my intention behind the movement of ease of doing business was that the policies of the central government, state government and local governments, all three should be favorable for development.

There are still some hurdles but now I am seeing a competition among states. I always believed that federalism should be 'competitive cooperative federalism', there should be a healthy competition between the states. Now gradually. I can see that competition in every state. They are bettering their rules and mobilizing the bureaucracy. If I get the support of the states, then I

believe that no person in the world will go anywhere except India.

Sanjay Pugalía: Yes, that is very important. Now, another thing is you have an image that you are very strict in terms of fiscal discipline. But nowadays there is competition for guarantees, you double down on making people happy for ease of living. So, some investors fear what will happen to fiscal discipline.

PM Modi: Nobody has any confusion regarding me. The people who have seen my work in Gujarat, they know I am a big believer of fiscal discipline. No nation can function without this discipline, it's one of the criteria. When I introduced the budget before elections, every media article speculated that this would be an election-driven budget, Modi will distribute revdi (freebies) but when the budget came, people were surprised that this is not an election budget at all.

Sanjay Pugalía: You had fiscal space available to spend but you didn't.

PM Modi: I decided to spend on development because I know that I want to make the country poverty-free. I have to empower the poor, I have to give them opportunities. The poor

do not want to live in poverty, they want to get out of that, but they need someone to give them a hand.

Now see, when the UPA government was there, they did not acknowledge the fiscal deficit, and its side effects were big. I believe the fiscal deficit should be followed religiously. Inflation is increasing in the world, people are wondering what has happened. During Covid, everyone thought of printing and distributing money. But inflation was still there. So, we controlled the fiscal deficit.

Another thing I've observed is that as you reduce taxation, your revenue increases. You'll see, the number of people paying income tax is almost doubling. There are many registrations for GST, so there's no deficit of trust in the government. Secondly, there's the topic of welfare. I consider welfare to be a very important part of India's social infrastructure. If we target welfare schemes and integrate them with the quality of life, they become assets. You must have noticed that in every task I undertake, welfare schemes ensure a guarantee to better people's quality of life. If one develops a habit of living a good life, they themselves make efforts for that. So, the essence of my welfare scheme is this.

Now, I give free ration but I put emphasis on nutrition. I want healthy children for my country, a healthy childhood is what will secure a healthy future for my nation.

Sanjay Pugalía: Yes, this is very important. The focus on nutrition and protein.

PM Modi: Now look at Capex (capital expenditure) also. Earlier, it was around rupees two lakh crore. We have reached around 11-12 lakh crores. How many people have got employment opportunities due to this. How many new people have come to work in the field.

Sanjay Pugalía: I don't want to ask you a question on behalf of bookies at all, sir. But the thing is that nowadays a lot of youngsters are also interested in investing. And my own opinion is that this time, the market had already understood the outcome of the election and moved up very fast. Right now there is nervousness in the market as to what the mandate will be, so what would be your comment on that?

PM Modi: See, if I say something, people will think I am trying to influence. Our government has done maximum economic reforms and pro entrepreneurship policies give a lot of boost to our economy. We started the journey at twenty five

thousand and have reached seventy five thousand. This in itself is a big achievement and also improves our image in the world.

Secondly, as more and more common citizens invest, it gives a lot of strength to the economy. I believe citizens should have some risk-taking capacity as they become more experienced investors. There is no point in living a life where you're just thinking what to do.

As you said on June 4, when the results of the elections will come, you will see that all those programming for India's stock market will get tired.

See where the share of PSU companies has reached. Earlier, PSU meant it was going to fall.

Sanjay Pugalia: Yes, this miracle has happened. Now if you go to withdraw from PSU...

PM Modi: Its value is increasing in the stock market, a lot. Now, look at HAL. They (Opposition) tried to create fear among workers, but look how well HAL is doing. Today, HAL has made record profit in the fourth quarter of four thousand crores. That has never happened in the history of HAL. This is a sign of big progress.

Sanjay Pugalia: Now moving from economic governance to politics and raising the

issue of employment, the opposition alleges that employment has not been created. So has employment not been created or has its form changed?

PM Modi: First thing is that so much work is not possible without manpower. Just money can't build roads, just money can't do electrification of railways. There is a need for manpower. This means that employment opportunities are created and there is no issue or truth in the opposition's allegations about unemployment. I believe that these dynastic parties have no understanding of how the youth of this country has changed. Take startups for example. Before 2014, there were some hundreds of startups, now there are 1.25 lakh startups. This means that every startup gives employment to five to seven bright youngsters for years. Today there are a hundred unicorns, which means a business of about eight lakh crore rupees. And people running these are 20 to 25-year-olds, our sons and daughters.

Now, in the gaming field, you see, India is leading the world. All the 20 to 22-year-olds are going to do it. We have pivoted from the entertainment economy to the creative economy. I firmly believe that our creators will be a strong

presence in the global market. That is, green jobs are becoming a huge opportunity.

Now, in the aviation sector, we had about 70 airports in our country. Today, there are around 150 airports. The total number of airplanes in our country, I guess, is six hundred to seven hundred, including private and government. Today, there is an order for one thousand new airplanes. One can only imagine how many people will get employment with this. That is why, this narrative..., in the political field, people are walking the same old path as they did 30 years ago, they have not changed, they are still humming the same tune.

Now, the records of PLFS (Periodic Labour Force Survey), according to the data of PLFS, it says that unemployment has been reduced by half. This is authentic data. Six crore new jobs have been generated in six to seven years, as per PLFS data. EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) also keeps a record of this, it's not mere speculation. Over six crore new officers have already been registered in seven years.

I had launched a huge campaign for government jobs which included millions of people. These people (opposition) used to shout at me about unemployment. Now, a very interesting

report has come out. It says that in the last ten years, every year, five crore jobs have been generated. And they have taken 22 factors into account in the parameter group, calculating how many jobs are needed per year. They have derived these figures based on that. These are derived from academic research. It's not just on paper; these things are visible on the ground. I'm talking about those non-governmental organizations with different arrangements.

Sanjay Pugalia: It is important that you mentioned that labour force participation has increased. Sir, this is the first election which is actually quite boring, it is the most historic election in which the mandate is already known. Still, we debate a lot about who will get how many seats. Regarding South India and East India, you have expressed confidence that BJP will get success this time. Are you not overconfident about South India and East India?

PM Modi: First thing is, even when I am confident, I never express it. I don't live in overconfidence. I'm a person who has his ear to the ground. I may think big, I may dream far, but I remain grounded. Whether it's South India, East

India, North India, West India, or Central India, it is rooted in the nation's mind this is the government that works, a government that leads the country forward, a government that does good for us, it understands our problems, it's a government that knows our pain even when the citizen is unaware of it. Who is considered a good doctor? You feel that a doctor is good when if you go to him for a stomach ache, he will know there's something wrong with your eye too, some who knows what's going on. Today, the country feels that there is a government that cares about our sorrows, it understands our dreams and always strives to enhance our capabilities and because of this, I believe that in the minds of ordinary people, the Bharatiya Janata Party has made a place.

There was a time when from Pashupati to Tirupati, it was known as the red corridor. That entire Naxal belt had been created. Today, gradually, it has vanished. People have started living in peace. How much joy it brings to a mother that her child will go in the right direction. Even if she has lived in a jungle, she knows that there is someone who worries about the future of her children. Today, look across every corner of India - North East, Bengal, Assam, Odisha, Telugu-speaking states, Karnataka. The Bharatiya Janata

Party is progressing rapidly. Now, in Jammu and Kashmir voters are going to vote after 40 years. There is trust in the government. And that's why I say that in this election, the Bharatiya Janata Party is going to set a historic record. It's going to be historic.

Sanjay Pugalia: In the Opposition alliance, there are contradictions emerging. Mamata Banerjee said that she won't be part of the alliance, then she said that if the government is formed, she will support the government from outside. We don't know what Akhilesh Yadav's position is. In such a situation, the issue of a stable or an unstable government arises. The voter also thinks about how to make a decisive vote based on which issue. So, what is your opinion on the condition of the Opposition, which guarantees to save democracy?

PM Modi: It is such a big country. Do you know whom you want to give your vote to? Their name, their experience? The nation sees everything. Whether the party names the person or not, the voters assess them. The scales are heavily tilted in our favour. I don't have to say anything about that. We have the upper hand. And everyone knows it

Secondly, tell me about the INDI Alliance. Besides photo ops, does the alliance show any activity? Even in the photo ops, the faces seen in the first INDI Alliance meeting have disappeared, the quality has reduced. Any person now goes there, gets a photo taken and leaves. Is there any common agenda? Is there any campaign strategy? There is nothing. Everyone is playing their own game, so the country cannot trust them. Secondly, the most trusted ally of Congress, the Left, who has the commitment of removing BJP from power, the biggest commitment, they contested against the Congress in Kerala. And the indecent language used in Kerala elections has never been heard in any election in the country so far. The kind of things that have been said against Congress. I'm talking about the people of the INDI Alliance. Also, most of the leaders of INDI Alliance are on bail and they are on bail for their own cases of their own era, not ours. The third thing is if you put them all together, it's clear that someone is someone's son or someone is someone's father, meaning it's clear that they are trying to revive the alliance to ensure the future of their children. You can't see the future of the country's children there and I don't believe they can win the trust of the people of the country.

Also, our government's track record over the past decade is evident, whether it's our work against terrorism, efforts in ensuring security, developmental initiatives, or our foreign policy during crises. I understand that the people of the country observe all these aspects and assess them. Therefore, the common sentiment among the people is that India should progress significantly. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) are trusted organizations with trusted leadership, whom the people know, have tried, and measured. Hence, supporting us feels natural and not risky.

Sanjay Pugalia: Yes, what you said there is correct. The positive atmosphere provides a lot of comfort and the momentum is on your side. In this regard, there are two more questions that the Opposition raises. The first one is you talk against appeasement but you have also played the communal card.

PM Modi: They have been running their politics by saying this over and over again. And sometimes we also thought that we should be careful. But when I look at everything and analyze it, I have observed that apart from disrespecting the

constitution, they have not done anything. The constitution talks about the possibility of universal development. These people are deeply communal, the basis of everything they do is communal. And there is vote bank politics even within that. When they try to go beyond this, they talk of caste. That is, on one hand, they cater to the vote-bank of the community, then they talk of caste, this is the game they are playing. Now, even if I get labeled as communal, then let it be, but I will expose their sins openly.

My rule is 'sab ka saath sabka vikas'. In a village, if 100 homes are to be given to beneficiaries, then their caste, community is not taken into consideration. My plan is saturation. For me, 100 percent means 100 percent. When I say 100 percent, that's true social justice, that's true secularism. There is no room for complaint for anyone, and there is trust. People believe that if someone has gotten benefits in June, then by December, my turn will come without paying anyone anything. Because of this, there is trust in the governance.

The Opposition's approach is that they don't want to do anything for everyone. I have given free ration to 80 crore people. I could also say that I'll give benefits selectively but I won't do that because

my mantra is "sab ka saath sab ka vikas". They have their eyes on SC, ST, OBC reservation for vote bank politics. That's where their focus is. They are supporting 'vote jihad'. All these things are being done under the guise of secularism but I have to expose this facade of fake secularism in front of the country and show that they are extremely communal people and they will destroy the country for the sake of their power, they can destroy your every dream.

Now, you see their courage. In their manifesto, they say contracts will be given based on religion. If someone has to build a bridge, their expertise, experience, resources, and technical manpower should be taken into consideration. Now, if you give contracts like this, what kind of bridge will be built, what will happen to my country?

Sanjay Pungalila: The Opposition expresses another concern, which is that you are aiming for 400 seats because you want to change the constitution.

PM Modi: The first thing is, under the leadership of the Bharatiya Janata Party, NDA already had 400 seats between 2019-2024. When we won, we had 360 seats and with NDA, we have

maintained 400 seats from 2019-2024. So linking 400 seats and the Constitution is stupidity. The issue is they don't want the House to function.

They talk about the Constitution. I ask, what happened to the Congress's Constitution? Does this (Gandhi) family accept Congress's Constitution? (Purushottam Das) Tandon became Congress president (in 1950) as per the Constitution. But (Jawaharlal) Nehruji did not accept this. Nehruji did drama, he said he would not be part of the working committee. Eventually, the Congress had to remove its elected national president to make this family happy.

Sitaram Kesari, he was Congress's president as per the constitution. He was locked in the bathroom, thrown out overnight and Soniaji became Congress president. I want to know, the way they seize control of the Congress Party, how many of the current office bearers of the Congress became members of the party according to their constitution?

Sanjay Pugalia: Sir, now that you have mentioned Kesari ji, it would be appropriate to give a disclaimer that I was present there when he was chased away.

PM Modi: Tell me, do they have the right to talk about the Constitution? What did they do with the constitution? I say, the first constitution ever made has a soul, and both the spirit and the words of that constitution matter. The creators of the constitution were wise. They thought that whatever is being written is for the present and the future. But we have a glorious past, what will we do about that? Then the constitution will become very big. So, they added pictures to the constitution. All the pictures depicted India's thousands of years of heritage, whether it's the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, or Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, everything was there. What was the first thing Pandit Nehru did? He threw the first draft of the constitution and later, the constitution that was printed, he cut out all these pictures and started the post-August 15 India, to glorify his family.

First, they attacked the Constitution's body then they attacked its spirit. In the first amendment to the Constitution, Pandit Nehru snipped the freedom of expression. This was the first blow to the soul of the Constitution. Then they (Congress) attacked the thought behind the Constitution. By misusing Article 356, they toppled governments a hundred times. They brought Emergency, put the Constitution into the dustbin. First Nehru ji

committed this sin, then Indira ji and then Rajiv ji came. Rajiv ji was bringing a law to control the media, meaning he was trying to change the Constitution for the sake of vote bank politics. He threw away the Supreme Court's Shah Bano judgment and amended the Constitution for vote bank politics. Once again, there was a media uproar like during the emergency so he couldn't pass that bill. Then comes their prince (Rahul Gandhi). He is nothing but an MP. He tore up the decisions of the cabinet during a press conference. They talk about the Constitution. Those who are in jail for fodder theft, who are out on bail on health grounds, they talk about the constitution. When the Women's Reservation Bill was introduced, they snatched the copy of the bill inside Parliament and tore it. It was the last day of Parliament. Those who grossly disrespected the constitution are now dancing with it. They are lying.

Sanjay Pugalia: India has done amazing work under your leadership in a way that the world has changed completely. Those who thought they ran the world are being defensive. India has come up with an independent and aggressive policy. It is obvious that you have big plans regarding this also, but there are challenges we face in managing relations with our neighbouring countries.

PM Modi: In the world, there is no task which doesn't have challenges. The basis of our foreign policy has been 'neighborhood first', 'Act East Policy'. Earlier, the basis of our foreign policy was about maintaining distances. Now, we see who is close to us, and thus, we have established a place with the world. And there is competition even in the neighbourhood too. Our effort is to move forward with everyone.

Sanjay Pugalia: I wanted to ask you a question for a long time. Many policy makers, leaders and politicians are amazed by you, how do you prepare these policies, design them? I feel that you are a rare self-taught leader and the biggest role in that is of your journey of 50-55 years. You have actually undertaken a lot of physical journeys. You have travelled a lot. How much has travel shaped you?

PM Modi: Your assessment is correct. I have been a wanderer. I have travelled through more than 90 percent of districts of India. This was before I entered politics. I have travelled by train without reservations. I have travelled in general compartments, travelled in trucks. So, I have been connected with the ground realities of the world and that's a major experience for me today. Secondly, in our country, most Prime Ministers

have emerged from the alleys of Delhi. There are very few Prime Ministers who have worked within the state governments. Those who have, have done so for a very short time. I am a person who has been the Chief Minister of a progressive state for a long time. So, I am familiar with public aspirations. I know where the conflicts between public aspirations and government lie. So, I have a treasure trove of experience. Also, I consider myself a student throughout my life. So, I try to learn from the academic world, what they think. I want to learn from those who have bureaucratic experience. For example, when I make the budget, if it's about infrastructure, I do a workshop on that. If it's on farmers, I do a workshop. So, I get new ideas from that. I do this both before and after the budget. I am an open-minded person.

I visited Japan a few years ago. I was the Chief Minister (of Gujarat) then. I had some time, so I decided to explore the area on foot. I noticed something on the footpath. When I asked around, they told me those were guide paths for visually impaired people. I took pictures of that on my phone. I carried a mobile phone with a camera. As soon as I landed in Ahmedabad, around 10 pm, I called the city commissioner. I asked him to visit me in the morning. Kankaria district's development

work was going on then. When he came, I showed him the photos and asked him to use them in a footpath that was then being made in Kankaria. That was implemented there soon after. So, I always have a mind for learning.

When I formulate policies, all this processing starts simultaneously. I remember when Corona arrived, these Nobel Prize winners would come and pressurize me to print more money and distribute it. Those who now curse the rich now, they used to tell me at that time to give money to the rich, otherwise the economy will suffer, there will be unemployment. I didn't do that at all. I didn't want the poor to go hungry. My first priority was to keep the kitchen of the poor running. Secondly, I wanted to empower the small scale vendors. So, I strengthened them in the direction of credit guarantee. Our small and medium-scale industries kept running, and I knew that if I keep doing this for three months then we will get out of that situation and that happened. While the world is still struggling, we emerged out of it with stability. So, you can't judge my policies from an academic perspective, neither within the scope of experience. Secondly, one thing that helps me a lot in my policies is that whatever I do, I do it for my country. There is no confusion. A person whose no

personal interest is involved can make the right policy. Whether it will benefit my party, whether it will benefit Modi, whether it will benefit any relative of Modi, I don't consider all this. So, my policies are made straightway that benefits me.

Sanjay Pugalia: Sir, my final question stems from this. Many young people in India have this dream, although they don't express it, but they also want to become leaders like PM Modi. So, this rare quality of yours, one of self-taught leadership, and the other, as people who have worked with you say that you're an extraordinarily good listener. What would you say to this youth if they want to become like you? What should they do?

PM Modi: I did something during COVID. I used to conduct video conferences where I requested the young people to do this exercise. I asked them to interview their grandparents, record their stories since they were home and had mobile cameras. I asked them to ask their grandparents what was their school life like? How were weddings in their time? In such small houses, how did they accommodate the wedding guests? How did they manage when there were no facilities. What would happen with that was the youth will understand how their family members live their

lives to reach this point. They will connect with them.

I believe the youth of our country should explore India's developmental journey post-independence with a curious mind. They should understand how things used to run earlier, how the trains carrying coal operated, and how the coal miners manage to work in such intense heat. Every young person trying to understand this journey of the past 75 years will contribute to shaping the journey ahead. They will become stakeholders in the future journey. It will instill leadership qualities in them, make them feel like they are adding value. What our predecessors have done will inspire them. Also, if they walk with the intention of becoming someone, they might be disappointed. However, if they move ahead with the intention of doing something, that will gradually lead to satisfaction and the expansion of satisfaction becomes the expansion of power. It can make them leaders. I want more leaders to emerge in our country, it will benefit the nation.

Sanjay Pugalía: Sir, where you have ended this conversation, we will need another session to carry that forward but we are short on time. Thank You very much.

PM Modi: Thank you and everyone else. I believe that in this festival of democracy, although there is very little time left now, elections are mostly over, but young people should actively participate. Democracy should be celebrated as a festival. Don't think of it like a contract that you have to sign once every five years, but believe that you're playing your part in running the country. It will benefit the country.

“I believe that true secularism is when 100% delivery is done”: PM Modi

PM Modi's Interview to News X

May 21, 2024



In an interview to News X, Prime Minister Modi addressed the issue of toxic language in elections, explained why the Opposition frequently discussed him, and shared his views on job creation. He criticized the Congress' tax plans and appeasement politics.

Rishabh Gulati: A very warm welcome to the viewers of News X and India News. I'm Rishabh Gulati and with me is Aishwarya Sharma of The

Sunday Guardian and Rana Yashwant. In today's special episode, we proudly welcome a renowned 'rashtra sevak', and the Prime Minister of India in this Amrit Kaal, Hon'ble Shri Narendra Modi. Mr Prime Minister, you took the time to speak to us, we are very grateful.

Prime Minister: Namaskar, my warm greetings to all your viewers.

Rishabh Gulati: Mr Prime Minister, the first question that comes to mind is about the Opposition, and it seems that the biggest item on their poll agenda is Narendra Modi. Why, in your opinion, do they talk so much about Narendra Modi?

Prime Minister: To understand why they discuss Narendra Modi, we must first understand the Opposition. To understand them, one can examine the administration between 2004 and 2014.

The Opposition has not been able to play a strong role. Even as the Opposition, the way they are falling apart, they did not play a constructive role of any kind. Despite deep discussions, they haven't been able to bring serious issues to the public attention. They thought that by their antics, taking up space in the media, they would be able to

keep their boat afloat. Even in this election, I have seen that they make fresh attempts every day to acquire media space, be it by making videos, nonsensical statements, or behaving in a way that people don't normally behave. So they do this to acquire space in the media. Now abusing Modi is one such antic, where, if nothing else, they are guaranteed publicity. Even a small-time politician, if he bad-mouths me, will get about an hour of media attention. Perhaps they see Modi as a ladder to climb up in their political career.

Aishwarya Sharma: Mr Prime Minister, the I.N.D.I. alliance is talking about wealth redistribution. Do you think this is possible, and will the voters of the country be influenced by such a scheme?

Prime Minister: You can't examine this in isolation. You must look at their overall thought process. When their (Congress) manifesto was released, I had said the manifesto had the imprint of the Muslim League. There was a statement made by Dr Manmohan Singh... I had attended the meeting in which he said that 'Muslims have the first right to India's resources.' Now when I raised this in public, their media ecosystem raised a storm

saying that 'Modi is lying,'. So two days later, I brought Manmohan Singh's press conference forward and put it in front of them. Then they stopped talking. So this was one example. Now in their Manifesto, they have said that they will give reservation (to Muslims) even when allotting government contracts.

So today, when a bridge is to be built somewhere, what is the criteria for awarding the contract? The company bidding is evaluated based on how resourceful they are, their experience, their capability, their ability to deliver on time, all these things. Now they say that they want to give reservations to the minorities, to the Muslims, in this process as well. It all adds up. Now when they say that they will impose inheritance tax, it means that taxes that go to the government, who will stand to benefit from it? It's the same people that Manmohan Singh ji talked about. If you join the dots, this is the logic that comes from it. How will the country accept this? Secondly, has any developing country in the world indulged in such madness? Today, India needs to work hard to rise above its problems. We have made this attempt and pulled 25 crore people out of poverty. Where there used to be a few hundred start-ups, there are now over 1.25 lakh start-ups, and there are Unicorns.

You must go among the people and work with energy, and that will bring the right result.

Rana Yashwant: Mr Prime Minister, the Ram Mandir has been built in Ayodhya, the consecration of Ram Lalla took place and there was joy among the people. In all this, there is Iqbal Ansari, who has fought the legal battle, and is an important person. He comes, holding a placard that says 'Modika Parivaar'. Today, the minority community identifies with your policies and welfare schemes. Your opinion?

Prime Minister: Since you've brought up Ram Mandir and Iqbal Ansari, I will narrate an incident. Ram Mandir should have been built right after Independence. In all these years, it wasn't built because they (Congress) felt it would affect their vote bank. Attempts were made in the Courts till the very end to stop it. It is a fact that Congress hindered the building of the Ram Mandir. Despite this, when the Supreme Court judgment came through, the Court constituted a trust, and the trust members, let go of all past differences and went to invite the Congress Party members to the consecration ceremony. They rejected the invitation. The same people went to invite Iqbal Ansari. The ironic thing is, that Iqbal Ansari, who fought the Babri Masjid case his entire life,

respected the Supreme Court's verdict and attended the 'Shilanyas' and the 'Pran Prathistha' ceremony as well. This is what I think, as far as Iqbal Ansari is concerned.

Now if you want to talk about secularism, it is my very serious allegation, that for over 75 years, through a very well-crafted conspiracy, a false narrative has been fed to the nation. It has been embedded in the nation from before our birth. Sardar Patel was targeted by this narrative, and maybe, today it may be my turn, tomorrow someone else. Why do they cry out 'secularism' over and over again? It's because they want to divert the world's attention from their communal activities. |

They cry 'thief' over and over when they have defrauded the people, and they do this because they think crying 'thief' will divert the public's attention. This is their ploy. I have called them out in front of everyone, that they are the ones who are communal. India's constitution does not allow you to indulge in such sectarian acts, and I have brought out several such examples, like I mentioned earlier that they called the Muslims the rightful inheritors of India's wealth. I am exposing them. They (Congress) hide behind their politics of appeasement and instead accuse me of being

communal. I am talking about those communal parties that wear the ‘nikab’ of secularism and indulge in hardcore communalism. I find three things common among these people. They are hardcore sectarians, they are extremely casteist, and they are hardcore dynasts. They are so full of these three things that they can’t come out of it.

Rishabh Gulati: Mr Prime Minister, you have spoken about lifting 25 crore people out of poverty. 80 crore poor people are receiving ration – it is necessary now and will be so in the future as well. What do you have to say about how crucial it will be in the future?

Prime Minister: When Manmohan Singh ji was the Prime Minister, news was rife with reports of food grains getting spoilt. So, the Supreme Court asked the government as to why the grains were not being distributed among the poor. Manmohan Singh ji, who was the Prime Minister then, stated on record that they could not distribute the grains and that it was impossible to do it. That is the consequence of his thinking. I faced the same issue, especially during COVID-19. My first goal was to ensure that a stove should be lit in every poor household. So, I started working on it. I have stated this for the next five years as well because in the lives of those who come out of poverty...

For example, one returns home from the hospital. The treatment has been done but precaution is necessary. A doctor advises you to take rest for a particular duration after returning home, tells you what to eat and what to refrain from consuming, and what to take care of. Why? The illness has already been addressed, but if anything is jeopardized then the condition of the person would return to what it was. That is why poor people who escape poverty need handholding. They should not return to that state in any condition. Once they escape poverty, they should be empowered to stand strong. In my understanding, in the next five years, those who have escaped poverty should be able to firmly stand on their feet. Any unfortunate incident in their family, should not push them to poverty again. And only then will the country eradicate poverty.

Aishwarya Sharma: Mr Prime Minister, our country is the youngest country. Under your tenure, 10 lakh government jobs have been filled. Now, the Opposition has vowed to fill 30 lakh government jobs. In your third term, how do you plan to boost employment opportunities for the youth?

Prime Minister: You must have read the SKOCH report that was released. I hope your TV channel studies the SKOCH report in detail and conducts a TV debate on this. They have analysed some 20 to 22 schemes of the government. They have published statistics about how many person-year-hours have been obtained. They have revealed how many hours it takes to build 4 crore houses and how many people it employs. They have published data for about 22 different parameters.

They have stated that 50 crore people have accrued benefits. Secondly, we brought the Mudra Yojana. We give bank loans without any guarantee. We have disbursed loans worth Rs 23 Lakh Crore. 80% of those who have received these loans are first-timers. Some have started their businesses and have employed a few people in this process. Start-ups used to be in the thousands and now they are in lakhs. People have been employed in this process, right? Consider that a 1000-kilometre road is being built and think about how many jobs are created. So, if a 2000-kilometre road is being built more people will be employed, right? Today, road and rail construction has doubled, electrification has doubled, and mobile towers are reaching every corner of India. All this is being created by people

who have received jobs. That is why a lie is being peddled.

What's important is that we must move towards creating jobs for ourselves. The youth in this country are in the mood to do something and be productive and we must help them. We must encourage them. Our Mudra Yojana does exactly that. We also run the SVA Nidhi scheme. There are countless street hawkers, who are poor people. But today, they are taking money from the bank to run their businesses. Due to this, they can save money and expand their business. Earlier, a street hawker would sit on the footpath and now his goal is to buy a lorry. One who would owned a lorry earlier now wishes to provide home delivery services. Their aspirations are rising. This is why I believe that while people receive the benefits of government schemes, which will eventually result in development, we must also focus on several other areas.

Rana Yashwant: Prime Minister, your government works on the principle of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas'. Beneficiaries avail welfare schemes without any discrimination – caste, religion, or community. Yet, the Opposition maintains that Muslims do not accrue the same benefits from these welfare schemes.

Prime Minister: You are the first person from whom I've heard this. The unique aspect of my government, in terms of delivering welfare schemes, has not raised any questions regarding discrimination.

Rana Yashwant: The Opposition has to say this.

Prime Minister: Even the Opposition does not say this. You are the first person from whom I've heard this. I have never heard this from anybody because everyone knows... and Muslims themselves say that they receive all benefits.

The primary reason is that I have two principles. First, 100% saturation. For example, if poor people must be given houses, complete delivery must take place. If 100% delivery is the goal, then where does the scope of discrimination even arise? Whether it is providing gas connections, building toilets, ensuring tap water connections, I believe in 100% delivery. Yes, some people will receive the benefits in January, some in April and some in November, but the scheme will apply to all and 100%. I believe that true secularism is when 100% delivery is done. Social justice is when 100% is done. So, if my mission is

100% saturation... and nobody has made this charge yet. They don't have the courage to say it. I have lived in Gujarat as well, and on this topic, nobody can prop up any charges against me.

Rishabh Gulati: Mr Prime Minister, you have taken out time to sit with us and relay your 'Mann Ki Baat'. Thank you so much. Best of luck for the polls ahead.

Prime Minister: I thank you all. I have been campaigning day and night...

Rana Yashwant: You are constantly on the move. We see you morning until night on the run...

Rishabh Gulati: Today, you had a big rally at 8 in the morning.

Prime Minister: I started my day at 6 am and went to Jagannath Puri temple to offer my prayers. Since then I have been traveling and have at last got time to meet you.

Rana Yashwant: Where ever you go, Jagannath or Kashi, there is a sea of people that comes to greet you. You have experienced it yourself.

Prime Minister: I realise that my responsibilities are now increasing. I also see that the public has taken ownership of elections. Political parties are not fighting the elections. The

public has taken ownership of this election. And the results will be as desired by the public.

Thank you!

“Viksit Bharat is a nation where no one is too small to dream and no dream is too big to achieve” : PM Modi

PM Modi's Interview to The Economic Times

May 22, 2024



Qus: Prime minister, the 2014 Lok Sabha campaign was strongly anchored in the fight against corruption. In 2019, it was the 'labharthi' model reaching every segment of society, besides the national security imperative that took centre stage. The 2024 Lok Sabha election campaign was expected to be pitched on 'vikas' and 'Viksit Bharat'.

But it seems to have turned communal and polarising, your thoughts?

Ans: Perhaps, you find it polarising because you have not examined the crux of the matter. What is truly communal and polarising is Congress party's manifesto, their issues and their intent. It is my duty to expose them. Just because I am exposing them, you think it is polarising. You noted it correctly that in 2014, corruption was the main issue. In 2019, it was labour this. In 2024, the main issue is Viksit Bharat. People across the country know that this is an important election which will ensure that we reach Viksit Bharat at the speed of the country's aspirations.

I must point out the difference between the scale of ambition of our government as compared to the UPA government. In 2014, the then finance minister said that India will become the third largest economy in 2043. In our case, we are already the fifth largest economy and will become the third largest economy in our third term. We will be at least 15 years ahead of their promise.

In this election, anti-corruption voter is with us and so is the labourer voter. Along with it, a large

section of the society which wants India to progress rapidly is also firmly backing us, which will ensure us getting a huge mandate on June 4.

Qus: Prime minister, you have started a political debate on which section has or should have the 'first right' to national resources. Which segment should have the 'first right' and how would you identify this segment?

Ans: I have said it before and I am saying it again: the first right to national resources belongs to the poor. Everything we do, every policy we make, has the welfare of the poor at the heart of it. We are committed to ensuring that the fruits of development reach every poor person, regardless of their caste, community or region. Over the last decade, we have focused on a policy of saturation, ensuring that government schemes reach 100% of beneficiaries.

For example, if a village has 20 homes, is it fair that only 15 homes receive all the benefits? No. We are ensuring that all 20 homes are empowered, leaving no one behind. We are moving forward with this motto of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas'.

Qus: 428 of the 543 parliamentary constituencies have already voted. How is BJP score currently looking against the '400 paar' target? Has BJP crossed the 272-mark?

Ans: Doing such analysis is the job of experts. However, I have clear signal from the people on the ground that we have crossed the majority mark and the momentum is only getting stronger with each phase.

Everywhere I have gone in the past few weeks, I have received a lot of love, support and enthusiasm for BJP.

On the voting day, our polling booths are brimming with activity. In contrast, the atmosphere on the Opposition side is very grim and hopeless. It shows that we are well on our track to achieve a historic victory in the elections. People also realise this and hence they won't waste their vote on Congress and its allies which have already lost the elections. Hence in the remaining two phases, we will see even greater support for NDA.

Qus: Which are the states you expect to score better than 2019?

Ans: In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, I am confident that BJP will win with a historic mandate. With the support we are getting from people in all states to make India a developed nation, I can confidently say that our vote share will increase everywhere. This time, we have set a more ambitious target: it's not just about winning seats, but about winning each polling booth. Every one of our karyakartas is focused on the strategy of winning the polling station.

I believe we will repeat our strong performance in the states where we won big in 2014 and 2019. South India and east India will bring record new gains. This time, we will vastly improve our performance in states like Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, West Bengal and Odisha. The so-called 'red corridor' will turn entirely saffron this election. Even Uttar Pradesh will see a rise in our seats.

The overwhelming will of the people across India is to bring us back with a historic mandate because they have seen how a strong, decisive and sensitive government has secured the nation and strengthened its position in the world. They are fed up with

corruption, dynastic politics, minority appeasement and the mismanagement of states under Opposition governments. That's why they want the NDA again.

Qus: The stock markets have been volatile of late amid FII selling while some market participants attribute this to uncertainty around election results. Do you think markets will respond positively post-election results?

Ans: Our government has undertaken maximum reforms and managed the economy with fiscal prudence.

The trust the stock market places in us is evident in its remarkable performance over the past decade. When we took office, the Sensex was around 25,000 points. Today, it stands at around 75,000 points, reflecting a historic rise. Recently, we reached a whopping \$5 trillion market cap for the first time ever!

Over the past 10 years, if you just take a look at the number of Demat accounts, you will understand how citizens have started to show confidence in Indian economy. The number of Demat accounts has increased

from just 2.3 crore to over 15 crore now. The number of mutual fund investors has increased from 1 crore in 2014 to 4.5 crore today. As a result, we have a broader base of domestic investment. Domestic investors have become more active and vibrant and are playing a more substantial role in our markets than ever before. This is a clear indication of the financialisation of savings that has occurred in the last 10 years.

Our investors are well aware of the pro-market reforms we have implemented. These reforms have created a robust and transparent financial ecosystem, making it easier for every Indian to participate in the stock markets. I can say with confidence that on June 4, as BJP hits record numbers, the stock market will also hit new record highs.

Qus: What your government calls a fight against corruption is criticised by the Opposition as targeted investigation by enforcement agencies. How do you respond to this?

Ans: The thing to note here is that even these people are not denying their own corruption. They are not saying that we are not corrupt or we have been falsely implicated. The only

thing they are saying is that they are being targeted. So yes, we are targeting all corrupt. I have no hesitation in saying that. Think about it. Last year, hundreds of crores of cash was discovered from a Congress MP in Jharkhand. Dozens of people had to use multiple note counting machines for days to count the mountains of cash. Recently, Rs 25 crore was found from the house of the assistant of a Congress leader. We all saw the piles of cash and the gold bars that ED discovered in a TMC leader's flat. What does this tell us? It tells us that our agencies are on the right track.

Besides, in all the corruption cases investigated by ED, only 3% involve politicians. The remaining 97% involve officials and criminals. This proves that ED and CBI are not acting with political bias. Additionally, before 2014, ED only seized assets worth Rs 5,000 crore, but in the last 10 years, that amount has exceeded ₹1 trillion. These findings show that our investigative agencies are doing their job well. Therefore, it is important to let these agencies work without interference.

These accusations from the Opposition seem to come from a fear of being caught and having their corruption exposed. The fact is that INDI Alliance is a bloc that has been formed to protect each other's corruption, and the money that they looted from the citizens is there for everyone to see each time a corruption scandal is exposed.

Back in 2019, I told the people that your vote has brought corrupt to the doorstep of jail. Your next vote will ensure that they are put behind bars, and I delivered on that promise. This government has taken steps to systematically root out corruption since day 1. Earlier, it was such that out of every rupee meant for the people, only 15 paise reached them. Today, I can proudly say that when a rupee is sent out, the full 100 paise reaches the intended recipients through DBTs. How? Because this government leveraged technology to tackle corruption. We introduced the concept of e-governance, simplified procedures and made India go digital and cashless. We have come a long way in our fight against corruption, and in my third term, it will continue with even greater vigour.

Qus: How do you rate your party's chances in Odisha after alliance talks did not fructify? You have often held Naveen Patnaik in high regard among all CMs. But what are your views as you challenge him in the state in a bid to prevent him from securing another term?

Ans: Over the last few days, I had the privilege of interacting with the wonderful people of Odisha across many rallies. Among the Odia people, especially the youth, women, tribals and farmers, I see a great upsurge of hope and aspiration towards the development-oriented politics of BJP. I am convinced that a big transformation is happening in the electoral landscape of the state, not only at the Lok Sabha level but also at the assembly level.

Odisha is a state that has a lot of untapped potential. It has talented young people and can be a much bigger player in the world of technology and startups. It has hardworking farmers and good natural resources. With an encouraging government, farmers of Odisha will make it an agricultural hub in the country. Odisha is a treasure trove of literature, history, heritage, art and

architecture. It has all the elements to make it a much sought-after tourist destination, which can create a number of opportunities for the youth.

Similarly, the state also has a vibrant coastline which helps trade and fisheries. But sadly, many of these sectors have been neglected over the years because of BJD's lethargy and lack of vision. The people of Odisha understand that only BJP can make a difference because they have seen the ten-year track record of our government at the Centre. They have seen how our schemes are designed and implemented with the people's empowerment as their focus. Whether it is foodgrain, gas connections, bank accounts, toilets or tap water connections, these are reaching the people and bringing a transformation in their lives. So, they trust those who actually deliver a better life to them.

Further, BJP is not new to Odisha. We have always got great support in the state, including putting up a strong performance in past Lok Sabha polls.

Qus: When we talk states, alliances in Punjab, Haryana and Tamil Nadu have come under strain ahead of Lok Sabha polls. Your thoughts?

Ans: See, you are focusing on a few parties who are no more part of NDA. In those cases, we have gone with our principles, the wishes of the people and our cadre. We are also sure that we will do well in the elections nevertheless. But what you mentioned is not the complete picture. Across India, there have been many states where we have added so many new partners into the NDA fold. You mentioned Tamil Nadu. In the state, NDA has about 10 or more parties.

There are states like Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Bihar and many others where we have added new allies over the last few weeks or months. If you look at the larger picture, we have added more parties and our alliance also has momentum on its side. So, I see this as a positive trend that more and more parties want to be with our vision for progress and the people are also supporting us.

Qns: India has good relations and strong strategic, economic ties with Israel as well as Iran besides most other gulf nations. How do you see the West Asia crisis impacting us? Do you foresee a bigger role for India in this conflict?

Ans: The crisis in West Asia is deeply concerning, especially in terms of the human cost of it. India has strong relations with many countries in West Asia. Even if some of these nations find themselves on the opposite side of each other, we have equally healthy relations with each of them. I also have a deep bond with the leaders of many of these nations and am moved by their gestures of friendship. I had sent a special envoy to urge for ensuring a cease-fire during the month of Ramzan. So, along with others, we too are doing our bit for global peace. We have always conveyed to these nations that we are totally on the side of peace and progress. We have always stressed upon the perspective that dialogue is the way forward. And we will continue to do so.

Qus: You have been saying India is at a turning point, ready for a quantum leap. What are

factors in India's favour and strengths that you intend to leverage to leapfrog?

Ans: I have said earlier that demography, democracy, demand are with India. These factors were there earlier too but the way we have empowered these crucial factors with our mantra of reform, perform, transform has made an important difference.

The demographic sweet spot that India is in has not been seen in the past and will not be seen in future. To complement it, we have put the nation in an economic sweet spot. We have given an era of historic reforms across various sectors.

Be it banking, foreign direct investment, compliances, corporate taxation, income taxes or even fiscal policy, our reforms have spanned across various sectors.

As a result, from Fragile Five we have reached Top Five Economies. We have been the fastest growing economy for many years now. We have also received record foreign direct investment (FDI) over the years.

All this has resulted in an environment where investment, industry and innovation can thrive, benefiting our talented

youngsters in terms of the number of opportunities being created across sectors.

Further, look at the impact of our welfare initiatives. Whether it is bank accounts, toilets, tap water, electricity or health insurance, these facilities are reaching those who were deprived of them for decades.

This helped 25 crore people rise above poverty, creating a neo-middle class that is hopeful and aspirational. These people are driving new patterns of income generation and demand, powering the wheels of the economy even further.

At the same time, India is undergoing rapid digital transformation, with increasing internet penetration and a booming tech and startup industry. Whether it is Digital India or DBT (direct benefit transfer) or digital payments, they are creating a new wave of innovation and empowerment.

And when it comes to physical and social infrastructure, the speed and scale at which we have worked is unprecedented. If the number of our airports has doubled, so has the number of medical colleges.

While we have added thousands of kilometres of national highways, we have also added hundreds of schools, colleges and universities.

These efforts have created momentum for capital and human capital.

Further, India's strategic positioning in the world enhances our trade and diplomatic engagements. As a trusted member of various international forums and trade agreements, India is well-placed to leverage global markets and attract international partnerships.

Many experts across the world are saying this is India's time, India's decade and India's century. Whether it is space or solar energy, sports or startups, the world is seeing India arrive on the global stage across sectors.

More importantly, every Indian, believes this is India's time. This self-belief is like the icing on top of all the strides that our country has taken in the last few years.

Qus: What in your vision constitutes 'Viksit Bharat', its contours and parameters?

Ans: Viksit Bharat is a nation where no one is too small to dream and no dream is too big to

achieve. Viksit Bharat is a nation where social circumstances or birth do not limit anyone's growth. Everyone, no matter who they are, can aspire to reach the heights of success.

Viksit Bharat is a nation with sustained high growth, strong manufacturing, services, agriculture and technology. It is a nation where economic growth is inclusive, where poverty is a thing of the past.

Viksit Bharat is a nation where there are high-quality jobs driven by innovation, entrepreneurship and skill development. Viksit Bharat is a nation with a fully digitised economy, widespread high-speed internet access and transparent e-governance services.

Viksit Bharat is a nation which is a hub of research and development, fostering a thriving ecosystem for science and technology.

Viksit Bharat is a nation with world-class transportation networks, renewable energy systems, and smart urban development.

Viksit Bharat is a nation where there is seamless rural-urban connectivity for balanced regional growth.

Viksit Bharat is a nation where high-quality healthcare is affordable, accessible and available to everyone.

Viksit Bharat is a nation with an education system emphasising quality, accessibility, native languages, fostering critical thinking, creativity and lifelong learning.

Viksit Bharat means having comprehensive social welfare systems ensuring the well-being of the elderly, Divyang, and marginalised communities.

Viksit Bharat means commitment to green growth through renewable energy, conservation of natural resources and a reduced carbon footprint.

In the last 10 years, we have been working proactively across all these sectors. The foundation we have laid will help us achieve great heights by 2047.

Qus: Creating enough jobs for India's youth is the biggest challenge facing the economy. Do you think high growth will address the issue, or something more is needed? What's the

road ahead? What contribution is expected from the private sector?

Ans: Today, India is blessed with a demographic dividend. Along with this blessing, it is very important to ensure that the youth get opportunities. Today, India's growth momentum, vibrancy and optimism comes from the fact that our youth have these new opportunities and are making the most of them.

Look at the startup sector, for example. We went from just a few startups in 2014 to nearly 1.37 lakh in 2024. We have 100+ unicorns today, and we're the third largest startup economy in the world.

Similarly, in R&D, we're leading the way. Startups themselves have registered over 12,000 patents. And last year, a record 90,300 patent applications were received. India's youth, empowered with opportunities and innovation under this government, have become the driving force behind the nation's remarkable growth trajectory.

While we understand that high growth is important for creating enough opportunities, we are not satisfied with just that. We are

actively bringing in reforms. We are looking towards the future and creating future jobs.

We are opening up new sectors, encouraging entrepreneurship, improving access to credit and improving government jobs.

India's digital economy has grown 2.4 times faster than the economy between 2014 and 2019, creating around 6 crore jobs.

Our gig economy is also thriving and is expected to grow exponentially in the coming years, with over 20% engaged in highly skilled jobs.

With just MUDRA loans, over crores of new businesses have been started and India's entrepreneurial energy unleashed.

I have been regularly attending rozgarmelas to interact with our youth. The central government alone has ensured that lakhs of youth receive their recruitment letters through the melas.

Look at the indicators which prove the job generation. The returns filed by individual taxpayers more than doubled from 3.36 crore in 2013-14 to 8.18 crore in 2023-24. EPFO payroll data shows that over 6 crore new EPFO subscribers have been added in the

last seven years, indicating a surge in youth employment. PLFS data shows that between 2017 and 2023, the participation rate of the worker population ratio has increased to over 56%, and unemployment is at a historic low of 3.2%.

In the last 10 years, we have not just stressed and worked on the creation of jobs, but also invested our efforts in nurturing and creating job creators.

Qus: Jammu & Kashmir has stabilised after the revocation of Article 370. You talked about holding elections in the Union Territory, the Supreme Court too has spoken similarly. What is your assessment on carrying out the next steps?

Ans: You are right that the region has stabilised after August 2019. The elections in Jammu and Kashmir are an important milestone in its history. The record voter turnout in is one of the most gratifying things I have seen in my tenure.

The people of the region have seen our constant and honest efforts to strengthen democracy. Be it Srinagar or Baramulla, people have expressed great confidence in

the electoral process and optimism for the future.

The progress that Jammu and Kashmir has made in the last five years is proof that we are on the right path. We will ensure that these gains become deep-rooted and irreversible.

We are very clear in our intent. We are committed to restore the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Supreme Court has set a date for assembly elections in the region. The Election Commission will take a call on the right time for the assembly elections.

Qus: Are you satisfied with the way the defence sector has responded to your call for 'atmanirbharta', to reduce dependency on imports? What more can be done by the government and other stakeholders?

Ans: During the Covid era, the world realised the importance of self-reliance. Although we were already making progress in this direction, we used the time of pandemic to push this cause with significant momentum.

For years, we used to rely on the world for even small items. Not only did it create

dependencies but it also caused loss of precious foreign exchange.

We used the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan to create a mindset change to promote self-reliance as well as to create conducive conditions for manufacturing in India. The results and the trajectory of growth have been quite satisfying.

Let us start with vaccine manufacturing. There was a time when India took 20 years to procure polio vaccines and vaccination took another 40 years. We took 32 years for TB vaccination! Today India has produced not one or two but four vaccines. And not only that, we exported it to more than 100 countries. And we also ran the world's largest vaccination programme.

Similarly, previously there was zero production of PPE kits. But during Covid, we witnessed large-scale manufacturing.

In defence sector, we struggled to even produce bulletproof jackets for our soldiers. Today Indian defence exports include helicopters, patrol vessels, coastal surveillance systems and high-end defence equipments to more than 20 countries. And

we are exporting bullet proof jackets to more than 100 countries. We are also emerging as a global hub for the production of helicopters. Our defence exports have touched a record high of more than 21,000 crore.

There was a time when India had only two mobile manufacturing units and over 90% of the mobiles were imported. Today 200+ units are manufacturing mobile phones and almost all the mobile phones used are made in India. We are the now second largest exporters of mobile phones in the world.

There were times when the potential of toy manufacturing and local artisans was overlooked. Today local artisans are making for the world. Their talent is getting recognised world over. There has been a decline in toy imports by 52% and rise in exports by 239% since 2014.

We are also focusing on semiconductor manufacturing and are taking rapid strides in this direction.

My vision for Aatmanirbhar Bharat aims to position India as a global manufacturing and innovation hub. I believe India, with its

demographic dividend, democracy and demand, has the potential not only to meet its own needs but also those of the world. I firmly believe that Aatmanirbhar Bharat will not just fuel India's growth but will also propel global growth.

“We have over 100 Unicorns and our start-ups have registered over 12,000 patents.”: PM Modi

PM Modi's Interview to the Statesman

May 24, 2024



In an exclusive interview to The Statesman, PM Narendra Modi underscores the need for a strong government and a clear vision for India's progress. He discusses plans for the middle class, youth employment, successes in Jammu and Kashmir, and Bengal's future, highlighting the importance of a significant electoral mandate for effective governance and a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Qus: The middle class has been a consistent support block for the national brand of Modi. The opposition alleges that the middle class has not got its due from your government. Would you agree? And what are your plans for the middle class?

Ans: Over the last 10 years, we have worked tirelessly to ensure progress and prosperity for our middle class.

The first area is expanding the middle class and to lift people from poverty. For a long time since Indian independence, for 70 years, there was a push from the top – where the middle class was being pushed into poverty and the poor into abject poverty. But today, we have effectively reversed this system; since 2014, we have recognised and celebrated the parishram of our madhyamvarg. Our government ensured that while your darja in society increased, the kharcha did not – because our policies are not meant to extort, but to support.

Twenty-five crore people have risen up to join the neo middle class and most importantly, we have changed the narrative that the middle class is one bill away from

slipping into poverty. The growth we have achieved is irreversible and here to stay – the only way to go is to climb upwards.

Rs. 11 lakh crore has been spent for infrastructure development in the country encompassing diverse sectors – from road and rail to education and healthcare infrastructure. People belonging to the middle class are the biggest beneficiaries of this development as new opportunities in jobs, contracts and other avenues open up for them.

We have worked hard to enhance the Ease of Living for the middle class. Be it travel or the day-to-day access that they have when the government is concerned, we have ensured that the entire experience becomes quick, comfortable and hassle-free. As far as travel is concerned, the number of airports has doubled, there are 20 cities with metro rail, there are over 100 Vande Bharat trains, we have state-of-the-art expressways, the EV sector is booming and growing. On the other hand – you see how the process for getting passports, filing income tax, registering grievances or registering new companies has

been made transparent, quick and without challenges.

We have ensured that the disposable income for the middle class has increased. Where every GB of internet data cost over Rs. 300, in just 10 years – the per GB cost of internet data is down to under Rs. 10. This is saving thousands of rupees every month.

The women belonging to the middle class have been empowered and are becoming job creators in their own right with MUDRA Loans, Stand Up India, GeM portal and so on.

Additionally, six crore new EPFO subscribers since 2017 and greater participation for the labour class shows that not only has employment generation increased, the absolute percentage of people participating in the nation's growth has also increased. 5.14 crore person years of employment have been generated every year since 2014, as a recent SKOCH report has also recognised.

While all this is happening, you have to understand that there are other things at work as well – average inflation for the last

10 years has been kept under 5 per cent, income tax rates have been greatly reduced. A significant section of the middle class resides in our cities and towns, and under PMAY-Urban – for over 25 lakh beneficiaries, an interest subvention of more than Rs. 58,000 crore has been provided. So, while there are greater incomes, there is also greater savings and this has led to greater investments. Almost 7 crore beneficiaries are enrolled in the Atal Pension Yojana. Today, the middle class is partnering and investing in India's growth – there are now over 15 crore DEMAT accounts, is this not a sign of prosperity?

Qus: Are you satisfied with your efforts at providing jobs for the youth?

Ans: India is blessed with a demographic dividend. And this blessing comes with a responsibility of ensuring suitable and sufficient opportunities.

If you look back on the last 10 years, you will notice that we have opened up opportunities in many new and emerging sectors for our youth such as in space, defence, drones, EVs, semiconductors, AI,

and much more. In many of these fields, India is now emerging as a key player on the global stage.

Today, India is the world's third-largest start-up ecosystem. We have gone from a few start-ups in 2014 to nearly 1.37 lakh startups today, generating employment for lakhs of people. We have over 100 unicorns and our start-ups have registered over 12,000 patents. This is also led by the youth who are making the most of the opportunities they are getting.

We have provided lakhs of government jobs as well as opened up self-employment opportunities for everyone on a massive scale. The MUDRA loans sanctioned have given birth to crores of new businesses, which have started a chain reaction of employment addition and expansion of the economy. Initiatives like Stand-Up India, Make in India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat have helped change the mindset at the grassroots level. Today, the youth of the country envision themselves as job creators.

India's digital economy grew 2.4 times faster than the economy between 2014 and 2019,

creating around 6 crore jobs. With the advent of AI and new-age Digital technology, we aim to expand job generation in this area, too.

The roads, highways, houses, and tunnels constructed require people to work. Direct and indirect jobs have been generated through the construction of Infrastructure. Infrastructure and productive capacity investments have a large multiplier impact on growth and employment. In the 2024-25 budget, we proposed increasing capital investment to Rs 11.11 lakh crore, creating additional jobs because of the multiplier impact.

EPFO payroll data shows that over six crore new subscribers have been added in the last 6 years, indicating a surge in youth employment. PLFS data shows that between 2017 and 2023, the participation rate of the Worker Population increased to over 56 per cent, and unemployment is at a low level of 3.2 per cent. So, we have employed more people compared to the population growth rate.

Qus: Handling of Jammu and Kashmir is hailed as one of the great successes of your government. From a completely peaceful abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 to historic elections in 2024, everything seems to have gone to plan. What next for the region?

Ans: First of all, I would like to begin by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to the people of Kashmir for their overwhelming participation in the historic Lok Sabha elections of 2024. The record-breaking voter turnouts, be it in Baramulla with a whopping 59 per cent voting, breaking a 4-decade record, or the Srinagar seat witnessing 38 per cent voting in the fourth phase, the highest in 35 years, they clearly show that the decisions we took were in the right direction.

Since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, our government has worked tirelessly to restore normalcy in the region. We have achieved a drastic reduction in terror cases in the valley, thanks to the unwavering commitment of our security forces and the support of the local population. This has laid the foundation for sustainable development and growth in the region.

One of our key priorities has been to deepen democracy at the grassroots level. We have conducted elections at the panchayat and block development levels, which has led to a significant trust-building exercise. The peaceful conduct of the Lok Sabha elections is a clear indication that the people of Kashmir are ready to embrace democracy and participate in the decision-making process.

The next logical step in our plan for Jammu and Kashmir will be to restore the state assembly and statehood to further strengthen democratic institutions and ensure that the people have a greater say in the affairs of their state. We are committed to working closely with the elected representatives to address the concerns of the people and to accelerate the pace of development.

Our vision for Jammu and Kashmir is to enable the region to regain its status as a leader in various sectors. We want Jammu and Kashmir to become an educational hub, a tourism hub, an IT hub, a horticulture hub that exports to the world, and a hub for handicrafts and handlooms. We are confident that with the support of the people and the

commitment of our government, we can achieve these goals and transform Jammu and Kashmir into a model of development and progress.

We will continue to work closely with the people and their elected representatives to ensure that the region achieves its full potential and becomes a beacon of hope for the entire nation.

Qus: Just a century ago, West Bengal was seen as a leader when it came to industry, arts, culture and other sectors. What is your view on the current scenario and what according to you is the way ahead?

Ans: West Bengal has been a state that the whole nation has looked up to. Whether it is intellectual leadership or industrial activity, science or spirituality, literature or art, music or mathematics, the people of Bengal have played a big role in various sectors, not only nationally but also globally.

There would hardly be anyone who is untouched by the greatness of Swami Vivekananda, Gurudev Rabindranath

Tagore, Jagdish Chandra Bose and many such leaders.

When it comes to the freedom struggle, the role of Bengal goes to a different level altogether with a galaxy of leaders and revolutionaries coming from this region.

The excellent foundation that the pre-independence generation of Bengalis had set for the state was squandered completely by the Congress, Communists and Trinamool Congress governments.

Ruling for many decades, each of these parties subjected the state to misrule, mafias, corruption and poverty. Congress was always worried about the welfare of one family. TMC has become very similar. And the Communists were always anti-development. So, the people of West Bengal were subjected to great hardships and the state was turned into a laggard state.

But the core elements that made Bengal a shining star – spirit of its people, culture and ethos – are as strong as ever, just waiting for an opportunity to express themselves. I think that time is coming.

Despite having a hostile state government, we are working to leverage West Bengal's unique strengths and address its specific challenges.

I am sure that with focused multi-sectoral reforms and good governance, the people of Bengal will make its future even brighter than the glorious past of the state.

First and foremost is that there is a need to focus on law and order. If the crucial foundations of safety and security are ensured, every sector of the economy can make great things happen.

Next, the industrial and agricultural ecosystem needs to be addressed. West Bengal has a rich history in sectors like jute, tea, and textiles. Streamlining regulations and creating a conducive environment for industrial growth can attract new investments and also strengthen the investment climate for existing players. Supporting farmers with policies that help them across things such as soil health, cold storage, irrigation, insurance and market access will give great results.

Additionally, investing in infrastructure, particularly in improving the connectivity of ports, road and rail networks, will further boost trade and industry.

West Bengal's rich cultural heritage is also a significant asset. Celebrating and promoting the art, culture and festivals of West Bengal can attract domestic and global tourists. When combined with good infrastructure and law and order, this can go a long way in creating opportunities for young people.

The young people of Bengal are some of the brightest in the world. No matter which field they are in, they need no introduction. But due to the TMC's misrule, today, they are often being forced to go out of the state to find high quality jobs and growth prospects. But with a planned effort to make the state a powerhouse in higher education, services, manufacturing, IT and innovation, their dreams can be fulfilled right here in Bengal itself.

Qus: Women are acknowledged as the biggest supporters of brand Modi across India. Do you have a special message for the women of Bengal?

Ans: Bengal is a land blessed by Maa Durga. The Nari Shakti of Bengal, the women, is an embodiment of the divine Shakti. When they decide to bless someone, their blessings are enough to help achieve great heights.

I want the women of Bengal to know that their courage is admired by the whole nation. The way women from the poorest sections of society have stood up to the powerful goons of the ruling party in Sandeshkhali and many other places is inspirational. At the same time, women from the urban areas of Bengal have raised their voices for justice, showing solidarity. It shows that when women unite and decide that enough is enough, no force in the world can stop them.

While I admire the courage of the women of Bengal, I am also deeply pained at what they have to suffer at the hands of an insensitive ruling party that bestows impunity upon those who harass women.

The misdeeds of the TMC are fast adding up and paving the way for an exit from Bengal. The people have decided to punish the TMC,

first in the Lok Sabha and later in the state assembly too.

We would like to assure the women of West Bengal that the BJP stands with you. By bringing in Rekha Patra Ji as one of our MP candidates, we have made our intentions clear that we are with the women of Bengal.

Further, we will continue to implement the existing pro-women welfare schemes such as taking tap water and gas connections to poor women for free. We will also implement our new schemes to benefit lakhs of women in Bengal.

Our initiative of creating crores of Lakhpati Didis through Self Help Groups, increased threshold for MUDRA loans, etc., will help women become more and more self-reliant. A number of new sectors like space and defence have now been opened up for women. In line with our vision of 'Vikasbhi, Virasatbhi' many new avenues and opportunities have been created for those who have interest in art and culture with the opening of new museums and centres.

So, my message to the women of Bengal is, the dawn of freedom from TMC's tyranny is near.

Qus: Kolkata earlier used to be the cultural capital of India. The city also used to be the economic hub for the entire East and North East India. What is your plan for reigniting the economic and cultural activity in Kolkata and also developing other major cities in Bengal?

Ans: I think the state of Bengal and Kolkata are symptoms of a larger neglect of eastern India that has been seen post-independence. In the priorities of successive Congress governments, there were no specific plans for eastern India and whatever were there, stayed on paper.

However, I have always drawn attention to the fact that eastern India needs focused work and we have worked with an ambitious plan for it.

In our rural electrification initiatives, a majority of the beneficiaries were in Eastern or Northeastern India. Whether it is the work that is going on for the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor or the work that has

happened for National Waterways along the Ganga, whether it is the operationalization of many airports in eastern India or the record creation of national highways, we have been giving great importance to eastern India's infrastructure needs.

If we speak of just railways in Bengal, the average rail budget for Bengal, which was around Rs 4,000 crore before 2014, has now increased to nearly Rs 14,000 crore. Vande Bharat Express trains are running across Bengal. Railway stations from Bengal are included under the Amrit Bharat station scheme, which aims to modernize more than 500 stations.

Automatically, such a big infrastructure push across the East will also result in increase in investments, industry and economic activity. As the pre-eminent city of eastern India, Kolkata stands to gain significantly from the overall development of the region.

Further, when it comes to Kolkata specifically, the first focus is on urban infrastructure, cleanliness and ease of living. Recently, I had the privilege of inaugurating the underwater metro tunnel in Kolkata

which is an engineering marvel that is also boosting connectivity between two important economic hubs of Kolkata.

Further, work has recently been completed on the Kavi Subhash – Hemanta Mukhopadhyay Metro section and the Taratala – Majerhat Metro section.

Over the last ten years there have been multiple such works that have happened in Kolkata and many more such works are envisaged in the future as well.

Qus: In the past 10 years we have seen that Kashi's infrastructure has transformed completely. Everyone who visits says this is not the Kashi that we saw 10 years back. How did you make this happen?

Ans: Kashi is a timeless city. It is a city that everyone in India pines to visit at least once because it has such great spiritual and cultural significance.

At the same time, this city and its infrastructure had been taken for granted completely. Over the last many decades, very few efforts had been made to get even basic infrastructure creation or upgrades

done. But we decided that this would change.

Since you mentioned the sight of Kashi 10 years ago, I am sure you all remember the massive number of power cables clumsily dangling over all the beautiful streets. We invested hundreds of crore rupees into taking all these cables underground, ensuring a more beautiful view of the city.

Everyone knows about the connectivity and infrastructure troubles Kashi faced 10 years ago. Since then, we have invested almost Rs 1,000 crore to construct or upgrade 15 bridges or flyovers. The road to Babatpur Airport, Varanasi Ring Road, Lahartara-Phulwariya-Shivpur four-lane road, I can give you many such examples of the construction or upgradation of high quality roads across the region.

Further, over 20 road widening projects worth over Rs 3,500 crore are changing the face of Varanasi and the roads that connect it with other cities.

This apart, the upgradation of the airport and railway stations, construction of world class facilities like the Rudraksh Convention

Centre, etc. are also making everyone feel this is a new Kashi.

However, Kashi and its soul remains the same. The only thing that has been added is ease of living for the local people as well as tourists.

Qus: Kashi is an eternal city associated with our glorious past. How do you envisage the place of such cities in the future of Viksit Bharat?

Ans: Our vision has always been that Vikas and Virasat go hand in hand. So, heritage and modernity go together.

While I spoke of all the infrastructure creation in and around Kashi, the most striking transformation has actually happened in the heritage sections of the city.

The Kashi Vishwanath Dham is there for everyone to see. We have kept in mind the spiritual soul of the temple while building the temple complex. Lakhs of pilgrims are returning happy to see the larger temple complex and its facilities. The streets around the temple are more accessible and cleaner.

The Ganga is cleaner than ever before. Maa Ganga is slowly being restored to her beauty.

Sewage treatment plants are being newly built or upgraded.

Many boatmen have been helped to use environment-friendly boats. For those who would like, more cruises have been made available, including the world's longest river cruise which starts from Varanasi.

The Ghats along the Ganga are spotless and clean. They have become world class spiritual spaces where one can sit with a clean mind, in clean surroundings and connect with the deeper spiritual vibe of Kashi.

At the same time, Varanasi is also being strengthened as a hub for tourism, culture, weavers, farmers and businesses.

So, I see a Kashi which will play an even more important role in the future of India than it did in the past!

Qus: How do you describe your relation with Kashi?

Sometimes, when I think of Kashi, Maa Ganga and the people of Kashi, emotions overwhelm me and leave me without words.

I have said even earlier that Maa Ganga has adopted me as her son. At the same time,

lakhs of families of Kashi have adopted me as their son or brother. I have always been treated like a family member. The love and affection I get is deeply moving.

It has been my firm resolve that I will repay this affection with record development. A lot has been done but a lot more is in store for the wonderful people of this ancient city.

Qus: Five phases of elections are over. Now only 114 seats remain to go to polls while the fate of 429 seats has been decided. What is your assessment now nationally for the BJP and NDA in terms of seats and vote share and has it changed from your assessment before the elections began?

Ans: Our target for 400 seats came from the people and hence it remains the same. This time it seems as if it is the people who are fighting the election and supporting us in an unprecedented manner.

After the polling on five phases I can assure you that BJP has comfortably crossed the majority mark on its own and NDA is looking to return with a historic mandate. The way the opposition has collapsed in one

phase after the other, the voters have made their decision quite clear.

The way the opposition is acting can be read like an exit poll. A senior leader like Sharad Pawar said that regional parties do not have any future now and should simply merge with the Congress. On the other hand, the Shehzaada of Congress knew that he would lose from Wayanad and so contested from another seat. Mamata Banerjee, who was one of the founders of INDI Alliance has deserted the alliance. She is speaking of supporting the alliance from outside.

Qus: You have several times talked of a 100-day agenda and now a 125-day agenda. What does it look like?

Ans: I have divided my plan into 2 phases, 100 days for the entire nation, and the second one, which has 25 days, would be dedicated towards policies for the Yuva Shakti and how they would like the nation's development to take shape as we move towards building a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

It is not the first time that I have set a 100-day plan as we head for an election. If you go a little back in time, you would find that

post elections in 2014 and 2019, we took historic decisions within 100 days of being elected that transformed India's growth path and, in a way, destiny. In my first term, in the first 100 days, I introduced Jan Dhan Yojana, providing bank accounts to people who never had a bank account and were kept away from formal banking. In my second term, in the first 100 days we abrogated Article 370, and Triple Talaq. In the third term, we will make historic decisions that would serve all sections of the society.

In the 25-day agenda of the youth, we will focus on the aspirations of the youth and giving wings to their ideas.

Qus: Why do you want a big majority in these elections? Critics argue that coalitions are better.

Ans: The question has never been about a coalition or a single-party government. Even though we have had a simple majority for the last two terms – we have continued to lead the National Democratic Alliance.

The question is whether we have a strong government with a definitive vision to move forward and support national growth or if we

have a mish-mash band of non-cooperative allies devoid of any vision or track record of development.

The difference is between the vision and the confusion – the former is a must while the latter is to be avoided at all costs.

I believe that alliances should be made with conviction and not compulsions, for cooperation and not corruption, for the nation and not for one's own family.

As far as the big majority is concerned, it is essential for the forward and swift movement of our vision. In the last 10 years we have taken several decisions which have benefited the nation and her people greatly. Today, the entire world respects us because it knows that we have a huge mandate from the people. Whatever India says, it says with conviction and the world listens, because we have a strong majority.

The people have seen the benefits of a strong government over the last 2 terms and are determined to ensure we get a strong government for yet another term.

“Congress’ politics solely rests on trying to hold Muslim votes hostage by creating a fear psychosis among them”: PM Modi

PM Modi's Interview to the Tribune

May 27, 2024



Ahead of the seventh and final phase of the Lok Sabha elections in eight states and UTs, including Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh, on June 1, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took time off from his hectic campaign schedule to speak to Associate Editor Aditi Tandon on a range of issues and narratives dominating the poll landscape. In a candid interview, the Prime

Minister fielded questions on the ongoing farmers protests in Punjab and Haryana, the BJP's decision to sever ties with erstwhile ally Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) in Punjab, the "ghuspethiya" remarks with reference to Muslims he made at the Banswara rally in Rajasthan on April 21, the BJP-led NDA's seat assessment and the state of the opposition INDIA bloc. PM Modi, eyeing a historic third term in office - a first for any prime minister since Jawaharlal Nehru - exuded confidence on the strength of his 10-year record as PM. The Prime Minister spoke of his Viksit Bharat @ 2047 platform and reiterated the BJP's commitment to taking the Uniform Civil Code forward. He admitted the BJP had not been able to rise to its full potential in Punjab because of its pact with SAD, but with the alliance now having ended, the party would emerge as a strong force in the state. Excerpts:

You have said you are going to the people with a 10-year record. What in your view is your most abiding legacy after two terms as Prime Minister and your most important achievement?

For decades now, I have lived with the motto of dedicating myself fully for the nation and the welfare of the people. My focus is on bringing a positive transformation in the lives of the people

and therefore, things like legacy do not matter to me.

Further, when it comes to achievements, there is nothing that one person or even a government can achieve, without the people's blessings and participation.|

After six phases of voting, my assessment is that the people of the country are blessing us with a historic, record-breaking win

So, I can speak of the nation's important achievements in the past 10 years.

At the very top would be the fact that 25 crore people have won the battle against poverty. Because this means, 25 crore people got the ability to dream and opportunity to fulfil dreams. It means 25 crore people could live a better life in the present and also give a better future to their future generations.

Further, whether it is the poor, farmers, women or underprivileged sections of society, they were kept deprived of even the basic human necessities for 60 years.

But we could serve them by taking crores of toilets, tap water connections, electricity connections, LPG and health coverage to them. This not only gave them a better life but also

helped them not go through the indignities that a life of deprivation subjects people to.

The fact that crores of people were positively impacted by these initiatives is a big inspiration to us.

At the same time, while working on the basics, we have also focused on aspirational goals, like taking optic fibre, mobiles and inexpensive data to even villages, making the country a leader in digital payments, making the country a bigger space power, etc.

The cumulative impact of all of these initiatives - the birth of self-confidence in Indians that our nation is meant for great things - is something that I am greatly enthused by.

One of the key issues in the election campaign this time is the Constitution and quota debate. You say Congress will dilute quotas to benefit Muslims; they say you will abolish quotas? Which one is true?

I would request respectable media houses like yours to do a simple fact check.

We have been in power for 10 years at the Centre with massive mandates. Our big mandate helped us do things that were thought to be

impossible, such as abrogation of Article 370, outlawing Triple Talaq, etc.

Anyone would tell you that a government that could take such big decisions could do anything it wanted. What did we do? We actually extended reservations for more years.

At the same time, we also ran a government with the maximum number of SC/ST/OBC ministers. Even the number of SC/ST/OBC MPs and MLAs are highest in our party. Further, we gave constitutional status to the OBC Commission, which the Congress never did.

The enthusiasm among first-time voters and the younger generation during my election campaigns inspired me to think of a blueprint for the first 125 days of the youth. Today's youth will ultimately drive India towards Viksit Bharat

So, our track record of commitment to the welfare of SC/ST/OBC communities is clear.

Now, when it comes to the Congress, we are not just saying they will dilute quotas to benefit their vote banks but we are saying they have already done it in various states when they were in power.

They have also openly declared, when they were in power at the Centre, that they intend to

bring in reservations on the basis of religion, despite knowing well that is unconstitutional.

Recently, Calcutta High Court scrapped Other Backward Classes (OBCs) certificates awarded to 77 communities since 2010 in West Bengal, an overwhelming majority of whom were Muslim, and called the classification process illegal.

So, they have an actual track record of diluting the quotas meant for SC/ST/OBC communities. Even now, I have challenged Congress leaders multiple times. I have asked them to declare they will not bring in reservations for their vote banks. But they have not uttered a word about it.

So, as a credible media house, now, can you tell me whose side facts are on and who is making false claims?

After six phases of voting, what's your assessment? Opposition says low voter turnout signals a no wave election and you won't cross 200 seats.

After six phases of voting, my assessment is that the people of the country are blessing us with a historic, record-breaking win.

Also, it is clear that the Congress is repeating its listless performance like in 2014 and 2019.

Further, due to their abysmal performance, the INDIA bloc, which is an opportunistic group without any vision or mission, will break apart after the elections. Knowing this, even their own cadre is not turning out to vote for them.

Our big mandate helped us do things that were thought to be impossible, such as abrogation of Article 370, outlawing Triple Talaq, etc.

Anyone will tell you that a government that can take such big decisions can do anything it wanted... We extended reservations

Even neutral analysts would be amused about the Opposition's claims that we won't cross 200 seats in the election.

Many people are saying that the NDA has already crossed the majority mark in just five phases, let alone the whole election!

How would you describe the opposition INDIA alliance?

Congress has accused AAP of orchestrating a liquor scam in Delhi.

The names that AAP people called the Congress in Punjab are the kind of names that even we would not.

AAP has accused the Congress of inflicting violence on Sikhs in Delhi.

Congress has accused AAP of being involved with terrorists in Punjab.

But both the parties are together in fighting elections in Delhi but not in Punjab.

In Delhi, they say 'Hum Saath Saath Hain' and in Punjab they say 'Hum Aap ke Hai Kaun'.

This is just the trailer of their supposed alliance. If I start going into the contradictions in Kerala, Bengal, Tamil Nadu and other states, then you will run out of space in your newspaper.

They have no agreement on policies, no consensus on leadership and certainly no vision for the nation beyond somehow gaining power by hook or crook.

Therefore, while the top leaders of these parties are being seen together for the time being, there is no collaboration among them. There is no coordination among their cadre either.

So, the only thing these people can give the country is instability and a weak government.

Though ‘Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas’ is your motto and government schemes seek to benefit everyone equally, why did you recently speak of Muslims as infiltrators and mention ‘children with more kids’?

When I say illegal infiltrators or people with more children, why are you assuming that I was referring to Muslims?

In fact, most of the successful flagship schemes of our government have minorities as a big chunk among the beneficiaries due to our saturation approach.

However, there is one point that needs to be made here. When I question the Congress’ divisive policies that aim to appease Muslims and distance them from the societal mainstream, I am speaking against the Congress, not against Muslims. This much is clear to anyone who actually listens to what I am saying.

In fact, speaking against appeasement politics is the most pro-Muslim stance one can take. Because the biggest victims of appeasement politics have been Muslims themselves. Congress got votes in their name, formed governments in their name, but never did anything to actually make their lives better.

Even today, the Congress' politics solely rests on trying to hold Muslim votes hostage by creating a fear psychosis among them that their religion is in danger if Muslims don't vote for the Congress. So, the Congress has no incentive to further education or empowerment among the community.

But steadily and surely, even Muslims are beginning to see through the Congress' game.

Several farmers continue to protest for legalisation of MSP on the borders of Haryana and Punjab and are preventing BJP leaders from canvassing in villages. Your comments and message?

Thank you for this very important question.

Firstly, it is our government which has implemented MSP in its true letter and spirit. In the last ten years, my government has increased the value of MSP and the volume of crops procured under MSP. My government started the direct transfer of MSP into the bank accounts of the farmers of Punjab. We understand the needs of the farmers of Punjab and Haryana, and we have always worked with them on the MSP issue. We are willing to go one step ahead. We are not only ensuring MSP on staple crops like paddy and

wheat, which are grown extensively in this region, but we are also incentivising farmers to grow pulses that have a strong demand in the market and can help the farmers improve their earnings significantly.

We want the willing farmers to embrace crop diversification and give them the necessary monetary and policy security cover. Also, crop diversification is an idea which has been supported by other parties too in the past. They have backtracked on it for political reasons, but the cost of politics should be something other than the future of the farmers of Punjab and Haryana. The MSP is not going anywhere. Instead, it is being expanded to empower the farmers for the future and safeguard the ecology of the region. Our farmers are a critical component of the 'India Growth Story'; therefore, my government wants to enable and empower them for the future, along with catering to their needs in the present.

The Akali Dal was your oldest alliance partner and yet you two fell out over the farm laws. Why did this happen? Do you regret this was not handled better?

Over the last few years, a few things happened which has led to a lot of traditional Akali Dal supporters feeling disappointed.

The first was Parkash Singh Badal Sahab's personal electoral defeat, and that too at such a stage of his life.

Subsequently, the passing of Badal Sahab left a void that was irreplaceable.

At the same time, the Akali Dal began to disintegrate, with very experienced leaders either reducing political activity or parting ways with it.

And, add to that the series of electoral routs.

All of these happenings have hurt every Akali Dal worker. A lot of them have privately even expressed their despair to me. A lot of people who think of the progress of Punjab tried to reform the Akali Dal and ensure it moves with the times but their efforts failed.

For every Indian, Punjab is a crucial state with a history of rich contribution to national development. Thus, it is not possible for our party to remain silent while the people of the state are unhappy. It is incumbent upon us to work even harder and ensure the people of the state are not unhappy.

The levels of unhappiness will surprise you all. In 2022, the people of Punjab were so disillusioned that they gave a mandate to AAP but they have only made things worse.

In such times, our duty is even more and thus, we are going to the people with our vision and good governance track record. We have taken this decision after much thought and the people are showing immense affection towards us.

We are going to the people with a single aim- the welfare of Punjab. Like our party transformed the growth trajectory of several states, we want to do the same for Punjab, be it in agriculture, industries, services, startups, healthcare, education, technology, transport, railways, environment, culture, tourism and more.

I want to specially highlight agriculture here. As Gujarat CM, whenever we hosted a big programme relating to the sector, I would invite Badal Sahab. He would not only attend but also praise the work we are doing in Gujarat. Like in all other things, Badal Sahab's insights on agriculture helped me immensely and given the opportunity, we will work to fulfil his vision in this sector as well.

What is your assessment of the Punjab Lok Sabha poll, specially as you are contesting alone for the first time?

In one word - excellent!

Whomsoever's heart beats for Punjab and whoever wants a glorious future for Punjab... Such people are joining us and are seeing BJP with great hope. Our cadre is fully energised as well. Our candidates in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls are a great mix of youth, experience, successful professionals and grassroots level leaders.

Today in Punjab we are seeing the following aspects:

Disgust with AAP, due to their abysmal governance and record corruption.

Disillusionment with Congress, due to their inability to look beyond one family, and that too a family which has seldom respected Sikh sentiments.

Disappointment with Akali Dal, for reasons I already mentioned.

A large section of Punjabi society, especially the youth and women, are seeing how the philosophy of the current leadership in Punjab mirrors the ideology of urban Naxals. They feel that Punjab has just about emerged from the

shadows of violence and bloodshed, and now again those with an urban Naxal bent of mind will take it on the wrong path. People are worried and feel it is only the BJP which can not only save Punjab, but also put it firmly on the path of peace, progress and prosperity.

Why has the BJP, a dominant force in the North, struggled for a foothold in Punjab?

Your question is not fully correct. If you evaluate our performance in the previous Vidhan Sabha and Lok Sabha elections, we have done well. Last two Lok Sabha polls we won two of the three seats we contested. For the longest time, our MLAs played an important role in the state government. But, despite all this, we remained humble and grounded which is why you feel we have struggled for a foothold. You may have also noted that the Punjabi community was our strongest support base in Delhi.

But yes, due to our alliance in Punjab we were not able to rise to our full potential. Now with the alliance over, we are all set to become an even stronger force in the state. The results and the mood of the people in the coming days will stun you but remember, I told you first that BJP is rising steadily in Punjab.

How would you describe your ties with the Sikh community?

I have had a long association with the Sikh community. I have worked extensively in Punjab and have lived there for years.

When a devastating earthquake hit Kutch, a deeply revered Sikh site in Kutch, Lakhpat Sahib Gurdwara, was completely destroyed. It was a place where Guru Nanak Dev Ji had stayed twice during his travels and was an important Sikh pilgrimage site. As CM, I ensured that the Gurdwara is restored to its past glory.

Post 2014, we have taken a number of steps to preserve and promote the rich Sikh heritage and culture. In 2019, the long awaited Kartarpur corridor was opened, which made it possible for Sikh pilgrims from India to visit the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan, where Guru Nanak Dev Ji lived out his final years.

In 2021, we ensured safe evacuation of Sikhs from war-torn Afghanistan and also ensured that the sacred Guru Granth Sahib was flown in with absolute reverence and dignity.

We declared December 26 as Veer Bal Diwas to commemorate the martyrdom of the Sahibzadas Zorawar Singh Ji and Fateh Singh Ji,

the brave sons of Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. The Sikh community has contributed immensely to nation building.

Do you think BJP will open its account in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh? How many seats will you win?

For decades, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala voters have voted for the same parties. These parties have promised to deliver development every election for decades. And if there is any scope for development, only certain sections were considered for these developmental schemes.

In 1984, when the BJP won two seats in India, one was from South India. So, for us, North and South have never been different.

In the 2019 parliamentary elections, the BJP emerged as the single largest party in the South, boasting the highest number of MPs. This victory is a testament to the voters' choice of development over divisive politics. The people's rejection of the North-South divide narrative is a clear indication of their informed understanding of how countries can develop and progress.

Take a closer look at how the states have been governed under the opposition parties. The

leaders who claim to lead based on family ties, have amassed unimaginable wealth. However, the state's finances are in disarray, and the people have come to realise how they are being exploited. They are now resorting to legal action to secure their salaries and pensions for the poor.

In this election, the voters will also send a strong message through their votes. The number of seats will significantly increase this time, and South India will show faith in our abilities.

The Enforcement Directorate arrested Delhi Chief Minister and AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal just before the elections; the SC gave him an interim bail a few days ago. The Opposition is accusing the ED of being a sword arm of the government...

Don't listen to me or them. Just check what the High Court has said.

The Delhi High Court has highlighted that the evidence reveals a conspiracy orchestrated at the highest levels. It also indicates that the Delhi Chief Minister was personally involved in perpetrating the scam. In a recent order, the Court again denied bail to their co-accused and deputy, noting that the accused was involved in destroying

electronic evidence. They even fabricated public opinion on the liquor policy!

These individuals never miss an opportunity to denigrate our institutions. Yet, these are the same institutions that granted them bail. Such hypocrisy is harmful to the nation's well-being.

These agencies are established for law enforcement and tackling financial fraud. They are doing their job in a free and fair manner.

Those claiming they are being targeted are the ones from whom mountains of cash have been seized. Yes, the corrupt are being targeted. The entire country saw the heaps of cash recovered by the agencies, which shows that the ED and the CBI are on the right track. Besides, the accusations are baseless; only 3% of all ED cases pertain to politicians, while the remaining 97% involve bureaucrats or officials. In the last 10 years, the amount seized has exceeded Rs 1.25 lakh crore, with Rs. 17,000 crore already returned to the citizens.

Your main poll promises — Ram Mandir, abrogation of Article 370 and commencement of work on UCC — have been fulfilled. What next?

These are not merely core issues of the BJP. These are the issues close to the heart of people

and of the entire nation and it is their expectation from us.

People are happy that in a short period, we have managed to clear the path for effectively resolving long-standing issues that have plagued the country for decades. The grand temple of Shri Ram Lalla has become a reality, with crores of devotees visiting Ayodhya for his darshan. After the abrogation of Article 370, a new era of peace, prosperity, and democracy is emerging in Jammu and Kashmir. Our party is also committed to bringing the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) to its logical conclusion.

Now our main driving force is the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047. I have received over 15 lakh suggestions from across the country. Based on this input, we have outlined a vision for 2047, a roadmap for the next five years, and a mission document for the first 125 days of our third term.

If re-elected, what will be your top target for the first 125 days?

We are planning for the future; we are planning for 2047. In this long journey, we have to begin with the first step. I have given this direction to my team, and my team has been discussing various aspects.

We were planning for 100 days, but we have now thought to take this to 125 days; the additional 25 days would be for the country's youth. The youth play a critical role in shaping the nation's future. The enthusiasm, especially among first-time voters and the younger generation during my election campaigns, inspired me to think of a blueprint for the first 125 days of the youth. And this is a reality that we need to take the youth into confidence. Today's youth will ultimately drive India towards Viksit Bharat, and hence, we must secure their future and fulfil their aspirations.

“More than ₹1.16 lakh crore worth of proceeds of crime has been attached by ED since 2014”: PM Modi

PM Modi's Interview to Open Magazine

May 29, 2024



The Indian economy is seen to be in a sweet spot. There are positive signals from most of the sectors. The Indian stand-point on issues confronting the world is being appreciated. Many countries see India as having the required heft to provide solutions to global problems. In this backdrop, how important are the outcome of this election and the shape of the new government?

It is basic nature for anyone-be it an individual or a country-to support and look forward to stability. If we are not stable, if we are unable to take steps that help us realise our potential, then it is obvious that we will not encourage a favourable outcome towards ourselves.

Over the last decade, our decisions, our proactive approach and our future-ready form of governance have helped us in tapping the true potential of the Indian economy.

Our growth, aided by a series of different initiatives, has been so remarkable that enterprises and nations across the world have been looking forward to having a part to play in our progress story.

Our vision for a Viksit Bharat is not an inward-looking vision-it is a vision of greater collaborations, stronger partner-ships, and global growth. I think there is a strong appreciation of this vision across the world.

Take our global outreach, for example, be it G20 where we insisted on digital infrastructure as a public good in the Delhi Declaration, the International Solar Alliance, the International Biofuel Alliance, the I2U2, or the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure are these not

aimed at global good? The world is looking to India for answers.

Today, we are working to play a proactive role when it comes to forging deeper partnerships or resolving conflicts.

This makes the result of these elections very important because what the world looks forward to is continuity, it is consistency and it is stability the three pillars of a decisive mandate by the people.

The election mandate is also very important because for 10 years we have done a lot of heavy-lifting, filled potholes from the past and empowered people with basic necessities. Now is the time for a quantum jump in aspirations and achievements. It is important that the path of growth is maintained at such an important time. People realise this and have decided to give us a huge mandate to accelerate progress.

Leftist slogans and prescriptions were seen to be responsible for pulling India back in the Congress years. These had little traction among policymakers in the recent past. But suddenly we see parties like Congress once again aggressively embracing those ideas. How will you counter this?

Congress, which has ruled the nation for several decades, has no real ideology except

‘Family First’ so they had to rely on ideologies that are alien to our land to continue their politics. Due to this, they had retrograde slogans and outdated programmes for everything.

Due to lack of a holistic national vision, their policies, their slogans could not achieve much. During Indiraji’s time, Congress turned into an outright leftist machinery. For every problem the nation faced, they gave a slogan. But the slogan could not solve any issue. They gave the slogan ‘Garibi Hatao’, but the nation ended up with the highest rate of inflation it has witnessed and a low rate of per capita income growth. By the end of the 1980s, Congress’ policies had led India to a massive balance of payment crisis that threatened the economy. Then again in 2004, Congress returned to power with the Left’s support. There again, outdated ideologies prevailed over commonsense and good governance.

Today, there is a declining trend of the Left in the country. Major citadels of Left politics have fallen. But there is one citadel of the Left that has only got stronger, which is within the Congress party. We saw how one of the closest advisors of Shehzaada was batting for a 55 per cent inheritance tax. In Congress’ manifesto, they have laid down their plans for wealth redistribution. Shehzaada has

said that he would do an X-ray of the personal wealth of people. We have also seen how Manmohan Singh had declared that Muslims had the first right to national resources. What do all of these things point towards that Congress has not changed with the times and remains outdated.

Their behaviour and promises are based on the premise that they are not coming to power. They have done no calculation behind the viability of their promises and what it would do to our economy. Their constant targeting of wealth-creators shows that progress and prosperity of the country do not matter to them.

As for countering this, the people of India are doing so. They have decided to punish Congress very severely and this will reflect in the results.

Why is the “Khan Market Gang” you referred to them in a recent address in Kolkata constantly attacking you and your government? They contend that the spirit of democracy is on the wane in India.

The loss of power and influence, and that too when one has wielded them for decades, can be lethal. For 60 years, a small coterie of people dominated all spheres of governance and politics.

These people spoke the same language, had the same cultural biases, thought the same way, and were totally disconnected from the rest of India. This coterie was powerful because of their surnames and not any real hard work. Sadly, for them, India has changed in the last decade and that is why they may be angry.

And in their anger they come up with new narratives year after year to prove their point.

As for democracy, let me tell you, democracy has been a part of our land for centuries. It is in our temperament to be democratic. The only time democracy was under threat was during Emergency and we all know which party imposed it. By the way, this is the same party which got the first amendment to curtail free speech. This is also the same party which wanted to snatch press freedom. I can go on and on about their anti-democratic nature, but I do want to say that democracy will always be vibrant in our nation, whatever narratives they want to peddle.

Why is a section of opinion-makers lenient towards one set of politicians even when they are caught in cases of corruption? I am referring to the play that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who is on parole, is getting in the media and

elsewhere. Has corruption in high places ceased to be an issue?

It is quite shocking that individuals identified by the court as being involved in corruption are receiving extensive media coverage without being cross-examined. When they make statements, these are accepted as truth and presented as such by the media. This person, who is out on bail for a few days, has been further exposed upon his release. The common people are observing, understanding, and realising this.

Corruption is indeed a critical issue. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) was originally founded on the plank of opposing Congress' corruption, and today, it is sitting with them while criticising the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). If the agencies had wrongfully accused him, why did he not receive relief from the court?

Furthermore, the opposition, which has accused ED and other agencies, has yet to prove in a single case that the allegations are unfounded. Every raid conducted by ED and CBI has revealed piles of cash, and people are witnessing this. For us, corruption is a very serious issue because it directly impacts people's lives. It is impossible to

say that corruption is not an issue. I have now added another aspect to this mantra: Na Khaunga, Na Khane Dunga. I have now added: Jisne Khaya Hai Who Nikalunga, Aur Jis ka Khaya Hai Usko Khilaunga. I will ensure that funds are recovered from the corrupt and returned to their rightful owners.

We have already demonstrated our track record in this regard. ₹17,000 crore of the ₹1.25 lakh crore of seized money has already been returned to the people. More than ₹1.16 lakh crore worth of proceeds of crime has been attached by ED since 2014, compared to only ₹5,000 crore before 2014. These findings show that our investigative agencies are doing their job well. Therefore, it is important to let these agencies operate without interference and without unfounded accusations of political bias.

There has been an effort to de-legitimise elections in India. It began with raising questions about EVMs and now there is a full-blown attack on the Election Commission. Some foreign publications have also joined this campaign. What is the reason for this attack?

Successive defeats and the fear of irrelevance can make people do very strange things.

Let me share a perspective with you: our party has spent a considerable amount of time in opposition, including the time when we had merely two MPs. We never ever discredited India's vibrant democratic processes. On the contrary, we worked towards expanding our own party and going among the people, which is why today we have emerged as the people's preferred choice.

In 2014, Congress got its lowest-ever tally in Indian history. Their performance in 2019 was about the same. In normal circumstances, this should have been a cause of introspection but nothing of that sort has really happened. On the contrary, they have blamed everyone except themselves for their pitiable condition.

Over time, they have begun to discredit the electoral process of India. And it is laughable because they, too, have been winning elections through this very process, including two states a year.

I just hope better sense prevails and they devote their time and energy to more constructive things.

You recently signalled that you have a 100-day plan for the government after it takes over for a third term. Will this be policy moves?

If you look closely at the track record of my governments, whether at the state or the national level, you will find that we believe in beginning with a bang. Usually, the first 100 days of any government are full of new energy due to the euphoria of electoral victory. It has been my firm belief that this energy should be channelled to yield immediate benefits for the people by taking big and bold decisions.

This also sends a message to the administrative machinery about the momentum, pace and direction for the next five years.

Take 2019, for example. Within 100 days of our victory, a number of big decisions were taken. There were many reforms in the banking sector, many of which directly resulted in the banking boom that we see today. The scope of PM Kisan was expanded from small and marginal farmers to all farmers. Amendments were made to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) to strengthen India's fight against terrorism. We had promised to form the Jal Shakti ministry and it was done in this period. The legislation against triple

talaq became a reality. We acted against Article 370 and ensured that Babasaheb's Constitution fully empowered the people of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

Any government would like to have achieved such things in its whole five years. But we did all this within the first 100 days!

For 2024 too, yes, we began with a 100-day plan for the third term of our government. But seeing the enthusiastic response to our governance from the youth, we have increased the scope to a 125-day plan, with 25 days having specific focus on policy decisions to benefit the youth.

The upcoming Budget takes place in exceptional circumstances. No government has had such an excellent macroeconomic backdrop, especially with respect to resurgent economic growth. What will be the broad contours defining this year's Budget?

I would like to humbly point out one nuance from your question. You said no government has had such an excellent macroeconomic backdrop and resurgent economic growth. It needs to be mentioned that these conditions did not happen of their own.

Bold economic reforms, keeping inflation down, continuous fillip to growth, focus on empowering the poor and marginalised sections, and fiscal discipline, even during a once-in-a-century global crisis, have given rise to a positive macroeconomic environment. In the past 10 years, our economy has grown but, at the same time, the benefits of growth have been taken to every region and every section of society. This will continue even in the future.

The upcoming Budget will take off where the interim Budget left off. With our interim Budget we have already shown that our focus is on strengthening the four pillars of our country—youth, poor, women, and farmers. It is these fellow citizens of ours who will be the key to building a Viksit Bharat.

There were big decisions for infrastructure, investment, industry and innovation in the Budget as well. You will find a further strengthening of these facets in the upcoming Budget.

One big feedback in this election is that aspirations have surged, especially since the new ecosystem is enabling social mobility. However, progress has not been easy, given that the legacy deficits especially with respect to basics like

banking, electricity, drinking water are just being overcome, leaving most Indians at a disadvantage. How will the government help the youth realise their aspirations?

For a long time, Congress-led governments kept people deprived of even the basics because they were aware that delivering good governance would raise expectations and only increase work for them. They had a 'basic minimum' attitude. Congress carefully calibrated the minimum amount of work they needed to do for the minimum number of people to keep winning elections. They promised only that and delivered even less. In the next election, the same cycle would continue.

But we have broken this status quo of 'basic minimum' and worked on delivering a '100 per cent saturation model' where everyone will be guaranteed of getting the benefits of every government scheme, be it bank accounts, toilets, tap water, or electricity.

We knew this would give rise to expectations for more and it was our declared intention to fuel these aspirations. I see rising aspirations and expectations of the people, especially the youth, as a good sign for our democracy. Through this, we are setting up a

political culture where good governance is demanded as a right by the people.

Right from Day One, even as we were working on fulfilling the basics, we have also been working on a detailed roadmap to empower our youth.

Our roadmap for the future, too, will encompass a 4E approach. 4E is Education, Entrepreneurship, Employment, and Emerging Sectors. When it comes to education, we are setting a furious pace, both in terms of quality and quantity. In the last 10 years, we have added a new college in India every day and a new university every week. Till 2014, there were less than 400 medical colleges in India. But today there are nearly 700. We have almost tripled the number of AIIMS in the country. There has also been a massive increase in the number of IITs, IIMs, IIITs, etc.

At the same time, just a few weeks ago, it was reported by the QS World University Rankings that, this year, Indian universities demonstrated the highest performance improvement among all G20 nations.

So, we are seeing a rise in both quantity and quality.

In terms of entrepreneurship, whether it is MUDRA Yojana or Startup India, our schemes have set a strong platform for our youth.

MUDRA has created around eight crore new entrepreneurs. And we have promised a doubling of MUDRA Yojana's loan size in the new government. This will go a long way in funding the dreams of our youth.

We already have around one lakh registered startups and this number is only set to grow in future with more and more youth getting exposure to innovation, investment and information.

The employment scenario in our country is seeing a revolution due to the push for Aatmanirbharta or self-reliance.

From a mobile importer, we became the second-largest manufacturer of mobiles. From a country that imported toys, we have become a country whose toy exports have gone up in record numbers. Our defence exports have grown twentyfold in the last 10 years. We are also seeing massive growth in manufacturing across various sectors.

This momentum towards building a self-reliant industrial base, complemented by our efforts to impart skills to youth, will be a big factor

in the rise of our economy to the top three in the world.

Added to this is our constant focus on emerging sectors or sunrise sectors that opens up new opportunities for youth. Semiconductors, space, AI, gaming, green energy, green hydrogen, space, drones many such sectors are being opened up for our youth. These will bring a fresh new wave of job creation. We will leave no stone unturned to ensure that Young India's dreams come true in a New India.

Another singular achievement of your government has been its record with respect to the empowerment of women. Beginning with your first Independence Day speech, your government has accorded dignity and empowerment to women. How do you view the social impact of such a profound transformation?

When speaking of the transformation that the nation's women have been leading over the past few years, I often get reminded of my conversation with a Lakhpatri Didi from the tribal areas of Madhya Pradesh. So that your readers have some context, Lakhpatri Didis are rural women who are organised into self-help groups (SHGs), where they

work with each other to run grassroots enterprises with financial assistance from the government. This has proven to be very successful across India, with one crore women becoming Lakhpati Didis already.

So, while I was speaking to this Lakhpati Didi, I asked her how her life changed. She said that earlier her husband used to travel around on a bicycle to his work. She found success in her small enterprise and she bought a scooter for him. Then, as an entrepreneur with a source of income, she took a loan and bought a tractor for him. That tractor became a source of income for him as well because he began to be called by farmers for the services of his tractor. She said they were on the verge of even repaying the tractor loan.

A number of socio-economic equations are being overturned by such schemes. Imagine the social impact that such work is bound to have when I say that we will work to create three crore Lakhpati Didis.

Our vision of women-led development is where women are not waiting to be empowered by others but are leading the empowerment of themselves and others. The government will play the role of an enabler. This was just one example.

But be it Jan Dhan accounts, toilets, tap water, MUDRA loans, or Ujjwala LPG connections, most of our flagship schemes have women as a central focus. Because the people most affected by the lack of these resources were women. Now, the movement of women on the path of social and financial leadership is on an upward trajectory and will continue to be so.

Your government is unique given that it has managed to achieve convergence between domestic and foreign policies. How will your government ensure this endures, given the heightened fluidity in geopolitics?

The reason you see this convergence between domestic and foreign policies is that the basic principle for both is the same Nation First. This principle sets all our priorities. So, when we are thinking of taking a tough decision domestically, our litmus test is not the political cost-benefit calculation but whether this is good for the nation or not.

When people see that we are putting national interest above politics, the support for our policy becomes broad-based. This massive backing of the people also serves us well in international relations

because the world knows India's leadership has the confidence of 140 crore people.

Countries that are working with us are also clear about our priorities. Be it in terms of energy security, combating climate change, trade, securing our borders, or rescuing our people from conflict zones, the world knows that India will do whatever is necessary for the welfare of its people and the world.

No matter how fluid geopolitics becomes, I believe there is space for a human-centric and principle-based approach. We saw this recently even during the G20 summit when the world came together in India. Our human-centric vision of progress is receiving widespread global support and I am confident that we will continue to do so.

You have reoriented politics in the last 10 years by empowering hitherto ignored categories like women. This has blunted entitlement politics. How do you see things panning out in the coming years?

Your question has the answer within it. How could we, as a nation, progress when more than half our population was ignored and deprived of any opportunity to contribute to national growth?

In these 10 years, we have not just empowered women, the marginalised and the backward communities; we have actually made them pivot points for prosperity. In the last 10 years, we have moved beyond the conventional idea of mere women's empowerment or women's development to a much larger vision of women-led development.

Each and every individual who has been touched or empowered with a government scheme has then passed on the benefits of their progress to those around them.

Till August 2023, we had provided over 43 crore MUDRA loans—of which around 70 per cent were provided to women. These loans led to the creation of eight crore new businesses; as these businesses grow, so will the number of individuals they employ and benefit. Since that time we have provided five crore more MUDRA loans—so you can imagine the pace at which this support and empowerment have gone forward and in our next term we aim to take it even further by doubling the credit availability of MUDRA loans up to ₹20 lakh.

We passed the historic Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam in our new Parliament and in future you will see how this historic legislation, which the

opposition kept delaying, will empower not just women to become people's representatives but also our entire legislature.

Similarly, two schemes which have led to the comprehensive and holistic enhancement of people's lives have been the PM Awas Yojana (PMAY) and the Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY. Every home built under PMAY is not just four walls and a roof, it is the centre of economic activity and a runway for aspirations to take flight—of these homes, 70 per cent have the name of one of my sisters, my mothers or my daughters on the registration.

Similarly, with the Ayushman Bharat scheme we have ensured that the gains made by poor families to lift themselves out of poverty are made irreversible. With Ayushman Bharat, seven crore families did not have to mortgage their savings, their land, their homes or their jewellery just to cover the cost of hospital admissions and treatments. You can imagine the boost it gives to their aspirations. In our next term, we are expanding the scope and coverage of both these schemes.

Overall, this is what we aim to do, we do not look at our achievements as a culmination, but

rather as the beginning of the road to a Viksit Bharat where every member of our society, regardless of caste, gender, colour, religion or location, is a beneficiary and contributor, where Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, and Sabka Prayas is integral to our progress and prosperity.

In the last 10 years, you have acted decisively against what some experts call “regulatory cholesterol”. You have been against red tapism. But do you think enough has been done?

In today’s world, there is a startup idea being discussed in every single classroom, café, and corner. From a village that may want to innovate around horticulture and handlooms to a group of students who may want to experiment with AI and machine learning, we have aspiring entrepreneurs everywhere. I do not want these aspiring entrepreneurs to worry about red tape. Every minute is critical for businesses, small and big, and therefore, it was important to do away with redundant and restrictive policies. By doing away with more than 39,000 unnecessary compliances and 1,500 archaic laws, or bringing the Jan Vishwas Act aimed at decriminalising and rationalising the system for ease of doing business, we have removed the speed breakers and pressed

the accelerator for speedy and effective governance.

Excessive red-tapism has also been addressed by integrating digital public infrastructure (DPI) in the routine processes. Be it the Goods and Services Tax (GST), or a simple process of availing a loan, I don't want our wealth creators to squander their precious time combating bureaucratic hurdles.

When I took over in 2014, one of my mottos was 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance'. Ten years later, we have achieved that. Could anyone have imagined in 2014 that 52 crore new bank account holders could access micro loans without even going to the bank?

From micro to macro, the red lights in the path of ease of doing business are now green.

Centre-state relations are always a tricky area especially when a section of the opposition believes in the politics of confrontation. How do you propose to get a convergence and insulate the economy from troublesome elements?

Not a single one of the opposition's narratives has been accepted in the court of law or in the people's court. Take for example, the Vande Bharat trains, airports or Metros—it is clear that

they have been started in every part of the country—north, south, centre, east and west. Similarly, expressways, Jan Dhan accounts, start ups, MUDRA and SVA Nidhi loans, PMAY homes, PM Kisan payments and completion of many stalled projects—all of this has been achieved at a pan-India level. Tax devolution, which the opposition was attempting to make an issue, has increased exponentially to all states.

Our government has written a new chapter on co-operative and competitive federalism. GST is a model for Centre-state cooperation and its success shows what we have achieved together. The aspirational districts programme has seen good convergence at Centre, state and district levels. We have encouraged and incentivised ease of doing business at the state level. During Covid-19, we made unprecedented efforts and took all states along. We also allowed excess borrowing depending on reforms done by states. We saw all states and over 100 cities host G20 events.

As far as the question of safeguarding the economy is concerned, I believe that if I can shield my people against the challenges across the world, if I can provide them with a Suraksha Kavach, I can ensure that our economy will continue to grow and thrive.

I am a son of a poor family; my party is made up of people who come from a farming family, a middle-class family, a poor family. This is why our government has ensured that while those from poor families, those fighting poverty, will get the security of Modi, they will get a Guarantee of Modi, they will get a Suraksha Kavach around them.

Even as the world battled with double-digit inflation, we ensured that inflation in India remained in the manageable category. In the last 10 years, the average inflation has been less than 5 per cent.

I will also cite some examples—today, if you want the best treatment, you are covered with Ayushman Bharat Yojana; if you want quality medicines, you can get them from a Janaushadhi Kendra; if you worry about getting food for your family, the Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana is there for you; if you are a farmer and worry about your basic needs, at a time when the price of urea is touching ₹3,000, my farmer brothers and sisters are getting it for ₹300.

For the last 10 years and in future as well, our vision of putting India first, Indians first, Indian interests first, will continue. This security

this Suraksha Kavach around Indians will continue; that is our first and foremost priority.

The markets are holding firm despite attempts to derail them. Is it because of confidence in policy continuity in other words, your continuation as prime minister?

I came to know that the markets were at an all-time high earlier this week. Clearly, a lot of factors are driving this upward trend, both globally and nationally. If you look at the markets at any given point, globally and not merely in India, you will realise that the factors driving investor sentiment, institutional or individual, are quite similar. Businesses like policy continuity that comes only from political stability and that stability only comes from a government that has a majority.

Can you imagine how markets would react if we had a new prime minister every year, as a part of a forced coalition? We have had coalitions in the past, but none as fractured as the one proposed by our opposition. This coalition is not about clarity or conviction but chaos and confusion.

The markets have covered a journey from 25000 to 75000 on the Sensex in our 10 years. Markets have seen that ours is a government which

is reform-oriented and has also improved the participation of retail investors significantly.

Our government has always been about celebrating wealth and employment-creation. From a woman running a small business in some village to a corporate employing thousands of people, our policies are all about empowering entrepreneurs.

Every single welfare programme or policy initiative we ran, from Jan Dhan Yojana to the Open Network for Digital Commerce, for the people was to enable them to become economic stakeholders in the country's progress.

We are poised to become the third-largest economy in the world. The confidence you see in the markets is their perception of the people and their mandate for a developed nation.

We pulled 25 crore people out of multidimensional poverty and we have empowered 100 crore people in the last 10 years, and in the next 10 years, these empowered households are going to lead the Indian growth story. These people are going to become the new wealth and job creators.

The strong buoyancy you are witnessing in the markets is a testament to the times to come. No one can derail the Indian growth story now. Several

CEOs in the West are already saying that going forward you cannot ignore India. If they can't ignore India and its imminent growth, how do you think markets in our financial capital can?

Banking was one sector that bore the brunt in the UPA years. How did the government manage to overcome the problem?

This is a very important question, and I am glad you asked me about this. When we took over in 2014, we inherited what has been described as the 'Twin Balance Sheet Problem'. The origins of this problem were in the exuberant credit growth that was allowed for some corporations. As you would know, several of these corporations had their projects ending up as Non-Performing Assets (NPAs). Preferential treatment by the previous government for a few corporations created the plague of NPAs. This was your era of phone-banking.

In 2014, banks had a critical problem. They had NPAs on their balance sheets which they could not get rid of, and because of that they were unable to lend to small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs. The public sector banks (PSBs) were recording losses every year. Our banking

system was in a credit deadlock. That was the mess Congress had left behind.

We introduced new reforms to recognise existing and potential NPAs, created laws that ensured easy exit for a business if it was running at a loss through the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (2016), as that would benefit the creditors as well.

For 70 years, no government had worked on such reforms but for us it was a priority because, unlike Congress, we could not leave the entire banking system at risk.

Ten years later, bank profits have exceeded ₹3 lakh crore in FY24. There is no credit deadlock anymore and everyone, from a woman working in an SHG to an entrepreneur, can access credit as per their eligibility.

Even though there were some economists who predicted that our MUDRA loan programme would usher in the next NPA crisis, the NPA ratio is very low, even when over 43 crore loans worth ₹22.5 lakh crore have been given.

The buck does not stop here. Financial inclusion, because of DPI, is now making personalised banking possible for every single household, without any paperwork.

On the foundation of Jan Dhan- Aadhaar- Mobile (JAM), we now have the Account Aggregator (AA) framework that is enabling people to access multiple credit options from the comfort of their homes, and availing credit in minutes.

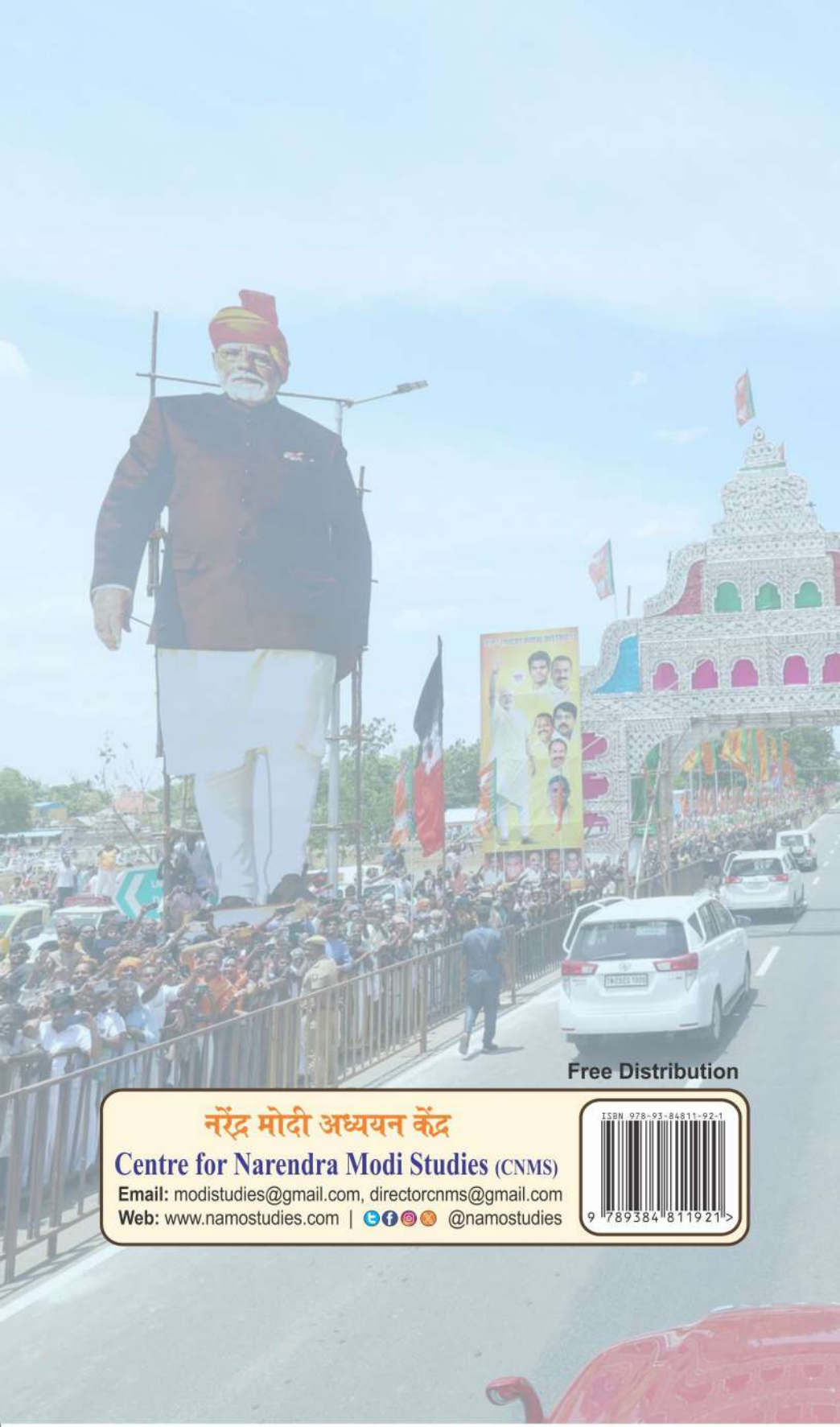
Congress ended up with an NPA crisis because their focus was narrowed to a few corporations, but our priority was inclusive growth, and that reflects in the current health of the banking system after a decade of our being in power.

Why are your rivals, particularly the members of the Gandhi family, angry with you?

I can't answer that question. It is best that they do. What have they not done to harass me? And it has been going on for two decades and more.

For my part, all I can say is that I have malice towards no one.

The people of India have seen the injustice, abuse, character assassination they have unleashed on me and have given me unparalleled affection. I am grateful for that.



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