

## Highlights of the President's Address 2021

The President of India, Mr. Ram Nath Kovind, addressed a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament on January 29, 2021. He outlined the major policy achievements and objectives of the government in his address. Key highlights of the address include:

### Economy and Finance

- The government is merging small banks to create large and strong banks to strengthen the banking system.
- Rs 1.8 lakh crore have been saved through the use of Jan Dhan Accounts, Aadhaar and Mobile. Since 2014, more than 13 lakh crore rupees has been transferred to bank accounts of beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer.
- Between April and August, 2020, foreign direct investment of 36 billion dollars was made in India.
- India's ranking in the Ease of Doing Business Index has improved.

### Health and COVID-19

- India managed the pandemic by developing a network of 2,200 labs, and manufacturing thousands of ventilators, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits, and test kits domestically. India is also conducting the world's largest COVID-19 vaccination programme. Both vaccines under the programme have been produced domestically. There has been a rapid decline in new cases of COVID-19 and recoveries have increased.
- Under the Ayushman Bharat scheme 1.5 crore poor people have received free treatment of up to five lakh rupees and saved Rs 30,000 crore.
- The government launched Shramik Special trains for migrants and workers during the lockdown to help them return.
- Under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Yojana, 7,000 Janaushadhi Kendras have been set up to provide the poor with affordable medicines.
- Since 2014, the number of medical colleges has increased from 387 to 562. Further, under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana, 22 new AIIMS have been sanctioned.
- Medical Council of India has been replaced with the National Medical Commission.

### Agriculture and Food Distribution

- Three farm Bills: (i) the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and

Facilitation) Bill, (ii) the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance, and (iii) the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill were passed.

- MSP has been increased to at least 1.5 times of the cost of production.
- Under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme, Rs 1.13 lakh crore has been transferred to the accounts of small and marginal farmers as income support.
- Under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Rs 90,000 crore has been paid as compensation to insured farmers in the last five years.
- During the lockdown, for eight months, 80 crore people were provided 5 kg free food grains per month under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, in addition to entitlements under the National Food Security Act, 2013. Further, the One Nation, One Ration Card allowed migrant labourers and workers away from home to access entitlements across India.
- The Agriculture Infrastructure Fund for one lakh crore rupees has been started to improve agricultural infrastructure. Similarly, an Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund for Rs 15,000 crore has been created to improve the infrastructure in dairy sector.

### Manufacturing and Job Creation

- 29 Central labour laws were amalgamated into four Labour Codes that were passed.
- Several provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 have been de-criminalised.
- Production Linked Incentive Scheme worth Rs 1.5 lakh crore is being implemented in ten manufacturing sectors.
- Initiatives such as the Emergency Credit Guarantee Scheme of three lakh crore rupees, a special scheme of Rs 20,000 crore for distressed MSMEs, and Fund of Funds have been implemented to benefit small scale industries during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan was launched in six states and 50 crore man-days of employment was provided to returnee migrant labourers in their villages.
- The National Recruitment Agency has been set up to simplify and streamline recruitment process for jobs.

## Defence and Internal Affairs

- In June 2020, 20 soldiers lost their lives at Galwan Valley in the Indo-China clash. Since then, additional forces have been deployed at the LAC to protect the sovereignty of India.
- Modern defence equipment is being procured to enhance capabilities of armed forces. An order for 83 indigenous fighter aircrafts 'Tejas' worth Rs 48,000 crore has been placed.
- India is increasing its share in the exports of defence equipment. Several advanced weapons including quick reaction missiles, tanks, and indigenous rifles are being manufactured in India.
- The number of naxal-violence related incidents have declined and the naxal-affected area is shrinking. There has also been a decline in the number of incidents of violent extremism in the North East.

## Infrastructure and Transport

- The National Infrastructure Pipeline worth Rs 110 lakh crore is being implemented to develop infrastructure projects across sectors.
- Infrastructure projects including submarine optical fibre cable from Chennai to Port Blair, the Atal Tunnel, and the Char Dham Road Project are being implemented.
- Under the Bharatmala Pariyojana, work on six new expressways and 18 access-controlled road corridors is underway.

## Urban and Rural Development

- Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, two crore houses have been built since 2014 for poor families in rural areas. More than one crore houses for the poor have been sanctioned in urban areas, of which 40 lakh houses have been constructed.
- Under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, construction of 6.42 lakh kilometres of road network has been completed in rural areas. In its third phase, 1.25 lakh kilometres of road networks will be upgraded.

## Energy

- Since 2013-14, India's renewable energy capacity has grown by 2.5 times, and solar energy capacity has increased 13 times. Further, a fourth of India's energy production comes from renewable sources.
- More than 2.5 crore free electricity connections been given since 2014 to ensure electrification in rural areas.

## Water and Environment

- Under the Jal Jeevan Mission, three crore families have been connected with piped water supply.
- India is among frontline nations in implementing the Paris Agreement.

## Education

- Under the National Education Policy, 2020 students have been given the freedom to opt for the subjects of their choice.
- The government is providing scholarships to more than 3.2 crore students.
- Under the Pradhan Mantri e-Vidya, the Diksha online portal has been developed to establish a unified digital platform for school education.

## Women and Child Development

- Under the Jan Dhan scheme, Rs 31,000 crore has been transferred to accounts of women.
- Under the Ujjwala scheme, 14 crore gas cylinders have been given free of cost to women beneficiaries.
- Under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana, more than seven crore women entrepreneurs have become a part of nearly 66 lakh self-help groups. These groups have been provided loans worth Rs 3.4 lakh crore since 2014.
- Under the Mission Indradhanush, 3.5 crore children have been vaccinated.

## Minority and Tribal Affairs

- The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 has been implemented to provide equal opportunities to transgenders.
- 550 Ekalavya Model Residential Schools have been sanctioned in every tribal dominated area.

## Technology and Space

- More than 2,000 government services can be availed through the Umang App launched to enable digital inclusion.
- Formation of the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe) will accelerate reforms in the space sector. Work on Chandrayan-3, Gaganyaan, and Small Satellite Launch Vehicle is ongoing.

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