

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
TO THE JOINT SITTING OF TWO HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT**

New Delhi, 31.01.2020

Honourable Members,

1. I am pleased to address the joint sitting of Parliament at the start of the third decade of 21st century. I once again extend my best wishes for the New Year and congratulate all Members of Parliament for being a witness to this historic occasion.
2. This decade is extremely important for India. In this decade, we will complete 75 years of our independence. In this decade, we all have to work together with new energy to give impetus to the making of a new India. With the efforts of my Government, a strong foundation has been laid in the last five years, to make this decade India's decade and this century India's century.
3. Whether it is Puja Bapu's dream of Gram Swaraj, Babasaheb Ambedkar's principle of social justice, Nehru ji's dream of creating a modern India, Sardar Patel's resolve for Ek Bharat- Shreshtha Bharat, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya's goal of Antyodaya, Lohia ji's vision of social equality, we the people of India will together make these dreams a reality.

Honourable Members,

4. The Constitution of India is the guiding light for all of us in fulfilling these dreams. Just a few weeks ago, on 26th November, 70 years of the Constitution have been completed. On that day, 12 crore citizens of the country, publicly read out the Preamble of the Constitution and renewed their commitment to the Constitution.
5. In addition, to protecting the rights of every citizen of our country, our Constitution makes the citizens of the country mindful of their duties. Further, our Constitution also places an expectation that the decisions taken through democratic processes will be

accepted by the countrymen. At the same time, our Constitution expects the Parliament and every member present in this House to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the countrymen and make the necessary laws, keeping the national interest paramount.

Honourable Members,

6. I am happy that in the last 7 months, Parliament has set new standards in conducting its business. The performance during the first session of this Lok Sabha has set a new record in the last seven decades.
7. Due to my Government's strong commitment, the law against Triple Talaq ensuring justice to Muslim women and safeguarding their rights; the Consumer Protection Act providing new rights to the citizens; the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Act for protecting the savings of the poor; the Chit Funds Amendment Act protecting the poor from fraudulent chit fund schemes; the law enhancing punishment for sexual offences against children; Motor Vehicles Amendment Act aimed at reducing road accidents; and the law protecting the rights of the transgender persons - several such historic legislations have been enacted.
8. I congratulate every Member of Parliament for fulfilling this Constitutional responsibility.

Honourable Members,

9. The faith reposed by the people of our country in our democratic institutions strengthens the foundation of our democracy. The maturity displayed by the countrymen after the Supreme Court's verdict on Ram Janmabhoomi is also laudable. My Government is of the firm view that mutual discussions and debates strengthen democracy. At the same time, any kind of violence in the name of protests weakens the society and the nation.

Honourable Members,

10. In a democracy, nothing is more sacred than the mandate given by the people. The people of the country have given this mandate to my Government for the making of a new India.
- A new India which takes pride in the glory of our ancient culture and which enriches the 21st century world with the power of its knowledge.
 - A new India, in which besides finding solutions to old problems, new chapters of development are written.
 - A new India, in which adequate facilities and new opportunities for growth are available for the poor, dalits, women, youth, tribals and minorities.
 - A new India, where every region develops, no region is left behind, where the benefits of modern technology reach the farthest end of society, and
 - A new India, which is at the forefront of the fourth industrial revolution and which attains new heights at the global stage.

Honourable Members,

11. For making such a new India and for fulfilling the expectations of the people, my Government is working with commendable pace and decisiveness to bring about changes in every field. It is the outcome of reforms at the grassroot level ushered in by the Government in the last five years that there has been an unprecedented improvement in India's global ranking in several areas.
12. In the World Bank's **Ease of Doing Business** rankings, India has leapfrogged to the 63rd position, moving up by 79 places. In the **Resolving Insolvency** rankings, India has moved from 108th to 52nd position and in the **Global Innovation** rankings, from 74th to 52nd position. India has improved its international ranking by 10 points in the **Logistics Performance Index**. India has moved from 52nd to 34th position in the World Economic Forum's **Travel and Tourism Competitiveness** rankings.

13. These reforms in diverse areas are also a call to the international community to see how India has strengthened its foundations in the last 5-6 years and how keen the people of India are to build a new India.

Honourable Members,

14. My Government is following the mantra of '**Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas**', and is working with full commitment and sincerity. Free gas connections to 8 crore poor, houses to 2 crore poor, bank accounts to about 38 crore poor, free treatment facility of up to Rs 5 lakh to 50 crore people, insurance cover to 24 crore people and free electricity connections to over 2.5 crore people have been provided; with complete transparency and without any discrimination. My Government has provided equitable access to benefits and facilities of its schemes for the poor people; of all religions and all regions, and has, thus, earned the trust of the people of the country.

Honourable Members,

15. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, the great son of Bengal and the Minister of Industry in the Government headed by Jawaharlal Nehru Ji, had said in the Lok Sabha: "**In a democratic federal state, the fundamental rights of the citizens of one constituent unit cannot vary vis-à-vis the citizens of another unit. Are not the people of Jammu and Kashmir entitled to the fundamental rights that we have given to the people of India minus Jammu and Kashmir?**"
16. Today, after seven decades, the whole country is happy that the dream of crores of freedom fighters including Dr. Mukherjee has come true and the people of Jammu-Kashmir and Ladakh, the dalits and women from that area have also got the same rights as the people in the rest of the country. The abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A of the Constitution by two-thirds majority in both the Houses of Parliament is not only historic but has also paved the way for equitable development of Jammu - Kashmir and

Ladakh. Through this House, I heartily congratulate the people of Jammu - Kashmir and Ladakh for joining the mainstream of development.

Honourable Members,

17. Rapid development of Jammu-Kashmir and Ladakh, preservation of their culture and traditions, transparent and honest administration and democratic empowerment are among the priorities of my Government. During the President's Rule and since becoming a Union Territory, all the developmental projects in Jammu - Kashmir and Ladakh have gained momentum.
18. Towards the end of the year 2018, elections in more than 4,400 panchayats of Jammu -Kashmir were conducted in a peaceful manner. For the first time since independence, elections to more than 300 **Block Development Councils** have also been held there. The people there are now getting full benefits under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Ujjwala Yojana, Ayushman Yojana, Ujala Yojana, **DBT** and food subsidy, in a transparent manner. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, while around **3,500** houses were built in Jammu - Kashmir till March 2018, in less than two years thereafter, construction of more than **24,000** houses has been completed.
19. Apart from this, works relating to connectivity, irrigation, hospitals, schemes related to tourism and establishment of institutes of higher education such as **IIT, IIM, AIIMS** are also proceeding at a rapid pace in Jammu -Kashmir and Ladakh. **NAFED** has been entrusted with the responsibility for the direct procurement of apples in Jammu - Kashmir. This has especially benefited the apple growers of Kashmir Valley.

Honourable Members,

20. The success of the public welfare schemes of my Government and the historic decisions taken by the Government have

increased the expectations of the countrymen, as well as the responsibilities of the Government.

21. For many years, the people of the country desired that they should be able to pay their respects at Kartarpur Sahib with ease. My Government has built the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor in record time, and dedicated it to the nation on the occasion of 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. It is a privilege for my Government to have got the opportunity to celebrate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji with full veneration, within the country and abroad. The 400th birth anniversary of Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji will also be celebrated in a befitting manner with full grandeur and devotion by my Government.

Honourable Members,

22. Over 40 lakh people living in the capital city of Delhi, had been living for many years in the hope that one day they would get the ownership rights of their homes and that they will be able to lead a dignified life. The Government has fulfilled this long awaited expectation of people living in more than 1,700 colonies of Delhi.
23. Farmers, agricultural labourers, unorganized sector labourers and small traders of the country had expectations of a pension scheme that would be of help to them in their old age. My Government has not only fulfilled their wish, but also has covered about 60 lakh beneficiaries so far, under these pension schemes.
24. Pujya Bapu always considered cleanliness next to Godliness. On the occasion of Gandhi ji's 150th birth anniversary, on 2 October last year, rural areas of the country have paid a befitting tribute to the Father of the Nation by declaring themselves free from open defecation. Now it is incumbent on all of us to make our cities and villages even more clean and beautiful in the coming decade.

Honourable Members,

25. Even today, there are about 15 crore houses without piped water supply in rural areas of the country. Our sisters and daughters face the maximum hardship due to lack of water supply in the house. Further, contaminated water adversely impacts the health of the entire family. In order to ensure the availability of sufficient quantity of potable drinking water to each rural household in the country, my Government has launched the Jal Jeevan Mission. Central Government, all State Governments, local bodies and voluntary organizations are working together to transform this Mission into a people's movement. In the coming days Rs 3 lakh 60 thousand crore will be spent on this scheme. My Government has launched the Atal Bhujal Yojana with special focus on seven of the most vulnerable States of the country, where ground water level is depleting rapidly.

Honourable Members,

26. My Government's mantra of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas is meant for every citizen and for every region and every State of the country. My Government believes that just as advancement of a person on the margins of society should be given high priority, the development of the areas left behind should also receive greater attention.

27. By according 112 districts the status of **Aspirational Districts**, the Government is paying special attention to each scheme relating to development of the poor living there. State Governments have also positioned the right mix of experienced and youthful officers in these districts. As a result, there has been impressive improvement in several development indicators in these districts and many districts have now come close to their State average. I congratulate and convey my best wishes to the team of each Aspirational District through this House.

Honourable Members,

28. More than the physical distance of the North East from Delhi, it was the emotional disconnect that disheartened the people of the

region. My Government has transformed this situation by working tirelessly during the last five years. Work is being done at an unprecedented pace in the North East to enhance connectivity, strengthen infrastructure and make people's lives easier. As a result of these efforts of the Government, by 2022, the capitals of Sikkim, Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland will be connected to the rail network. The work on Agartala-Akhaura rail link is also progressing at a fast pace. In the year 2022, the construction of the new airport being built at 'Holongi' in Arunachal Pradesh will also be completed.

29. Besides this, construction of AIIMS in Guwahati, bio-refinery in Numaligarh and sports university in Manipur are also progressing at a fast pace. Recently, the Government has sanctioned about Rs 9,000 crore for the North East Gas Grid Project. This project will lay the foundation of a **Gas Based Economy** in all the 8 States of the North East.
30. The Central and Assam Governments have recently signed a historic agreement with the Bodo Organizations to bring an end to the 5 decade-old Bodo dispute. With this agreement, a complex problem, that has claimed more than 4000 lives, has been resolved. After this agreement, the Government will spend Rs1500 crore for the development of Bodo community. Similarly, another landmark agreement between Tripura, Mizoram, the Central Government and the Bru community has not only resolved a decades-old problem but has also ensured a secure life for thousands of people belonging to the Bru community.

Honourable Members,

31. My Government is committed to bringing the brothers and sisters from the tribal community of the country into the mainstream of development. For the first time, Government has extended the benefit of **MSP** to forest produce. My Government's special emphasis is on the health, education and skill development of the tribals. Only a few weeks ago, the Government has launched a

programme for opening more than 400 Eklavya Model Residential Schools in the country. Recently, reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies has also been extended for the next ten years.

Honourable Members,

32. My Government is also constantly striving for the social, economic and educational progress of the minority community. Through Hunar Haat, employment opportunities have been provided to 2 lakh 65 thousand skilled artisans belonging to the minority community. Scholarships have been granted in large numbers to Muslim students to enable them to continue their education without interruption.
33. On the special request of my Government, an unprecedented increase in Haj quota was made by Saudi Arabia as a result of which a record 2 lakh Indian Muslims performed the Haj this time. India is the first country where the entire process of Haj pilgrimage has been made digital and online. The Government is also undertaking 100 percent digitization of Waqf properties across the country so that these properties can be utilised for the welfare of the Muslim community.

Honourable Members,

34. My Government is working with utmost sensitivity towards fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of the divyangjan. Along with increase in reservations and legal empowerment, more than 1000 Government buildings and more than 700 railway stations have been made accessible for divyangjan. In the last 5 years, aids and assistive devices worth Rs 900 crore were distributed to the divyangjan by organising camps. The Government is creating a national database of divyangjan and **e-Unique Identification Cards** have been issued to more than 25 lakh divyangjan. My Government, in its previous term, had undertaken a special initiative for preparing the **Indian Sign Language Dictionary**. It

gives me pleasure to inform the House that a special dictionary of 6 thousand words has been prepared.

Honourable Members,

35. India has always believed in the principle of equal respect for all faiths. However, at the time of Partition, this very belief of India and of its people came under the most severe attack. In the environment prevailing in the aftermath of partition, the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi had said: **“Hindus and Sikhs of Pakistan, who do not wish to live there, can come to India. It is the duty of the Government of India to ensure a normal life for them.”** Many national leaders and political parties have from time to time supported this idea of Pujya Bapu and further propagated it. It is our responsibility to honour this wish of the founding fathers of our nation. I am happy that both the Houses of Parliament have fulfilled this wish, by enacting the Citizenship Amendment Act. At a time when the country is celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhi ji, all of you have given paramount consideration to this sentiment. I congratulate both the Houses of Parliament and all the MPs for this.

Honourable Members,

36. We have all been witness to the increase in the atrocities on minorities in Pakistan over time. We have all seen what happened in Nankana Sahib recently. It is the responsibility of all of us to bring the atrocities being committed in Pakistan to the notice of the global community.

37. While condemning the atrocities on the minorities in Pakistan, I urge the world community to take cognizance of it and take necessary steps in this regard.

Honourable Members,

38. My Government would like to clarify once again that the procedures which have existed for people from all faiths of the world who believe in India and who wish to obtain Indian

citizenship, remain unchanged. A person of any faith can follow these processes and become a citizen of India. The Government has made several provisions to ensure that granting citizenship to those who have been compelled to take shelter in India does not have any adverse cultural impact on any region, especially the North East.

39. Honourable Members,

The great saint poet of India, Thiruvalluvar had said -

‘Urruvar Ulgattaark AaniyaTattraad, Erru-vaare Ellaam Porutt’

That is, “Like a linchpin of an axle, a farmer holds together the entire world. He bears the burden of those people who cannot cultivate land.”

40. Our country is indebted to our farmers who are our annadata, because of whose hard work we are self-reliant in foodgrain. Bringing about a change in the lives of farmers who serve the country selflessly and development of rural areas, are the priorities of my Government. The Government is going to spend an amount of Rs 25 lakh crore in the coming years to strengthen the rural economy. Government is working on a strategy to develop an income centric system aimed at doubling the income of farmers.

Honourable Members,

41. Under the Prime Minister Kisan Samman Nidhi, more than Rs 43 thousand crore has been deposited in the bank accounts of more than 8 crore farmer families. On 2nd January this month, my Government has created a record by transferring Rs 12 thousand crore to the bank accounts of 6 crore farmers simultaneously.

42. My Government is working with dedication to provide the farmers, prices which are one and a half times the input cost. Steady increase in **MSP** for Kharif and Rabi crops is a step in this

direction. Due to the efforts of the Government the procurement of pulses and oilseeds has increased by more than 20 times.

Honourable Members,

43. My Government is also promoting alternative farming practices. Along with cluster-based horticulture, organic farming is also being promoted and propagated. The production of honey has increased by about 60 per cent due to the efforts made by the Government in this area. The export of honey has also more than doubled. In order to build further on this accomplishment, the National Bee-Keeping and Honey Mission has been approved.
44. The twin objectives of doubling the fishermen's income and fish production are sought to be achieved through the newly created Department of Fisheries. A massive drive is being organized with the aim of ensuring the health of more than 50 crore livestock of the country. Under the National Animal Disease Control Programme, an amount of Rs 13 thousand crore is being spent on immunization and other measures to protect the cattle from **Foot and Mouth Disease**.

Honourable Members,

45. My Government along with the State Governments is working with sensitivity to provide relief to farmers from natural calamities. Under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, on an average, every year, more than five and a half crore farmers are availing crop insurance cover at a very low premium. Under this scheme in the last three years, claims of farmers to the tune of Rs 57 thousand crore have been settled.
46. The impact of **e-NAM**, the online national market for farmers has also started becoming visible. 1 crore 65 lakh farmers and about 1 lakh 25 thousand traders of the country have been linked to it. About Rs 90 thousand crore worth of business has been transacted through this platform. In order to further enhance the

effectiveness of **e-NAM** in this decade, work is underway to link more than 400 new mandis with it.

Honourable Members,

47. The health of an individual has impact on the development of both the family and the country. My Government is working with a holistic approach in the area of health. Serious efforts are being made at every level in preventive and curative healthcare. Many schemes such as the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Jal Jeevan Mission, Poshan Abhiyan, Fit India Movement, Ayushman Bharat Yojana, are contributing to improving the health of the people.
48. The wide ranging impact of the Ayushman Bharat Scheme on the health sector of the country is visible. Under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, so far 75 lakh poor have availed free treatment. More than 27 thousand Health and Wellness Centres have also been set up.

Honourable Members,

49. Due to the decisions taken by my Government, medical expenses of the poor and the middle class have been reduced considerably. Capping of prices of more than 1000 essential medicines has resulted in a saving of Rs 12,500 crore for the patients. Reduced cost of stents and knee-implants has provided huge relief to lakhs of patients. Every day 5 to 7 lakh patients are now purchasing medicines for serious ailments at affordable prices from more than 6,000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras.
50. By setting up the National Medical Commission, my Government has reaffirmed its commitment to reform medical education and healthcare. 75 new medical colleges have been sanctioned this year, which will result in an increase in **MBBS** seats by about 16 thousand and **PG** seats by more than 4 thousand. In addition, 22 **AIIMS** have been sanctioned for various parts of the country, construction work for which is in progress.

51. My Government is also making special efforts to improve the health of women. Under the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, about Rs 5 thousand crore has been transferred by the Government directly to the bank accounts of 1 crore 20 lakh women of the country. Under Mission Indradhanush, 3 crore 50 lakh infants and about 90 lakh pregnant women have been vaccinated. Benefits of these schemes are particularly visible in areas inhabited by dalits and tribals. My Government has also started making oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins 'Suvidha' available for just one rupee.

Honourable Members,

52. Because of the efforts of my Government to promote entrepreneurship and livelihood for women, more than 6 crore 60 lakh women have already joined the Self Help Group movement. These women are being provided credit at low interest rates. In order to provide equal opportunities, for the first time women have been allowed to work during the night shift also in both underground and open cast mines. It is with this same objective of promoting gender equality that admission of girls has been permitted in Sainik Schools for the first time. Appointment of women in the Military Police is also underway. For the first time the Indian Air Force is providing new opportunities for women to work in the fighter stream and as defence attachés.

Honourable Members,

53. My Government is working with sensitivity for ensuring the safety of women. In order to enhance women's safety, more than 600 One Stop Centers have been set up in the country. A national database has been created to identify the perpetrators of crimes against women. More than 1 thousand Fast Track Special Courts will be set up across the country to ensure speedy justice in such cases. It has also been decided to set up a **Women Help Desk** in every police station of the country. For heinous crimes like sexual

offence against children, Government has made a provision even for capital punishment.

Honourable Members,

54. The 21st century is referred to as the Century of Knowledge and the priority of the Government is to prepare the youth to provide leadership in this field. In the areas related to Research, Innovation, Incubation and Start-Ups, it is the youth who will be at the forefront in this decade. The youth are benefitting continuously from the policy decisions taken by my Government in this regard. Today, India is home to the world's third largest start-up ecosystem. Under the Start-Up India campaign, recognition has been accorded to 27 thousand new start-ups in the country. The number of patents granted in the country has increased four times in the last five years, whereas trademark registrations have increased five-fold.
55. Through the Skill India Mission and National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme, along with skill development the youth are also being provided with necessary funds for self-employment. More than 5 crore 54 lakh new entrepreneurs in the country have availed loans under the Mudra scheme. So far, credit in excess of Rs 10 lakh crore has been sanctioned under this scheme.

Honourable Members,

56. My Government is laying emphasis on schemes aimed at improving quality of education and promoting **innovation**. More than Rs 37 thousand crore has been sanctioned for modernization of 75 educational institutions in the country through the **Higher Education Funding Agency** (HEFA). Government has initiated action for appointment of about 7 thousand teachers in Kendriya Vidyalayas and 12 thousand teachers in Higher Education Institutions. 'Swayam2' has also been introduced by the Government to strengthen the online education system.

57. I am delighted to inform you that for the first time ever in the history of the country, number of girls admitted in higher education has exceeded that of boys.

Honourable Members,

58. Our youth have the potential to transform India into a great sporting power in the world. Under various schemes, including the Khelo India programme and the Olympic Podium Scheme, young talent is being identified and provided with requisite training to compete at the highest level. The third phase of Khelo India programme has been successfully concluded in Guwahati just a few days back. It is worth noting that 80 new national records were set there, of which 56 were set by women.

Honourable Members,

59. This year 1st August marks the hundredth death anniversary of the great freedom fighter, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who had given the clarion call that Swaraj is our birth right. After attainment of Swaraj, the nation has now started moving towards Suraaj. Moving rapidly towards the goal of Suraaj, my Government is working at three levels:

- First – Transforming the work culture in Government and strengthening institutions,
- Second - Use of modern technology to promote transparency,
- And third - promoting healthy competition and public participation at the grassroot level.

Honourable Members,

60. Following the fundamental principle of “**Minimum Government, Maximum Governance**”, several **reforms** have been undertaken by the Government. With its recent abolition of **58** more laws, the number of laws abolished by the Government has now reached about **1500**. **Reforms** in recruitment process for every level are underway in order to promote transparency. The youth are

benefitting from the decision to discontinue interviews for most of the Group B posts and Group C posts.

Honourable Members,

61. Coordination among Departments and dismantling of **silos** are absolutely essential for successful implementation of schemes. In this direction, organization of a common Foundation Course for officers of more than 20 Civil Services in October last year is an important step. Recently, the management of Indian Railways has also been restructured. To make the functioning of various Tribunals in the country more effective, the Tribunal system too is being reformed. New Ministries have also been created to facilitate better target orientation of schemes. Creation of the Ministry of Skill Development and the Ministry of Jal Shakti by the Government is an example of this thought process.

Honourable Members,

62. Fast and accurate delivery of Government services and benefits has been the hallmark of my Government. This has been made possible by application of technology as a basis of good governance on an unprecedented scale. Identification of beneficiaries in a transparent manner, transfer of 100 per cent assistance directly to bank accounts of beneficiaries and use of modern technology in monitoring of schemes have made the lives of the poor and the middle class easier. This technology will also help in improving the quality of life of our countrymen during this decade.

Honourable Members,

63. We are all aware that digital technology is the foundation of the Industrial Revolution **Industry 4.0**. My Government has focused on **Digital Access, Digital Inclusion** and **Digital Empowerment** in an unparalleled manner through the Digital India Programme in order to take full advantage of the Industrial Revolution in the 21st century. It is a matter of pride for the country that digital systems

developed in India during the last five years have been a source of inspiration for several countries of the world.

Honourable Members,

64. Today, more than 121 crore people in the country have Aadhaar cards and about 60 crore people possess **RuPay** cards. A record value of Rs 2 lakh crore has been transacted through **UPI** in December 2019. Recently, the Government has also launched a new version of the **BHIM App**.
65. The Government has linked about 450 schemes to Direct Benefit Transfer or **DBT** by using the **JAM** Trinity of Jan-Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile. An amount of over Rs 9 lakh crore has been directly transferred to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries through **DBT**, during the last 5 years. By plugging the leakages, my Government has saved about Rs 1 lakh 70 thousand crore from going into the wrong hands.
66. The Government e-Marketplace, **GeM** has brought about transparency in Government procurement. **GeM** has not only opened up a huge market, in the form of the Government, for the small and micro entrepreneurs, it has also connected the Government directly with the entrepreneurs. During the last three years, about Rs 40 thousand crore worth of procurement has been done by different Government Departments through **GeM**.
67. By leveraging technology, my Government has taken several major steps to end the Inspector Raj. Now we are also developing a system in the Income Tax Department which would be devoid of any human interface. This system will increase transparency and improve work culture in the tax department.

Honourable Members,

68. Technology plays a major role in bringing cities and villages closer. So far, more than 1 lakh 25 thousand Gram Panchayats have been connected with high speed broadband under the

BharatNet scheme. In 2014, there were 60 thousand Common Service Centres in rural areas of the country, which have now increased to more than 3 lakh 65 thousand. This has provided employment to more than 12 lakh villagers. Through these centres, the Government is delivering more than 45 services in rural areas.

Honourable Members,

69. In order to strengthen the spirit of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat, My Government is developing integrated and organized systems for the countrymen, through use of technology.
70. Recently, **One Nation, One FasTag** has been launched to ensure **seamless mobility** in the country. **One Nation One Mobility Card** has enabled use of the same card for different modes of transport across different States. **One Nation, One Ration Card** is also being launched by the Government. **One Nation, One Tax**, that is **GST**, has also promoted transparency in trade and commerce through use of technology. In the pre **GST** period, more than two dozen different taxes had to be paid. Now, not only the complex tax web has come to an end, the incidence of tax has also been reduced.

Honourable Members,

71. In a federal country like India it is imperative for fast paced development, that States compete with each other in development schemes; and also share experiences with each other. My Government has therefore been consistently emphasizing **Competitive Cooperative Federalism**. The Government is ranking States on the basis of **real time data** collected at district and village level. Its impact is visible in various areas ranging from Swachh Bharat Abhiyan to Ease of **Doing Business** and Smart City Mission to **Aspirational District Programme**.
72. Information collected during the **Census** plays a crucial role in enabling Governments in formulation of appropriate schemes and

targeted interventions. This time digital technology is being used, in the conduct of **Census**, to collect information so as to complete the process expeditiously.

73. My Government is committed to protecting privacy amidst the increasing use of digital technology. To fulfil this commitment, Government has introduced the **Data Protection Bill** in the Parliament.

Honourable Members,

74. My Government is committed to attaining the goal of making India a USD 5 trillion economy. Towards this objective, Government is making efforts at all levels of the economy, in consultation with all stakeholders. In spite of global challenges, the fundamentals of Indian economy are strong. Our foreign exchange reserves have reached a historical high of over USD 450 billion. Inflow of **Foreign Direct Investment** to India is also on the rise. As compared to last year, **FDI** has increased by USD 3 billion between April and October this year.

75. On the other hand, merger of small Public Sector Banks has strengthened them and improved their lending capacity. In the first half of this financial year, 12 Public Sector Banks have reported profits. Due to the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code**, nearly Rs 3.5 lakh crores have also been recovered by the banks and other institutions. Reduction of corporate tax and the codification of Labour Laws will increase ease of doing business in India.

Honourable Members,

76. My Government is providing impetus to Make in India to accelerate the growth rate of the economy and to boost manufacturing and exports. Government is developing two defence corridors in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, in addition to 5 Industrial Corridors in the country.

Honourable Members,

77. India is making rapid strides in electronics manufacturing sector in particular. National Policy on Electronics has been formulated to give further impetus to the manufacturing of mobile phones, TVs and other electronic devices. The value of electronic equipment manufactured in the country has increased to Rs 4 lakh 58 thousand crore in 2018-19, as against Rs 1 lakh 90 thousand crore in 2014-15. In 2014, there were only 2 companies manufacturing mobiles in India. Today India is the second largest mobile manufacturing hub in the world. Make in India is also being encouraged by the Government in automobile sector and railways. Full indigenous manufacturing of modern trains like Vande Bharat and Tejas Express is in progress.

Honourable Members,

78. The fundamental mantra of independence was a Self-reliant India. A self-reliant India is possible only when every Indian takes pride in every product made in India. My Government believes in the mantra of '**Buy local for a better tomorrow**'. I urge every representative of the people, from Panchayat level to the Parliament, and every Government in the country, to transform the philosophy of 'Buy local for a better tomorrow' into a movement. I also urge every Indian to give priority to local products. By using locally manufactured products, you will be able to help the small entrepreneurs in your area to a great extent.

Honourable Members,

79. The poor and the middle classes hope and aspire for a modern 21st century infrastructure in the country. To fulfil this aspiration of the people more than Rs 100 lakh crore will be invested in the next five years. With a special emphasis on connectivity, the Government is also focusing on creation of new highways, new waterways, new airways, and new I-ways.

80. Rural roads contribute significantly to the country's infrastructure. Rural roads have now been expanded to every corner of the

country through the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana. Third phase of the programme has been launched to strengthen rural roads and connect them to schools, hospitals and agricultural markets. 1 lakh 25 thousand kilometers of roads will be constructed and upgraded under this programme.

81. Inland waterways are also being developed by the Government. In December 2019, for the first time, container cargo reached Pandu in Assam via National Water Way-2. Under the Jal Marg Vikas Project, the multi-modal terminal at Haldia on River Ganga and the navigation lock at Farakka will be completed this year. It is also our endeavour to operate large transport cargo vessels on River Ganga by next year.
82. Rapid progress is being made towards providing better public transport facilities in urban areas. Metro facility has now been extended to 18 cities in the country. So far, 670 km of metro lines have been operationalized, and work on another 930 km is underway. The residents of Delhi and NCR have greatly benefitted from the construction of Delhi-Meerut Expressway, as well as from Eastern and Western Peripheral Expressways.

Honourable Members,

83. Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities of the country are emerging in a new role towards achieving the goal of USD 5 trillion economy. The progress of small cities in areas relating to sanitation, amenities, start-ups or other commercial activities has been encouraging. Since 2014, start-ups in small cities have grown at a rate of 45 to 50 per cent. Similarly, about 35 lakh people have so far travelled by air under the UDAN scheme. Last year, 335 new air routes have been approved. It is estimated that in the coming years, more than half of the country's digital transactions will take place in these tier-2 and tier-3 cities.
84. My Government is doing its utmost to fulfil the developmental aspirations of small cities and the new middle class. The middle

class in small towns has also benefitted the most from tax exemption on income up to Rs. 5 lakhs. The middle class families with annual income of up to Rs 18 lakhs are able to save between Rs 5 to 6 lakh on home loans with tenure up to 20 years. It is the middle class that will benefit the most from the Rs 25 thousand crore fund provided by the Government for completion of stalled housing projects.

Honourable Members,

85. India is playing an effective role globally in the field of **clean energy**. Due to the efforts of the Government, LPG coverage in the country has increased from 55 per cent to about 97 per cent. City gas distribution is now being extended to **407** districts of the country. Now we are moving towards a **gas-based** economy.
86. Keeping environment conservation in mind, my Government has enhanced the target for producing renewable energy to 450 gigawatts. Under the Pradhan Mantri-Kusum Yojana, it has been targeted to provide more than 17 lakh solar pumps to farmers across the country. Similarly, under the second phase of the solar roof top programme, the target is to generate 38 gigawatt of electricity.

Honourable Members,

87. The efforts of the countrymen have made it possible to expand India's tree and forest cover by 13 thousand square kilometers during the last four years. Similarly, the number of tigers has increased to 2,967 in July 2019 from 2,226 in 2014, which is a matter of satisfaction.
88. To address the issue of air and water pollution, the Government will be implementing the National Clean Air Programme in 102 cities of the country. I am glad that the positive impact of the Namami Gange Mission launched by the Government has now started becoming visible. Under this mission, projects worth Rs 7

thousand crore have been completed and projects worth more than Rs 21 thousand crore are in progress.

89. The impact of all these efforts is also visible on the country's tourism sector. During the last few years, there has been extraordinary development of infrastructure related to tourism. Recently a nationwide programme has been launched from Kolkata for conservation and beautification of the heritage buildings of the country. The tourism sector is also being strengthened by the modern infrastructure being developed under Swadesh Darshan and PRASAD schemes. New records are being created every day in the number of tourists visiting the 'Statue of Unity', the statue of Sardar Patel; which is the tallest in the world.

Honourable Members,

90. It is the belief of my Government that paying tribute to the great personalities who dedicated their lives to the nation and contributed towards preserving the heritage of the country is an important part of nation building. With this idea, museums celebrating the contributions made by the brave tribals, both men and women, during our freedom struggle are being set up in different States. The 250th birth anniversary of the great social reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy, whose teachings guided the nation, will also be celebrated in 2022 by the Government in a befitting manner.

Honourable Members,

91. The objective of India's space programme has always been service to humanity. Due to the tireless work of country's space scientists, Chandrayaan-2 has stimulated a new interest in technology among the country's youth. My Government has already approved Chandrayaan-3. **ISRO** is also working expeditiously on the manned spacecraft programme – Gaganyaan, as well as Aditya-1 Mission.

Honourable Members,

92. In these evolving times, to meet the new and complex challenges related to the defence of the country, my Government is working to make the defence forces stronger, more effective and modern. The appointment of **CDS**, the **Chief of Defence Staff** and creation of the **Department of Military Affairs** are steps in this direction. This will also improve coordination among the three services, while speeding up their modernization and the process of making them self-reliant.
93. We are fully attentive to the requirements of our security forces, including adequate armaments, safety equipment and bullet proof jackets. Manufacture of state-of-the-art **AK 203** rifles, in collaboration with Russia, will commence in the Ordnance Factory at Amethi in Uttar Pradesh. Recently, when the **Naval Prototype** of Tejas landed and took off from **INS Vikramaditya**, every Indian was filled with pride. The Government has also taken historic steps in enhancing space security. With the successful testing of **A-Sat**, India has become the fourth country in the world to attain strike capability in space.

Honourable Members,

94. My Government is working with full strength and determination to free the country from the scourge of terrorism. In view of the changing nature of terrorism, alertness on the part of the citizens is extremely helpful. The decrease in terrorist activities in Jammu Kashmir demonstrates that public cooperation can be effective in the fight against terrorism. My Government has given the security forces a free hand in taking the strongest measures against those indulging in terrorism. The security situation in the North East has also improved significantly due to the concerted efforts of the Government. The geographical spread of Naxalism is also steadily shrinking.

Honourable Members,

95. My Government is of the view that foreign policy is a vital ingredient of the country's economic and strategic security. We are stimulating economic growth and prosperity by increasing connectivity with our neighbouring countries. **“Neighbourhood First”** policy is our priority. Apart from our neighbours, we have also strengthened relations with other countries of the world. This is why a number of countries have bestowed their highest honour on India. Our cooperation with ASEAN and African countries is being taken to a new level.
96. After International Solar Alliance, India has been at the forefront of a global partnership, **Coalition on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure-CDRI**. This step aimed at mitigating natural disasters will further strengthen India's stature as a sensitive world power.

Honourable Members,

97. This decade, which has just begun, will determine India's global standing in the times to come. The world will witness an inclusive, prosperous, capable and powerful New India in this decade. Hence it is the bounden duty of every Member of this House and every countryman to strive hard with all their capability to achieve their respective goals.
98. We should all strive to make every citizen conscious of and dedicated to his duties in the national interest, and ensure that this sense of responsibility becomes the guiding principle of our civic life. Come, let us together make this decade of 2020 the decade of fulfilling our duties.
99. We must always remember that we are first and foremost citizens of this country, and leaders or supporters of a particular ideology thereafter. The prestige of our country should be more important than our party loyalties.

100. It is my belief that in the times to come, all of us together, drawing inspiration from the glorious past of our country, will make every possible effort to ensure a bright future for the country; and that we will also succeed in our endeavour.

101. Let us all come together to fulfil the dream of a New India; let us together make a New India.

Jai Hind !!!
