

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

New Delhi, January 31, 2022

Hon'ble members,

1. We are in the third year of the pandemic caused by Corona-virus. In these years, people of India have displayed profound faith in the democratic values, discipline and sense of responsibility. At a time, when India is celebrating the Amrit Mahotsav on the occasion of 75th year of its independence, this willpower of every Indian creates immense confidence for India's bright future. With this confidence, I extend my greetings to every Indian from this historic Central Hall of the Parliament.
2. Addressing both Houses of Parliament assembled together today, I salute lakhs of freedom fighters who gave highest priority to their duties and secured the rights of India. I also salute all the great personalities for their contribution in the development-journey of our country in these 75 years of independence.
3. In this period of Amrit Mahotsav, special events related to great personalities of the country are also inspiring us. My government is celebrating the sacred occasions of the 400th Prakash Parv of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, the 150th birth anniversary of Sri Aurobindo, the 150th birth anniversary of V.O. Chidambaram Pillai and the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose with grandeur. From this year onwards, the government has started the Republic Day celebrations from January 23, the birth anniversary of Netaji.
4. My government believes that remembering the past and learning from it are equally important for a secure future of the country. Observance of 'Veer Bal Diwas' on 26th December in the memory of sacrifice of Sahibzadas and 'Vibhajan Vibhishika Smriti Diwas' on 14th August is a reflection of this thinking. The government also decided to celebrate the birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda on 15th November as 'Jan-jatiya Gaurav Diwas' as a tribute to him.

Hon'ble members,

5. Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is a sacred occasion for all the Indians to give concrete shape to the resolutions for the next 25 years. My government is moving fast on building a strong foundation for the next 25 years following the mantra of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Aur Sabka Prayas'. The most important resolution related to this foundation is the creation of an India which includes all, benefits all, which is strong and self-reliant. The challenging period of Corona has inspired us to achieve our goals at the fastest possible pace.

Hon'ble members,

6. The Covid pandemic affected the entire world and in India too, many of our loved ones were snatched away from us. In these circumstances, the Central Government, State Governments, local Governments and administration, our doctors, nurses and health workers, our scientists and entrepreneurs have worked as a team. This mutual trust, coordination and cooperation between the government and citizens is an unprecedented example of the strength of our democracy. For this, I appreciate every health and front-line worker, and every citizen.
7. An example of India's capability in the fight against Covid-19 is evident in the ongoing Covid vaccination program. We have surpassed the record of administering more than 150 crore vaccine doses in less than a year. Today we are among the leading countries in the world with the highest vaccine doses administered. Success of this campaign has given a shield to the country providing enhanced protection to our citizens, while also boosting their morale.
8. Today, more than 90 percent adult citizens of the country have received the first dose of the vaccine, whereas more than 70 percent have been administered both the doses. The government is also reaching out to the rest of the population through the 'Har Ghar Dastak' campaign. Adolescents in the age group of 15 to 18 years have also been included in the vaccination program from this month. Precautionary dose for the front-line workers and senior citizens with co-morbidities has also been started.
9. So far, eight vaccines have been approved for emergency use in the country. Three vaccines being manufactured in India have also got approval from the

World Health Organization for emergency use. These vaccines manufactured in India are playing an important role in making the entire world free from the pandemic and in saving crores of lives.

Hon'ble members,

10. The efforts of the country are not limited to addressing the immediate challenges in the fight against Covid pandemic. My government is developing far-reaching solutions which would be effective and useful in future also. The launch of Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission with an outlay of Rupees 64,000 crore is a commendable example. This will not only help in meeting the current health requirements, but will also prepare the country for any future crises.
11. Health facilities are now easily accessible to the common people because of the responsive policies of my government. More than 80,000 health and wellness centres and crores of Ayushman Bharat cards have helped the poor immensely in getting treatment. Government has reduced the cost of treatment by providing affordable medicines through more than 8,000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras. 'Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission' is an important step in providing easy and accessible health services.

Hon'ble members,

12. The Indian pharma sector has also proved its mettle during the Corona period. Presently, products of Indian pharma companies are reaching more than 180 countries. However, there is a wide range of opportunities for India in this sector. The PLI scheme announced by my government for the pharma industry will further expand the opportunities, and will also provide impetus to research.
13. Yoga, Ayurveda and traditional medical practices are also becoming increasingly popular due to the efforts of the government. The country used to export AYUSH products worth Rupees 6,600 crore in 2014. This export has now increased to more than Rupees 11,000 crore. India is going to establish the world's first 'WHO Global Centre of Traditional Medicine'.

Hon'ble members,

14. The chief architect of our Constitution, Baba Saheb Doctor Bhimrao Ambedkar, had said:

“My ideal would be a society based on Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity... Democracy is not merely a form of government... It is essentially an attitude of respect and reverence towards one’s fellow men”.

My government considers these ideals of Baba Saheb as its motto. My government believes in the mantra of Antyodaya, which encompasses social justice, equality, respect and equal opportunities. Therefore, in the policies of the government, top priority is being given to villages, the poor, Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes and backward communities. This spirit of India is clearly reflected in the selection for Padma awards in recent years. In a diverse country like India, dedicated people across the country are engaged in the service of the nation. They reflect the strength of India.

Hon’ble members,

15. Several major countries have experienced scarcity of food-grains and faced starvation during the Corona crisis. But my sensitive government ensured that nobody remained hungry during the worst pandemic in 100 years. My government is providing free ration to each poor household every month under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana. This is the world’s largest food distribution program with an outlay of Rupees two lakh sixty thousand crore reaching out to 80 crore beneficiaries for 19 months. Being fully sensitive to the present circumstances, the government has extended this scheme till March 2022.
16. Government is also running the PM-Sva-Nidhi scheme for enhancing the self-esteem of the poor and protection of their livelihood also during the Corona period. This scheme is proving to be very useful for the street vendors. Under this scheme, more than Rupees 2900 crore have been provided to 28 lakh street vendors. The government is also connecting these street vendors with online food delivery companies. Further, government has started the e-SHRAM portal to protect the interests of labourers and more than 23 crore workers have joined it so far.
17. We can see the impact of Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile or JAM trinity which my government has leveraged for the empowerment of citizens. With more than

44 crore poor people joining the banking system, crores of people benefitted from direct cash transfer during the pandemic.

18. Amidst the progress made in respect of Digital India and Digital Economy, I also appreciate the government's vision for the success of the country's UPI platform. Transactions worth more than Rupees 8 lakh crore have taken place in the country through UPI in December 2021. This is a clear example of how fast our people are adopting technology and rapid change.

Hon'ble members,

19. My government considers provision of basic amenities as a means of empowering the poor and enhancing their dignity. More than two crore pucca houses have been provided to the poor under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana as a result of the efforts made in the last few years. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gramin, 1 crore 17 lakh houses have been approved at a cost of about Rupees one and a half lakh crore in the last three years.
20. Launched with the aim of 'Har Ghar Jal', the Jal Jeevan Mission has brought about a huge difference in the lives of the people. Nearly six crore rural households have been provided tap water connection despite the constraints imposed by pandemic. It has been of huge benefit for the women, sisters and daughters in our villages.
21. The Svamitva scheme, launched to provide property documents to people in rural areas, is also an extraordinary initiative. So far, more than 40 lakh property cards have been issued in 27,000 villages under this scheme. These property cards are not only preventing disputes but are also assisting rural population in accessing banking support.

Hon'ble members,

22. My government is working continuously to empower the farmers and the rural economy of the country. Despite the pandemic, our farmers produced more than 30 crore tonnes of food grains and 33 crore tonnes of horticulture produce in 2020-21. The government made record procurement to match the record production. The government procured 433 lakh metric tonnes of wheat during the Rabi season benefiting about 50 lakh farmers. A record

quantity of about 900 lakh metric tonnes of paddy was procured during Kharif season, benefiting 1 crore 30 lakh farmers.

23. Our agriculture exports have also reached a record level due to the efforts of the government. Agricultural exports registered a growth of more than 25 percent in the year 2020-21, and have reached nearly Rupees 3 lakh crore.
24. Horticulture and honey production are important means of generating new sources of income for farmers, as also to provide them better access to markets. Because of incentives provided to honey production, domestic production of honey has reached 1 lakh 25 thousand metric tonnes in 2020-21, an increase of about 55 percent compared to 2014-15. Export volume of honey has also grown by more than 102 percent as compared to 2014-15.
25. In order to ensure remunerative prices to farmers for their crops, it is necessary that their products reach the right market. In this direction, the government has endeavoured to open new avenues of prosperity for the farmers by launching Kisan Rail Seva. During the Corona period, Indian Railways operated over 1,900 Kisan Rails on more than 150 routes to transport perishable food items like vegetables, fruits and milk, thereby transporting about 6 lakh metric tonnes of agricultural produce. This is an example of how new avenues can be created from the existing resources if the thinking is innovative.

Hon'ble members,

26. I would like to give maximum credit to the small farmers of the country for this consistent success and strengthening the agriculture sector. Interests of the small farmers, who constitute 80 percent of the farmer-community, have always been central to our government. Under the PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi, Rupees 1 lakh 80 thousand crore have been provided to more than 11 crore farmer families. With this investment, the agriculture sector is witnessing major transformations today. The small farmers of the country have also benefited from the new changes in the crop insurance scheme. More than Rupees one lakh crore have been given as compensation to about eight crore farmers since these changes were introduced.
27. Government is also making investments at an unprecedented level for developing infrastructure required near farmlands. Thousands of projects have been approved under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund having a

corpus of Rupees one lakh crore. In order to ensure self-sufficiency in edible oil, my government has also launched the National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm with an outlay of Rupees 11,000 crore. Government is also making special efforts like organic farming, natural farming and crop diversification.

28. All of you are aware that the United Nations has declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets. My government will celebrate the International Year of Millets on a large scale with farmers, Self-Help Groups, FPOs, food industry and the common citizen.
29. My government is also working sincerely for rain water conservation. Special campaigns are being implemented for creation of rain water harvesting infrastructure and restoration of traditional water sources in the country. Sixty-four lakh hectares of land with irrigation facilities has also been developed in the country with the help of various projects under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana and Atal Bhu-jal Yojana. The government has also taken forward the plans for interlinking of rivers. Recently, the Ken-Betwa link project to be completed at a cost of Rupees 45,000 crore has also been approved. This project will be helpful in ending the water crisis in Bundelkhand.

Hon'ble members,

30. Women are playing an increasingly important role in providing impetus to rural economy. Banks have extended financial help to the tune of Rupees 65,000 crore to more than 28 lakh Self-Help Groups in 2021-22. This is four times the amount extended in 2014-15. The government has also provided training to thousands of members of the women self-help groups and made them partners as 'Banking Sakhi'. These women are delivering banking services to rural households at the doorsteps.
31. Women's empowerment is one of the top priorities of my government. We are all witness to the success of Ujjwala Yojana. Entrepreneurship and skills of the mothers and sisters of our country have been promoted through the "Mudra" scheme. "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" initiative has yielded many positive results, and there has been an encouraging improvement in the number of girls enrolled in schools. Treating sons and daughters as equals, my government has also introduced a Bill to increase the minimum age of marriage for women from 18 years to 21 years at par with men.

32. The government has made a beginning to liberate the society from the manifestly arbitrary practice of Triple Talaq by making it a criminal offence. Restrictions on Muslim women from performing the Haj only with Mehram have also been removed. While about three crore students from minority communities were provided scholarships prior to 2014, my government has provided scholarships to 4.5 crore such students since 2014. This has led to a significant reduction in the school dropout rate of Muslim girls and an increase in their enrolment.
33. A provision has also been made for Gender Inclusion Fund in the National Education Policy to promote learning capability among our daughters. It is a matter of happiness that all the existing 33 Sainik Schools have started admitting girl students. The government has also approved the admission of women cadets in the National Defence Academy. The first batch of women cadets will enter the NDA in June 2022. With the policy decisions and encouragement of my government, the number of women personnel in various police forces has more than doubled as compared to 2014.

Hon'ble members,

34. The great saint Thiruvalluvar had said:

Karkka kasaddar karpawai katrapin,

Nirkka adarkka taga.

That is, what a person has learnt is reflected in his conduct.

My government is implementing a new National Education Policy across the country to give shape to the resolve and potential of Atmanirbhar Bharat. Local languages are also being promoted through the National Education Policy. Emphasis is being laid on conducting important entrance examinations for undergraduate courses in Indian languages as well. This year, 19 engineering colleges in 10 states will start teaching in six Indian languages.

35. Under the Skill India Mission, more than 2 crore 25 lakh youth across the country have been skilled through ITIs, Jan Shikshan Sansthan and Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras. Many changes have also been made in the UGC regulations to link skills with higher education.

36. In the battle against Corona, six special training programs related to health care have been launched under the Skill India Mission. These are helping the health care sector.
37. Eklavya Residential Model Schools are being expanded to every tribal majority block for the education of tribal youth. These schools will empower about three and half lakh tribal youth.

Hon'ble members,

38. We have all witnessed the potential of India's youth power during the Tokyo Olympics. In its best performance ever in this international competition, India won seven medals. In the Tokyo Paralympics too, Indian para-athletes set a record by winning 19 medals. In order to improve India's performance in the Olympics and sports, the Central Government along with the state governments is setting up hundreds of Khelo India Centres in the country. The government has also established Centres for Disability Sports in Gwalior with modern facilities to provide training to Divyang youth in para sports.

Hon'ble members,

39. Accessibility, equality and a dignified life for Divyang people is our collective responsibility as a society. In this direction, Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan is a symbol of our national sensibility. The country is implementing several programs - from providing free assistive devices to Cochlear Implant surgery - in order to transform the lives of Divyang people. Under these programmes, more than 25 lakh assistive devices have been provided to Divyang people so far and about 4,000 successful Cochlear Implant surgeries have been performed. Taking these efforts forward, the government has also established the National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation in Madhya Pradesh. A 10,000-word Indian Sign Language Dictionary has also been developed for the future of Divyang youth.

Hon'ble members,

40. Our start-up industry is also an example of the infinite new possibilities that are rapidly taking shape under the leadership of our youth. Since 2016, sixty thousand new start-ups have been established in 56 different sectors in our country. More than six lakh jobs have been created by these start-ups. In 2021, during the Corona period, more than 40 unicorn start-ups have

emerged in India, each with a minimum market valuation of Rupees 7,400 crore.

41. Because of the policies of my government, the cost of internet connectivity and price of smartphones in India today are among the cheapest in the world. This has hugely benefitted our young generation. India is also working with great pace on 5G mobile connectivity, which will open doors to new opportunities. India's efforts on semiconductors will significantly benefit our start-up ecosystem. The government has taken many policy decisions and opened up several new sectors so that our youth can benefit from rapidly changing technology. Through the Start-ups Intellectual Property Protection Program, the government has simplified and accelerated the processes related to patents and trademarks. As a result, nearly 6 thousand patents and more than 20 thousand trademarks have been applied for in this financial year.

Hon'ble members,

42. Due to consistent endeavors of my government, India has again emerged as one of the fastest growing economies in the world. GST collection has consistently remained above Rupees one lakh crore during the last several months. Inflow of 48 billion dollars in the first seven months of the current financial year is a testimony to the belief the global investor community has in India's growth story. India's foreign exchange reserves today exceed 630 billion dollars. Our exports are also growing rapidly, breaking several past records. During April to December 2021, our goods-exports stood at 300 billion dollars or more than Rupees 22 lakh crore, which is one and a half times more than the corresponding period of 2020.
43. My government has launched 14 key PLI schemes with an outlay of more than Rupees 1 lakh 97 thousand crore to fully realize the potential of the manufacturing sector and to create new opportunities for the youth. These PLI schemes will not only help transform India as a global manufacturing hub but also create over 60 lakh jobs. The domestic mobile manufacturing sector is a shining example of the success of the PLI scheme. Today India has emerged as the second largest mobile phone manufacturer in the world, generating lakhs of jobs for our youth.

44. In order to develop our country as a global leader in the field of electronics and technology hardware, the government has also recently announced a package of Rupees 76,000 crore for silicon and compound semiconductor fabrication, display FAB, chip design and related ventures.
45. Along with developing new areas, my government is restoring our traditional strength in domains in which we possess centuries of experience. In this direction, my government has approved seven Mega Integrated Textile Regions and Apparel Parks with an investment of about Rupees 4,500 crore. This will facilitate integrated textile value chain. These mega textile parks will attract both Indian and foreign investors, and create lakhs of new employment opportunities.

Hon'ble members,

46. Along with large companies, our small and medium enterprises have a critical role in India's prosperity. Our MSMEs have been the backbone of our economy, and a driver of ***Atmanirbhar Bharat***. In order to protect MSMEs from crisis and ensure adequate availability of credit during the Corona period, the government started a scheme for guaranteed Collateral Free Loans of Rupees 3 lakh crore. It is evident from the recent studies that this scheme has given a fresh lease of life to 13 lakh 50 thousand MSME units and also secured 1 crore 50 lakh jobs. In June 2021, the government has enhanced credit guarantee from Rupees 3 lakh crore to Rupees 4.5 lakh crore.
47. Several policy decisions have also been taken to expand the scope and opportunities for the MSME sector. The new definition of MSMEs is helping small industries to expand. The government has also permitted wholesale and retail traders, as well as street vendors to get themselves registered on the Udyam portal so that they can avail benefits of Priority Sector Lending.
48. The success of Khadi also deserves a special mention. Khadi, which was a symbol of the country's consciousness during the freedom struggle under the leadership of Bapu, is once again becoming the mainstay of small entrepreneurs. With government's efforts, sale of Khadi products has trebled in the country since 2014.

Hon'ble members,

49. Infrastructure is the foundation for development in any country. My government also views infrastructure as a bridge to address social inequality. Investment in infrastructure not only generates lakhs of new jobs, but also has a qualitative impact, enhancing ease of doing business, facilitating faster transport and promoting economic activities across sectors.
50. My government has integrated different ministries to work in a synergised manner under the **Pradhan Mantri Gatishakti National Master Plan** to accelerate infrastructure development. This plan is going to usher in a new era of multi-modal transport in India. In future, the railways, highways and airways in India will no longer be separate and isolated infrastructures, but will be an integrated resource to the country.
51. Construction of roads, resources and infrastructure in rural areas has opened up possibilities for the country which have been neglected for decades. The achievements of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana are something to be proud of. In the year 2020-21, 36 thousand 5 hundred kilometres of roads have been built in rural areas, at the rate of more than 100 km per day, and thousands of habitations have been connected with all-weather roads.
52. Today, the national highways too are connecting the length and breadth of the country from east to west and north to south. As against 90 thousand kilometres of national highways in March 2014, today we have more than 1 lakh 40 thousand kilometres of national highways. Under the Bharatmala Project, construction of more than 20,000 kilometres of highways is in progress with an outlay of about Rupees 6 lakh crore, including 23 green expressways and green-field corridors.
53. The Delhi-Mumbai Expressway is also nearing completion; it will be the longest and fastest expressway in India. It is also a matter of privilege for my government to start widening of Sant Dnyaneshwar Marg and Sant Tukaram Palkhi Marg connecting Pandharpur temple.
54. Today, while on the one hand the modern infrastructure of the country is opening ways for development, on the other hand it is also providing new strength to country's security. Border Roads Organization has constructed a

transport-worthy road at 19 thousand feet, the highest altitude for such a road, at Umling La Pass in Ladakh. Even the most remote villages like Demchok in Ladakh, Joling Kong in Uttarakhand and Huri in Arunachal Pradesh have been connected by modern roads.

55. My government is also modernizing the Indian Railways at a fast pace. New Vande Bharat trains and new vistadome coaches have added new feathers to the Indian Railways. In the last seven years, 24,000 km of railway route has been electrified. Laying new railway tracks and double-laning are also progressing rapidly. Gandhinagar railway station in Gujarat and Rani Kamalapati railway station in Madhya Pradesh now provide new glimpse of modern India. The railway arch bridge being constructed on the Chenab River in Kashmir is also emerging as a centre of attraction.
56. My government has also done remarkable work in the field of public transport, enhancing ease of living for the poor and the middle class. Eleven new metro routes have commenced, benefiting lakhs of people in 8 states every day. India is now also among the four countries in the world having largest driverless train networks. We have also developed Indigenous Automatic Train System in the country which symbolizes the growing capability of Make in India. The government has also accorded approval for the construction of 21 greenfield airports in the country, among which is the country's biggest airport coming up at Gautam Buddha Nagar district in Uttar Pradesh.
57. More than 80 connectivity projects are also in progress under the Sagarmala program to connect the country's important commercial hubs with ports. So far, 5 existing National Waterways and 106 new waterways in 24 States have been declared as National Waterways, taking the total number of National Waterways to 111. Out of these, 23 waterways are viable for transportation of cargo. With the objective to modernizing infrastructure, more than 27 thousand circuit kilometres of transmission lines have also been laid by the government.

Hon'ble members,

58. In recent times, we have witnessed a new resolve of Atmanirbhar Bharat taking shape in the country. This resolve is getting further strengthened by

the energy emanating from the slew of reforms. From new reforms in labour laws to reforms in banking sector, and to insolvency and bankruptcy code, this series of reforms is rolling on uninterrupted. Last year, more than 26 thousand compliance requirements have been reduced by different departments of Centre and States. Space sector has now been opened up for private sector, providing a horizon of endless possibilities. The formation of IN-SPACE last year is one such important step to enhance India's space capabilities.

59. My government is also aware and proactive about the rapidly evolving drone technology and related opportunities. In this direction, the government has notified the simplified Drone Rules 2021, and has also launched a PLI scheme for manufacturing of drones and drone-parts in the country. This will help India to secure its position in this critical technology of the future.

Hon'ble members,

60. My government is working with utmost determination to ensure a safe and secure India. Due to the policies of the government in the defence sector, especially in defence production, the country is becoming increasingly self-reliant.
61. Of all the approvals accorded for modernization of armed forces in the year 2020-21, 87 per cent were from 'Make in India' category. Similarly, in 2020-21, preference was accorded to 'Make in India' category in 98 per cent of equipment related contracts. Our Armed forces have also issued a list of 209 military-equipment, which will not be purchased from abroad. A list of more than 2,800 defence equipment has also been issued by defence undertakings which will be manufactured domestically.
62. A contract has been signed with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited for manufacture of 83 LCA Tejas fighter aircraft. The government has also taken important steps for reorganization of Ordnance Factories into 7 Defence PSUs. Besides, the government is also committed to rapidly promote the private sector and start-ups in the defence sector. Our objective is that the products required by our Forces should be developed in India and also manufactured in India.

Hon'ble members,

63. India has strengthened its standing in the rapidly evolving global environment through improvement in diplomatic relations. India chaired the United Nations Security Council in August 2021 and took several path breaking decisions. Under the presidency of India, for the first time, the Security Council held a comprehensive debate on the issue of maritime security. The Security Council, for the first time, adopted a Presidential Statement on this subject, and did so unanimously.
64. We have witnessed instability and volatility in our neighbouring country, Afghanistan. In spite of the prevailing situation, true to the spirit of humanity, India launched Operation Devi Shakti. Despite the challenging conditions, we successfully airlifted a number of our citizens and many Afghan Hindu and Sikh minorities from Kabul. We also brought back two swaroops of the Holy Guru Granth Sahib safely amidst difficult situations. From the humanitarian point of view, India is helping Afghanistan by delivering medical supplies and food-grain.

Hon'ble members,

65. Climate change is a major challenge confronting the whole world at present. India has emerged as a responsible global voice on the subject. At the CoP-26 summit, my government has announced that by 2030 India will reduce its carbon emission by 1 billion tonnes. India has also committed to a target of becoming net zero emission economy by 2070. India has also taken the initiative of "Green Grid Initiative: One Sun, One World, One Grid" with the global community. It is the first international network of globally interconnected solar power grids. Our ambitions and resolves towards the environment are a testimony of our sensitivity towards nature.

Hon'ble members,

66. My government considers it a responsibility to preserve, enrich and empower India's ancient heritage. It is a matter of pride that the Harappan site of Dholavira and the 13th century Kakatiya Rudreshwar Ramappa temple in Telangana have been declared as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. After the Kumbh Mela Prayagraj, Kolkata's iconic Durga Puja has also been included in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

67. It has also been a priority of the government that the priceless heritage of India should be brought back to the country. The idol of Maa Annapurna Devi, which was stolen from India a hundred years ago, has been brought back and installed in the Kashi Vishwanath temple. Many such historical artefacts are being brought back to India from different countries.
68. We are all aware that heritage and tourism are closely linked to each other. That is why, while India's spiritual heritage is being rejuvenated, modern facilities and infrastructure are also being developed for the pilgrims and tourists. Swadesh Darshan and PRASAD schemes started by my government are playing a significant role in it.
69. The Fort Aguada Jail Complex has also been renovated and inaugurated on the occasion of Goa's 60th Liberation Day. It is a memorial to the warriors of the unforgettable struggle to liberate Goa.

Hon'ble members,

70. Today, in the Amrit Kaal of independence, our resolve of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' is enabling us to write a new chapter of development on the basis of democratic values. Today the country is making special efforts for the states and regions hitherto left neglected.
71. The beginning of a new era of development in Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh region is a great example of this. My government has started a new central sector scheme for the industrial development of Jammu & Kashmir at a cost of about Rupees 28,000 crore. Last year Qazigund-Banihal tunnel was opened to traffic. International flights between Srinagar and Sharjah have also started.
72. Many important steps have also been taken to provide better opportunities for education, health and employment to the people of Jammu & Kashmir. At present, works are in progress on seven medical colleges and two AIIMS, one in Jammu and another in Kashmir. Construction of IIT Jammu and IIM Jammu is also going on in full swing.
73. The Sindhu Infrastructure Development Corporation has been set up to accelerate infrastructure and economic development in the Union Territory of

Ladakh. Another chapter in this development journey of Ladakh is being added in the form of Sindhu Central University.

Hon'ble members,

74. My government is committed to sustainable development of all the states of the North East – Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. In these states, basic amenities and economic opportunities are being developed at every level. Rail and air connectivity are no longer a dream for the people of the North East, they are now able to experience them in reality. It is a matter of pride for the country that all the capitals of the North-Eastern states are now being brought on the railway map with the efforts of my government.
75. A new airport is being set up at Hollongi, Itanagar. A modern new terminal has recently been opened at the Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport in Tripura. This development of North East will prove to be a golden chapter in India's growth story. Just a few days ago, January 21 marked the 50th anniversary of the creation of Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura. The journey of these states, coinciding with 75 years of independence, is inspiring us for new resolves for their development.
76. Efforts of my government to establish peace in the North East have attained historic success. Just a few months ago, a settlement was reached between the Central Government, the State Government of Assam and the Karbi groups to end the decades-old conflict in Karbi Anglong. This has ushered in a new chapter of peace and prosperity in the region. Due to concerted efforts of my government, the number of Naxal affected districts in the country has also come down from 126 to 70 today.

Hon'ble members,

77. My government is committed to increase accountability of government departments towards the citizens. All Ministries of Government of India are undertaking special drive for cleanliness and disposal of pending references. Under Mission Karmayogi, the Government has established the Capacity Building Commission for Civil Servants. Mission Karmayogi will be helpful for

civil servants' career, and will also prepare them for new responsibilities of nation building.

78. Many important steps are also being taken in the country to make delivery of justice easier and more accessible. A platform has been set up for pre-litigation advice through tele-law program. To expedite the settlement of disputes, my government has introduced the Mediation Bill, 2021 in the Rajya Sabha.

Hon'ble members,

79. Today the country's achievements and successes are as limitless as the country's potential and possibilities. These achievements are not of one institution or establishment; these are the collective achievements of more than a billion citizens of our country. These are the fruits of the labour and sweat of billion plus people. These achievements are milestones in the long journey to achieve our ambitious goals, and are our motivations to move forward.

80. In the year 2047, the country will celebrate its centenary of independence. We have to work hard now for building a grand, modern and developed India of that time. We have to ensure that our hard work leads to fruitful results in the end. We all have a stake, and an equal stake in this journey.

81. I appreciate the manner in which all the Members of Parliament have discharged their responsibilities, and the two Houses have functioned with all precautions during this challenging time of Corona. You are the drivers of hopes and aspirations of crores of our people. It is with the same spirit that we have to keep working in future.

82. I have firm belief that together we will take our great Bharatvarsha to the pinnacle of its glory. With the same spirit, I once again congratulate all of you. My profuse thanks to all of you!

Jai Hind!
