

From seeker, India now a solution-giver: Prez

Describing Modi govt as 'decisive', she highlights its achievements — from infrastructure ramp-up to digital network boost

ADITI PHADNIS
New Delhi, 31 January

Describing the government as “decisive” where no policy paralysis slowed decision-making, President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday said the *Amrit Kaal* — 25 years towards the centenary of India’s independence — was around the corner when India would see “no poverty and a happy and satisfied middle class”.

Almost all the metrics cited by the President compared the period 2004-2009 with 2014-2022: The first when the Congress-led coalition was in power and the second when the Narendra Modi-led coalition was in power. There was no mention of the earlier Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government, which was led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Murmu was delivering the traditional address to the joint session of Parliament, customary at the beginning of a calendar year. The President’s speech is written and vetted by the elected government of the day.

“My government has always kept the country’s interest paramount and shown the will power to completely transform the policies and strategies when required. From a surgical strike and firm crackdown on terrorism to a befitting response to every misadventure from LoC to LAC, from abrogation of Article 370 to triple talaq, my government has been recognised as a decisive government,” she said.

“Today an honest taxpayer of the country wants the government to desist from the politics of shortcuts. He wants plans that encourage permanent solutions to problems and empower the common people. Therefore, my government has laid emphasis on the long-lasting empowerment of the countrymen

while dealing with the current challenges,” the President said.

Murmu said among the biggest achievements of the past nine years was the fact that India “which once looked to others for solutions to most of its problems, is today emerging as a provider of solutions for the issues faced by the world”.

In these nine years, a new modern infrastructure has been put in place, basic facilities are available to those who were denied them for centuries, India’s digital network is become an example for even developing countries, and the “long-felt urge to be rid of the scourge of mega scams and corruption in government schemes is now being realized”.

The President explained that this is the reason for India catapulting to the fifth-largest economy in the world, from the 10th spot. Corruption was down and government procurement systems had been put online. “So far, an amount of more than ₹27 trillion has reached crores of beneficiaries with complete transparency. The World Bank report acknowledges that

it was only due to such schemes and mechanisms that India was able to prevent crores of people from falling below the poverty line during the Covid pandemic” the President said.

Explaining that illness was a major cause of poverty, the President said the Ayushman Bharat Yojana for free medical treatment of low-income group families and the Jan Aushadhi Kendra scheme for subsidised medicines had together helped Indians get assistance amounting to ₹1 trillion.

The provision of water and free housing has added to the self-confidence of Indians. The free foodgrain scheme (Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana) was built on a transparent mechanism with the help



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DROUPADI MURMU
President



President Droupadi Murmu, along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi, proceeds to address Parliament on the opening day of the Budget session on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

of technology and has ensured full delivery of foodgrain to every beneficiary. The government will now focus on marginalized communities — Dalits and Adivasis — to improve their standard of living. Similarly, it is working to empower 100 districts that have been lagging on several parameters.

“Our heritage connects us to our roots and our development gives us the courage to reach out to the sky. That is why my government has chosen the path of consolidating heritage and giving priority to development. Today, on the one hand, Ayodhya Dham is being constructed in the country, and on the other hand, the modern Parliament House is being built. On the one hand, we have constructed Kedarnath Dham, Kashi Vishwanath Dham and Mahakal Mahalok, on the other hand, our government is building medical colleges in every district”.

The President said Make in India was a resounding success: The process of manufacturing semiconductor chips and aeroplanes in India had begun. “Until a few years ago, we used to import mobile phones in large numbers. Today, India has become a major exporter of mobile phones to the world. The import of toys in the country has decreased by 70 per cent, while their export has increased by more than 60 per cent,” the president said, adding defence exports from India had grown 6 times. On innovation, India had done well: In 2015, India was ranked 81st in the Global Innovation Index. Now it has reached the 40th position. Seven years earlier, there were only a few hundred registered start-ups in India, today this number is almost 90,000.

“Talking about social infrastructure, while 145 medical colleges were opened in the country between 2004 and 2014,

more than 260 medical colleges have been opened during the tenure of my government from 2014 to 2022. The number of graduate and postgraduate seats for medical students has now doubled in the country as compared to the earlier period. While there were about 725 universities in the country before 2014, more than 300 new universities have been set up in the last eight years. More than 5,000 colleges have also been opened in the country during this period”, the speech said.

On climate change, the speech emphasised green energy and added that solar power capacity had increased by almost 20 times in the past nine years. Today, India ranks fourth in the world in renewable energy capacity. The country has already achieved the target of making 40 per cent of its electricity generation capacity from non-fossil fuel sources, nine years ahead of the target.

Budget ray of hope for world: PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, 31 January

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said amid global economic turmoil, India’s Budget would attempt to meet the hopes and aspirations of common citizens and be a ray of hope for the world.

Addressing the media ahead of the Budget Session of Parliament, Modi said recognised voices in the world of economy were bringing positive messages from all sides.

The prime minister said the Budget, to be presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday, will strive to fulfil people’s hopes, aspirations and also boost the hopes with which the world is looking at India.

“The ray of hope being seen by the world will glow brighter — for this, I firmly believe the finance minister will make all efforts to meet these aspirations,” Modi said.

He also noted that President Droupadi Murmu was delivering her maiden address to the joint sitting of Parliament at the start of the Budget Session. The President’s speech is the pride of the Constitution of India, the pride of India’s parliamentary system, and also an opportunity to respect women and the great tribal traditions of the country, Modi said.

According to the parliamentary traditions evolved over the last six to seven decades, a parliamentarian speaking for the first time in the House, belonging to any political party, is extended respect and a conducive atmosphere is created to enhance his/her confidence, the Prime Minister said.