

Third term a mandate for speed, continuity: Modi

PM says working on war footing to curb paper leaks, guilty won't be spared

PHOTO: PTI

ARCHIS MOHAN
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Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the historic third successive term for his government was a mandate for speed and continuity. He vowed that his administration would operate with triple the speed over the next five years, propelling India to the “next level” of development and fulfilling the ambition of “Viksit Bharat”, a developed India, by 2047.

In his reply to the debate on the President’s address, Modi in the Lok Sabha said the government was working on a “war footing” to combat the incidents of paper leaks, ensuring that those who jeopardise the futures of young Indians would not escape justice. The debate, which unfurled over two days in the Lok Sabha, saw

the Opposition demanding accountability from the government over allegations of leaks in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test and other examinations.

Modi’s speech, which spanned two hours and 14 minutes, was punctuated by the din of protest from the Opposition’s INDIA bloc members, who stormed the Well of the House, chanting slogans and demanding “justice for Manipur.” The sole intermission in their protests came when Modi expressed his condolences for the loss of over 100 lives in a stampede in Uttar Pradesh.

The PM reflected on the past decade, highlighting the dedication with which his government had served the people. “In our third term, we will work with triple the speed, will put in thrice the strength, and will ensure three times the results,” he said.

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“CONGRESS-RULED STATES ARE PURSUING POLICIES THAT WOULD LEAD TO FINANCIAL ANARCHY”

Narendra Modi

Prime Minister, in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday

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▶ RESTORE REMARKS, SAYS RAHUL, AFTER CHAIR EXPUNGES PORTIONS FROM SPEECH

Congress fomenting social discord: PM

PM Modi spoke of fulfilling the objective of constructing modern infrastructure, 30 million houses for the poor, and empowering women self-help groups. The PM said his government continued reforms with an objective of “nation first”. “We do not believe in *tushtikaran* (appeasement) but *santushtikaran* (fulfilment),” Modi said. He said the policy of appeasement had harmed the country. He said his government would work towards making India the world’s third-largest economy, ushering in a “green era”, and creating both employment and self-employment opportunities. A recent study, he noted, had shown private-sector jobs at an 18-year high.

Modi criticised the Congress, accusing it of fomenting social discord through regional and caste divides. He slammed Congress-led state governments for purportedly pursuing policies that he claimed would lead to “financial anarchy,” urging instead for a competition grounded in good governance and attracting foreign investment. In a reference to Rahul Gandhi’s speech on Monday, Modi said the comments of the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha could no longer be “ignored” as from someone who is a “*balak buddhi*”. He said the intent behind the comments was

suspicious, and demanded the chair to take strict action. Modi said Gandhi’s comments on Hinduism (which the Chair expunged on Tuesday morning) will not be forgiven for centuries and alleged that it was a “conspiracy” by an “ecosystem” to insult Hinduism.

He invoked the imagery of Hindi cinema, from Sholay to Gangs of Wasseypur, painting Gandhi as a purveyor of falsehoods on various national issues and labeling the Congress as a “parasite” that thrived on its allies to inflate its tally. Modi pointed out that for the first time, the Congress had secured fewer than a hundred seats in a third successive Lok Sabha election. He also accused the Congress of trying to wean India’s youth away from the defence forces by “spreading lies” on the Agnipath scheme. The PM said forces inimical to India’s democracy, demography and diversity will be severely dealt with as will anyone in India supporting them.

Opposition MPs began protesting as soon as Speaker Om Birla asked the PM to address the House, who had entered the Lok Sabha with Treasury members chanting Modi’s name, to which the Opposition members responded with slogans of “*Jai Samvidhan*”.

Opposition members urged

the Speaker to allow an MP from Manipur to speak. When Birla said one of the MPs from Manipur had already spoken in the House (on Monday night), Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi, along with two Manipur MPs, entered the Well of the House, with several Congress MPs joining them, while Trinamool Congress MPs stood in the aisles in support. Birla also chided Gandhi for asking Opposition members to enter the Well.

After the PM concluded his speech, the Lok Sabha passed a resolution that criticised the Opposition for disrupting Modi’s speech. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who had moved the resolution, said the actions of the Opposition MPs “shredded” parliamentary norms. Union minister Amit Shah seconded the motion, which the House passed by a voice vote. The House adjourned sine die, and will now meet for the Budget session later this month. The PM will reply to the debate in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday.

In his speech, the PM said the BJP and its allies won in all four states that also had simultaneous Assembly polls. He reminded the House that the BJP had swept the Rajasthan, MP and Chhattisgarh Assembly polls held a mere six months back.

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