

New world order tilting towards India: PM

Says trade deals to open opportunities for youth, SMEs

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said India's recent trade deals with the European Union (EU) and the United States would open up opportunities for the country's youth and for its small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

He said a new world order was taking shape just as it had after the Second World War, but on this occasion it was tilting towards India.

Modi said the world was feeling more confident about stability after these developments, and he urged Indian manufacturers to focus on the "quality" of their products even if it meant lower profits.

Modi said earlier most commentary on any international economic development would state that "India has missed bus", but now the world believed that it would miss the bus if it did not engage with India.

In his 97-minute reply in the Rajya Sabha to the motion of thanks to the President's address, Modi said the world now trusted India's SMEs. He said his government had pursued policies to make the country "future ready", and the message from the trade deals was that India was ready for competition.

Alluding to the mobility pacts that the country had signed, including the one with the EU, he said the youth of the country would be the "biggest beneficiaries" of the trade deals.

There is demand for India's young professionals and caregivers, with countries setting up office here to hire them, he said.

At a time when the world's prosperous countries are ageing, India is young, and its youth are talented, he said. He said just as the second quarter of the last century was crucial in India's freedom movement, so was the second quarter of the current century for its path to become a developed country by 2047.

Earlier, the Lok Sabha was adjourned for the day at 3 pm after repeated interruptions in proceedings because of Opposition protests.

The Lok Sabha passed the motion of thanks to the President's address in the afternoon without the PM's cus-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi replies to the Motion of Thanks to the President's address in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday

PHOTO: PTI

tomary reply, which was scheduled for Wednesday evening. Constitutional experts said it was "unprecedented" for the discussion on the President's address to be passed without the Prime Minister's reply.

When the Lok Sabha reassembled at 3 pm, Speaker Om Birla said he had "concrete information" that many Congress members might move towards the Prime Minister and carry out "some unexpected act", as a result of which he had requested him not to come to the House to reply to the discussion.

The Speaker slammed the conduct of the Opposition, and cautioned that the Lok Sabha would not function if members brought banners and posters to the House.

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra told reporters in the Parliament House complex it was an "absolute lie" that there was any plan to hurt Modi.

She alleged that the Prime Minister was "hiding behind" the Speaker, and he did not have the "guts" to come to the Lok Sabha.

Constitutional expert P D T Achary termed the passage of the motion of thanks on the President's address without the customary reply by the Prime Minister as an "unprecedented development".

Achary, a former Lok Sabha secre-

tary general, said in 2004, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was present in the House, but did not make a speech in accordance with an understanding reached with the Bharatiya Janata Party, then in the Opposition.

In his speech, in the Rajya Sabha, Modi accused the Congress of insulting the President of India by resorting to disruptions in the Lok Sabha during the debate on her address, and also the tribals, Dalits, people from the Northeast, the Sikh community, and the Constitution.

The references were to the disruptions by the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, because of which Modi had to skip his reply to the debate in that House.

Modi said the Opposition, especially the Congress, was unable to digest that he, from a poor family, had continued as the country's Prime Minister, and also that they continued to lose elections.

Taking on the Congress, he said those who talked of "Mohabbat ki dukaan" were raising slogans like "Modi teri kabr khudegi", which highlighted their frustration after electoral defeats.

He said the Congress and the Opposition would never be able to "dig his grave" despite nursing deep hatred towards him.

He accused the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress of protecting infiltrators, and accused them of trying to pressure the judiciary. He said the Congress's first family felt the Prime Minister's post was their family fiefdom. He alleged that the Congress' first family "stole" the "surname of a Gujarati", that is of Mahatma Gandhi.

After sloganeering during the initial part of Modi's speech, the Opposition staged a walkout from the Rajya Sabha.

The Congress maintained that all Opposition parties were united on the point that if Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi was not allowed to speak on the most important order of business, there was very little opportunity for the House to run. It also recalled that on June 10, 2004, Singh was prevented by the BJP from speaking on the motion of thanks to the President's address.