

Will return with a report card in 2024, Modi says at Red Fort

Country should rid itself of corruption, dynasty politics, and appeasement politics, says PM, who declares that India will be the third largest economy in his next term; Centre and State are working together to bring peace in Manipur, he asserts

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI

Delivering his last Independence day speech, the last ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha election, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a strong pitch for his return to the ramparts of Red Fort next year.

Noting that he came to power in 2014 promising change, and was elected again in 2019 on the basis of his government's performance, Mr. Modi said he would present a report card of India's achievements in 2024.

"Next time, on August 15th, at this very Red Fort, I will speak of the achievements of our country, the potential and resolve of our people and their success and self confidence,"



Narendra Modi delivering the Independence Day address from the Red Fort. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Mr. Modi said, in a speech lasting 89 minutes.

Mr. Modi added his "guarantee" that in his next term, India would be the third largest economy. To develop further, the country should rid itself of three big obstacles: cor-

ruption, dynasty politics, and appeasement politics, Mr. Modi said.

He reiterated his assurance in Parliament that the country was with the people of Manipur, which has been in the grip of ethnic violence for the last few

months. The Union and State governments were working together to bring peace there, he said.

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Housing scheme for urban poor

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced a new scheme to help the urban poor build houses in cities. Under this programme, people would get relief in interest rates and loans taken from banks to construct houses. » **PAGE 13**

Kharge skips PM's address

NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge skipped the Prime Minister address, citing an eye problem as well as the PM's security protocol, which he claimed, would not have allowed him to reach on time from the AIICC office. » **PAGE 13**

Will return with report card in 2024, says Modi

"In the northeast, especially in Manipur, a period of violence has ensued, many people died, many of our mothers and sisters were disrespected," Mr. Modi said, adding that there has been news of peace being slowly established in the past few weeks. The Central and State governments were working together to resolve the issue and establish peace, he said.

Among the new initiatives by his government, the Prime Minister announced that interest rate subvention will be given to the urban poor to buy houses. Under the Vishwakarma Yojana, to be launched next month, those with traditional skills and crafts will be allocated ₹1,300 crore to ₹1,500 crore to encourage them in their craft.

Mr. Modi also announced a programme to train women in self-help groups to use and repair drones, which will be deployed in agricultural work. "We have also kept a goal of making two crore 'lakhpati didis' (sisters with at least a ₹1 lakh in resources)," he said. The number of Jan Aushadhi Kendras will be increased from 10,000 to 25,000 in the coming years, he added.

Millennium of rejuvenation

Stressing that the trinity of demography, democracy and diversity was the country's key strength, the Prime Minister said that it was the youth and working professionals who would propel India to strengthen the foundation for a rejuvenation for the next thousand years.

India's future economic power will mainly accrue from Tier-2 and Tier-3 towns and a new middle class which will propel the country into the league of developed nations as early as in 2047, the centenary of Independence.

"There are no ifs and buts, there is a new confidence in India," he said.

However, as a warning, Prime Minister Modi noted that modern India still remembers that the country was attacked, about 1,000 to 1,200 years ago. "One minor king of a small state lost a war, and we did not realise that the consequences of it will last for centuries, a trap of slavery lasting a thousand years".

Giving an account of his government's work culture, Mr. Modi said that the people's mandate had given him the strength to reform, and for his government, bureaucrats, and others to perform to transform. As an example, he referred to the 200 crore anti-COVID vaccine doses that were administered to citizens.

On I-Day, Stalin seeks transfer of education back to State List

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Tuesday called for transferring education back to the State List of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. He said that only this would help to abolish the centralised examinations like NEET. Education, originally a State subject, was moved to the Concurrent List by the Indira Gandhi government during the Emergency.

Hoisting the national flag at Fort St. George on Independence Day, Mr. Stalin recalled the stand taken by former Chief Ministers C.N. Annadurai and M. Karunanidhi on State autonomy. "All subjects that interact with people directly should be transferred to the State List. Especially, education should be transferred [back] to the State List," he said.

The State government

The Chief Minister says all subjects that interact with people directly should be put on the State List

would constitute a welfare board for workers attached to service-providers, such as Ola, Uber, Swiggy, and Zomato, who have been serving their consumers in major cities, he said.

The Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme would be expanded to all State-run schools across Tamil Nadu from August 25 and he would visit a school at Thirukkuvalai for inaugurating the scheme that day, he said. Mr. Stalin said the scheme to provide a subsidy of ₹1 lakh to women autorickshaw drivers would be expanded to cover 500 women.

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On I-Day, Stalin seeks transfer of education back to State List

The monthly pension for freedom fighters and their families would be increased from ₹10,000 to ₹11,000, he said.

He also announced that the Agricultural College and Research Institute, functioning under Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, at Killikulam in Thoothukudi district would be named after late freedom fighter V.O. Chidambaranar.

Training for ex-servicemen

Mr. Stalin said the government would implement a programme to train 10,000 ex-servicemen to help them get employment. About 55,000 vacancies in government departments would be filled this financial year. The Kalaigarn Centenary Park would be established on a 6.09-acre plot on Cathedral Road in Chennai at a cost of ₹25 crore.

The Chief Minister also announced that the free bus travel for women would henceforth be called 'Vidiyal Payanam'.

CM presents 'Thagaisal Thamizhar' Award to Dravidar Kazhagam chief Veeramani

Awards were presented under various categories during the Independence Day celebrations; in his address, CM recalls Gandhi's visit to areas hit by communal riots in Noakhali in the then Bengal for restoring peace instead of taking part in the celebrations when India got Independence in 1947

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Dravidar Kazhagam president K. Veeramani received the 'Thagaisal Thamizhar Award' from Chief Minister M.K. Stalin during the Independence Day celebrations here on Tuesday.

W.B. Vasanth Kandasamy, Professor in the School of Computer Science and Engineering, Vellore Institute of Technology, with over 50 years of research in transdisciplinary mathematical modelling and teaching experience, received the Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Award from Mr. Stalin.

N. Muthamilselvi of Chengalpattu district, who scaled the Mount Everest on May 23, was given the Kalpana Chawla Award for Courage and Daring Enterprise.

E. Tharanirajan, Dean, Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital, Chennai (for caring for untended patients) and IPS officer V. Badrinarayanan (for Project Pallikoodam - Awareness on Child Sexual Abuse) received the Chief Minister's Best Practices Award. The Mobile App and Real time Dashboard for monitoring the Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme by the Tamil Nadu e-Governance Agency also received an award under this category.

For exemplary service



Chief Minister M.K. Stalin presenting the 'Thagaisal Thamizhar' award to Dravidar Kazhagam president K. Veeramani on Tuesday. Chief Secretary Shiv Das Meena is seen. R. RAGU

towards the welfare of the differently abled, D. Jayakumar from Chennai received the best doctor award; Shanthi Nilayam, Kanniyakumari, best institution; Ratan Vidyagar from Coimbatore, best social worker; Teddy Export, Madurai, best private employer; and Ramanathapuram District Central Co-operative Bank, best district central cooperative bank.

Gramathin Oli of Kallakurichi district won the best institution award and D. Stanley Peter won the best social worker award under the category for services rendered towards the welfare of women.

As for Chief Minister's Award for best performing

local bodies, Tiruchi and Tambaram secured the first two positions under the municipal corporation category. Among municipalities, Rameswaram, Thiruthurai, Poonchi and Mannangudi received the first, second and third prizes respectively. Vikravandi in Villupuram district, Alangudi in Pudukkottai district and Veerakkalpudur in Salem district secured the top three spots among town panchayats.

S. Dhusthageer, R. Dinshakar, M. Vijayalakshmi, S. Chandiralekha and Kavitha Thandoni received the Chief Minister's State Youth Award.

IPS officers Asra Garg, V.

Badrinarayanan and Don-gare Pravin Umesh, and police personnel M. Guna-sekaran, S. Murugan and R. Kumar received the Chief Minister's Police Medal for outstanding work in eradicating drug production and illicit trafficking in the State.

'Noble intention'

Referring to instances from history, during his Independence Day speech, Mr. Stalin recalled that Mahatma Gandhi had visited areas hit by communal riots at Noakhali in the then Bengal to restore peace instead of taking part in the celebrations in Delhi when India attained freedom in 1947.

"He did not visit the safe places, but went and stayed in the areas where people affected by the violence had lived. The Mahatma controlled the riots with his noble intention and good heart," Mr. Stalin said, elaborating on the idea of India that were in the minds of the people who struggled for the country's freedom.

He also recalled a letter from the last Viceroy of India, Lord Louis Mountbatten, to Gandhi appreciating the latter for controlling the riots in the then Bengal as a single person when about 55,000 personnel were unable to control the riots that happened in the then Punjab.

"The Mahatma, who restored peace in [the then] Calcutta [Presidency], then came to Delhi. He thought that if people fought each other over religion and other issues, it was important to visit and pacify them to restore peace," Mr. Stalin said.

Quoting from the ideals advocated by late social reformers B.R. Ambedkar and Periyar E.V. Ramasamy, Mr. Stalin said these leaders stood for an India that upheld equality and fraternity. "India is not what it is because of its boundaries. It should be made in ideas."

Later in the day, in a social media post, Mr. Stalin said: "As we celebrate India's Independence, let us

reaffirm our commitment to preserving the diverse fabric of our Union. Together, as part of INDIA, we stand strong to safeguard our Constitution's ideals of democracy, unity, and diversity."

Wish fulfilled

The wish of an eight-year-old boy, P. Lidsaran, from Sadayanendhal in Ramanathapuram district was fulfilled on Tuesday as he witnessed the Chief Minister hoisting the national flag at the Fort St. George here.

The Class III student and his classmates in the Panchayat Union Primary School at Pappanam, Kamudhi Taluk, had written letters to the Chief Minister, expressing their wish to witness the flag hoisting ceremony on the Independence Day.

Lidsaran's letter was brought to the attention of officials in the Chief Minister's office.

The boy was accompanied by his mother to Chennai, on his first-ever visit to the city. Accommodation for them was arranged at the State guest house. Seated in the same enclave as MPs, MLAs and journalists, Lidsaran witnessed the Independence Day parade. His mother Anandhavalli thanked Mr. Stalin for the gesture.

Governor R.N. Ravi hoisted the national flag at the Raj Bhavan.

PM announces new housing scheme for urban poor; low interest rate loans on offer

The initiative will benefit families that live in unauthorised colonies, slums or rented houses in various cities, says Modi; he adds that weaker sections living in cities faced a plethora of problems

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday announced a new scheme to help the urban poor build houses in cities. Under this programme, they will receive relief in interest rates and loans taken from banks to construct their houses.

Addressing the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the occasion of the 77th Independence Day, Mr. Modi said that weaker sections who lived in cities faced a plethora of problems.

Poor facilities

"Middle-class families are dreaming of buying their own houses. We are coming up with a new scheme in the coming years that will benefit those families that live in cities but are living in rented houses, or slums, or *chawls* and unauthorised colonies," he said.

The Prime Minister said that if this section wanted



Proud moment: Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, Ministers Rajnath Singh, Piyush Goyal, Amit Shah, Nitin Gadkari, and Anurag Thakur, and others at the Independence Day celebration. *ANI*

to build their own houses, the government would assist them with a relief in interest rates and loans from banks that would help them save lakhs of rupees.

Flagship mission

The government already has a scheme to address the housing shortage for the urban poor called the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban (PMAY-U), which was launched in 2015.

The PMAY-U is a flagship mission of the government which is implemented by the Housing and Urban Af-

fairs Ministry. The mission aims to address the urban housing shortage among the economically backward sections, including the slum dwellers by ensuring a *pucca* house to all eligible urban households by 2022.

The scheme period though now has been extended up to December 2024 to complete all the houses sanctioned without changing the funding pattern and implementation methodology.

A total of 75.51 lakh houses have been complet-

ed out of which 71.39 lakh have been occupied till now under the PMAY-U, the government had informed the Rajya Sabha.

Uttar Pradesh had the largest number of houses completed at 12,87,307. Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh were other high-performing States with 8,80,209 and 8,08,278 houses completed. The number for Tamil Nadu was 5,30,350.

The Centre has released a ₹1.48 lakh crore assistance to the States, the government said in the reply.

Why is the Cauvery water sharing issue flaring up again?

What prompted the Tamil Nadu government to move the apex Court? How has the Karnataka CM reacted?

T. Ramakrishnan

The story so far:

In August 14, the Tamil Nadu government sought the Supreme Court's intervention to make Karnataka immediately release 24,000 cubic feet per second (cusecs) from its reservoirs and ensure the availability of the specified quantity of water at Biligundlu on the inter-State border for the remainder of the month. It also urged the Court to direct Karnataka to ensure the release of 36.76 TMC (thousand million cubic feet) stipulated for September 2023 as per the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT)'s final award of February 2007 that was modified by the SC in 2018.

How is the water being shared?

A monthly schedule is in place for Karnataka, the upper riparian State of the Cauvery basin, to release water to Tamil

Nadu. As per the schedule, Karnataka is to make available to Tamil Nadu at Biligundlu a total quantity of 177.25 TMC in a "normal" water year (June to May). Of this quantity, 123.14 TMC is to be given during the period from June to September, also marking the season of the southwest monsoon. Invariably, it is during this period that the Cauvery issue gets flared up, when the monsoon yields lower rainfall than anticipated. After the SC gave its judgment in February 2018 on the CWDT's 2007 award, the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) and Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) were established four months later to ensure the implementation of the judgment. Since then, the two bodies have been holding meetings to take stock of the situation.

Why has T.N. approached the SC?

The CWMA, at its meeting on August 11, wanted Karnataka to manage its releases

in such a way that 10,000 cusecs of water was realised at Biligundlu for the next 15 days, starting from August 12. In other words, Karnataka would have to provide 0.86 TMC a day or 12.9 TMC totally in the 15 days. The Authority also decided that based on future rainfall, there would be a re-evaluation of the quantity to be released. But, what apparently irked Tamil Nadu was the refusal of Karnataka during the meeting to abide by the quantity that was agreed upon at the meeting of the CWRC the previous day—which was a figure of 15,000 cusecs for 15 days. However, Karnataka, during the Authority's meeting, said it would release only 8,000 cusecs, and that too up to August 22.

How has Karnataka responded?

Karnataka has contended that lower rainfall in the Cauvery catchment including in Kerala has led to the poor inflow to its own reservoirs. On Saturday,

in Mysuru, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah told journalists that whenever additional water flowed into the reservoirs, Karnataka was releasing it to Tamil Nadu. But, this year, Karnataka was not in such a position, he conceded. According to data of the Meteorological Department, Kodagu, the district cited by Mr. Siddaramaiah for the deficit rainfall (the Cauvery originates from there), received 44% less rainfall during June 1-August 15 than what it was expected to experience. Also, Karnataka, at the Authority's meeting, had refused to accept the demand of Tamil Nadu for following a distress-sharing formula, even though its Chief Minister, in Mysuru, favoured the idea of sharing distress.

What lies next?

Tamil Nadu, especially its farmers in the Cauvery delta, is eagerly awaiting to see whether Karnataka will go at least by the decision of the Authority. The present storage of the Mettur reservoir in Tamil Nadu is precariously low with about 20 TMC, which will last only 10 days after giving allowance for dead storage and drinking water requirements, even though water will be required at least for one more month for the standing short-term crop, *kuruvai*. It remains to be seen how the Supreme Court is going to view the matter.

A distress-sharing formula, acceptable to all, seems to be the need of the hour.

THE GIST

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