

Highlights of the President's Address 2019

The President of India, Mr. Ram Nath Kovind, addressed a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament on January 31, 2019. He outlined the major policy achievements of the government in his address. Key highlights of the address include:

Economy

- During the last four and a half years, the economy of the country has been growing at a rate of 7.3% on average. India has emerged as the 6th largest economy in the world.
- While India's contribution to the world GDP was 2.6% in 2014, it has increased to 3.3% in 2017 as per latest reports.
- By decreasing the burden of income tax and keeping rate of inflation under control, the government has created new opportunities for expanding the savings of the middle class.

Finance and Banking

- Under the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana and the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, 21 crore individuals belonging to low income groups have been provided with insurance coverage. More than Rs 3,100 crore has been disbursed under these schemes.
- Under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, which facilitates credit for professional and business requirements, loans of more than Rs 7 lakh crore have been disbursed to the youth.
- So far, 34 crore bank accounts have been opened under the Jan Dhan Yojana. Of all the bank accounts opened in the world from 2014 to 2017, 55% were opened in India alone.
- As a result of the expansion in Direct Benefit Transfer in the last four and a half years, more than Rs 6.05 lakh crore have been directly transferred to the bank accounts of beneficiaries. Because of this, about Rs. 1.1 lakh crore have been saved.

Corruption and Black Money

- To address corruption, a Special Investigative Team on black money has been established.
- Through demonetization, the registration of 3.3 lakh shell companies responsible for flow of black money have been annulled.
- Assets worth more than Rs 50,000 crore are being confiscated under the Benami Property Act, Prevention of Money Laundering Act and the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act.

Skill Development and Job Creation

- The Kaushal Vikas Abhiyan has been launched. In the coming days, more than 15,000 ITIs, 10,000 Kaushal Vikas Kendras and more than 600 Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Kendras will play a critical role in developing the skill-set of the country's youth.
- The creation of jobs with tax incentives under Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana has been undertaken. Under this scheme, the EPS and EPF contribution of 12% payable by the employer is being paid by the Government for the first three years. More than one crore youth have benefitted from this scheme.

Health and Sanitation

- To reduce out-of-pocket expenses on medical care for the poor, the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadi Yojana has been launched. 4,900 Jan Aushadhi Centres have been opened in more than 600 districts.
- The Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana has been launched. Under this scheme, 50 crore poor people are eligible for availing treatment of up to five lakh rupees per year per family in case of a serious illness. More than 10 lakh people have availed free treatment from hospitals under the scheme.
- Mission Indradhanush has been launched to provide immunisation to children and pregnant women living in remote and tribal areas. As a result, the country has moved rapidly towards the target of "Universal Immunisation".
- Under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, more than 9 crore toilets have been constructed. The coverage of rural sanitation, which was less than 40% in 2014, has increased to 98%.

Social Justice and Empowerment

- In the past four-and-a-half years, 140 camps have been organised per month where disabled individuals can receive equipment. During this period, equipment worth Rs 700 crore has been distributed to about 12 lakh individuals.
- To alleviate the problems faced by the disabled at railway stations and bus stations, the government has made about 1,000 government buildings and 650 railway stations fully accessible under the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan.

Education

- New educational institutions to provide professional education of the highest standard

have been established. Seven IITs, seven IIMs, fourteen IIITs, one NIT, and four NIDs are being established.

- Efforts are being made to strengthen the education system by opening 103 Kendriya Vidyalayas and 62 new Navodaya Vidyalayas.

Women and Child Development

- Under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, maximum benefit has been availed by women. Out of the 15 crore Mudra loans, 73% of these have been disbursed to women entrepreneurs.
- In order to ensure the participation of women entrepreneurs in small and medium enterprises, it has been made mandatory for major government companies to buy at least 3% of their material from women-owned enterprises.
- The government has enhanced maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks.

Law and Governance

- The Citizenship Amendment Bill ~~has been passed. The Bill*~~ will help victims who were persecuted and were compelled to seek refuge in India to secure citizenship in India. *
- The government has created a provision for capital punishment in case of heinous crimes like rape of minors. The government is also working on passing the Triple Talaq Bill in the Parliament.

Industry and Manufacturing

- India's position has improved by 65 places in the Ease of Doing Business ranking, from 142 in 2014 to 77 now.
- As a part of the Make in India initiative, Asia's largest MedTech Zone is being established in Andhra Pradesh. Defence Corridors are being established in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Transport and Connectivity

- Under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, a target to provide road connectivity to every village by 2019 has been set. More than 82% villages have been connected by roads, as compared to 56% villages in 2014.
- Under the 'Udan scheme', 12 lakh seats have been made available to people at lower tariffs. This has provided the common person with an opportunity of air travel.

Urban and Rural Development

- In the last four-and-a-half years, 1.3 crore homes have been constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. In 2014, only 25 lakh houses had been constructed.
- The government has enacted the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 to

ensure that construction of houses is completed on time. Since then, about 35,000 real estate projects have been registered.

- Six crore LPG connections have been provided under the Ujjwala Yojana. In the last four years, the number of families with gas connections has risen from 12 to 13 crore.
- In 2014, there were more than 18,000 villages which had no electricity connection. Today every village has been electrified. Under the Pradhan Mantri Saubhagya Yojana, 2.4 crore homes have been provided electricity.

Agriculture and Water Resources

- Work is being carried out to provide farmers with fair prices for their crops. The Minimum Support Price (MSP) of 22 crops has been fixed at a price one and a half times higher than the production cost of the crop.
- Crop insurance is being provided to farmers at low premiums under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana to safeguard them from potential crisis due to crop damage.
- Under the 'Namami Gange Mission', projects worth Rs 25,500 crore have been approved so far. The government has initiated the cleaning up of the river Ganga by diverting dozens of major drains, stopping flow of industrial effluents, and by setting up several sewage treatment plants in the cities.

Development of the Eastern Region

- Under the Udan Yojana, 19 new airports are being built in Eastern India and of these 5 are coming up in the North East. The construction of Pakyong airport in Sikkim and Veer Surendra Sai Airport at Jharsuguda in Odisha has been completed.
- Almost all the railway lines of the North-East have been converted to broad gauge. Efforts are underway to provide rail connectivity to the capital cities of all North-East states. For this, work on 15 new rail lines is under progress at a cost of approximately Rs. 50,000 crores.

[*Correction made on February 1, 2019.](#)

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