

PM MODI AT 76

Prime Minister Narendra Modi turned 76 and it was a working birthday for the longest serving PM of India. Modi is a phenomenon who changed India in many ways – the most important being that he pushed Indians to aspire high and work harder for it. Modi is not an accidental Prime Minister who came because of a little twist in the situation. He rose with the evolution of Indian peoples’ aspirations and outlook. He has risen from the ranks as a member of the RSS. As part of the RSS, he travelled across India as an observer and also to many parts of the world as a leaner. PM Modi’s life is an open book with his rising from a small family and yet never making that an excuse or a plank to garner sympathy. PM Modi’s greatest contribution to changing the way India moves is that he injected dynamism in governance and thinking of the people. It’s a fact that since India is home to one-sixth of the humankind on the planet, the country’s problems are unlikely to vanish overnight. Yet tangibles like lifting million from acute poverty, adding millions to the banking system and creating the most efficient digital financial transaction module like the UPI, make him the enemy of his rivals. Not much is discussed about the way Prime Minister works, but whatever little one known from those privy to the things, it’s clear that people like Modi are missionary leaders. He is into politics with clear vision and a roadmap and not just to enjoy power. His frugal ways of life are well known. As CM of Gujarat he donated all his savings from his salary to the girls’ education. In PM’s house, he spends his money on food including cooking gas. He is one of the most elegantly dressed leaders of the world and yet his dress is desi. PM Modi is a real karmyogi!

VK Bahuguna

The tragic collapse of a five-storey paying guest (PG) accommodation in Delhi’s Satya Niketan - claiming the lives of seven young students and injuring several others — was not an act of God. It reflects institutional manslaughter and is deeply shameful for a country that promises to become a developed nation by 2047.

For hours, as rescue teams pulled crushed bodies and screaming survivors from beneath pulverised concrete, the true culprit remained undisturbed in comfortable municipal offices. This tragedy was not caused merely by ageing brickwork or unseasonal rainfall; it was caused by systemic decay, unchecked corruption and the criminal negligence of civic authorities entrusted with public safety. This writer knows of a well-known case relating to the Prime Minister’s UDAY Yojana, under which unauthorised colonies were supposed to be regulated by the DDA. The Assistant Director concerned in East Delhi was allegedly demanding a heavy bribe

Kalyani Shankar

The political situation in Uttar Pradesh is evolving. Mayawati, Leader of the Bahujan Samaj Party and former ruler of the state, hopes to return after a five-year break from active politics. While she may not seek to regain full control, her presence could affect the elections by drawing votes from her opponents.

Uttar Pradesh will hold its next Assembly elections in 2027. The key rivalry will be between the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Samajwadi Party (SP). Additionally, the Congress Party is teaming up with the SP to try to revive its political presence.

The BSP once held influence in UP, Punjab and Uttarakhand. Mayawati faces several new challenges, including heightened political awareness among young voters, increasing competition from rival parties, and the continued dominance of dynastic politics.

Her strategy for the upcoming elections emphasises acknowledging past achievements, staying relevant in today’s political landscape, and actively engaging with local communities. This approach aims to rejuvenate the BSP’s future and reconnect with its support base.

Uttar Pradesh is significant in India because it is the most populous state. Many past Prime Ministers have travelled through U.P. on their way to Delhi, highlighting its influence in national politics. It has 80 Lok Sabha and 403 Assembly seats.

The BSP’s recent election performance has been disappointing, with the party securing only 1 of 403 seats. After this setback, Mayawati and her party face a crucial turning point. To regain



their relevance and influence, she must effectively navigate a competitive environment where both the BJP and SP are actively reaching out to Dalits and marginalised communities.

The BSP has ruled out forming any pre-election alliances and plans to contest the upcoming 2027 elections independently. Mayawati aims to recreate the successful Dalit-Brahmin alliance of 2007 by selecting more Brahmin and upper-caste candidates to run alongside her core Dalit supporters. Senior leader Satish Chandra Mishra has been appointed to oversee vital tasks related to legal matters, media strategy and election coordination to ensure effective campaign management.

One of Mayawati’s primary strategies for the 2027 elections will be to reaffirm her dedication to the Dalit community and other marginalised sections of society. She recognises the importance of establishing a strong support

base as the political landscape in Uttar Pradesh transforms ahead of the elections. Her vision integrates historical awareness, maintaining contemporary relevance and grassroots community involvement to enhance the BSP’s prospects.

Young voters, increasingly aware of their rights and issues, are shaping the political landscape, as seen with the recently emerged Cockroach Janata Party. Mayawati’s party also faces competition from other parties trying to attract these voters.

To start her innings anew, she recently distanced herself from her nephew, whom she had once supported, causing tension within the party. While he remains affiliated with the BSP, she stressed that he needs to develop more political maturity before taking on significant responsibilities.

To regain her party’s relevance, Mayawati must adeptly

navigate this competitive political environment, particularly as both the BJP and SP work hard to connect with communities. She is expected to launch outreach programmes to reconnect with her traditional voter base, which has eroded significantly in recent years. To address dynastic politics within her party, Mayawati is working to reshape the BSP’s internal structure. To tackle this challenge, she should promote a more democratic process by filling leadership positions through grassroots elections rather than appointments by a select few party leaders. This shift can foster a more inclusive party culture and restore members’ faith.

Engaging younger party members and fostering future leaders in key roles is essential to revitalising the BSP. Mayawati can launch leadership-development initiatives to ensure new leaders represent younger voters’ interests and concerns while also in-

volving them in decision-making.

The BJP’s influence in Uttar Pradesh is notably strong, especially among upper-caste and Hindu voters, while the SP continues to strengthen its position among Yadavs and Muslims. To counter her rivals’ polarising tactics, Mayawati might seek strategic alliances with regional parties and organisations that share her vision of social justice. Politics

The BSP is focusing on mobilising Other Backward Classes (OBCs) alongside Dalits, which can create a larger voting bloc compared to Muslims. OBCs make up approximately 40 per cent of the state’s population, while Dalits represent more than 20 per cent. The Muslim community accounts for nearly 20 per cent of the population. Mayawati must use technology adeptly in her campaign efforts. Employing digital strategies for campaigning, outreach and voter engagement is vital. Social media platforms can effectively connect with younger voters, allowing them to access relevant, engaging content while addressing their concerns.

Additionally, Mayawati should develop online and offline programmes to educate potential voters about their rights and the political process. This outreach can empower marginalised communities.

Finally, Mayawati needs to evaluate her past governance approaches to align them with current expectations. By implementing effective strategies and utilising technology to connect with voters, she can help build a stronger foundation for the BSP’s influence in the upcoming elections. The question is whether she will return or fade away further.

HOLD ON TO YOUR GOODNESS

Rajyogi Brahma Kumar Nikunj Ji

“Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see,” said Mark Twain.

Human beings are kinder to each other when they feel safe and secure. However, with the rise of aggression in our culture, the threat of terrorism, and the increase in stress in our schools and workplaces, we find ourselves in a position of fear, which creates anxiety, resulting in distorted thinking. These recent changes in our culture have promoted a lack of goodwill towards others and fostered more self-absorption and less outward giving. It seems that today there are no takers for acts of kindness, truthfulness and simplicity. As a result, those who do good are often left deserted. On the other hand, the clever and shrewd steal the show. It’s very sad that the world today is more conducive to those who are manipulative and practical, and those who chase rewards, than to



those toiling hard with faith in the return of good actions. In such a scenario, then what is the point of being good in a mad, bad, sad world? Because every good deed anyway gets ‘lost’, as many of us have come to believe. Just like everything becomes dark at night and a lone flower in a thick jungle remains unseen, the little goodness flickering here and there in the world seems to be of no use.

History presents us with innumerable examples of times when the bad seemed to be all-pervasive, when powerful conquerors looted and trapped the masses in an undignified life. And yet, from these very masses emerged a small, courageous group of awakened people who led a revolution against injustice and finally turned the tables on their oppressors. But, of course, all acts of goodness do not amount to a revolution, for they do not always aim to blow strong winds of change. But nevertheless, they work like a cool breeze in a hot desert, or a drizzle on parched land.

We all know the story of the little bird that filled her beak with water from a pond and headed for the woods that were on fire. While she was at it, a spectator asked the tiny creature what was the point of her efforts, for the small droplets would not douse the huge flames. She quipped, “When I die, and my life’s record is being read out, my name will appear on the list of those who tried to put out the flames, and not among those who sparked it or did nothing about it.” We must remember that there is a law of cause and effect that guides every act in the universe.

And what a person does unto anyone, he does unto himself. So, while a negative action piles debt on a person, a positive act is an investment in a good future. So, an honest person must hold on to his virtue with courage and patience in testing times. He must empower himself with the unflinching hope that, as night is followed by day, better times will inevitably follow. It is just a matter of time before the clouds will give way to clearer skies. So, keep the faith until the new day arrives.

Satya Niketan: The price of institutional apathy

through his agents to complete the conveyance deed. It was only when this writer approached senior officials on behalf of a helpless victim that the work was completed. The officer concerned was later arrested and suspended. However, the larger question remains: how are civic bodies allowing such lawlessness in the capital city of the country? Satya Niketan, situated adjacent to Delhi University’s South Campus, has evolved from a quiet residential neighbourhood into a dense and largely unregulated commercial hub. Driven by an acute shortage of official university accommodation, tens of thousands of young students from outside Delhi are pushed into the hands of a lucrative private PG market. To maximise profits, property owners routinely violate master plans by digging unauthorised basements, removing load-bearing walls and adding illegal upper floors to decades-old foundations designed only for modest family dwellings.

What makes the tragedy unforgivable is its predictability. Satya Niketan has witnessed similar disasters, yet dangerous structures continue to operate despite notices and warnings. Illegal modifications, alleged bribery and inadequate safety measures have become routine, leaving shops and crowded PGs without proper fire safety, structural certificates or emergency exits.

This is happening routinely across Delhi in all kinds of buildings and hotels, endangering the lives of unsuspecting people and reflecting a total collapse of urban governance. The regulatory framework meant to govern private housing in academic hubs has been deliberately ignored because the institutions responsible for oversight have been hollowed out by corruption.

Every administrative body involved operates in silos, passing the buck while illegal construction thrives under their noses. When disaster strikes, junior officials are suspended, a magisterial inquiry is ordered to quell public anger, a few low-level contractors or property owners are arrested, and financial ex gratia is announced to compensate for the loss of human life. Within weeks, the outrage subsides, suspended officials are quietly reinstated, and business as usual resumes

over fresh graves. This is the situation across much of India. Such incidents must be treated as structural crimes. IndiaNews Coverage

To prevent urban centres from turning into death traps, the Government must immediately implement drastic structural reforms.

First, criminal liability must be fixed for municipal officers. Public accountability laws should be amended so that jurisdictional engineers, inspectors and sanctioning authorities can be held accountable in cases where illegal or unsafe structures collapse due to proven negligence. These officials must face serious legal consequences alongside predatory landlords; only then will enforcement become a reality.

Second, mandatory independent structural audits should be undertaken by qualified structural engineers from reputed technical institutions rather than relying solely on local municipal officials. All commercial PG accommodations and multi-storey facilities operating in high-density educational corridors should be covered.

Any building lacking a digitally verifiable structural fitness certificate

should be sealed immediately.

Third, the Government, in tandem with universities, must enact a strict statutory framework for private student accommodation, imposing hard caps on occupancy, mandatory fire exits, structural load limits and the public display of safety clearances outside every premises. Universities cannot remain passive bystanders to a housing crisis that exploits their students.

Authorities must also mandate fast-tracked public-private hostel construction within academic zones to reduce the dangerous dependence on unregulated PG operators. The Ministry of Education should evolve a scheme for this purpose and provide funding and low-interest loans to eligible private agencies.

Student housing also needs effective regulation. Turning Delhi University’s residential corridors from dangerous profit centres into accountable student housing requires a coordinated strategy. The university should establish a housing portal to empanel private accommodation providers and allow students to use only approved PGs. Students should be discouraged from

taking accommodation in unlisted premises.

Fourth, all records relating to building sanctions, notices, demolition orders and structural safety reports must be digitised and published on a publicly accessible digital map. Occupational-Health & Safety

Fifth, the Government should enact a Paying Guest Accommodation Regulation and Safety Act, requiring all accommodation providers housing more than four or five students to obtain a formal PG operating licence.

Operating an unapproved PG or violating safety norms should attract heavy financial penalties and criminal liability. Illegal additions to buildings should be sealed forthwith, with water and electricity connections disconnected where legally permissible.

The mandarins occupying positions of authority must remember that the seven young lives lost in Satya Niketan were not victims of bad luck or poor weather; they were victims of an administrative ecosystem that, where corruption and negligence are proven, can place illicit monetary gain above human safety.