



NAMO: 2 YEARS OF HITS & MISSES

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ABSTRACT:

Narendra Damodardas Modi became the 15th Prime Minister of India on May 26, 2014. The most-loved leader has completed two years, but the excitement, on his being our PM has not died down. He still moves people with his excellent oratory skills and still manages to attract public, wherever he goes.

Under the various ministries of the government, Modi has launched several schemes and programmes for the benefit of the citizens. We have a prime minister who is strong, decisive and always available to the masses. He has a professional work style and has invigorated a new work culture in the government. He routinely conducts review meetings with ministers, top bureaucrats, and interacts with officials across the country via video conferences. He talks to people through 'Mann Ki Baat', his monthly programme on radio. He has used these opportunities to launch massive campaigns such as the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and has been successful in evoking a sense of patriotism in the youth. Whether it is an earthquake in Nepal, or Indians stranded in Yemen, floods in Kashmir, or a fire in a Kerala temple, the Modi government has always reached out to the people with relief and rescue measures.

The biggest achievement of this government has been to curb widespread corruption in the system. Since it took over in May 2014, the government has not faced a single corruption charge. At the same time, it has brought in one of the toughest legislation in the world to deal with the black money menace. Here I have tried to gather the Major Hits, Misses and work in progress of Modi Government.

On 26th May 2014 NarendraModi took oath as the Prime Minister of India, becoming the first ever PM to be born after India attained Independence. Dynamic, dedicated and determined, NarendraModi reflects the aspiration and hope of over a billion Indians.

Ever since he assumed office in May 2014, PM Modi has embarked on a journey of all-round and inclusive development where every Indian can realize their hopes and aspirations. He remains deeply inspired by the principle of ‘Antyodaya’, of serving the last person in the queue.

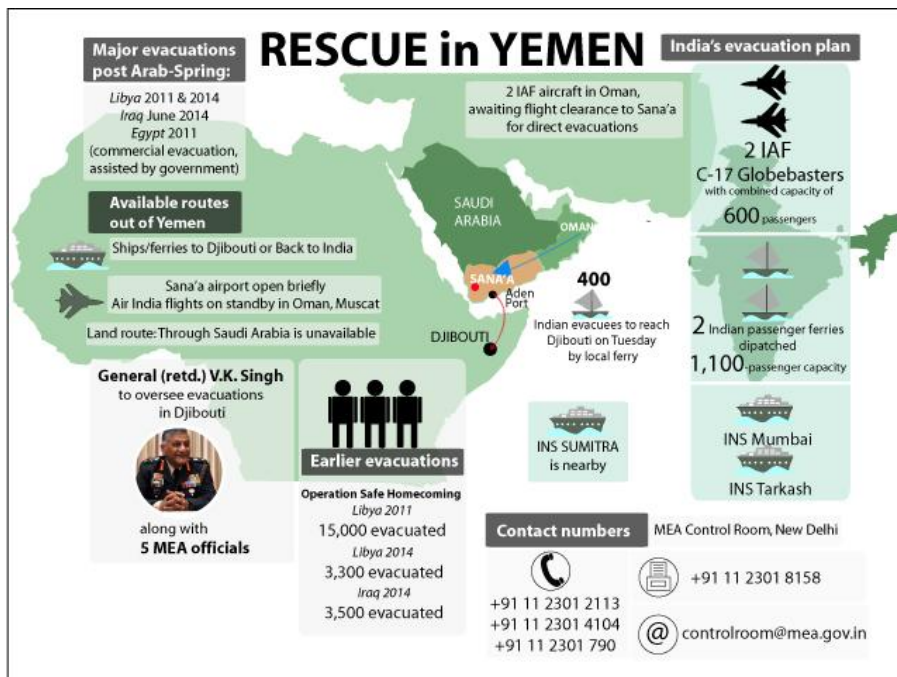
Through innovative ideas and initiatives, the Government has ensured that the wheels of progress move at rapid pace and the fruits of development reach every citizen. Governance has become open, easier and transparent.

Since Modi's taking office as Prime Minister, his administration has focused on reforming and modernizing India's infrastructure and government,[4] reducing bureaucracy, encouraging increased foreign direct investment,[5] improving national standards of health and sanitation and improving foreign relations

On PMModis's completion of two years in power, I have tried to gather the MAJOR HITS & MISSES during his service:

HITS:

1. Yemen evacuation



This was one of the biggest evacuations during the times of war, since the Gulf War I. MoS Gen. (Retd) V.K. Singh personally oversaw the operation. The External Affairs Minister headed by Sushma Swaraj earned laurels for helping the Indians living abroad, be it for rescuing Kerala nurses from war-torn Libya or bringing back differently-abled Geeta from Pakistan.

2. Jan Dhan Yojana

Anyone can now open an account in a bank, thanks to this financial inclusion scheme. Barely a fortnight after the launch, the yojana entered the Guinness Book of World Records for the maximum number of accounts opened in a week. The scheme is a big boost in moving towards direct subsidy transfer.

3. LPG Subsidy reforms

Initially started as a 'Give It Up' campaign, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry headed by Dharmendra Pradhan barred LPG subsidy to customers who earn more than Rs. 10 lakh per annum. The amount saved was used to give over five lakh new LPG connections to those who still use firewoods or kerosene stoves for cooking.

4. Swachh Bharat Mission

A pet project of Mr. Modi, sanitation ministry's Swachh Bharat mission got wide public support, especially on social media after celebrities joined the Clean India challenge. Not just stopping with cleaning the locality, the government has taken initiatives such as building more toilets, waste management and waste segregation. Real success, will however happen, when manual scavenging is completely eradicated.

5. India-Bangladesh land boundary agreement

When India is facing boundary disputes with every neighbour, this agreement gives optimism that issues can be amicably solved over diplomacy. The people living in the enclaves that were recently annexed to India even exercised their franchise in the recently concluded West Bengal Assembly elections.

6. Bankruptcy code

At a time when bankers were grappling with huge rise in non-performing assets and government eyeing to create more entrepreneurs, the amendment of existing bankruptcy laws was necessary. With the support from Congress, the law was passed in Rajya Sabha during the Budget Session where the ruling party was short of numbers.

7. Real Estate regulation

Apart from making the process transparent and keeping checks and balances in the form of a Real Estate Regulatory Authority, the law drafted by Housing Ministry headed by M. VenkaiahNaidugave confidence to home-buyers. When housing sector contributes to nine per cent of GDP, this law, if effectively implemented by the States, is a game-changer in the housing sector.

8. Yoga Day

India's lobbying got success when the United Nations declared June 21 as International Yoga Day. The mass yoga performance at Rajpath, which was led by Mr. Modi himself, set the record of most number of people participating in such an event.

9. Mann Ki Baat

A first such initiative in India where a top leader addresses millions, that too periodically. The programme even featured U.S. President Barack Obama during his visit to India.

10. Digital India

This flagship programme of Ravi Shankar Prasad's Communications Ministry aiming to create a knowledge economy and good governance is travelling in the right path. Every minister and every ministry is now on Twitter. A slew of e-governance measures like digital locker and feedbacks through mygov.in are some notable initiatives.

MISSES:

1. Pathankot attack

The attack at IAF air base, just few hours from the National Capital, is the first of its kind after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks. There were differences of opinion over the way in which the encounter was handled, Home Minister Rajnath Singh was kept out of key meetings at the time of attacks and to make things worse, there was confusion over the number if terrorists sneaked in to carry out the attack. The attack raised questions on the security-level at India's military bases.

2. Masood Azhar

India's efforts to add the name of Masood Azhar, the chief of JeM, in the UN list of proscribed terrorists failed as China raised objections to it. This is a major setback to India as Azhar is believed to be behind the Pathankot attack.

3. India-Pak relations

Much to the hype of Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif attending the swearing-in ceremony or the saree diplomacy, both governments couldn't re-start the dialogue process nor has the firing across the Line of Control come down. Mr. Modi's surprise stop-over at Lahore too failed to cut the ice.

4. India-Nepal relations

Anti-India protests flared up in Nepal after trade movements through the border were not allowed for many days. Nepal called it 'India's blockade' as it followed protests by Madhesis. All of these happened within a year of the Himalayan quake, when Nepal thanked India's help in rescue and rehabilitation. Also, India couldn't keep away Nepal from moving closer to China.

5. Dissidence in Central Universities

Smriti Irani and the Union Ministry of Human Resource and Development was in news for all wrong reasons. The suicide of a Dalit Research Scholar at Hyderabad Central University, sedition charges against students of Jawaharlal Nehru University, the FTII students' strike, decision of not to support off-campus centres of Aligarh Muslim University, closing down Ambedkar-Periyar Study circle in IIT-Madras, the list goes on. And some avoidable controversies such as competition for school children on Christmas or scragging German being taught at CBSE schools.

6. GST Bill/Land ordinance

The government is unable to pass the GST Bill in Rajya Sabha for the past two years. Touted as the biggest tax reform in Independent India, the government is unable to bring consensus. Same is the fate of land bill. Though the Centre took the ordinance route to clear the bill, it was re-promulgated twice and lapsed on August 31, 2015.

7. Uttarakhand fiasco

The pre-mature imposition of President's Rule in Uttarakhand, and victory of Harish Rawat in the Supreme Court-monitored floor test, is not only an embarrassment to the ruling government but also to the BJP, whose attempt to gain from dissidence in Uttarakhand Congress misfired.

8. Silence on fringe right-wing groups

Law and order could be a State subject. Murders of rationalists and attacks on minority community by fringe right-wing elements may not be limited to the BJP-ruled states. But the Centre as well as the Prime Minister's refrains from condemning or making comments against such attacks didn't go well with the public.

9. Women's Bill

The bill seeking one-third representation for women in Parliament and State Assemblies is an almost-forgotten topic now. Cleared in RajyaSabha in 2010, the Bill is pending in the lower House, in which the BJP front enjoys comfortable majority.

WAIT & WATCH:

1. Smart City plans

It is impossible to create a city, that too a 'smart' one in two years. But the BJP government has kickstarted the process by short listing 20 cities in the first phase. Mr. Jaitley's maiden budget allocated 7,060 crore for the development of 100 smart cities.

2. Make In India

Another pet project of Mr. Modi to make India the manufacturing hub, the government is taking efforts by easing foreign investment norms, revamping labour laws and cutting down the red tape. India has conducted road shows abroad and Mr. Modi has travelled several countries to gather support. Many multi-nationals have pledged their support.

3. EPFO reforms

The government introduced universal access number (UAN) to all EPF holders to make transfer of PF accounts easy when switching jobs. The good name earned from the working class soon vanished when the Finance Minister proposed tax at premature withdrawal of provident fund. It was roll backed after protest by garment workers crippled Bengaluru.

4. OROP

The One Rank One Pension scheme, a long-pending demand of ex-servicemen was accepted by the government, but with caveats. Premature retirees have been excluded and the pension review will be carried out every year. Though all demands of veterans have not been met, the government will be remembered for bringing a 40-year-long struggle to an end.

5. Planning Commission to NITI Aayog

Doing away with the more than six-decade practice of Planning Commission, the government came up with a think-tank approach to economic strategy. The acronym NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) itself invited criticism of government pushing pro-Hindi agenda and opposition ridiculing it as anti and durniti. For a nation so used to Planning Commission allocating funds every year, time will tell the effect of this new approach.

6. UDAY

The Power Ministry headed by Piyush Goyal plans to aid discoms and State governments to raise upto Rs. 1.75 lakh crore through bonds to improve the health of power distribution sector. Eighteen states have agreed to take part in the scheme. The plan also aiming to curb power theft and pilferage, appears good on paper. What needs to be seen is how it is implemented.

7. Aadhaar

The government saved Aadhaar from turning to a white elephant by passing the Aadhaar Bill. However, questions remain on why it was made a money bill, would the constitution be amended to give more teeth to Aadhaar, or would the UIDAI compromise on privacy. The Centre's Digital India and host of welfare measures rely on Aadhaar. Will Aadhaar be just another card or will it truly make a change should be watched.

8. Ganga rejuvenation

The Modi government created a separate ministry headed by Uma Bharti to clean the river and protect its ecosystem. The NamamiGange project with a budget of Rs. 20,000 crores over a period of five years has been cleared. Ms. Bharti claims Ganga will be cleaned by 2018. The deadline appears tight but nonetheless, the clamour for a cleaner river has gained momentum.

9. Bullet train

Imagine travelling to Mumbai from Ahmedabad within two hours? That's what a bullet train would do if the deal with Japan is implemented. China has expressed interest in developing the Chennai-Delhi bullet train corridor. But a single bullet train corridor requiring about Rs. 98,000 crores questions the viability of the project.

10. Welfare Schemes

A slew of insurance schemes namely crop insurance for farmers, Atal Pension Yojana for the unorganized sector, affordable health insurance coverage, and the Jan Aushadhi Yojana for retail sales of generic drugs were introduced in the last two years.. In addition, the government has re-launched Kisan Vikas Patra and introduced a PPF-equivalent for girl child, the Sukanya Samridhi Scheme. Again, in country known from socialist welfare schemes, the onus of welfare shifting from government to individual is an ideological change and may take time for acceptance.

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