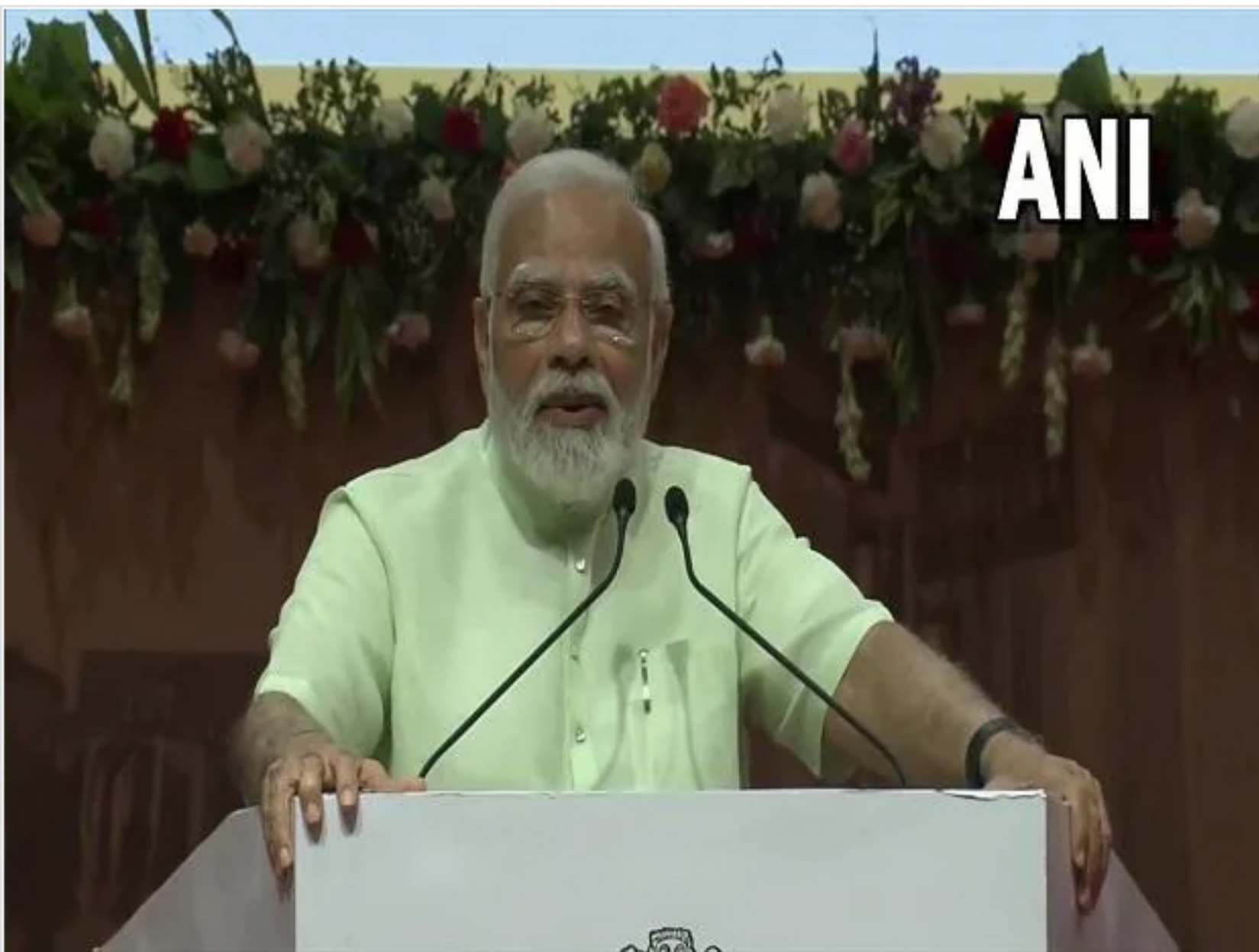


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PM Modi

Uttar Pradesh will give momentum to India's growth story in the 21st century, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Friday, presenting India as the "reliable partner" the world is looking for today. Speaking at Uttar Pradesh's third investors' summit, marking the ground-breaking or the launch of 1,406 projects worth over Rs 80,000 crore, he said the prevailing situation in the world has brought big opportunities for India.

"I am confident that in the 21st century it will be UP, which will give momentum to India's growth story. UP is going to become a driving force of India," he said.

Gautam Adani, Kumar Mangalam Birla and other leading industrialists are participating in the mega summit organised by the Uttar Pradesh government. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also attended it.

Modi said "only our democratic India" has the capability to prove that it is the "reliable partner" the world is looking for today. "The world today is looking at India's potential and praising its performance."

The projects were in diverse fields including agriculture, IT and Electronics, MSME, manufacturing, renewable energy, pharma, tourism, defence and aerospace, handloom and textiles.

"We are growing the fastest among the G-20 economies. Today, India is No. 2 on the Global Retail Index. India is the third-largest energy consumer country in the world," Modi said.

He said last year a record USD 84 billion of Foreign Direct Investment came to India from more than 100 countries. "India has made a record by exporting merchandise worth over USD 417 billion i.e. more than Rs 30 lakh crore in the last financial year."

Speaking on his government recently completing eight years in power at the Centre, he said, "In these years we have moved ahead with the mantra of Reform-Perform-Transform. We have emphasised policy stability, coordination, and ease of doing business.

"Through our reforms, we have worked to make India strong as a nation," Modi said, mentioning

schemes like One Nation-One Tax and One Nation-One Ration Card. "These efforts are a reflection of our concrete and clear policies," Modi said.

In this year's Budget, he said, an unprecedented capital expenditure allocation of Rs 7.50 lakh crore was made.

Modi said the emphasis being laid today on defence manufacturing was never given earlier. "Under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, we have decided with immense courage, and identified 300 defence items which will not be imported. In other words, those who want to come in the field of defence manufacturing, for them, there is an assured market of these 300 products," he said.

He said better law and order situation has restored the business community's confidence in Uttar Pradesh, created a proper atmosphere for industries and improved the administrative systems in the state.

As an MP from the state, he said, he feels the capability and the potential the state government and the administration has. He also talked about the "changed mood" and the work culture of the state machinery.

Uttar Pradesh is home to about 16-20 per cent of the country's population, therefore it has a huge bearing on the development of the nation, he said.

The PM also compared the development works done before 2014 and those effected by his government in eight years.

"In 2014, there were only six crore broadband subscribers in our country. Today, this number has gone up to 78 crore. In 2014, one GB data used to cost nearly Rs 200, but today, its cost has come down to Rs 11-12," he said, adding India is among the countries with the cheapest data rates.

In 2014, the number of village panchayats connected to optical fibre was less than 100 which has gone over 1.75 lakh now, he said.

"Before 2014, there were only a few startups. But, today, the number of registered startups has reached nearly 70,000. Recently, India has made a record of 100 unicorns, he said.

The PM thanked the investors for showing their faith in the capability, dedication, hard work and the understanding of the youth of Uttar Pradesh.

He also asked the industrialists to visit "my Kashi" (Varanasi), which he represents in Lok Sabha as an MP. The fact that Kashi, along with its ancient glory, can also emerge with a new version of itself, is a living example of the capabilities of Uttar Pradesh."

Modi also said proposals agreed on today will create new possibilities in Uttar Pradesh and reflect the growing confidence in the Uttar Pradesh growth story. The prime minister said that over the last few years a new culture of delivering projects on time has developed in the country.

He also observed that betterment of every person of UP means the betterment of every sixth Indian.

Modi informed that in the latest Budget, there was an announcement of a five-kilometre chemical-free natural farming corridor on both banks of the Ganga.

Uttar Pradesh is home to 1,100 kilometre expanse of river Ganga covering 25-30 districts. This will create huge opportunities for natural farming, he said.

He also said now is the golden opportunity for the corporate world to invest in the agriculture sector.

He said several initiatives such as the modern power grid, multi-model connectivity, record number of expressways, Eastern and western Dedicated Freight Corridors converging in UP will give a new push to the development of the state.

"For making a self-reliant India, reforms will be carried out in whichever sector, and wherever necessary. Reforms will be carried out continuously. We are with development as far as 'niti' (policy), 'nirnay' (decisions), 'niyat' (intention) and 'swabhaav' (behaviour) are concerned," he said.

Adityanath, Defence Minister Singh and UP's Industrial Development Minister Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi' also addressed the gathering.