



Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi lays foundation stone of Ken-Betwa River Linking National Project in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh

PM inaugurates Omkareshwar floating solar project

PM lays foundation stone of 1153 Atal Gram Sushasan buildings

PM releases a commemorative stamp and coin marking the 100th birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee

Today is a very inspiring day for all of us, today is the birth anniversary of respected Atal ji: PM

Ken-Betwa Link Project will open new doors of prosperity and happiness in Bundelkhand region: PM

The past decade will be remembered in the history of India as an unprecedented decade of water security and water conservation: PM

The Central Government is also constantly trying to increase facilities for all tourists from the country and abroad: PM

On the occasion of the 100th birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of multiple development projects in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh. Addressing the gathering, Shri Modi greeted the people of Christian Community of India and World a merry Christmas. Recalling that the Government under the leadership of Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav had completed a year of its formation, Shri Modi congratulated the people of Madhya Pradesh for the same. He added that the developmental works had gained pace along with the implementation of new infrastructure projects worth over thousands of crores of rupees in the last one year. The Prime Minister remarked that today the foundation stone was laid for the historic Ken-Betwa river linking project, the Daudhan dam and the Omkareshwar floating solar project - MP's first solar power plant. He congratulated the people of Madhya Pradesh for the same.

Terming today as a remarkably inspirational day on the occasion of the birth centenary of Bharatratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Prime Minister said today marked the festival of good governance and good service serving as an inspiration to all of us. Remembering Shri Vajpayee while releasing the commemorative stamp and coin the Prime Minister said that Shri Vajpayee had nurtured and mentored many foot soldiers like him over the years. The Prime Minister said that the service of Atalji towards the development of the nation will always remain indelible in our memory. Shri Modi underlined that work on more than 1100 Atal Gram Sushan Sadan will be underway from today and the first installment has been released for the same. He remarked that the Atal Gram Seva Sadan will propel the development of the villages.

Emphasising that the Good Governance day was not a one day affair, Shri Modi said "Good Governance is the identity of our Governments". Thanking the people for giving the opportunity to serve for the third consecutive time at the Center and continuously giving opportunity to serve at Madhya Pradesh, the Prime Minister said that Good Governance was the strongest factor behind this. The Prime Minister urged the intellectuals, political analysts and other noted academicians to evaluate the country after having completed 75 years of Independence on the parameters of development, public welfare and Good Governance. He highlighted that their Government had been successful in ensuring People's Welfare and developmental works whenever they had the opportunity to serve the people. Shri Modi said "If we are evaluated on certain parameters, the country will see how dedicated we are towards the common people". He added that the Government worked tirelessly to realise the dreams of our freedom fighters who had shed their blood for our nation. The Prime Minister underlined that good governance requires not only good schemes but also their effective implementation and highlighted that the measure of good governance is the extent to which government schemes benefit the people. The Prime Minister noted that during previous governments which made announcements, the benefits did not reach the people due to a lack of intent and seriousness in implementation. He emphasized the benefits of schemes like the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, where farmers in Madhya Pradesh receive ₹12,000 and said that this was made possible by opening Jan Dhan bank accounts. The Prime Minister highlighted the Ladli Behna Yojana in Madhya Pradesh, noting that it would not have been possible without linking bank accounts to Aadhaar and mobile numbers. He remarked that while cheap ration schemes existed before, the poor had to struggle to get ration while today, the poor receive free ration with complete transparency, thanks to the introduction of technology that eliminated fraud and nationwide facilities like One Nation, One Ration Card.

Shri Modi remarked that good governance means that citizens should not have to beg the government for their rights or run around government offices. He highlighted that their policy is to connect 100% of beneficiaries with 100% of benefits, which sets their governments apart from others. The Prime Minister noted that the entire country is witnessing this, which is why they repeatedly gave them the opportunity to serve.

Emphasizing that good governance addressed both current and future challenges, the Prime Minister said that unfortunately the people of Bundelkhand suffered greatly for decades because of misgovernance of previous governments. He emphasized that many generations of farmers and women in Bundelkhand struggled for every drop of water due the lack of effective governance and thought of a permanent solution to the water crisis by erstwhile dispensations.

Remarking that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was one of the first to understand the importance of river water for India, Shri Modi highlighted that the major river valley projects in India were based on Dr. Ambedkar's vision, and the Central Water Commission was also established due to his efforts. The Prime Minister expressed anguish that previous governments never gave Dr. Ambedkar the due credit for his contributions to water conservation and large dam projects, and they were never serious about these efforts. Emphasizing that even after seven decades, many states in India still have water disputes, the Prime Minister remarked that lack of intent and misgovernance of previous dispensations prevented any concrete efforts.

Highlighting that Shri Vajpayee's government in the past had seriously begun addressing water-related challenges, but were sidelined after 2004, the Prime Minister stressed that his government was now accelerating the campaign to link rivers across the country. He added that the Ken-Betwa Link Project is about to become a reality, opening new doors of prosperity and happiness in the Bundelkhand region. Emphasizing the benefits of Ken-Betwa Link Project which would provide irrigation facilities to 10 districts in Madhya Pradesh, including Chhatarpur, Tikamgarh, Niwari, Panna, Damoh, and Sagar, Shri Modi remarked that the project will also benefit the Bundelkhand region in Uttar Pradesh, including the districts of Banda, Mahoba, Lalitpur, and Jhansi.

“Madhya Pradesh has become the first state in the country to initiate two projects under the grand campaign of river linking” said Shri Modi. He highlighted that during his recent visit to Rajasthan, the linking of several rivers through the Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal and Ken-Betwa Link Projects was confirmed. The Prime Minister noted that this agreement will significantly benefit Madhya Pradesh as well.

“Water Security is one of the biggest challenges of the 21st century”, exclaimed Shri Modi. He highlighted that only those countries and regions with sufficient water will progress and water is essential for prosperous fields and thriving industries. The Prime Minister said that coming from Gujarat, where most parts experience drought for most of the year, he understood the importance of water and remarked that the blessings of the Narmada River from Madhya Pradesh changed Gujarat's fate. He stressed that it was his responsibility to free the drought-affected areas of Madhya Pradesh from the water crisis. The Prime Minister noted that he had promised the people of Bundelkhand, especially the farmers and women, to work sincerely to reduce their difficulties. He highlighted that under this vision, a ₹45,000 crore water-related plan was created for Bundelkhand. The Prime Minister emphasized that their governments in Madhya Pradesh and

Uttar Pradesh were continuously encouraged, leading to the foundation stone laying of the Daudhan Dam under the Ken-Betwa Link Project. He remarked that this dam will have a canal stretching hundreds of kilometers, providing water to approximately 11 lakh hectares of land.

“The past decade will be remembered in the history of India as an unprecedented decade of water security and conservation”, said Shri Modi. He added that previous governments had divided water-related responsibilities among different departments, but it was his Government which created the Ministry of Jal Shakti to address this issue. Shri Modi emphasized that for the first time, a national mission was launched to provide tap water to every household. Highlighting that in the seven decades after independence, only 3 crore rural families had tap connections, Shri Modi said that in the past five years, they have provided tap water to 12 crore new families, spending over ₹3.5 lakh crore on this scheme. The Prime Minister highlighted the water quality testing, another aspect of the Jal Jeevan Mission that doesn't receive as much attention, and said that 2,100 water quality labs have been established across the country, and 25 lakh women have been trained to test drinking water in villages. He emphasized that this initiative had freed thousands of villages from the compulsion of drinking contaminated water, protecting children and people from diseases.

Remarking that before 2014, there were around 100 major irrigation projects in the country that had been incomplete for decades, Shri Modi highlighted that his Government spent thousands of crores to complete these old irrigation projects and increased the use of modern irrigation techniques. He noted that in the past 10 years, nearly One Crore hectare of land was connected by micro-irrigation facilities, including around Five lakh hectares in Madhya Pradesh. Shri Modi emphasized that continuous efforts are being made to utilize every drop of water effectively and highlighted the campaign to create 75 Amrit Sarovars in each district to mark 75 years of independence, resulting in the creation of over 60,000 Amrit Sarovars across the country. The Prime Minister noted the launch of the Jal Shakti Abhiyan and Catch the Rain campaign, with over three lakh recharge wells being constructed nationwide. He highlighted that the leadership of these campaigns was being taken by the people, with active participation from both urban and rural areas. He emphasized that the Atal Bhujal Yojana is being implemented in states with the lowest groundwater levels, including Madhya Pradesh.

“Madhya Pradesh has always been a leader in tourism”, said Shri Modi and stressed that tourism is a sector that provides employment to the youth and strengthens the country's economy. Adding that India is set to become the world's third-largest economic power, he said that global curiosity about India was increasing and the world wanted to know and understand India, which will greatly benefit Madhya Pradesh. The Prime Minister highlighted a recent report in an American newspaper that named Madhya Pradesh as one of the world's top ten most attractive tourist destinations.

Underscoring that the central government was continuously working to enhance facilities for both domestic and international tourists to make travel easier, the Prime Minister said the Government had introduced e-visa schemes for foreign tourists as well as taken steps to expand heritage and wildlife tourism in India. Emphasising the exceptional potential for tourism in Madhya Pradesh, Shri Modi said that the Khajuraho region was rich in historical and spiritual heritage, with sites like Kandariya Mahadev, Lakshman Temple, and Chausath Yogini Temple. He added that to

promote tourism in India, G-20 meetings were held across the country, including one in Khajuraho with construction of a state-of-the-art international convention center in Khajuraho for this purpose.

Deliberating further on the tourism sector, Shri Modi remarked that under the central government's Swadesh Darshan scheme, hundreds of crores was allocated to Madhya Pradesh to develop eco-tourism facilities and new amenities for tourists. He highlighted that Sanchi and other Buddhist sites were being connected through the Buddhist Circuit while Gandhi Sagar, Omkareshwar Dam, Indira Sagar Dam, Bhedaghat, and Bansagar Dam were part of the Eco Circuit. He further added that sites like Khajuraho, Gwalior, Orchha, Chanderi, and Mandu were being connected as part of the Heritage Circuit. The Prime Minister remarked that Panna National Park is also included in the Wildlife Circuit and noted that around 2.5 lakh tourists visited Panna Tiger Reserve last year. He expressed happiness that the link canal being constructed will consider the wildlife in Panna Tiger Reserve.

Remarking that efforts to boost tourism significantly strengthen the local economy, the Prime Minister explained that tourists would purchase local goods, use the facilities like auto and taxi services, hotels, dhabas, homestays, and guest houses. He added that farmers also would benefit as they receive better prices for products like milk, curd, fruits, and vegetables.

Lauding Madhya Pradesh for having made remarkable progress in various areas in the past two decades, Shri Modi remarked that in the coming decades, Madhya Pradesh will be one of the top economies in the country, with Bundelkhand playing a significant role. Concluding his speech, Shri Modi assured that the governments at the Center and the State will continue to work sincerely towards making Madhya Pradesh a developed state for a developed India.

The Governor of Madhya Pradesh, Shri Mangubhai C. Patel, the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Dr. Mohan Yadav, Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' welfare, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Shri Virendra Kumar, Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Shri C.R Patil were present among other dignitaries at the event.

Background

The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of Ken- Betwa river linking national project, country's first interlinking of rivers project under national perspective plan. This project will provide irrigation facilities to various districts in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh benefitting lakhs of farmer families. The project will also provide drinking water facilities to the people of the region. Along with this, the hydropower projects will contribute more than 100 MW in green energy. The project will also create many employment opportunities as well as strengthen the rural economy.

The Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone of 1153 Atal Gram Sushasan buildings. These buildings will play an important role in the practical conduct of work and responsibilities of Gram Panchayats leading to good governance at local level.

In line with his commitment to energy sufficiency and promoting green energy, Prime Minister inaugurated the Omkareshwar Floating Solar Project established at Omkareshwar in Khandwa district of Madhya Pradesh. The project will reduce carbon emissions and contribute to the

Government's mission of net zero carbon emission by 2070. It will also help in water conservation by reducing water evaporation.

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— Narendra Modi (@narendramodi) December 25, 2024

आज हम सभी के लिए बहुत ही प्रेरणादायी दिन है...आज श्रद्धेय अटल जी की जन्मजयंती है:
PM @narendramodi pic.twitter.com/InIMRUKZcb

— PMO India (@PMOIndia) December 25, 2024

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