

# Next 25 years crucial for India's development: PM

He also mentioned that while celebrating independence, "Indians had taken an emotional decision to mark August 14<sup>th</sup> as Partition Horrors Remembrance Day" for all those who had lost their lives and loved ones in the Partition of 1947.

His speech, nearly 90 minutes in all, went over the efforts of his government to simplify laws, make government less intrusive, invest in infrastructure, including the ₹100 lakh crore "Gatishakti initiative", the master plan for which would be unveiled soon. He pointed out to India's commitment to the environment and its climate change goals by stating that the country was committed to "circular economy". He said his government was committed to the goal of 100% coverage of all welfare schemes, including the Jal Jeevan Mission of tapped drinking water connections to all homes, Ujjwala cooking gas scheme, Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana for housing and Jan Dhan bank accounts for everyone. He also announced the admission for girls in all Sainik Schools across the country and that the use of fortified rice across all government nutrition programmes would also be undertaken. In a nod to the fact that his government has been dealing with long-running protests by farmers groups and Opposition parties on the three contentious farm laws, he asserted that the majority of Indian

farmers were small and marginal and his government had prioritised their interests.

Giving the slogan of '*chhota kisan bane desh ki shaan* (small farmers should become India's pride)', Mr. Modi said 80% of India's farmers had less than two hectares of land.

"Keeping small expenses in mind, the government is implementing the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) under which more than ₹1.5 lakh crore has been transferred into the bank accounts of over 10 crore farmers," he added.

## Reservation ensured

Mr. Modi also said reservation was being ensured for Dalits, STs, backwards and general category poor, and emphasised that the handholding of deprived communities was necessary.

He expressed pride in the defence sector's efforts under "Make in India", including the trials of *INS Vikrant*, the aircraft carrier.

Mr. Modi said that development of Jammu and Kashmir as well as Ladakh was under way as was the work of the delimitation commission in J&K, and that Assembly election would be held in the Union Territory sooner rather than later. He also lauded the Olympic contingent, which was present at the Red Fort, and said their performance encouraged the youth of the country.