

Vigilant India

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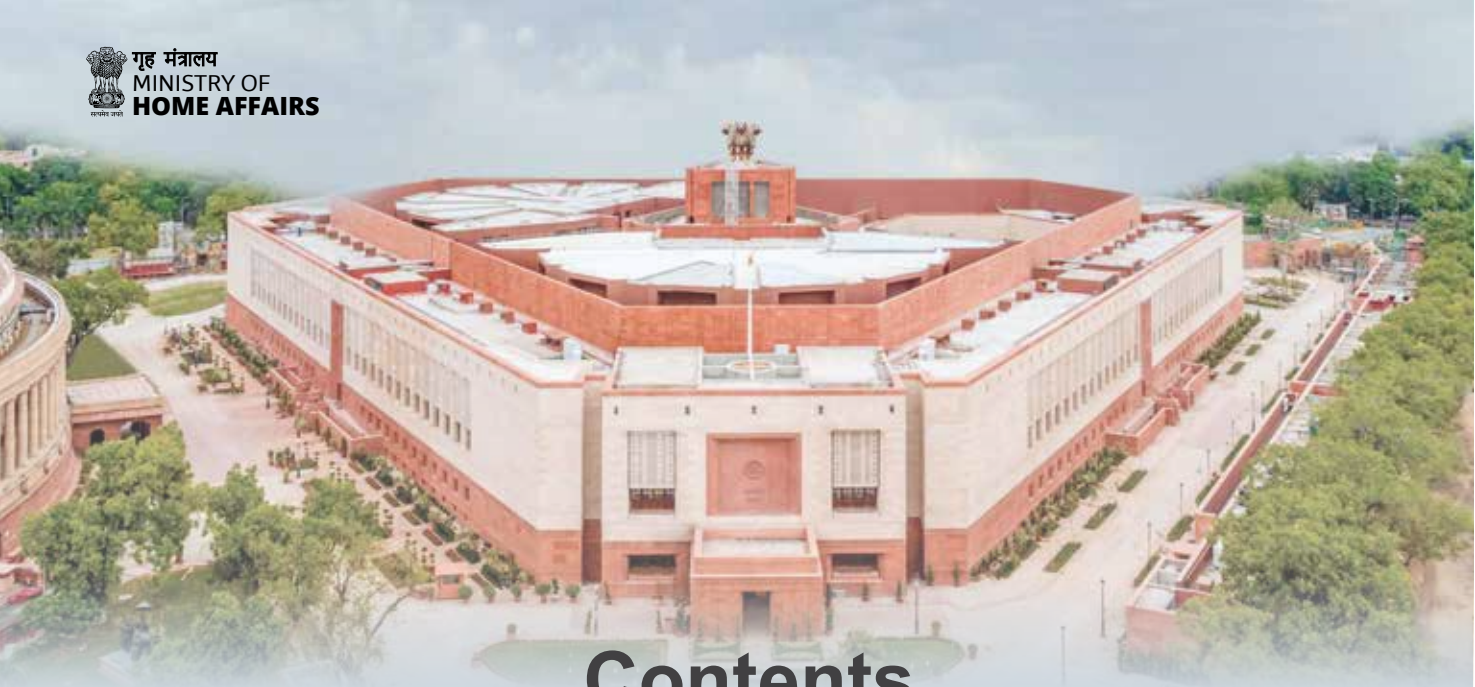
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Creating a Safe India for Women



Women's Safety Union Govt's Topmost Priority



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From the Editor

Women's safety is a barometer of a nation's values and governance, and not just a social topic of discussion. As the world's most populous nation, India takes the importance of safeguarding around half of its population—its women—very seriously. This is not only a matter of national dignity, but also crucial for harnessing the full potential of the nation's demographic dividend.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, substantial efforts have been made since 2014 to address the various challenges of women's safety in India. A significant step in this direction is the operationalisation of the nationwide emergency helpline number 112 launched in 2019. This number integrates all emergency services, providing a one-stop solution for women in distress. It has significantly reduced response time and improved the efficiency of interventions in crisis situations. However, there are other helpline numbers available, such as Women's Helpline (General): 1091, Women's Helpline (Domestic Abuse): 181, National Commission for Women Helpline: 7827170170, Central Social Welfare Board Police Helpline: 1091/1291, Shaktishalini Women's Shelter: 011-24373736, 24373737, among others.

The 'Safe City' project, launched in 2023 in major cities by the Union Home Ministry is helping create a safe, secure and empowering environment for women in public places, to enable them to pursue all opportunities without fear of possible violence or harassment. Under this project, major cities are being equipped with advanced surveillance systems, improved street lighting and increased police patrols in areas identified as vulnerable.

To prepare the police forces to tackle women's safety matters as part of their regular duties, gender sensitisation of the personnel, right from their probationary training period onwards, is a critical step forward. Specialised training programmes equip the police to deal more effectively and sensitively with gender-based violence.

On the legislative front, the New Criminal Laws passed in December 2023 have comprehensive provisions for safeguarding women's safety by providing for strict penalties for crimes related to women and children. As the Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah said in Parliament, the new laws will serve as a deterrent as well as a mechanism to ensure swifter justice for victims.

The 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' campaign, envisioned by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, while primarily focused on ending female foeticide and improving girls' education, also contributes indirectly to long-term safety and empowerment, which reduces their vulnerabilities to violence and discrimination.

This issue of 'Vigilant India' is centred on efforts towards gender safety. Please feel free to send your feedback at sajag-bharat@bprd.nic.in

Jai Hind!

Director General, BPR&D

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भारत की परमाणु शक्ति के साक्षी रहे राजस्थान के पोखरण में देश ने 'स्वदेशीकरण से सशक्तिकरण' का दम देखा। हमारे जांबाजों के शौर्य और पराक्रम की गूँज को पूरी दुनिया ने महसूस किया है।



श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी, प्रधानमंत्री



CAA से किसी की भी नागरिकता नहीं जा सकती, क्योंकि CAA नागरिकता देने का कानून है, नागरिकता लेने का नहीं।



श्री अमित शाह
केंद्रीय गृह एवं सहकारिता मंत्री



माननीय प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी ने बिहार के बेतिया में 'विकसित भारत - विकसित बिहार' कार्यक्रम के अंतर्गत 12,800 करोड़ रुपए की विभिन्न परियोजनाओं का लोकार्पण किया।



श्री नित्यानंद राय
केंद्रीय गृह राज्य मंत्री



Another #ModiKiGuarantee delivered. The Govt under the leadership of Hon'ble PM Sh@narendramodi ji, notifies the #CAA rules, making it possible for minorities persecuted for their religious beliefs in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan to become citizens of India.



Shri Nisith Pramanik
MoS, Ministry of Home Affairs



प्रधानमंत्री ग्राम सड़क योजनांतर्गत 7.484 करोड़ की स्वीकृत लागत से निर्मित 7.125 किलोमीटर MRL-07 गोला अलीगंज गदियाना संपर्क मार्ग का लोकार्पण



श्री अजय मिश्रा
केंद्रीय गृह राज्य मंत्री



प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी के नेतृत्व में केंद्र सरकार देश में ड्रम्स के डिटेक्शन, नेटवर्क का नाश, दोषियों के डिटेक्शन और लत के शिकार के पुनर्वास के माध्यम से नशामुक्त भारत के लक्ष्य को प्राप्त करने की दिशा में तेजी से आगे बढ़ रही है।



गृह मंत्रालय
भारत सरकार

Creating a Safe India for Women



Bureau

The empowerment of women by providing them with ample opportunities, along with ensuring their safety and security, is crucial for the development of India. The Union Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has taken several steps forward in this journey. A shining example of empowerment of women is

Shrimati Droupadi Murmu—born in a tribal society and now the country's First Citizen—after being sworn in as the President of India on July 25, 2022.

Over the past decade, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Modi, the Union Government has worked to provide safety, assistance and various facilities to women. Thoughtfully crafted schemes, such as the Ujjwala scheme for cooking gas connections, Swachhata for clean toilets and Jal



Jeevan for household water have not only helped women in their traditional role as homemakers, but also boosted their self-esteem and confidence.

Under the guidance of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the leadership of Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah, the Ministry of Home Affairs has initiated various measures and legal amendments to enhance women's safety. The Ministry has also launched extensive campaigns to raise awareness in this regard. These efforts include special schemes for safe transport facilities and strict actions against crimes targeting women.

The Union Government has taken up several projects in collaboration with States and Union Territories to enhance women's safety. The safety of women in a country depends on various factors, including suitable laws for deterrence, effective justice delivery, timely redressal of complaints and accessible institutional support for women victims.

The recently enacted criminal laws—Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023 and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam 2023—have special provisions curated to tackle crimes against women and ensure stringent punitive action.

These three new criminal laws would be operational from July 1.



The Union Government is committed to women-led development and ensuring their safety.

Shri Amit Shah, Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation



One of the major issues addressed in these laws is mental harm inflicted on a woman. It is now considered as cruelty and is covered under Section 86 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, providing punishment for the offender. If a woman is harmed, her life is endangered, or her mental and physical health is jeopardised, the perpetrator faces up to three years in prison. Moreover, Section 86 states that provoking a woman to commit suicide is also considered cruelty.

Committed to providing young girls with a safe and secure environment, the three new criminal laws provide for the imposition of severe punishments for those involved in heinous crimes against them. According to the new criminal laws, the minimum sentence for rape of a girl under 16 years of age has



Funds for Women's Safety

To enhance the safety of women, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi authorised a substantial allocation of ₹1,179.72 crore during the period from 2021-22 to 2025-26. The funding will assist the umbrella scheme on 'Safety of Women', which was approved by the Union Cabinet on February 21. Of the total project allocation, the Union Home Ministry will contribute ₹885.49 crore from its own budget. The projects financed under the 'Safety of Women' scheme will include upgrades such as the 112 Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) 2.0, enhancement of Central Forensic Sciences Laboratories, including the establishment of a National Forensic Data Centre.

'Beti Padhao' have been launched to change societal mindsets on female education, in order to make them self-reliant citizens.

In August 2019, the Union Government passed the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017, in the Lok Sabha. This Act makes triple talaq or talaq-e-biddat in any form illegal, protecting the rights of Muslim women forced into such situations. This Act ends the arbitrary practice of divorcing wives with just an SMS or WhatsApp message, marking the beginning of empowering married Muslim women who have been helpless in such incidents.

In his first Independence Day speech from the ramparts of the Red Fort in 2014, Prime Minister Shri Modi had said, "Parents ask their daughters where they have been if they come home late, but do they ask their sons the same? Ultimately, the person committing a heinous crime like rape is someone's son. As parents, have we asked our sons where they are going? When we question our daughters, why don't we apply the same standards to our sons?"

Mentioning this on his first Independence Day speech reflects the deep concern in the Prime Minister's mind for women's safety and gender equality. With this approach as a foundational background, Shri Modi has ensured that the issue of women's safety is an integral part of the Union Government's policy making, governance and agenda. ■

been increased from imprisonment for 10 years, to 20 years, which can be extended to imprisonment for the remainder of the offender's natural life. In case the victim is under 12 years of age, the offender will be punished with imprisonment for the remainder of his life or will be given the death sentence.

Women police volunteers and the women's safety app named 'Himmat' strengthen the Union Government's commitment to providing safety to women both inside and outside their homes.

The Human Trafficking (Prevention, Rehabilitation, Protection) Bill 2018 offers solutions for dealing with heinous crimes that affect the most vulnerable individuals, especially women and children.

The Union Government is committed to ensure better opportunities for women in every sector. It has introduced a substantial new scheme for women— the 'Namo Drone Didi' programme for boosting agriculture and generating additional income. The scheme empowers women in rural areas and discourages negative attitudes towards women, by bringing out their active contribution as part of the country's labour force. To contribute to national development and progress in India's democracy, women need to be acknowledged as equal to their male counterparts. Campaigns such as 'Beti Bachao,

Gender Sensitive Policing Enhances



The key to ensuring women's safety efforts is enhanced gender sensitisation of police, with strict penalties for custodial violence against women. States are encouraged to evaluate their law enforcement effectiveness in women's issues, ensuring swift FIR registration and timely medical examinations of victims.

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Ensuring women's safety and dignity in society is one of the paramount duties of basic policing. Especially at a time when participation of women in public activities is on the rise, there is an urgent need to evolve policing attitudes and methods that are sensitive to addressing violence against women. This would require gender sensitive policing to create confidence among women.

Replying to a question in the Rajya Sabha on February 7, the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Shri Nityanand Rai, said that gender sensitisation has become an integral part of training at national-level academies such as the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy (SVPNPA) in Hyderabad and the North Eastern Police Academy (NEPA) in Shillong.

Shri Rai said that significant efforts are being made by SVPNPA by including special modules during the basic course training, mid-career training and

induction training courses for IPS officers in order to sensitise them on gender-related issues. These modules cover gender sensitisation in the working of police stations and in the process of investigation, case studies and case laws relating to violence and crime against women, as well as procedures for scientific aids to the investigation of such crimes. Additionally, under the Protection of Sexual Harassment (PoSH) Act 2023, strategic management for protecting women and children, aspects of women's security, legal provisions relating to violence and crimes against women and proper handling of victims of violence and crime are emphasised.

Shri Rai said that the Union Ministry of Home Affairs has approved a scheme 'Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children' (CCPWC) that gives guidance on how to deal with threats to women and children from cyber criminals.

At the SVPNPA, field visits are organised to familiarise participants with special initiatives in gender sensitisation. Similarly, NEPA has conducted 13 courses on gender sensitisation and trained 317

Women's Safety



The presence of women police personnel gives a sense of confidence among the people, especially women. They naturally feel more connected to women personnel.

Shri Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

police personnel during 2021-2023. The Central Detective Training Institutes (CDTIs) and the Central Academy for Police Training (CAPT), under the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), have conducted nine courses and trained 407 personnel during 2023-24 for sensitisation on these issues.

It is noteworthy to mention that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in his monthly address 'Mann Ki Baat' on October 24, 2021, said that there was an utmost need of gender sensitivity in policing. He also emphasised on creating parity between male and female personnel in police forces. He said the Union Government is keen to increase the number of women personnel in the police forces. "Earlier it was believed that services in the army and police are meant only for men. That mindset has changed and in the last few years, the number of women police

One Stop Centres (OSCs)

One Stop Centres (OSCs) are intended to support women affected by violence in private as well as public spaces. Women facing physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and economic abuse, irrespective of age, class, caste, education status, marital status, race and culture are facilitated with support and redressal at these centres.

OSCs have been established in States/UTs to facilitate access to a range of services including medical, legal, and psychological support and are integrated with existing helplines.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

- Emergency response and rescue services to women affected by violence—through linking of existing mechanisms such as the National Health Mission (NHM), 108 service (Emergency Ambulance), police (PCR van) so that women affected by violence are rescued from the location and taken to the nearest hospital/police station.
- Medical facility (public/private) or shelter homes—aggrieved women who are affected by violence are referred to the nearest hospital for medical aid/examination, which are undertaken as per the guidelines and protocols developed by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- Assistance to women in lodging FIR.
- Psycho-social support/counselling—available on call. This counselling process gives women confidence and support to address violence or to seek justice.
- Legal aid and legal counselling—to be provided through empanelled lawyers or National/State/District Legal Service Authority.
- Temporary shelter facility—For long term shelter requirements, arrangements can be made with Swadhar Greh/short stay homes managed/affiliated with the Government/NGOs.
- Video conferencing facility to facilitate speedy and hassle free police and court proceedings. Through this facility, the aggrieved woman can record her statement to police/courts using audio-video (electronic) means.



personnel has doubled. In 2014, their number was close to 105,000, but by 2020 it more than doubled to 215,000," the Prime Minister said.

The Prime Minister added, "Even in the Central Armed Police Forces, the number of women has almost doubled in the last seven years. And I'm not talking just about numbers. Today, the daughters of the country are performing the toughest duties with full force and zeal. For example, many are currently undergoing training for specialised jungle warfare commandos, which is one of the

In a unique initiative to boost gender sensitisation in police forces, the Ministry of Home Affairs conceptualised the Women Help Desks (WHDs) scheme in 2019, with the primary objective of supplementing the efforts of States and Union Territories in strengthening measures to provide assistance to all aggrieved women.



most difficult training. They will be a part of the CoBRA battalion”.

Prime Minister Shri Modi said, “The presence of women personnel instils a sense of confidence among people, especially women. They naturally feel connected to women security personnel.”

Prime Minister Shri Modi in his 'Mann Ki Baat' also said that because of sensitivity in women, people tend to trust them more. “Policewomen are becoming role models for lakhs of our girls across the country. I would like to request women police personnel to visit schools in their areas and inspire girl students,” he said, adding that it will create interest in girls to join the police forces.

In a unique initiative to boost gender sensitisation in police forces, the Ministry of Home Affairs has also conceptualised the Women Help Desks (WHDs) scheme in 2019, with the primary objective of supplementing the efforts of States and Union Territories in strengthening measures to provide

assistance to aggrieved women. Under this scheme, WHDs have been set up in police stations across the country, with each station receiving an amount of ₹1 lakh. As of now, out of the total 16,469 police stations in the country, 13,557 WHDs have been set up. The objectives of the WHD scheme are to make police stations more women-friendly and approachable and serve as the first and single point of contact for any woman walking into a police station. They have an enlisted panel of experts such as lawyers, psychologists and NGOs, who can provide shelter, rehabilitation and training for accessing outside support.

In conclusion, this comprehensive approach to gender sensitisation in policing and training of the personnel reflects the Union Home Ministry's dedication to create a safer and more supportive environment for women, ensuring that law enforcement is adept at handling gender-related issues with sensitivity and effectiveness.■

A Healing Touch for Acid Attack Victims

Project Malham: Acid attacks on women are one of the most heinous crimes in society. This is generally based on gender and sexual exploitation of women. While stopping such crimes is the foremost duty of the police, how to give support to the affected women and how to investigate, apprehend and punish the offender is of immense importance. The BPR&D has made several recommendations to deal with such situations. These include:

Stopping illegal purchase and sale of acid is a must: No acid should be sold without the identity cards of the buyers. The records of the buyers must be kept and motive of purchase should be known. An online portal for acid transactions must be established.

Investigation Protocols: SOPs should be developed for strict monitoring, such as decoy operations and deploying CCTV at sale points.

Victim Support and Compensation: Compensation provided under the victim compensation scheme is typically low and often delayed. It is recommended that such compensations be expedited and monitored through the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS). Additionally, States may

ensure immediate and free treatment of acid attack survivors. This should cover not only the surgeries essential for survival, but also subsequent restorative surgeries. There is a notable lack of awareness about first-aid for acid attack victims; therefore, the health department should create and distribute short video tutorials on social media.

Employment & Rehabilitation: Post recovery, what the victims need is a social engagement and removal of taboos. For this, they need to be independent and vocational training and small loans should be ensured to help survivors find employment. It is recommended that Government departments may offer jobs to victims, under disability quotas and so on.

Public Awareness and Education: The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting can consider creating documentaries about acid attacks to enhance the dignity of women.

Integrative Support Systems: There should be a dedicated desk for acid attack cases within existing helpline systems. The OSCs must provide comprehensive support, including psychiatric counselling.

Women's Safety: Union



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Women's safety has been one of the major concerns in India. Either because of lack of legislation or improper implementation of existing provisions, gender based violence still requires to be addressed in a proper manner. The Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has rightly raised the issue of gender justice as one of his topmost priorities.

Under the leadership of Shri Amit Shah, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs has taken several measures to ensure women's safety. These include the introduction of new criminal laws and a host of programmes to create a safe and just environment for women. Special training and support are also being provided to police officers, enabling them to act impartially and competently. The aim of these efforts is to ensure that women get equality and respect in society.

In that endeavour, September 21, 2023, will be written in golden letters in the history of the Indian Parliament. This was the day when for the first-time

Women are epitome of perseverance, will power and vision. They have this inherent ability to work towards achieving goals. These qualities are playing a role in propelling India forward.

Shri Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

business was conducted in the new Parliament House and a bill granting reservation for women in State Assemblies and the Lok Sabha, pending for years, was passed in the Parliament.

The Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Shah, said that women who represent 50% of the 140 crore population, had now been truly empowered. "Now, the women of the country will not only participate in politics, but also contribute to policy making and legislation", he said.

Shri Shah said that women empowerment is a



Govt's Topmost Priority

The Ministry of Home Affairs has taken several steps to enhance women's safety across the country. They include setting up a dedicated women's safety unit to sensitise States and Union territories on issues related to women's security, including timely investigation of sexual assault cases.

matter of recognition and acknowledgement of the fact that there should be a level-playing field and equality between the two sexes. He said that the safety, respect and participation of women have been one of the topmost priorities of the Union Government under the leadership of Shri Modi. He added that in his first speech after becoming the Prime Minister in 2014, Shri Modi had stated that his Government is for the welfare of Dalits, backward classes, tribals and women.

There have been several occasions when the Union Home Minister has spoken about women's safety. In August 2023, when three bills were introduced in the Lok Sabha to reform India's criminal justice system, he highlighted the importance of women's safety for the country. He mentioned that the new criminal laws include stringent provisions on crimes against women and children. For example, the new laws will provide a 20-year prison sentence or life-term for the rape of a minor under 16 years of age and capital punishment for the rape of a minor under 12 years of age.

In fact, there are 37 sections addressing crimes against women and children, consolidated under Chapter V of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023.

ITSSO, NDSO & Cri-MAC

Prime Minister Shri Modi has ensured that women's safety is an integral part of his Government's policy making, governance and agenda. The nation has seen some pioneering declarations that ensure the dignity and well-being of women. Many declarations have been made with a focus on women-centric development, some of which have potentially transformed women's safety across the country.

Emergency Response Support System (ERSS)

- ➔ ERSS is a Pan-India single emergency response number 112 (One-Nation, One-Emergency Number facility) to address all kinds of distress calls such as police, fire and ambulance etc.
- ➔ The national average response time is 20 minutes (as of July 2023).
- ➔ More than 27.10 crore calls have been handled so far.
- ➔ Approximately 11.23 lakh users have downloaded the 112 India Mobile app.
- ➔ The ERSS Number 112 has been integrated with the railway helpline number 139 and National Disaster helpline number 1078 across all States and Union territories.
- ➔ More than 46% of registered 112 India Mobile app users are women.

The Ministry of Home Affairs has taken several steps to ensure the effective implementation of various measures at the grassroots level and is continuously monitoring their progress. They include the Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences (ITSSO), the National Database of Sexual Offenders (NDSO), Cri-MAC (Crime Multi-Agency Centre), etc. These initiatives assist in timely investigations.

ITSSO is an online analytical tool launched to monitor police investigations of sexual assault cases and ensure their completion in a timely manner (currently within two months as per the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018). Additionally, NDSO was introduced to identify repeat offenders and also to assist in investigations by providing alerts on the perpetrators.

Cri-MAC was launched by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2020 to facilitate dissemination of information about significant crimes, including human trafficking cases across the country on a real-time basis.



Prevention of Cyber Crimes Against Women

The Ministry of Home Affairs has a strong focus on preventing cyber crimes against women and children. Currently, 14 States, including Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Odisha, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand have established cyber forensic training laboratories. Training has been provided to police personnel, lawyers and judicial officers in identifying, detecting, and resolving cyber crimes against women and children. The Ministry of Home Affairs has also launched the www.cybercrime.gov.in portal, where citizens can report obscene content, which can be blocked within 72 hours. This portal was launched on August 30, 2019.

On February 21, the Union Cabinet approved the Ministry of Home Affairs' proposal to continue the implementation of a comprehensive plan on women's safety during the period from 2021-22 to 2025-26, with a total cost of ₹1,179.72 crore. Out of the total project expenditure of ₹1,179.72 crore, ₹885.49 crore will be provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs from its budget and ₹294.23 crore will be financed through the Nirbhaya Fund.

No Compromise on Women's Safety

The Union Government has adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards crimes against women. Upon



The Union Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji is committed to women-led development and will ensure their safety.

Shri Amit Shah, Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation



assuming the office of the Prime Minister in 2014, Shri Narendra Modi made his intentions clear in this regard and has never looked back.

In the last week of November 2023, the Union Cabinet approved the continuation of the Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) for the next three years to provide expedited justice in cases related to sexual offences. After the horrific Nirbhaya gangrape and murder in 2012, the enactment of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2018 was passed and the Union Government decided to establish a total of 1,023 FTSCs, including 389 courts dealing with cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act in 31 States and Union Territories. This initiative was launched for one year on October 2, 2019 (Gandhi Jayanti) and was later extended for an additional two years until March 31 this year.

Incidents of rape of minors and women have deeply impacted the country. The need for a dedicated court system to expedite hearings and provide immediate



relief to victims of sexual crimes was felt due to the recurring nature of these incidents and the lengthy trials of the offenders.

Implemented by the Department of Justice under the Law Ministry, the Union Government sponsored scheme of FTSCs enhances the resources of State Governments to establish them, ensuring the swift handling of rape and POCSO Act-related cases. As many as 30 States/Union Territories have participated in this scheme and launched 761 FTSCs, including 414 dedicated POCSO courts, which have resolved over 195,000 cases.

Designed as dedicated courts, the FTSCs are expected to ensure swift justice while strengthening the deterrent framework against sexual offenders and providing quick relief to the victims. This reflects the country's commitment to eliminating violence based on sexual and gender grounds. By relieving the judicial system of its caseload, it significantly reduces pending cases under the rape and POCSO Act. It also ensures accessibility to justice for victims of sexual crimes through better facilities and expedited hearings, reducing the caseload to a manageable number.

Women's safety in the country is the result of several factors, such as stringent deterrence through strict laws, effective delivery of justice, timely resolution of complaints and easily accessible institutional support structures for victims. In its efforts towards women's safety, the Union Government has also launched several projects in collaboration with States and Union Territories. The objectives of these projects include

Projects Proposed

The Union Government has listed the following projects under the comprehensive women's safety plan:

- ➔ Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) 2.0.
- ➔ Upgradation of Central Forensic Sciences Laboratories, including the establishment of a National Forensic Data Centre.
- ➔ Strengthening DNA analysis and cyber forensic capabilities in Forensic Science Laboratories (FSLs) across States.
- ➔ Prevention of cybercrimes against women and children.
- ➔ Capacity building and training of investigators and prosecutors for dealing with cases of sexual harassment against women and children.
- ➔ Women assistance desks and anti-human trafficking units.

ensuring timely intervention and investigation in cases of crimes against women and enhancing efficiency while handling and preventing such crimes in the States/Union Territories. The Union Government is committed to the safety of women and children and is keen to empower them. ■

Women's Reservation Act to Boost



Bureau

India's development journey is closely interlinked with the empowerment of its women. Recognising this, the Union Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, had kept 'Nari Shakti' at the forefront of its agenda.

In the last 10 years, the Union Government has launched numerous welfare schemes that have aimed to empower women and make them an integral part of India's development journey. A milestone in this journey was achieved by the passing of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (Women's Reservation Act 2023), which reserves one-third of the total number of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.

With the passage of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam in Parliament, we have ushered in an era of stronger representation and empowerment of women across India. This is not merely a legislation; it is a tribute to the countless women who have contributed to nation-building. India has been enriched by their resilience and contributions.

Shri Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

The Union Government considers women-led development a central dimension of India's progress and a necessity for strengthening the country.

India's Development Journey

Legislative Milestone

September 21, 2023, marked a historic milestone in India's quest for gender equality and political inclusivity with the passage of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam-2023 in the Parliament. It reflects the Union Government's steadfast commitment to enhancing women's participation in the political sphere.

Prime Minister Shri Modi hailed the passage of the bill as a transformative step towards empowering women and promoting their leadership in India's political landscape. He underscored that the legislation not only ensures representation, but also opens new avenues for women to shape policy and governance. He said, "The one thing that will take the country forward is women-led development."

The Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah, underscored the significance of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, describing it as a culmination of the Union Government's efforts to empower women across the nation. He commended Prime Minister Shri Modi's leadership in championing women's rights and highlighted the transformative impact of

initiatives such as the PM Jan Dhan Yojana, which has empowered millions of women by providing access to financial services through bank accounts.

Schemes for Women's Empowerment

There are many schemes aimed at educating and uplifting women in the country. Among these, the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' (BBBP) scheme, a flagship initiative of the Union Government, has significantly contributed to women's empowerment. It has been pivotal in changing mindsets, as evidenced by the increased participation of women in major household decisions.

According to the National Family Health Survey, 88.7% of women now partake in significant household decisions, up from 84% five years ago.

The BBBP scheme aims to prevent gender-biased sex-selective elimination, ensure the survival and protection of the girl child and promote her education.

The scheme has been expanded to cover all districts, emphasising activities with tangible impacts, such as promoting sports among girls, organising self-defence camps, constructing girl's toilets and providing sanitary napkin vending machines in educational institutions. ■

Empowerment through Reservation

Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam seeks to reserve one-third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies. The allocation of reserved seats shall be determined by such authority as prescribed by the Parliament. One-third of the total number of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be reserved for women of those groups in the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies. Reservation of seats for

women shall cease to exist 15 years after the commencement of this Amendment Act. The implementation of the Women's Reservation Bill is contingent on specific steps. As outlined, the reservation is set to be enforced following the publication of a new census and the completion of the delimitation exercise.



Women's Safety: No Room for Negligence



Bureau

The Union Government has established various legal provisions and laws prioritising the safety of women in the country. This priority is particularly reflected in the three new laws enacted by the Parliament. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita now includes a chapter on 'Crimes against Women and Children' to address sexual offences. The law aligns cases of rape involving minor girls with the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, giving life imprisonment or the death penalty for such crimes. For all gang-rape cases, there is a provision for a 20-year imprisonment or life imprisonment and gang-rape of a minor is now categorised as an aggravated offence. Additionally, there are penalties for those who fraudulently engage in sexual intercourse or promise marriage without intending to fulfil the promise.

Previously, the Union Government had set up the Nirbhaya Fund for projects related to women's safety, with

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Union Government has been implementing new provisions for women's safety, aligning with contemporary needs. This commitment is reflected in the enactment of the three new criminal laws.

the Ministry of Women and Child Development serving as the nodal authority to evaluate and recommend proposals for funding. To assist States and Union Territories, the Union Home Ministry on February 19, 2019 issued an online analytic tool 'Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences', enabling police to monitor and track time-bound investigations in sexual assault cases.

The Union Government has also taken several measures to ban obscene materials related to women, aiming to prevent the spread of indecent content

against women on the Internet and other media, thus safeguarding their dignity and safety.

The Union Home Minister informed the Parliament that guidelines have been issued for collecting forensic evidence in sexual assault cases, including a standardised structure for sexual assault evidence collection kit. Programmes have been initiated to enhance manpower training and skill-building for investigating officers, prosecution officers and medical officers.

Thousands of officers have been trained in collection, handling and transportation of forensic evidence by the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan National Institute of Criminology and Forensic Science (LNJN-NICFS) and National Forensic Sciences Universities (NFSUs).

Furthermore, the Union Government runs awareness programmes and publicity campaigns about various laws related to women's rights through workshops, cultural programmes, seminars, training sessions and advertisements in print and electronic media. For women experiencing violence, One-Stop Centres have been established to provide psycho-social and mental healthcare. Additionally, 'Swadhar' homes have been set up to support women in crisis or those facing difficult circumstances.

It is also noteworthy that the Ministry of Women and Child Development plays a crucial role in this area, overseeing many special laws.

These include the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961; the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986; the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005; the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace



(Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

The Ministry also administers the Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005; the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015. Additionally, the 'Tejaswini' women's safety and empowerment campaign is a significant initiative in Delhi, aimed at enhancing women's safety and empowerment. This campaign organises various programmes and activities to prevent violence against women, train them in self-defence and raise awareness of their rights. Pink booths have been set up in high-traffic areas of Delhi to provide safe public spaces. Over 500 PCR vans have been deployed near schools and colleges throughout the national capital to ensure the safety of girl students. The scheme was launched by the Delhi Police on July 10, 2021. ■

Women Empowered Through Enhanced Safety Measures

According to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the benefits of Union Government schemes began reaching women more effectively due to enhanced security, directly improving their standard of living. Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah on September 20, 2023, stated in Parliament that since Prime Minister Narendra Modi took office in 2014, the safety, respect, and participation of women have been central to his administration. Shri Shah highlighted that in 2014, as many as 70 crore people in India did not have bank accounts. The launch of the Jan-Dhan Yojana led to the opening of 52 crore bank accounts, 70% of which were in the names of women. The Union Home Minister emphasised that the lack of household toilets disproportionately affected women. During his first term, Prime Minister Shri Modi facilitated the construction of 11.72 crore toilets, thereby helping protect the dignity of women. Additionally, the Prime Minister opened 3.18 crore Sukanya Samriddhi accounts and provided approximately 26 weeks of maternity leave. Shri Shah also noted that while the global percentage of women pilots is 5%, in India it is 15%, exemplifying true empowerment.



PM Modi's Bhutan Visit Bolsters Bilateral Ties

Bureau

The bilateral relations between India and Bhutan are marked by trust, goodwill and mutual understanding across all levels, fostering strong bonds of friendship and close people-to-people connections. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi embarked on a two-day visit to the Himalayan kingdom on March 21-22 to further bolster ties between the two neighbouring nations.

During a productive meeting held in Thimphu on March 22, Prime Minister Shri Modi and his Bhutanese counterpart Shri Dasho Tshering Tobgay reaffirmed their dedication to elevate the exceptional bilateral

partnership to new heights in the future. The leaders conducted a comprehensive review of all facets of bilateral energy cooperation, expressing contentment with the effective implementation of jointly undertaken projects, which are playing a pivotal role in Bhutan's economic advancement. Building on the success of the 720 MW Mangdechhu hydroelectric project, the commissioning of the 1,020 MW Punatsangchhu-II hydroelectric project is scheduled for later this year.

The leaders welcomed bilateral discussions aimed at charting a technically sound and cost-effective pathway for the 1,200 MW Punatsangchhu-I hydroelectric project. Recognising the significant contribution of the Clean Energy Partnership to Bhutan's hydropower

The foundation of India-Bhutan ties lies in mutual trust. While it can be challenging for any leader to embark on foreign visits in the midst of parliamentary elections, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's visit to Bhutan (March 21-22) has deepened the bonds of friendship, mutual trust and goodwill between the two neighbouring nations.

sector development and regional energy security, both sides expressed appreciation for the collaboration.

Bhutan's increasing domestic capacity for implementing energy projects is highly laudable. Similarly, India's substantial growth in the renewable energy sector and its leadership in initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance and India's National Green Hydrogen Mission have earned encomium.

Building on these facts, the two leaders conducted a comprehensive review of all facets of bilateral energy cooperation. Recognising the significant contribution of the Clean Energy Partnership to Bhutan's hydropower sector development and regional energy security, both sides expressed appreciation for the collaboration.

During their meeting, the leaders engaged in discussions covering various aspects of the multifaceted bilateral relationship, pledging to further bolster cooperation in sectors such as renewable energy, agriculture, youth exchanges, environmental conservation, forestry and tourism.

Prime Minister Shri Modi and his Bhutanese



counterpart signed several MoUs/agreements pertaining to energy, trade, digital connectivity, space, agriculture and youth connectivity, among others.

The Prime Minister also met with the King of Bhutan, Shri Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck. Both leaders expressed profound satisfaction with the close and unique friendship between the two countries and their commitment to advancing this pivotal



transformative partnership, through mutual trust and understanding.

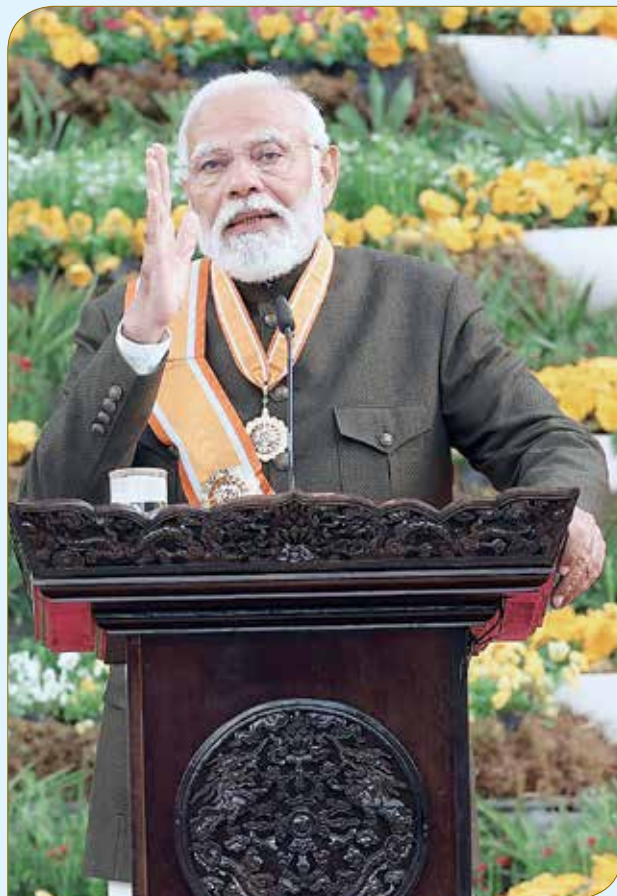
India's development assistance to Bhutan traces back to the 1960s, with a pledge of ₹5,000 crore for Bhutan's 12th five-year plan, facilitating the implementation of over 600 projects. India has pledged further assistance for the ongoing 13th five-year plan in alignment with Bhutan's needs and priorities. Hydropower cooperation remains a cornerstone, with India having constructed four major hydropower projects in Bhutan.

India continues to be Bhutan's leading trading partner and primary source of investment, contributing 50% of FDI. Collaboration is expanding into new sectors such as space, fintech and e-learning.

During his two-day visit, Prime Minister Shri Modi assured Thimphu of India's steadfast support in developmental initiatives, committing to provide assistance worth ₹10,000 crore over the next five years. Additionally he, alongside Bhutanese Prime Minister Shri Tobgay, inaugurated a modern hospital for women and children in Thimphu, a collaborative effort between India and Bhutan. The Indian Prime Minister's reception by the King of Bhutan, Shri Wangchuck, at the Lingkana Palace, garnered praise on social media.

Earlier, on March 15, Prime Minister Shri Tobgay had visited India. This marked his first official foreign visit since assuming office in January.

During discussions, Shri Tobgay and Shri Modi had assessed progress across various domains of bilateral cooperation, encompassing infrastructure development, connectivity, energy, hydropower



collaboration and people-to-people exchanges. The two leaders reiterated their dedication to strengthening the unique bond between India and Bhutan. Prime Minister Shri Tobgay lauded India's support as a reliable and valued partner in Bhutan's developmental endeavours.■

PM Honoured with Order of the Druk Gyalpo

At a public ceremony held in Thimphu, the King of Bhutan bestowed upon Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi the 'Order of the Druk Gyalpo', Bhutan's highest civilian honour. Prime Minister Shri Modi holds the distinction of being the first foreign leader to receive this prestigious accolade. It acknowledges Prime Minister Shri Modi's contributions to strengthening the friendship between India and Bhutan, as well as his people-centric leadership. The citation accompanying the award underscores India's rise as a global power under Prime Minister Shri Modi's leadership and celebrates the special bond between Bhutan and India. Upon receiving the award, Prime Minister Shri Modi expressed that it symbolises an honour bestowed upon the 140 crore people of India and serves as a testament to the special and unique relationship shared between the two nations. Established in accordance with established protocols and traditions, the Order of the Druk Gyalpo is conferred as a recognition of lifetime achievement, holding precedence over all other honours, decorations and medals in Bhutan.

Positioning India as a Semicon Powerhouse

Bureau

Aiming at positioning India as a global hub for semiconductor design, manufacturing and technology development, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on March 13 addressed the 'India's Techade: Chips for Viksit Bharat' programme and laid the foundation stone for three semiconductor projects worth about ₹1.25 lakh crore via video conferencing. These initiatives, aimed at fostering indigenous semiconductor capabilities, underscore his vision to catalyse economic growth and create employment opportunities for the youth.

The projects include a semiconductor fabrication facility at the Dholera Special Investment Region (DSIR) in Gujarat, along with Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) facilities in Morigaon, Assam and Sanand, Gujarat. These state-of-the-art facilities are poised to strengthen India's semiconductor ecosystem and provide employment to thousands of youth in the semiconductor industry, as well as related sectors such as electronics and telecommunications.

Prime Minister Shri Modi hailed the occasion as a significant milestone towards realising India's potential as a semiconductor hub. He emphasised the pivotal role of semiconductor manufacturing in India's journey towards self-reliance and modernisation, stressing the importance of 'Made in India' and 'Designed in India' chips in driving technological innovation and bolstering the nation's global competitiveness.

Prime Minister Shri Modi highlighted the strategic imperative of India's entry into semiconductor manufacturing, especially in the wake of disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. With only a handful of nations currently dominating semiconductor production, India's foray into this sector holds the promise of enhancing the country's resilience and ensuring a reliable supply chain for critical technology components.

Underlining the Union Government's commitment to fostering a conducive environment for semiconductor manufacturing, Prime Minister Shri Modi outlined various policy measures undertaken to



The day is not far when India will become a global power in the semiconductor sector.

Shri Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

promote ease of doing business and attract foreign investment. These measures include the simplification of regulations, liberalisation of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policies and the implementation of Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes to incentivise large-scale electronic manufacturing.

The Prime Minister also highlighted India's growing prowess in electronics and hardware manufacturing, citing the country's position as the second-largest mobile manufacturer in the world. He emphasised the Union Government's initiatives in advancing technology adoption and fostering innovation, including the establishment of the National Research Foundation and the expansion of India's Artificial Intelligence (AI) mission.

The event witnessed the virtual presence of semiconductor industry players from Taiwan, signalling international recognition of India's burgeoning semiconductor industry. The event reaffirmed the Union Government's commitment to driving India's semiconductor sector towards unprecedented growth and global prominence. ■

India Showcases Indigenous Defence Might in the Desert

Bureau

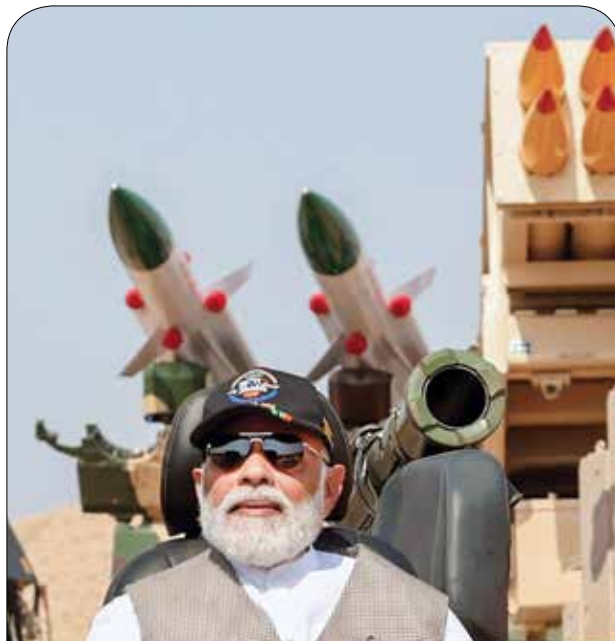
In a resounding display of indigenous defence prowess, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on March 12 witnessed the Tri-Services Live Fire and Manoeuvre Exercise, dubbed 'Bharat Shakti' in Pokhran, Rajasthan. The exercise showcased an impressive array of homegrown weapons systems and platforms, marking a significant milestone in India's journey towards self-reliance in defence.

The event, premised on the nation's Atmanirbharta initiative, demonstrated realistic, synergised, multi-domain operations, exhibiting the integrated operational capabilities of the Indian Armed Forces across land, air, sea, cyber and space domains. Key equipment and weapons systems featured in the exercise included T-90 (IM) Tanks, Dhanush and Sarang Gun Systems, Akash Weapon System, Logistics Drones, Robotic Mules, Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) and various unmanned aerial vehicles, showcasing advanced ground warfare and aerial surveillance capabilities of the Indian Army.

Prime Minister Shri Modi hailed the demonstration as a testament to the evolving ethos of New India. He emphasised the significance of self-reliance and importance of reducing dependence on external sources, highlighting the strategic significance of indigenous defence capabilities.

Prime Minister Shri Modi reiterated India's commitment to self-reliance across various sectors, including defence, emphasising the need for policy reforms, private sector involvement and support for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) startups. He lauded the efforts of the armed forces in promoting indigenous production and announced significant investments in defence corridors and manufacturing facilities.

Prime Minister Shri Modi also highlighted notable achievements, including the development of fighter jets, aircraft carriers, transport aircraft and advanced flight engines. He also noted India's transition from being the largest defence importer to a burgeoning defence exporter, with an eight-fold increase in exports



Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi emphasised the significance of self-reliance and importance of reducing dependence on external sources, highlighting the strategic importance of indigenous defence capabilities.

since 2014. His remarks underscored India's readiness to confront contemporary and future challenges with homegrown solutions, emphasising resilience, innovation and strength in India's domestic defence capabilities on the global stage.

The 'Bharat Shakti' exercise stands as a testament to India's strides towards self-reliance in defence, showcasing the nation's determination to secure its sovereignty and strengthen its position as a global leader in defence innovation.

Union Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh, Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Shri Bhajan Lal Sharma, Chief of Defence Staff, Gen Anil Chauhan, Chief of Army Staff, Gen Manoj Pandey, Chief of Air Force Staff, Air Chief Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari and Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral R Hari Kumar were present on the occasion. ■

A Drug-free India

Bureau

The Union Government has undertaken numerous initiatives to address the issue of drugs and contrabands, with its primary goal being the creation of a drug-free nation and the reintegration of youth addicted to drugs into the society.

Enhanced policies and mechanisms have been implemented to tackle the drug problem more effectively, including the utilisation and enhancement of technical equipment for prompt detection. Stringent measures are being enforced to dismantle drug distribution networks, accompanied by legal actions to consolidate evidence for prosecuting drug traffickers.

Several schemes have been launched by the Union Government towards achieving a drug-free India, including the establishment of de-addiction centres, support for the rehabilitation of individuals affected by drug addiction and collaboration with social organisations to combat drug menace.

These efforts appear to yield positive results. On March 3, the Union Home Ministry unveiled three videos showcasing the successes of the Union Government in combating drug menace. The Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah, shared a series of posts and videos on the social media platform X, highlighting these achievements.

In a social media post, Shri Shah highlighted the robust approach of the Union Government towards combating narco-trade, emphasising its effectiveness in escalating arrests and drug seizures.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, a cohesive anti-narcotics framework has been established nationwide, fostering enhanced coordination and cooperation among Government bodies and agencies. This concerted effort has resulted in a notable surge in the interception of drug smuggling activities and the registration of cases.

The Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD), fortified in 2019, stands as a testament to this commitment, facilitating seamless coordination between Central and State agencies engaged in anti-narcotics endeavours, aligned with Prime Minister Shri Modi's vision.



Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Union Government is moving rapidly towards achieving the goal of a drug-free India. Drugs are being detected and seized, networks are being busted, peddlers are taken to task and drug addicts are being rehabilitated.

Shri Amit Shah, Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation

Union Home Minister Shri Shah reiterated the vision of Prime Minister Shri Modi for a drug-free India, terming it as a paramount gift for future generations. He further underscored the Union Government's rapid strides towards achieving this goal through comprehensive strategies encompassing drug detection, network disruption, apprehension of drug traffickers and the rehabilitation of those afflicted by drug addiction. ■

India's Deep-rooted Democracy Inspires the World, Says PM

Bureau

Addressing the third 'Summit for Democracy' via video conference on March 20, Prime Minister Shri Modi highlighted the significance of the event which was held in Seoul, South Korea, and termed it a crucial platform for global democracies to share insights and knowledge. He reaffirmed India's steadfast dedication to democracy, citing its deep-rooted and resilient cultural heritage as a testament to this commitment.

India is not only meeting the aspirations of its 140 crore citizens but also inspiring the world with the efficacy of democracy in empowering people. Prime Minister Shri Modi, citing the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, emphasised that the whole world will witness democracy's grandeur, as people once again will reaffirm their trust in it.

The Prime Minister underscored India's historical embrace of consensus-building, open dialogue and free deliberation, which have long been ingrained in its fabric. He emphasised that these values have positioned India as a beacon of democracy, cherished by its citizens as the very cradle of democratic principles.

In his address to an assembly of global leaders, Prime Minister Shri Modi highlighted that India's remarkable achievements over the past decade have strengthened worldwide trust in democracy as a catalyst for positive transformation.

The Prime Minister spoke of elevating 25 crore people out of poverty in India within the last decade and emphasised how this accomplishment has bolstered confidence in democracy's capacity for constructive change on a global scale.

Furthermore, Shri Modi pointed to India's distribution of COVID-19 medications and vaccines to over 150 nations as a demonstration of Indian democracy's inherent efficacy. "The success of the Chandrayaan mission was not merely a source of pride for India but also symbolised a triumph for democratic ideas", he said.

During its tenure as the president of the G20, India's advocacy for the Global South exemplified



India's contributions to global democracy, including legislative initiatives to enhance women's representation and poverty alleviation are examples to foster democratic principles worldwide.

Shri Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

the significance of collaborative decision-making in international affairs. As India progresses towards becoming the world's third-largest economy, it instils hope for a brighter future for millions worldwide. With its commitment to attaining developed nation status by 2047, India illustrates democracy's potential to lead, motivate and accomplish significant milestones.

Prime Minister Shri Modi acknowledged that amidst global upheavals and transitions, democracy encounters numerous challenges, necessitating collective action. "India stands prepared to share its insights and experiences with fellow democracies in addressing these challenges", he said. He cited India's contributions to global democracy, including legislative initiatives to enhance women's representation and poverty alleviation as examples to foster democratic principles worldwide. ■

Startup Culture Fosters Growth & Social Change

Bureau

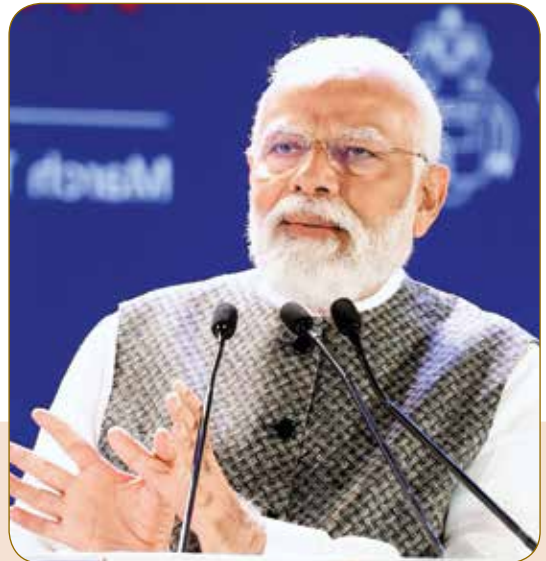
In order to realise Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of ushering in a developed India, active participation from all quarters is necessary. Emphasising the potential of the youth, the Prime Minister has frequently urged them to contribute to this vision.

During the Startup Mahakumbh held at the Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on March 20, Prime Minister Shri Modi delineated the comprehensive roadmap for achieving this goal. He underscored the pivotal role of the startup culture in bolstering the Indian economy, noting the support extended to startups through initiatives such as Digital India, which serves as a significant source of motivation. He suggested that educational institutions integrate this ethos into their curriculum, viewing startups as a subject of study. Furthermore, he lauded the role of UPI in bolstering fintech startups, which spearheaded the development of innovative products and services, thus advancing digital services across the nation.

Highlighting the youth's contribution to elevating India to the fifth largest economy globally from the 11th position, the Prime Minister reiterated the potential of startups in further propelling India towards becoming the third-largest economy. He recounted the enthusiastic response from industry leaders and global dignitaries at the India Pavilion during the G20 summit, where UPI functionalities were showcased, underscoring how this has enhanced financial inclusion and bridged the rural-urban gap. Notably, technology adoption has permeated both urban and rural areas.

The Prime Minister expressed satisfaction over the fact that over 45% of startups in the country are led by women, spanning sectors such as education, agriculture and healthcare.

The Prime Minister highlighted India's strides in the information technology and software sector in the recent decades, emphasising the burgeoning trends of innovation and startup culture. He remarked on the meaningful presence of individuals from the startup community, underscoring the



There are 1.25 lakh startups in India. We are the third largest startup ecosystem in the world with 12 lakh youngsters directly working with them.

Shri Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

significance of the occasion. Recognising the diverse spectrum of attendees, including investors, incubators, academics, researchers, industry leaders and both current and prospective entrepreneurs, Prime Minister Shri Modi noted the unprecedented energy and dynamism generated by the Startup Mahakumbh.

The Prime Minister highlighted that Indian startups are making significant strides across more than 50 sectors, even venturing into space exploration with the launch of space shuttles. This demonstration of India's youth potential has garnered global attention, prompting the country to take several initiatives towards fostering a vibrant startup ecosystem.

The Startup Mahakumbh showcased unparalleled innovation, highlighting transformative products, cutting-edge technologies and revolutionary business models across diverse sectors. ■

Tripura Accord: Testimony to Union Govt's Northeast Focus

Bureau

March 2 was a red-letter day for India's Northeastern State Tripura, after a tripartite agreement was signed in New Delhi among the Union Government, the Government of Tripura and the Tipraha Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance (TIPRA), commonly known as Tripra Motha, with the Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah, in attendance. The agreement encompassed the amicable resolution of various issues concerning the history, land and political rights, economic development, identity, culture and language of Tripura's original inhabitants.

Shri Shah stated that through this accord, past errors have been rectified and present realities acknowledged, thus paving the way for a harmonious future. While history remains immutable, lessons from past mistakes and a cognisance of contemporary circumstances propel us forward, he said.

The Union Home Minister lauded Tripra Motha and all other tribal factions for their constructive contribution towards this endeavour. The agreement was signed on behalf of Tripra Motha by its founder, Shri Pradyot Deb Barma, alongside others. Shri Manik Saha, Chief Minister of Tripura and many senior officials from the Union Home Ministry and the Government of Tripura were present during the signing ceremony.

To ensure a dignified resolution, it was also decided to establish a joint working group/committee tasked with implementing the agreed-upon points within a specified timeframe. Additionally, all stakeholders committed to refraining from any form of protest or agitation once the agreement came into effect, fostering an environment conducive to its implementation.

During the event, the Union Home Minister commended the consistent efforts of the Tripura Government. He expressed confidence in Tripura's dedication to contributing to Prime Minister Shri Modi's vision of a developed India and advancing itself as a developed State.

The Union Home Ministry under Shri Shah has



For peace and prosperity of the Northeast, the Union Government has signed 11 historic agreements in the last five years.

Shri Amit Shah, Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation

endeavoured to realise a vision where the Northeast is free from insurgency, conflicts and violence. Approximately 10,000 militants from various outfits have surrendered their arms across the Northeast in the last 10 years and integrated into the mainstream, fostering a climate of development in the region.

Highlighting the Union Government's special focus on the Northeast, Shri Shah talked about the recent agreements signed by various outfits that have fostered peace and stability in the entire region.

Shri Shah noted that agreements such as the Bru-Reang Accord and various border agreements had their origins in Tripura, and now, once again, Tripura was at the forefront of signing another agreement. He cited a series of accords, including those with the NLFT (SD) in 2019, Bru and Bodo accords in 2020, Karbi-Anglong in 2021, Tribal Accord and Assam-Meghalaya Border Accord in 2022 and the Assam Arunachal Border Accord, Dimasa Accord, UNLF and ULFA Accord in 2023. ■

Paving the Way for Development



Bureau



appreciation to the Prime Minister for over 10 schemes amounting to ₹5,000 crore for Bihar.

On March 8, the Union Minister of State for Home, Shri Nisith Pramanik, unveiled photographs from the Joint Regional Official Language Conference 2024 for the East and Northeast regions held in Siliguri, West Bengal. He also showcased images capturing poignant moments from the Bharat Sankalp Yatra and public outreach endeavours on March 7. Similarly, on March 2, he shared snapshots highlighting special moments from a public outreach programme in Sahebganj area of Cooch Behar in West Bengal.

On March 14, the Union Minister of State for Home, Shri Ajay Kumar Mishra, addressed people's concerns in Lakhimpur Kheri. He also graced a smartphone/tablet distribution programme, organised under the Swami Vivekananda Youth Empowerment Scheme at Yuvraj Dutta College, where he was the chief guest. On March 13, he inaugurated various developmental initiatives, including a student investiture ceremony. A day earlier on March 12, he inaugurated an open gymnasium in Mailani, capturing moments of the event on social media.■

Since its inception in 1969, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has played a pivotal role in safeguarding the nation's security. The Union Minister of State for Home, Shri Nityanand Rai, took part in a ceremonial parade in Bhilai, Chhattisgarh, to commemorate the 55th foundation day of the CISF. He shared this update, along with accompanying photographs of the event on March 12.

With the Union Government offering employment opportunities, India's journey towards progress is gaining momentum. On March 13, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the Pradhan Mantri Samajik Utthan evam Rozgar Adharit Jankalyan (PM-SURAJ) portal via video conference. This was informed by Shri Rai through a post on platform X.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for 112 road projects worth ₹1 lakh crore across various States via video conferencing on March 11. Shri Rai participated in the event at Patna's Urja Auditorium, extending

A Decade of Determination Strengthens Women's Safety

Over the past decade, India has witnessed a transformative journey in enhancing women's safety, marked by significant legislative reforms and the adoption of advanced technological solutions. The period from 2014 to 2024 stands out as a crucial period during which the collective consciousness around women's safety found resonance in the corridors of power, leading to robust policy changes and the implementation of sophisticated safety measures.

The turning point in the decade-long reforms was arguably the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 2018. This amendment, catalysed by the national outrage over brutal child rape cases, was a watershed moment in strengthening the legal apparatus against sexual crimes, especially those committed against minors. The law introduced severe penalties for the rape of minors under 12 years, including the life imprisonment or capital punishment, that were a significant escalation from previous laws. These changes were aimed at deterring heinous crimes through the fear of stringent legal repercussions.

Moreover, the amendment brought about a crucial operational change in the judicial handling of rape cases. Anticipatory bail for those accused of raping or gang-raping minors under 16 was also disallowed, which addressed concerns about perpetrators evading the law.

Looking further ahead, the enactment of the three new criminal laws—Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam 2023 and Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023 is set to replace the colonial-era penal and procedural laws, indicating a forward-looking approach that aligns with contemporary legal standards and societal norms.

The new laws are going to be implemented across the country from July 1, and would evoke new confidence among women, society, enforcement agencies and courts for punishing culprits, deterrence of crimes and ensuring time bound justice to victims. Under the provisions of the new criminal laws, medical practitioners are mandated to send the medical report of a rape victim to the investigating officer within seven days. For sexual offences, a woman magistrate shall record the statement of the victim and where a woman magistrate is not available, the statement shall be recorded in the presence of a woman.

These laws have refined definitions and classifications



Manjari Jaruhar

of crimes against women, emphasising the role of digital evidence and reinforcing the protection of victims, thereby shaping a more responsive and just legal environment.

Parallel to these legal reforms, the integration of technology in policing and surveillance marked a new frontier in India's approach to women's safety. The implementation of the Emergency Response

Support System (ERSS) providing a unified emergency number (112) across the nation, the roll out of Safe City Projects with extensive surveillance systems and the establishment of digital databases such as the National Database on Sexual Offenders (NDSO) significantly bolstered the infrastructure to prevent and respond to crimes against women.

Amid these legal and technological advancements, political leadership has also played a pivotal role. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has consistently emphasised the critical role of women in fostering a stronger society and has advocated for their safety and empowerment as integral to the nation's progress. In his addresses to the nation, including his Independence Day speeches and the 'Mann Ki Baat' radio broadcasts, the Prime Minister has highlighted the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women. He has praised the increasing participation of women in the police force, noting that their presence not only boosts security, but also instils a greater sense of confidence among women.

The Prime Minister has often spoken about the need for societal shifts to eliminate patriarchal practices that demean women, advocating instead for a culture that respects and values women equally. He has also strongly advocated "women-led development" many times.

Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah has stressed that women's safety, respect and participation in all activities are fundamental to the Union Government's priorities. He articulated this stance during discussions on the Women's Reservation Bill, asserting that the passage of the bill would herald a new era for women's equality. He emphasised that women's empowerment is a core principle and noted that ensuring the safety of women and children remains a top priority of the present dispensation.■

(The writer is the first woman IPS officer of Bihar and fifth woman IPS officer of India. Former Special DG, CISF)



A tripartite agreement, involving the Union Government, the Government of Tripura and the Tipraha Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance (commonly known as Tipra Motha) was signed in the presence of the Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah, in New Delhi on March 2.

As part of the Central Industrial Security Force Week commemorating CISF Raising Day 2024, a blood donation camp was conducted at Barwaha in Madhya Pradesh. CISF personnel donated 54 units of blood during the camp, as reported on the official X account of the CISF on March 8.



During a workshop titled 'Women in Policing' held on International Women's Day at Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) headquarters on March 8, Smt. Archana Ramasundaram, IPS (Retd.), Member of Lokpal and Shri Balaji Srivastava, DG, BPR&D addressed a gathering of 100 participants from various police forces.



The YouTube channel, 'Police Aur Seva,' run by Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) has come up with a video detailing internet safety tips for parents. It advises parents to promptly address any concerns or fears their children may have about online interactions and emphasises on the importance of safeguarding personal information online.



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- ◆ Bharat Ke Veer corpus would be managed by a committee made up of eminent persons and senior government officials, in equal number, who would decide to disburse the fund equitably to the braveheart families on a need basis.



“

We had said that the concept of triple talaq did injustice to Muslim women and we would abolish it. We fulfilled that promise. Many provisions have also been included in the new criminal laws for boosting the safety and security of women. Now, there is a provision for life imprisonment and death penalty for the rape of a minor.

”

Shri Amit Shah, Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation



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