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Slam Pak, not Parliament: Modi

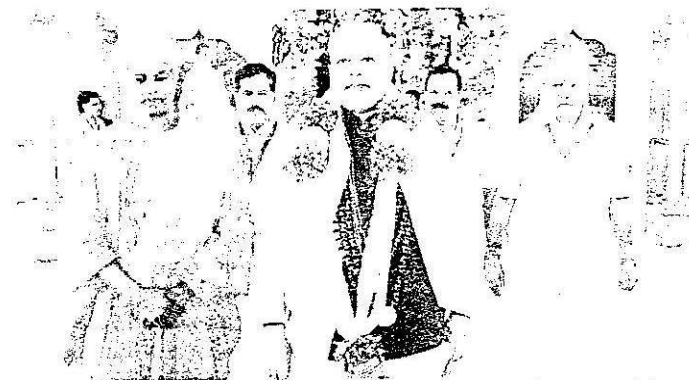
Tells anti-CAA to expose neighbouring country for its deeds; targets Opposition

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Tumakuru

WITH his forehead smeared with holy ash, sporting a multi-layered rudraksha garland and shoulders wrapped in a red silk shawl, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday played the Pakistan card while defending the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) at the Sri Siddaganga Mutt here.

Addressing a gathering, mostly students of the mutt — an iconic seat of spirituality for Lingayats — Modi termed the nationwide protests against the CAA as against Parliament. He accused anti-CAA protesters and the opposition of agitating against refugees who have fled to India to escape persecution on religious grounds from Pakistan. He asked them to voice their protest against Pakistan instead, if they have to.

“Those who are protesting against Parliament, I want to tell them that the need is to expose Pakistan’s deeds on the world stage. If you want to protest, raise your voice against Pakistan’s deeds for the last 70 years, you should have the guts,” he said. Even as protests against the CAA are raging, the PM stepped up to defend his government’s move. The PM blamed the Congress and its al-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi after laying the foundation stone for a memorial museum of Sri Shivakumara Swamiji at Siddaganga Mutt in Tumakuru on Thursday

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Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

lies for creating an ecosystem that was rising up against Parliament. Modi also invoked Pakistan multiple times to defend the CAA and asked why the Opposition was not questioning that country over the atrocities on its minorities. “Just like how they have shown us (BJP) hate, they are now showing hatred towards Parliament. These people are protesting against Dalits and the persecuted,” Modi said.

“Whether it is Hindu or Sikh or Christian or Jain, atrocities have increased against them in Pakistan. Thousands of such people had to leave their houses and come to India as refugees.”

The PM was speaking after paying respects at the ‘Gadudge’ (final resting place) of late Siddaganga Mutt seer Shivakumara Swami. He also laid the foundation stone for a museum in honour of the seer.

However, the raising of issues like CAA, Pakistan, and opposition at a spiritual place while addressing students, came under under fire from some quarters. Many netizens too expressed disappointment over the PM talking politics inside the premises of a mutt. **PS**

‘Agri growth vital to achieve \$5 tn economy’

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI
@ Tumakuru

AMIDST the prevailing economic slowdown, PM Modi on Thursday stressed the need to improve the agrarian economy in order to transform the country into a \$5 trillion economy. “To achieve this by 2022, which marks the country’s 75th year of Independence, the contribution from the agriculture sector should be significant. This is why we have been helping farmers cultivate cash crops with export value”, he told a massive farmers’ rally here.

In his 40-minute speech, he pointed out that agricultural production has witnessed phenomenal improvement over the years due to various policies. Referring to neem coating of urea, amending certain rules in Fasal Bima Yojana and improving cold storage plants, he said these steps have helped improve output.

PS

PM promises to help coffee planters

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"PRODUCTION of masala (species) has increased to 25 lakh tonnes annually, which fetched export revenue of between Rs 16,000-18,000 crore", he pointed out, while advising farmers to go in for cash crops.

Karnataka being the country's leading coffee growing state, Modi promised all help to even marginal coffee planters to add value to their produce, right from production stage to packaging, through an integrated mechanism. In an attempt to win over South Indian farmers, the PM said that through horticulture, they have contributed immensely to export revenues. The 'New India' should keep pace with the south, he said even as he spoke of Karnataka's contribution several times throughout his speech.

Giving away the Krishi Karmanya award, Modi said, "The Krishi Samman Nidhi scheme has united farmers of the entire country. Their income should be doubled by 2022. I expect that in the new year, those states which are not associated with the Kisan Samman Yojana will at least become a part of it", he wished.

Modi also said thrust will be given to rubber and turmeric cultivation with more research and development. He also said the Centre has given out Rs 28 crore to states where there is scope for inland fisheries, rolled out schemes to ensure the safety of deep-sea fishermen and started online registration for vaccination against foot-and-mouth disease in cattle.
