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PAPER CLIPPINGS

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Constitution is the guiding light, says Modi

Open to varied spiritual influences: PM

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The Union government does not discriminate on the basis of faith, gender, caste, creed, or language, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said.

"We are guided by the desire to empower 130 crore Indians and our guiding light is the Constitution of India. We will produce locally and buy local products. This will light the lamp of prosperity in many homes," Mr. Modi said. He was inaugurating the 90th birthday celebrations of Joseph Mar Thoma, Mar Thoma Metropolitan, at the Alexander Mar Thoma auditorium in Thiruvalla through a video-conference from Delhi on Saturday.

"India has always been open to spiritual influences from many sources," the PM said. The Church, which

had played a role in India's freedom struggle, had strived for national integration and had opposed the Emergency. "The Holy Bible talks extensively about togetherness," he added.

On the fight against COVID-19, India, with a growing recovery rate, was placed much better than many countries because of the nationwide lockdown, the subsequent government initiatives, and the people-driven fight against the pandemic, the PM said. Deaths due to the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus in India was below 12 per million, compared to 574 per million in Italy. The figures in the U.S., the U.K., Spain, and France too were higher than those in India, he added.

The Prime Minister said the Centre had taken decisions based on feedback from people on the ground.