

India is no longer a land of 'snake charmers and black magic'

NEW DELHI, INDIA: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi said a "digital India" could compete with the world and hailed its information technology professionals for banishing the country's image as a land of "snake charmers and black magic".



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to transform the country into a digital, software and manufacturing hub and connect every village in India to a broadband Internet connection. Image: [DNA India](#)

In an Independence Day speech, Modi said India had transformed itself through strides taken by its information technology outsourcing sector.

"But more still has to be done to get India digitally connected to the Internet and tap other technologies," he said.

"About 25 or 30 years ago, the world used to think we are a land of snake charmers and black magic. But our youth has surprised the world with its IT skills," he said.

"I dream of a digital India. It was once said railways connect India. Today I say IT connects India. I fully believe a digital India can compete with the world," he added.

In February, Indian Satya Nadella was appointed Microsoft's Chief Executive in an endorsement of home-grown talent that has risen to the top of the US corporate world.

Technology and manufacturing will stimulate growth

Modi, a technology-savvy politician who is immensely popular on Facebook and Twitter, said India must use Internet to reach out to each of its 1.2bn people.

"Digital India is not an elite concept anymore. We have to take broadband connectivity to every village. We have to use this idea to revolutionise health and education in India," he said.

Modi, known as zealous moderniser when Chief Minister of the prosperous Gujarat state, also appealed to global business to set up shop in India.

"I tell the world to come and make products in India. Sell anywhere, but manufacture here. We have the skill and talent," he said. "Our dream should be to see the 'Made in India' signs in every corner of the world."

While known for its flagship outsourcing industry, India's manufacturing sector is still nascent. The government is anxious to create manufacturing jobs to employ the millions of Indians who enter the employment market each year.

Modi also called on Indians to do their bit to promote manufacturing, saying the country should become self-reliant as he tapped into the philosophy preached by India's independence icon Mahatma Gandhi who urged Swadeshi, self-reliance in manufacturing of goods.

"Each Indian must take a pledge so that the country does not have to import anything. Even if the youth start manufacturing one item each, it can make a huge difference," he said.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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