

Pioneer P 5
28.2.14

In power, BJP vows to address traders' issues

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Thursday indicated that if voted to power it would set up a "mechanism" in the Government that progressively turns into a separate Ministry dedicated to the traders.

Speaking at a function organised by All India Federation of Traders, BJP's prime ministerial candidate and Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi and former BJP president Murli Manohar Joshi gave enough hints that the traders' demand would be reflected in party's manifesto.

The 10-point charter submitted to the two leaders by Federation's general secretary included announcement of a national trade policy, a separate Ministry and setting up of a trade board at the Centre and States to regulate trade and pension for traders after 60 year of age.

Modi said Joshi, who was at the head of BJP's manifesto committee, has "a big role to play" and would look into all issues raised by the traders. He said his party's image was that "we are party of businessmen" and quipped it meant "we must have done something" to earn this title.

Describing Modi as "future PM of the country", Joshi said like small farmers and



BJP's prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi and senior BJP leader Murli Manohar Joshi at the Traders' National Summit in New Delhi on Thursday PTI

labourers, traders are also a neglected lot though they provide maximum employment which was the basic task of a Government.

While speaking about the pivotal role played by traders contributing 15 per cent of the GDP, Joshi said "Chai bechte-bechte, Modi PM hone wale hain, dhyan dena chahiye achhi chai hi nahin achcha PM bhi milne wala hain," evoking peels of laughter among the audience and a smile on Modi's face.

Asian Age P 3
28.3.14



BJP leaders Manohar Joshi and Narendra Modi during the Traders' National Summit in New Delhi on Thursday.

— PTI

Asina Age P 1

28.2.14

■ Is BJP signalling a shift in FDI line?

Modi: Don't run, try to face global challenge

Praises traders' risk-taking; to scrap laws that are not needed

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 27

In what appeared to be a significant shift in the BJP's stated position on FDI in multi-brand retail, the party's PM candidate Narendra Modi on Thursday asked the traders' community not to "run away from global challenges, but face them", and also promised to scrap all "unnecessary laws", saying it appeared the government believed that "all are thieves". Praising the "risk-taking" ability of traders, which he said was "more than that of a soldier", he said the government must help them spread their influence across the globe.

Mr Modi, projecting himself as a leader who does not succumb to pressures, appeared to target Prime Minister Manmohan Singh over his earlier remarks on "coalition compulsions", saying that "alliances cannot be blamed for corruption".

Mr Modi, who attended three separate events in New Delhi on Thursday, said the country could progress only if it was run "together" by the Prime



BJP PM candidate Narendra Modi addresses members at the Confederation of All-India Traders national summit in New Delhi on Thursday.
— SONDEEP SHANKAR

Minister and chief ministers, which he said was the true spirit of federalism.

"I don't know if it will benefit me politically... The trading community should not run away from global

challenges. They should not think they will die if businesses go online... You demand from the government help to build your capacity to meet chal-

■ Turn to Page 3

Asina Age P 3

28.2.14

Modi: Try face challenge

■ Continued from Page 1
-lenges. A small town buyer is also looking for branded products. We should not meet to decide how to escape from this, but how to take it on. You should enhance your quality and filter out those whose quality is suspect," Mr Modi said while addressing the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT).

It may be recalled that till now the BJP central leadership has consistently opposed the government's move to allow 51 per cent FDI in multi-brand retail. The party stalled several Parliament sessions on the issue, with Opposition Leaders of the Sushma Swaraj and Arun Jaitley making fiery speeches against the move.

Sharing traders' concerns over "complicated and too many" laws in the country, he said even he

felt at times that a law should be made that stipulated that a new law will come into force only when 10 old laws are scrapped. "There is a web of law. You give us strength so that we (when in power) could repeal one law every week," he said, adding that he favoured reforming of laws.

While Mr Modi did not offer any specific promise to traders on their charter of demands, he did refer to the BJP's pro-trader image to give them reassurance. He added that the external affairs ministry still worked in the old way, focusing on diplomacy and intelligence gathering, when trade was the "biggest tool of spreading" influence around the world. He said, "Instead of calling coalitions as compulsions, the question is whether you have a zero tolerance policy towards

corruption or not. And if the people at the top are resolute in this aspect, the situation can improve. So the coalitions should not be blamed." He was responding at a chartered accountants' event to a question on the PM's earlier remark about "coalition compulsions" on various problems. He also said the BJP was not opposed to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and instead blamed the UPA government for not doing enough preparation for its implementation. Mr Modi said governments should meet the objectives for which they were formed, and there was no point in leading a government that was unable to do so. "The main grudge against me is that I don't succumb to pressure... There are people who have made a living on the basis of this grudge," he said.

Hindustan Times P 1,6
28.2.14

MODI SIGNALS SHIFT, BATS FOR BIG RETAIL

HT Correspondent

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: BJP's PM candidate Narendra Modi on Thursday called upon Indian traders not to get intimidated by big retail chains and instead learn to compete and work with them, signalling a shift in the party's stand that has opposed the entry of global supermarkets.

"We should not worry about the challenges from global trade," Modi told a meeting of the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT).

"The government should not look to curb online trade. We should not worry about these things our children have taken IT to the world. We'll have to embrace it."

The BJP and CAIT have so far opposed foreign investment in multi-brand retail stores, arguing that it would put the livelihood of millions of neighbourhood grocery stores and street vendors at risk.

Last month, the BJP-ruled Rajasthan government and the erstwhile Aam Aadmi Party government in Delhi had reversed the decision to allow global chains to set up superstores.

In 2012, the Centre had eased norms arming state governments with the power to allow or prohibit FDI upto 51% in multi-brand retail.

Modi also vowed to eliminate red tape and favoured the roll-out of a unified goods and services tax (GST).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

from page one

Modi signals...

"As far as BJP is concerned, we are in favour of the GST. Nobody should have any doubts regarding it," he said.

Modi also shot back at the finance minister Chidambaram for his comments on his knowledge of economics. In an interview, Chidambaram had said the amount of economics Modi knew can be written on the backside of a postal stamp.

On Thursday Modi said, "My knowledge about finance and economy will not occupy even a postage stamp. My whole knowledge can be confined to one word, that is trustee," he said, recalling Mahatma Gandhi's concept of trusteeship.

Modi also signalled a supportive diplomatic regime for the economy. "Times have changed, the core work of external affairs ministry today is trade and commerce," he said.

In a separate address to top business leaders, Modi dropped broad hints about the party's likely economic agenda, should it come to power, but gave out few specifics.

Modi said it was critical to instil confidence among entrepreneurs, and the next government would inherit a weak economy.

"When Atalji was in power the GDP growth was 8.4%, UPA will leave it at 4.8%, we will have to start from there," he said.

Mum on retail FDI, Modi asks traders to face global challenge

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: BJP's prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi on Thursday urged Indian business not to fear global challenges and vowed to smash the web of complex rules with an overhaul of the governance structure.

► **For e-commerce, P 18**

Speaking at three events here, Modi urged traders to embrace modern science and technology to deepen their

markets and start virtual malls in small shops by forging pacts with large players. "I don't know whether it will benefit me politically or not...

There is no need to be scared by the global challenges," Modi said without committing his stance on allowing foreign retailers into the country.

Advocating e-commerce, Modi calls for abolishing outdated legislation

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: BJP's prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi, who spoke at three events here, used the opportunity to give some indication of his economic vision in the lead-up to the national elections later in the year. His critics, including finance minister P Chidambaram, have raised doubts about his knowledge of economics and ability to tackle complex economic issues while his backers cite his record as Gujarat CM and his development model.

"You ask the government to help you build your capabilities to meet the global challenges. The government should focus on that and not say close online. How will you stop online?" asked Modi urging the traders to improve their delivery systems and step up online marketing.

He said the consumers in small towns and cities have become brand conscious and small traders should seize the opportunity to service this demand.

"Do not be scared by these things. Our children have taken IT to the world. You have to embrace modern science and technology. Set up e-commerce. You can set up virtual malls in small shops," Modi said. The BJP has opposed the entry of global retailers such as Wal-Mart and Tesco and its government in Rajasthan has reversed a decision to allow foreign chains in the multi-brand retail sector.

Modi, who is seen as a tough administrator, also called for eliminating outdated laws which have stifled the common man and the business community.

"Sometimes I feel that there is a need to devise a law which would ensure that a new law will be enacted only when 10 old and outdated laws are done away with," Modi said, while calling for an across the board overhaul of government machinery.

For the full report, log on to www.timesofindia.com

Millennium Post P 1

28.2.14

Modi bats for empowered states, pro-trader policies

M POST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: BJP PM candidate Narendra Modi, while taking the side of small traders in the midst of global challenges, called for virtual malls' using technology. He also said states need to be empowered.

The idea of state empowerment was first stressed by West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee who had said the country should be run by the state governments and not by Delhi alone.

Modi, while addressing a gathering of the Confederation of All India Traders at Siri Fort Auditorium, said, 'I think time has come that the traders should use technology to set up virtual malls. Today, people living in rural areas are

looking for branded goods and to reach the target the traders have to opt for technology.'

He said, 'Small businessmen can do big business by setting up virtual units. They can improve the delivery systems and go for online marketing. No need to fear global challenges. Set up virtual malls using science and technology to improve businesses.'

While hinting at FDI and admitting the party's pro-traders policies, he said, 'We don't have to fear the global challenges. We can, in fact, convert this into an opportunity and out-run our global rivals. More than our soldiers, it is our traders who are known for their risk-taking capacity.'

'It's a two way system. A small

trader can only flourish when a common man will have the capacity to buy the products. And to maintain the balance, the government will have to take strong measures to improve manufacturing,' the Gujarat chief minister said. 'The fashion of running the country from Delhi should be stopped for better trade,' he said.

Modi's message to the traders to work with large modern stores and online retailers could be seen as a pro foreign investment signal. Without going in to the details on foreign investments, he said, the small traders should emphasized more on quality products so that they can compete better and could enter into contracts with big online retailers to create 'virtual trade'.

Mint P 1
28.2.14

PLEASE-ALL MESSAGE

Modi bats for a new federal compact

BJP leader promises unqualified support for reforms, guarantee to provide every citizen with basic entitlements

BY GYAN VARMA & ASIT RANJAN MISHRA
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) prime ministerial candidate, Narendra Modi, on Thursday renewed his appeal for an electoral mandate, this time with the promise of ushering in a new federal compact between the Union and the states, unqualified support for economic reforms, and a guarantee to provide every citizen with basic economic entitlements.

At once, in his please-all message, he was addressing three sets of key stakeholders: potential political allies, foreign investors and the general public. The cornerstones that would enable the broad vision that he laid out was what he referred to as the three D's: demography, democracy and demand.

Simultaneously, using the platforms provided by the three back-to-back events, Modi did not miss out on listing out his credentials as an efficient administrator as chief minister of Gujarat since 2001. And significantly, he made the argument that his lengthy tenure at the state level made him the perfect candidate to lead the vision wherein the Centre and the states do not view each other as adversaries.

On his own role, Modi maintained that he saw himself as a "trustee"—drawing from the role Mahatma Gandhi had outlined for himself while spearheading the movement for independence.

In this context, Modi offered his unequivocal support for the implementation of the single goods and services tax (GST)—a

MODI VS UPA

A comparison of what Modi said at his speech in New Delhi on Thursday and what the current status is under the UPA government.

E-COMMERCE

● Modi ● UPA

- Bats for online trade but silent on FDI in e-commerce. BJP opposed to FDI in multi-brand retail.
- Has allowed 51% FDI in multi-brand retail. Has started a public discussion on allowing FDI in e-commerce.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

- Favours GST but says IT infrastructure need to be built first to implement GST and that concerns of the states need to be addressed.
- Wants to push through GST at the earliest. Work on GST network is ongoing.

EXTERNAL SECTOR

- Ministry of external affairs should focus only on economic diplomacy and creating enabling circumstances for Indian exports.
- Still focuses on conventional political diplomacy though in the past decades has had specialized divisions to deal with energy security, development assistance, public diplomacy, and e-governance and information technology, besides multilateral economic diplomacy units for Group of Twenty and Asean nations.

EDUCATION

- Wants a focus on teacher training.
- Focus on bringing children to classrooms and preventing dropouts.

CORRUPTION

- Sees transparency and end to discriminatory power in decision-making as a solution.
- Has passed Lokpal and whistleblower protection Bills.

CENTRE-STATE RELATIONS

- Wants empowered states and participative decision-making.
- Centre has been at odds with states on many of its proposals such as National Counter-Terrorism Centre and communal violence Bill.



SARVESH SHARMA/MINT

Source: Mint research

key reform measure that would for the first time economically unify the country. He clarified that neither the BJP-ruled states nor the party had opposed GST and instead blamed the lack of progress on tardy efforts by the Union government.

"The BJP favours GST. However, the IT (information technology) infrastructure is not ready, without which GST cannot be

implemented. The state governments also had their concerns, which the Centre should have handled sympathetically," Modi said at a meeting with members of an association of financial consultants.

The Gujarat chief minister also spoke at a national convention of traders and at the India Econom-

TURN TO PAGE 3 ▶

Mint p 10
28.2.14

Modi bats for a new federal compact

► FROM PAGE 1

ic Convention 2014 event.

He stressed the need for maintaining the sanctity of constitutional institutions, and accused the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government of eroding it by attacking the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) and the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC).

Modi said widening differences between the Union and state governments were resulting in a trust deficit. He also listed other shortcomings the UPA government had brought about—a security deficit, a governance deficit and what he called a moral deficit, apparently a reference to corruption scandals.

Promising conciliation between the Centre and the states if elected, Modi said he would strive to evolve a team where the Prime Minister is assisted by the chief ministers and would not restrict it only to the union Cabinet.

“Development cannot happen in isolation. It should be inclusive and futuristic,” Modi said. “It is sad that development is only limited to government. We have to build a mass movement for development. People must feel that they are working for the development of the country. The agenda for speedy economic growth should be inclusive...responsive to innovations and the economic agenda must translate into human wellbeing and assured social justice,” Modi said.

The vision statement that Modi sought to stitch together provides equal representation to both pushing economic reforms and ensuring growth was inclusive.

Addressing a meeting of traders in the morning, Modi argued that it was the government’s primary task to develop the capacity of domestic business so that

LJP returns to NDA, seat-sharing finalized

New Delhi: Ahead of the Lok Sabha election scheduled to be held by May this year, Ram Vilas Paswan-led Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) returned to the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) after a seat-sharing agreement in Bihar was finalized on Thursday night.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has agreed to give LJP seven out of 40 seats at stake in Bihar, said BJP president Rajnath Singh. **PTI**

they are able to face up to global challenges. Merely banning competition from, for instance, e-commerce was not the solution, he said.

“The main work for the external affairs ministry is to look after trade and commerce of the country. When the BJP comes to power and forms the government, the main work will be to fill the gaps created in the last decade,” said Modi.

Describing the trading community as the backbone of the economy, he said: “Trade and business are the oldest ways to influence international relations. It also helped integrate people of different regions.”

Traders, he said, must create virtual malls by using modern technology—if books were available online, he said, then there was little reason for anyone to visit a shop. The trick, he said, was to expand the market through a more equitable distribution of the benefits of growth so as to expand purchasing power.

Modi also emphasized that the government must be policy-driven and should not discriminate between people. He said the government must make use of technology to increase transparency and thereby contain corruption.

“There needs to be a debate about ways to check corruption from the beginning rather than take steps after it has been committed,” Modi added.

Attacking the growing inequality in the economy, he said the government must be able to provide a “certain quality of life” to all citizens. While talking about improving the quality of life, Modi said the government must not only focus on education, but also on improving education infrastructure; there must be a greater focus on improving the quality of healthcare.

“Do we not want people to live with respect? Do we all not want to improve our quality of life? Can we not provide certain level of quality of life? Dignity is an issue in this country. There should be dignity of labour. Dignity must be handled with care,” said Modi.

Some experts reacted positively.

“What I found most interesting is his focus on moral (deficit) and how he brought up the concept of Gandhian trusteeship. I have not heard him speak about it earlier,” said Arvind Virmani, a former chief economic adviser in the finance ministry.

Political experts say Modi is using his interactions with the business community as some kind of an outreach programme to win over voters.

“It is known that traders and business community vote for the BJP, but now with these programmes, Narendra Modi is trying to consolidate his votes before the election,” said Badri Narayan, an Allahabad-based political analyst. “The BJP and its prime ministerial candidate are not known to believe in holistic development, but Modi is talking about it now. He tried to please all the sections in his meetings before the election because this is an outreach programme.”

gyan.v@livemint.com

Indian Express P 1, 4
28.2.14

Don't run from big retail chains, face them, Modi tells traders

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 27

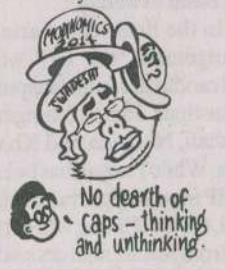
THE BJP'S prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi Thursday told small traders they have to accept the presence of large retail chains instead of "running away" from the challenges posed by them.

The Gujarat chief minister's comment is the first clear statement in favour of big retail and e-commerce from the party that has publicly opposed foreign direct investment, especially in multi-brand retail.

"There is no need to fear global challenges, try to convert the situation into an opportunity. Make the most of this situation. We are a powerful nation and have taken a lead in information

Business as Usual

By UNNY



CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

From the **FRONT PAGE**

'Don't run from big retail chains, face them'

I DON'T NEED BOOKS, MODI TELLS PC

NEW DELHI: The war of words between Narendra Modi and Finance Minister P Chidambaram continued Thursday with the former saying the minister will not be able to do the good work of bringing in the Goods and Services Tax.

In another potshot, Modi responded to Chidambaram's jibe that his knowledge of economics could fit on the back of a postage stamp. "My knowledge of the economy will not occupy even a postal stamp. My entire knowledge is confined to only one word — trustee, like Gandhiji talked about trusteeship. This is all the knowledge I need. You are the trustee of the country's resources, not its owner. I don't need books for this," Modi told the India Economic Convention. When the need arises, he would employ experts to deal with economic issues, he said.

ENS

jasthan's BJP government became the second state after Delhi to roll back the permission given to foreign direct investment of up to 50 per cent in multi-brand retail. Other BJP ruled states have not permitted such FDI and analysts said Modi's views could force a rethink.

Global retailers such as Walmart, Tesco and Carrefour who had shown interest in India have since gone slow on their plans while even single-brand retailers such as Ikea have decided to pause despite getting all clearances.

Modi's statements were lapped by big retailers.

tions, ease of doing business deficit, security deficit," he said at the India Economic Convention.

"We need to restore the faith of common people. We don't have direction, dedication and determination. Bad governance is like diabetes. More than policies we need governance... What we need is a complete overhaul of the departmental system. Laws should be made simple," he said.

Economic decisions, Modi said, should not be taken under the influence of politics. "If the purpose for which the government has been constituted isn't served, there is no point in running the government," he said.

Modi said GST introduction was delayed as the Centre had not been able to prepare for it and had not listened sympathetically to the states.

"I have met the finance minister and told him if the IT backbone is not created GST cannot come through," Modi said, without specifying why Gujarat has been opposing the Bill despite the Centre's compensation offer.

"This looks like a strategic direction which is being set ahead of the elections and it's a very welcome one. These comments and clarity will help everyone in the industry and foreign players to take decisions," Kishore Biyani, CEO of Future Group, told The Indian Express.

Modi used the three different platforms to give some indicators of the economic policies the BJP could follow if elected to power.

"In the last 10 years we have lost out... We talk about fiscal deficit but we have governance deficit, deficit of vibrancy in democratic institu-

मल्टी-ब्रांड रिटेल पर BJP की 'मोदी पॉलिसी'

[ईटी ब्यूरो | नई दिल्ली]

बीजेपी के प्रधानमंत्री पद के उम्मीदवार नरेंद्र मोदी ने गुरुवार को कहा कि भारत के ट्रेडर्स और ग्रॉसरी स्टोर मालिकों को मॉडर्न रिटेल स्टोर और ऑनलाइन रिटेलर्स से मुकाबला करना सीखना चाहिए। यह पार्टी की पॉलिसी में बड़े बदलाव का संकेत हो सकता है।

यूपीए सरकार ने 2012 के आखिर में भारत में विदेशी सुपरमार्केट्स को आने की इजाजत दी थी, जिसका बीजेपी ने विरोध किया था। पार्टी का कहना था कि इससे बड़ी संख्या में किराना स्टोर मालिक और छोटे ट्रेडर्स की रोजी-रोटी के लिए संकट खड़ा हो जाएगा। इन लोगों को बीजेपी समर्थक माना जाता है। एक अलग स्पीच में मोदी ने इनवेस्टर्स, बिजनेसमेन और इकनॉमिस्ट्स के बीच पार्टी का इकनॉमिक रिफॉर्म वाला एजेंडा रखा। हालांकि मोदी ने इस बारे में साफ तौर पर कुछ नहीं कहा कि वह रिटेल में विदेशी निवेश का समर्थन करते हैं या विरोध? उन्होंने कन्फेडरेशन ऑफ ऑल इंडिया ट्रेडर्स के मेंबर्स को संबोधित करते हुए कहा, 'हमें ग्लोबल ट्रेड से मिलने वाले चैलेंज को लेकर फिक्र नहीं करनी चाहिए।' मोदी ने कहा कि छोटे ट्रेडर्स को अपने प्रॉडक्ट की क्वालिटी पर जोर देना चाहिए और इसके बूते मुकाबला करना चाहिए। वे बड़े ऑनलाइन रिटेलर के साथ मिलकर 'छोटी दुकानों में वर्चुअल मॉल्स' खोल सकते हैं। इस महीने की शुरुआत में राजस्थान में सत्ता में लौटी बीजेपी सरकार ने रिटेल में विदेशी निवेश की इजाजत का फैसला वापस ले लिया था। देश के कुल 28 राज्यों में से आधे इस पॉलिसी के खिलाफ हैं।

गुजरात के सीएम मोदी ने यह भी कहा कि वह देश भर में गुड्स एंड सर्विसेज टैक्स (जीएसटी) लाने के हक में हैं। यह रिफॉर्म लंबे समय से लटका हुआ है। बीजेपी शासित सहित कई राज्य जीएसटी का विरोध कर रहे हैं। उन्हें डर है कि इससे रेवेन्यू लॉस होगा। लोकसभा चुनाव करीब हैं। ऐसे में मोदी ने बाद में इंडियन इकनॉमी पर एक कॉन्फ्रेंस में अपनी आर्थिक नजरिया भी रखा। उन्होंने यहां जुटे बिजनेसमेन, बैंकरों और इकनॉमिस्ट्स से कहा कि हमें तेज, सस्टेनेबल और इनक्लूसिव ग्रोथ की जरूरत है। उन्होंने कहा कि भारत बहुत बड़ा है।



BJP'S RETAIL RETHINK?

Traders should Compete with Modern Stores, Says Modi

Lays out reformist agenda & promises effective policy implementation

OUR BUREAU
NEW DELHI

Narendra Modi, the BJP's prime ministerial candidate, said on Thursday India's traders and grocery store owners must learn to compete with large modern stores and online retailers — comments that could signal a change in a key economic principle of the party.

The BJP opposes the government's decision in late 2012 to allow foreign supermarkets to open in India due to the threat it says the move poses to millions of kirana store owners and small traders who form the crux of the party's support.

In a separate speech, Modi laid out a reformist agenda and promised policy implementation to an audience comprising investors, businessmen and economists.

But Modi stopped short of commenting on whether he supports or opposes foreign investment in retail. "We should not worry about the challenges from global trade," he told a gathering of the Confederation of All India Traders. Rather, he said, small traders should emphasise on quality of their products to compete better and could enter into contracts with big online retailers to create "virtual malls in small shops".

A key member of the Modi



"Speedy, yet sustainable economic growth that is inclusive of all is the need of the hour"

NARENDRA MODI

On the Economy

team said on condition of anonymity that the party's stand on FDI in multi-brand retail remains unchanged. He said Modi will go by the party's stand on the issue. Earlier this month, the newly elected BJP government of Rajasthan rolled back the decision to allow foreign investments in retail.

'No Tailor-made Solutions' >> 5

SHIFT TO INCLUSIVE GROWTH

SEE EDIT

28.2.14

No Tailor-made Solutions

►► From Page 1

More than half of the 28 state governments are against the policy.

Modi, chief minister of Gujarat, said he also favoured introducing a nationwide goods and services tax (GST), a long-pending reform expected to bring a uniform market, reduce costs of businesses and increase government revenue.

Many states, including BJP-ruled ones, have resisted GST as they fear loss of revenues if the raft of existing levies were replaced.

With the general elections fast approaching, Modi also laid out his economic views separately at a conference on the Indian economy later in the day. "Speedy, yet sustainable economic growth that is inclusive of all is the need of the hour," he told a crowd of businessmen, bankers, economists and diplomats. As India is vast, he said there are no tailor-made solutions for the problems of the entire country. "The government must identify the strengths of each state and devise strategies accordingly," he said in an hour-long speech.

But for that the prime minister and chief ministers must act as a team. "This is not rocket science. The harmony is missing in decisions."

Modi also revealed his plans to accommodate women in boosting growth. "Women form 50% of the population, but they assume that they have no role in contributing to GDP growth." The truth is they play a huge role, be it animal husbandry, healthcare and handicrafts, according to him.

Modi spoke in Hindi, which disappointed at least a few foreign nationals — people from 25 countries attended the meeting, according to organisers



Narendra Modi

of the event — in the audience. Genevieve Connors, a water resources specialist with the World Bank, said she only caught the gist of the speech and the few words Modi spoke in English.

Brian Oravee, managing partner and CEO, of Realterm Global, an infrastructure company, who had come to listen to "the leading candidate in the elections", said he didn't understand the speech at all.

Abdul Jabbar Al Sayegh, chairman of Al Sayegh Brothers, a company with interests in oil and gas and based in Abu Dhabi, had a friend translate parts of Modi's speech.

Modi used the occasion to reply to a potshot by finance minister P Chidambaram who said in January that "what he (Modi) knows about economics can be written on the back of a postage stamp".

He said he doesn't even need a postal stamp to present his economic vision because it can be summed up in one word — trustee. "You are the trustee of the country's resources, not its owner. For me, this much knowledge is enough."

Modi answered only two questions from members of the audience, one of which was related to energy security. He said he preferred using the country's own natural resources such as solar energy and wind energy to energy imports. Still, Modi's speech fell short of laying out a clear economic blueprint and he again could not resist throwing barbs at the central government's failures and extolling his own achievements. Many times, he stuck to

slogans than specifics. He said the 3Ds — direction, devotion and determination — are key to economic development. BJP spokesman Piyush Goyal said at such forums one can only present a mindset and not a blueprint.

Surjit Bhalla of Oxus Investments agreed, saying Modi's speech was about changing the mindset. "He laid out a credible vision... if he had mentioned specifics I would have been disappointed." And few seemed to mind. "He did not pretend he has all the answers but he conveyed the confidence in doing things," said Connors.

Ajit Ranade, chief economist of the Aditya Birla Group, said Modi articulated a strong vision statement. "...it was a strong statement about inclusive growth and sustainability," he said.

Tulsi Tanti, managing director of Suzlon Energy, said he was happy that Modi's basic fundamentals are clear for the sustainable economy, agriculture, industry and services."

States Man P 7
28.2.14

Modi signals shift in favour of FDI

NIRENDRA DEV

nirendelhi@thestatesman.net
New Delhi, 27 February

BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate Narendra Modi today said trade and commerce should be made the cornerstone of India's foreign policy. He signalled that he is in favour of foreign direct investment (FDI) and urged the trading community not to run away from global challenges but face them.

Addressing a meeting of the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) here, the Gujarat chief minister promised to scrap major unnecessary laws if the NDA comes to power as it appears that the government so far believes "all are thieves". He did not oppose FDI in retail.

Batting for a massive 'kayalp (complete overhaul)' of governance, Modi pitched hard for a strong federal structure and said the fashion of running the affairs of the country from Delhi should stop. States must be trusted to govern, he



Narendra Modi at a talk on 'Economic Growth-The Way Forward' organised by Bhartiya Vitta Salahkar Samiti in New Delhi on Thursday. ■Subrata Dutta

said.

"I don't know if it will benefit me politically...Trading community should not run away from global challenges. They should not think they will die if businesses go online. You demand from government to help build your capacity to meet challenges. A small town buyer is also looking for branded products," he said.

Modi said small traders

should emphasise on the quality of their products to compete better as even housewives and rural customers these days cared about 'brands'. "We should not meet to decide how to escape from this (global trade) but how to take it on. You should enhance your quality and filter out those whose quality is suspect," he said.

Slamming the alleged web of laws and regulations in the country, he said the External Affairs ministry or foreign policy engine room should focus on "economic diplomacy and trade and commerce". "Times have changed, the core work of external affairs ministry today is trade and commerce," he underlined.

Modi's statement is significant as BJP is opposing FDI in retail and the Vasundhara Raje government in Rajasthan has rolled back the FDI move.

Commenting on his remarks, Kishore Biyani of retail chain Future Group, today said that Modi's speech "looks like a strategic direction" and that these comments and clari-

ty will help industry and foreign players to take decisions.

Stating that there were too many laws in the country, Modi said "the country cannot run like this, people and government should trust each other". "If we get chance perhaps in about few months, we will do away with so many laws," he said.

Modi shared the traders' concerns over "complicated and too many" laws and lengthy forms for VAT, etc., and said at times he felt that a law should be made which stipulates that a new law can come into force only when 10 old laws are scrapped.

Addressing two other meetings during his day-long engagements in the Capital today, Modi targeted Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for his refrain about "coalition compulsions". "Instead of calling coalitions as compulsions, the question is whether you have zero tolerance policy towards corruption or not. Situation can improve if the people at the top are resolute. The coali-

tions should not be blamed".

Modi offered himself as a strong leader and said almost tongue-in-cheek, "The main grudge against me is that I don't succumb to pressure... there are people who have made a living on the basis of this grudge".

Addressing the Chartered Accountants Association, he offered condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in INS Sindhuratna tragedy.

BJP leader Arun Jaitley today said Modi has been able to overcome a sustained campaign against him over the 2002 Gujarat riots. "But he (Modi) had the capability to go over the head of the media and directly communicate with the people where your views are believed more than what is being said against you," Jaitley said speaking at the launch of a book 'Narendra Modi - a victim of manipulations'.

"Hundreds were killed in police firing in Gujarat. It shows that the police was on the job," Jaitley added.

Pioneer P 5
28.2.14

Modi seeks to scrap 'complex web

Asks traders not to be scared of global competition or e-commerce

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

Strongly pitching for abolishing "the complex web of laws" in the country, BJP's prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi on Thursday called for simplifying them with a clear aim to "empower common man." He also asked traders not to be scared of e-commerce and instead innovate and improvise with Information Technology to counter global competition.

He wondered why the country was perceived in separate brackets (Government, States, people, police etc) and why the thought "we are all separate and are not working for one country" was instilled.

"This mindset of over 60 years need to be changed," Modi said while addressing 1,500 representatives at a two-day conference organised here by All India Confederation of Traders here at Siri Fort auditorium.

Seeking "a root and branch

change", he said there was a need for a complete transformation in country's machinery "from the PM to Peon".

"Jab bhi hum ayenge ...60 days left... tab 60 saal ke gadde bharne honge," Modi said amidst applause. He invited another round of cheer when he said he was not a man who calculates profit or loss (while taking steps). "I was not born that way," he added.

Looking 10 years ahead from now, Modi said this transformation would make 75-year-old Independent India "young again". Modi said the country should not be run from Delhi and States "should be trusted".

He said there was an urgent need to "simplify laws" in the country and doing away with host of tax forms. He maintained there was a thinking in Government or its agencies like income tax department that "all others are thieves". It is not law but "trust that runs society," he maintained adding "this thinking is beginning for transformation".

Asking traders not to be scared of global competition or e-commerce, he sought them to innovate and invent newer ways to outwit competition from malls. He said they should adept themselves to new infor-



BJP's prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi addresses traders during the Traders' National Summit in New Delhi on Thursday

mation technology and "fight rather run away" from the trade competition.

He was responding to the demand for a ban on e-commerce by general secretary of All India Confederation of traders Praveen Khandelwal

who said the 62 per cent increase in the sector was "affecting domestic retail".

He said retail traders should make powerful portals and reach out even to villages by creating a "virtual mall" and compete with major malls. But

for this, Modi said, the Government should build capacity with surplus power supply and internet reach every where in the country.

Modi interspersed his address giving interesting insight into ancient trade practices and wisdom. He said while traveling in a small Russian state of Astrakhan, he came across a number of shops with names "Okha" which he recalled was a port in Gujarat (in Jamnagar district). When he inquired about the practice of naming shops as "Okha", he was told that it suggested "a good brand" bearing credibility and trusted by Russians.

While addressing the issues relating to the governance, Gujarat Chief Minister said India's External Affairs Ministry was working "in old and outdated ways" "Why not think of trade or commerce diplomacy," he asked saying the old beaten paths should be done away with.

Referring to the ancient wisdom that easily merged with practical knowledge, he gave an example as how "supari" (Betel nut) farming generated employment in south India though "supari" has "no health value". Modi said our ancestors introduced "supari" as a must in all



"pujas" and it became a big trade. "This is a vision," he said. Senior BJP leader Murli Manohar Joshi, who also

addressed the said Walmart is now not h set up its shop