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New Parliament building will reflect India's aspirations: Modi

It will be the amalgamation of the new and the ancient, says PM

NISTULA HEBBAR NEW DELHI



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the new Parliament building, for which the ground-breaking ceremony was held, would channel and reflect the aspirations of 21st century India.

The ceremony was attended by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha Harivansh, and Union Ministers Hardeep Puri and Pralhad Joshi, along with members of the Union Cabinet, diplomats, and Members of Parliament.

The ceremony included an all-faith prayer and rituals by priests from the Sringeri Sharada Peetham, Karnataka. The shankha (conch shell) and navaratnas (nine precious stones) had come from the Peetham.

Mr. Modi said, "The new building will be the amalgamation of the new and the

New seat of power

A look at some of the features of the proposed four-storey Parliament building

Shape: Triangular

Total area 64,500 square metres

Main spaces Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and Central Lounge

THEME OF INTERIORS

Lok Sabha Peacock (National bird)

Rajya Sabha (National flower)

Central Lounge (National tree)



The National Emblem will crown the new **Parliament** building

CAPACITY



Lok Sabha 888 seats (current chamber can accommodate 552 people)



Rajya Sabha 384 seats

■ The Lok Sabha Hall will also have additional capacity, up to 1,272 seats, to host joint sessions



Gearing up: Construction workers walking past a hoarding featuring the new Parliament building. • REUTERS

 Construction was scheduled to start in December, but the works have been stopped till the Supreme Court disposes of challenges to the project

Estimated cost

Contractor Tata Projects Ltd.

Architect HCP Design, Planning and Management

Completion deadline: October 2022, in time for the winter session of Parliament in the 75th year of Independence

ancient, and reflects also the spirit of fostering change in oneself adapting to changing circumstances. Our Constitution was framed and given to us in the current Parliament building and it is the repository of much of our democratic legacy but it is important to be realistic as well. Over the last 100 years, several modifications have been made to the current building to the point where even the building requires rest. Which is why the decision was taken to construct a new Parliament building."

Mr. Modi spoke of some of the new features, including a space where people from constituencies could meet their MPs, something lacking in the current building.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 RELATED REPORTS PAGE 9

FROM PAGE ONE

'Parliament building will reflect India's aspirations' 型100日上27日

Mr. Modi called upon MPs to keep the spirit of optimism alive around democracy by being always accountable to people and the Constitu-

He spoke of the spirit of conversation and dialogue, quoting the first Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Nanak Devji: "as long as the world exists, conversations must continue", noting that it was the spirit of democracy, a comment significant with regard to the stalled negotiations between the government and farmer groups over the three farmer-specific laws passed by Parliament.

While there could be disagreements, there cannot be space for disconnect, he stated. While pointing out that many nations felt Indian democracy would not last, the country had proven naysayers wrong, especially because of the ancient roots

of democracy in India as elaborated in the concept of the 12th century Anubhava Mantapam set up by Basaveshwara; a 10th century stone inscription in a village near Chennai, describing a panchayat mahasabha and its elaborate rules, including the need for members to disclose their income; and the ancient republics of the Lichchavis and Shakyas.

"As a nation we must pledge to keep the spirit of democracy and public service alive," he observed. "The day isn't far when the world acknowledges that India is the mother of democracy," he asserted.

Speaking earlier, Mr. Puri, whose Ministry is the nodal agency for the construction of the new Parliament, said it was hoped that the 2022 winter session of Parliament would be held in the new building.