**75 Years On: India Under the BJP**

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At the stroke of the midnight hour, on the 15th of August, 1947, The Republic of India was born. Poor and desiccated post-partition, the path to economic stability has been a long and difficult one. Today, some 75 years on, India is expected to soon become the world’s third-largest economy behind the US and China. However, today’s India, despite all its successes is far from rid of controversy and in the midst of it all is one man, India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Born the son of a street vendor in the small town of Vadnagar, Northern Gujrat, he truly came from humble beginnings. In his early years, he worked as a ‘chaiwala’ or tea seller to support his family and after school, went on to study politics, eventually getting a master’s degree in political science.

Joining the local branch of the RSS, a right-wing, Hindu nationalist volunteer organization at a young age, Modi grew up with strong Hindu and patriotic values. In 1987, he joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a political party with strong associations with the RSS and swiftly rose through its ranks, eventually becoming Chief Minister of Gujarat in 2001. He subsequently led the party to a sweeping general election victory in 2014 and he’s been India’s Prime Minister ever since.

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The once-unpopular BJP has dominated Indian politics since then, effectively ending the domination of the Indian National Congress in Indian politics, which had been crucial in the country’s founding and has ruled modern India for much of its existence. In opposition to Congress’s secular stance, the BJP’s Hindutva narrative, which is based around a non-secular India defined by Hindu values, has thus gained great strength during their time in power.

For many outside of India, the party’s popularity is a puzzling affair given all the violence and polarization that has spread across the country in recent years. But we have to understand that India, despite its massive Muslim and Christian populations, is an 80% Hindu country, and from the common man’s perspective, Prime Minister Modi has protected Hindu customs and values, taken their fiercest enemy Pakistan, head-on, cracked down on terrorism and established India as a strong, independent power.

And to be fair to the common man, the BJP’s tenure has seen a total transformation for India, both domestically and especially, on the world stage. Its domestic accomplishments include almost doubling the taxpayer base, digitalizing the country from the Internet to payment systems, boosting domestic manufacturing and greatly developing India’s infrastructure. On the world stage, India has been transformed into a global power that stands independently of the West and its adversaries while maintaining a good relationship with them all.

However, from the demolition of the Babri Masjid to the 2002 Gujarat Riots (during Modi’s Chief Ministership) and the Citizenship Amendment Act along with the revocation of Kashmir’s special status, the government has long been criticized for its harsh, nationalist, pro-Hindu rhetoric and its targeting of the country’s Muslim minority, which comprises of around 200 Million people, enough to make it among the world’s most populous countries on its own.

The BJP’s reign has seen a great heightening of sectarian violence in the county and has worsened relations with India’s nuclear-armed rival, Pakistan.

At the end of the day, it’s clear that the BJP and Prime Minister Modi will continue to dominate Indian politics for years to come and that India, which is estimated to have already overtaken China as the world’s most populated country, will continue to expand its global influence. Time will tell the footprint India’s Bharatiya Janata Party will leave and whether history will view them favourably or not.

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