

# Apple of eye at book fair, Modi stands beside Jobs

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EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
AHMEDABAD, MAY 1

HUGE posters of two book jackets, one featuring Chief Minister Narendra Modi and the other being the cover of late Steve Jobs' autobiography, both under the title "Visionary Managers of the New Age" (*Nava Yug na Visionary Sutradhar*), greeted the visitors as they entered the National Book Fair that opened on the banks of the Sabarmati river on Tuesday.

Among the thousands of books displayed at the fair, standing out were those on Modi or by Modi, proclaiming him as "Architect of modern Gujarat", "Sculpture of Development" and such other.

Modi inaugurated the seven-day fair in the air-conditioned canopy set-up on the Sabarmati riverfront, in which 177 publishers from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and New Delhi have their book stalls selling a large variety of books. There were over a dozen stalls selling books on religion and spirituality right from Hinduism, Islamism, Christianity among others displayed besides books on education, literature and science.

"We have entered in 52nd anniversary of statehood to-

day. However, the world doesn't know much about Gujarat and Gujaratis. When we say German or Yahudi (Jews), we conjure up specific images of them but when it comes to Gujaratis, the image that comes to mind is people with *taraju ya vyapaar* (weighing scale or business). But the arrival of this fair will change this image," Modi said in his speech at the inaugural function.

Modi said the decision to hold the book fair didn't happen randomly. Instead, it was a strategic move of the state government which has taken more than five years. He also said the benefit of this endeavour would start realising after five to 10 years when the new generation comes up. The fair is propagated as an extension of the state's "Vanche Gujarat" campaign (Gujarat reads), to promote reading among youth.

The fair is being jointly organised by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and National Book Trust (NBT), New Delhi.

At the inaugural ceremony, director of NBT M A Sikandar, while appreciating the state government's move, said publishers were reluctant to come to Gujarat because of the apprehension of poor business.



Chief Minister Narendra Modi at the National Book Fair in Ahmedabad, which was inaugurated on Tuesday.

SATISH JHA/JAVED RAJA

