



## 2.5% GDP to be spent on health sector

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the aim of the government is to spend at least 2.5% of Gross Domestic Product in the health sector in the coming years. The motto of this government is to provide good and cheap treatment to needy people with proper facilities, the Prime Minister said.

## PM on Europe tour from May 29

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will embark on a four nation visit to Germany, Spain, Russia and France during his six-day Europe visit starting May 29. Modi's first destination will be Berlin.

# MODI@3

# Urban India rises, Andolan is now in the making

• BY SAURABH JAIN

The launch of the urban leg of the Swachh Bharat Mission on October 2, 2014, was a landmark occasion, not merely for placing the issue of sanitation at the centre of the government's developmental agenda for Urban India, but also for the clear message that was sent out from the ramparts of the Red Fort by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi: "Na gandagi karenge, Na karne denge", thereby making every citizen an equal partner in India's collective journey towards swachhata. The journey of two-and-a-half years since then has been exciting, with many heartening successes tempered by some challenges.

During the first two years since its launch, the major focus of the government was on putting in place an enabling environment for achieving the mission objectives -- creating all 4041 statutory towns Open Defecation Free (ODF), along with 100% scientific management of municipal solid waste. This was done through suitable policy changes to encourage infrastructure creation on the one hand and creating a conducive environment for citizen participation on the other. These efforts have now started yielding promising results, with rapid and visible on-ground outcomes helping to accelerate the pace of progress of the mission.

There has been a paradigmatic shift in the way the mission is being monitored by the Ministry of Urban Development. The focus is now on monitoring the outcome -- number of open defecation-free cities, rather than counting the number of toilets constructed. In October 2014, no city in India was ODF.

Today, urban areas of two

states -- Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat, and one UT, Chandigarh -- have been certified as ODF through a third party. In all, 776 cities have self-declared themselves ODF, and 653 among them have been certified as ODF. In fact, Urban India is poised to become ODF by October 2018.

For solid waste management, the Cabinet has introduced a series of path-breaking policy interventions to promote the processing of waste into value-added products, viz., compost and energy, as well as encouraging recycle and reuse of construction and demolition waste, and reuse of plastics in road construction. As a result, Waste to Compost production has increased manifold: from 1.5 lakhs MT in March 2016 to 13.13 lakhs MT as on date, with 145 functional plants, and another 150 plants under construction. With these added facilities, we envisage that compost production capacity will go up to nearly 95 lakh MT per annum. Waste to energy is also picking up speed, with 7 plants currently operational, with a combined capacity of 88 MW, and another 56 plants coming up with capacity of 415 MW. Additionally, the mission is now gearing up to launch a pan-India campaign on World Environment Day (June 5, 2017) to segregate wet and dry waste at source, for better and more efficient waste processing, recycle and reuse.

Along with these infrastructural set-ups, a parallel social movement has been steadily gathering momentum among citizens. From the beginning, the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) has been focusing continuously on the issue of attitudinal and behaviour change, and introducing a variety of initiatives to encourage citizen participation, so that SBM evolves into a true 'people's



movement'. Through initiatives such as nominating celebrities as Swachh Bharat ambassadors, running the Swachh Survekshan survey (a ranking survey conducted to rate cities on various cleanliness parameters, with citizen feedback being one of the key data inputs), thematic drives with citizen participation, engaging students and self-help groups to be the drivers and change agents for social behaviour change, engaging nearly 20,000 swachhagrahis across the country to drive behaviour change, intensive multi-media communication campaigns carrying messages of 'swachhata', and introduction of various ICT tools and apps for

greater citizen participation and engagement. There is now a growing appreciation among people that sanitation and cleanliness is not the sole responsibility of the government, and that each of us are also equally responsible for maintaining cleanliness of our surroundings.

There have of course been challenges. Sanitation being a state subject, successful implementation of the SBM components requires significant amount of support from states and cities, be it preparing Detailed Project Reports in a timely manner for fund release from Centre, speedy transfer of central funds to the cities, etc. While some states have been coopera-

and also proactive, others have not been so. Moreover, there are still some regulatory challenges with regard to waste processing, which are currently being sorted out.

Nonetheless, the Swachh Bharat Mission is clearly transforming into a Jan Andolan and is receiving support from citizens, who have pledged to make India a clean country. A doctor couple from Chalapalli district who have been undertaking cleanliness drives in their surroundings every day of the year, a 104-year-old lady in Ahmedabad who devotes her time selflessly to educating shopkeepers against littering, highly-qualified engineers giving up lucrative careers to devote time

and efforts to 'swachhata'-related technology and services, religious leaders and monks devoting time and energy in motivating followers and volunteers to take up cleanliness drives -- these and many other such inspiring stories serve to reinforce the fact that citizens are becoming active participants and advocates in cleanliness activities across the country.

The dream of a 'Clean India' or 'Swachh Bharat,' as dreamt by Gandhiji has begun to take shape and is continuing unwaveringly on its path to success.

(The author is a senior IAS officer with the Ministry of Urban Development)

# Prez to get first copy of PM's Mann Ki Baat book

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's radio programme *Mann Ki Baat* will now be available in a book. President Pranab Mukherjee will receive the first copies of books *Mann Ki Baat: A Social Revolution on Radio* and *Marching with a Billion- Analysing Narendra Modi's Government at Midterm* from Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, who will formally release it at a function to be held at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Friday.

Vice-President Mohd Hamid Ansari, Defence and Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, among other dignitaries would be present during the function. The book *Mann Ki Baat: A Social Revolution on Radio* by Rajesh Jain is a compilation of the prime minister's addresses to the nation on radio every month under the programme *Mann Ki Baat*.

It contains a comprehensive, qualitative and ac-

ademic analysis of *Mann Ki Baat* -- the themes, the choice of topics, the salient features, a press release issued on Thursday by Rashtrapati Bhavan said.

It illustrates how *Mann Ki Baat* has connected with the 'New India' -- the youth in particular.

It also presents a coherent narrative about the manner in which *Mann Ki Baat* has created mass movements, be it in cleanliness, in promoting India's tourism potential, safer roads, drugs free India etc, the release said.

The book *Marching with a Billion- Analysing Narendra Modi's Government at Midterm* analyses the monumental changes that Modi has brought on multiple fronts as the prime minister on India's governance landscape by ushering in an unprecedented culture of transparency to create a level playing field so necessary in a developing country. The book is written by journalist Uday Mahurkar. — PTI

# PM to address nation from Guwahati today

• AGENCIES  
Guwahati

All roads lead to Guwahati on Friday as Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the nation from Guwahati on the completion of three years of the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre. Friday will also mark one year of the BJP regime in Assam.

On Thursday, Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, BJP's Assam unit president Ranjit Kumar Das, and Special DG of Assam police Kula Saikia reviewed the security at Khanapara in Guwahati, where PM will address the nation from a public meeting.

"It is a proud moment for the people of Assam, as

Prime Minister Modi will address the nation from Assam as the BJP marks three years of the NDA government," Assam Chief Minister Sonowal said.

Sonowal informed the media that all Cabinet ministers of the Union Government would participate in the public meeting at Khanapara. Apart from the Union ministers, several top BJP leaders and Chief Ministers of the BJP-ruled states would also take part in the programme.

While in Assam, the Prime Minister will also inaugurate the Dhola-Sadiya Bridge on the Brahmaputra, the country's longest bridge that will connect Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. It is 9.15 km long.