

Modi reminds Indians of civic duties in 'new India' dream

MANN KI BAAT PM also makes renewed appeal for use of digital platforms for payments

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NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday began the process of outlining his vision for a "new India," by calling on people to demonstrate greater civic responsibility. But, he offered only sketchy details of how Indians could help achieve the goal he set on March 12, a day after his party's sweeping victories in state elections.

In his first Mann ki Baat radio address since the electoral triumph, Modi identified traffic rules and fuel consumption as areas where people could contribute to the "new India".

"If every citizen resolves to obey traffic rules, if every citizen resolves that he will discharge his duties honestly, if every citizen resolves that he will not use petrol or diesel one day in a week – these are not very big things but these will contribute to the realisation of the dream of this coun-



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NARENDRA MODI, Prime Minister

try," he said, dubbing the move as a clarion call to create a magnificent India and shift from "swaraj to suraj (self rule to good governance)".

Calling discharge of civic duties as a "good beginning" to the new India, Modi said, "All these things are not necessarily achieved through the budget, government projects, or government money."

The "new India" theme is

expected to dominate the agenda of the government in its remaining two years, ahead of the 2019 election.

The Centre would need to be pro-active to build a new India, senior opposition leader Tathagat Satpathy said.

"When citizens become conscious and aware of their responsibilities and rights, things will always improve. But for this, radio talk alone is not sufficient.

Proactive action on the part of the Narendra Damodardas Modi government has been invisible," the Biju Janata Dal leader said.

Another dominating theme of Modi's talk was the fight against black money and cashless transactions. "We must take our fight against black money and corruption to the next level. Can 125 crore countrymen resolve to undertake 2500 crore digital transactions during this year?" the PM said.

It is an ambitious target, as a large section of the population in rural areas does not have ATM or credit cards. To plug the gap, the government has introduced some phone apps that can help such people go cashless.

Ahead of the World Health Day on April 7, Modi asked people to speak up and seek help for depression. "Depression is not incurable... The first mantra is the expression of depression instead of its suppression," Modi said.