

# Debate on simultaneous polls a healthy sign: PM

Days after CEC's comment, PM says efforts afoot for 'one nation one poll'

**New Delhi:** Describing the debate on holding Lok Sabha and assembly polls together a healthy sign for democracy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said it was an appropriate tribute to former premier Atal Bihari Vajpayee who changed the country's political culture.

He said efforts were afoot and discussions being held about holding Lok Sabha and assembly polls together.

"The government and the opposition both are putting forth their view points. This is a good development and a healthy sign for our democracy. I must say that developing healthy traditions for a sound democracy, making constant efforts to strengthen democracy, encouraging open-minded debates would also be an appropriate tribute to Atalji," Modi said in his monthly 'Mann ki Baat'.

Political parties are divided on the issue of simultaneous polls. The BJP, its NDA partners Shiromani Akali



PM Narendra Modi also lauded former PM Vajpayee for good governance

Dal, AIADMK, SP and TRS supported it. The Congress, Trinamool Congress, AAP, DMK, TDP, Left parties and the JD(S) have opposed the proposal.

The parties have given their response to the Law Commission, which is set to come out with a legal framework required to hold the mammoth exercise.

Chief Election Commissioner OP Rawat recently said there are no chances of holding the two polls together without a legal framework. "Koi chance nahi," he said. "The lawmakers will take at least a year to frame a law that can be enforceable..." Rawat had said. In his address, the PM said



## NUMBERS AT ODD

- If simultaneous elections are held in 2019, the EC will require nearly 24 lakh EVMs, double the number required to hold only the Parliamentary polls.
- EC officials had said they would need around Rs 4,500 crore to buy nearly 12 lakh additional EVMs and an equal number VVPAT machines.

the country will remain grateful to Vajpayee for bringing good governance into the main stream.

"His (Vajpayee's) efforts in the direction of bringing about the changes in our political culture, his efforts to mould it into an organised framework and which proved very beneficial for India and a bigger benefit will accrue in days to come," he said. —PTI