

Have become member of every family: Modi

In *Mann ki Baat*, Prime Minister deflects Opposition charge

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As his government and party complete three years in power this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to his monthly radio programme, *Mann ki Baat*, to say that he felt he was conversing with “my own family while sitting at home” – apparently in response to the Opposition that has accused him of being unilateral in his decisions.

In the 32nd episode of the monthly programme, Prime Minister Modi said he had not thought it would be viewed politically when he launched the programme more than two years ago (on Gandhi Jayanti, October 2, 2014).

‘Routine conversation’

He said through the programme, he had “become like a member of every household” of the country, conversing with “my family” about routine issues.

“Some people take *Mann Ki Baat* as a monologue and some criticise it from a political angle,” Mr. Modi said. “When I started *Mann Ki Baat*, I had not thought so.”

Through the programme, he said he felt like he was conversing with “my family while sitting at home”. He added that many families had written to him with these feelings.

He greeted the people on the advent of Ramzan, a period of fasting among Muslims. He said that India as a country was lucky to have ancestors who have “created such a tradition that today India and its 1.25 billion people, can take



Family affair: BJP president Amit Shah listens to PM Narendra Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' in New Delhi on Sunday. ■PTI

pride in the fact that people from all communities and faith are present here. This is a country where both theists and atheists, idolators and those loathing idol worship coexist.”

Family yoga selfies

Referring to the upcoming third International Yoga Day on June 21, Mr. Modi invited selfies of three generations of a family – grandparents, parents and children – on the lines of the ‘selfie with daughter’ campaign earlier.

Noting that Sunday was the birth anniversary of freedom fighter Veer Savarkar, Mr. Modi said, “Countless great men spent their youth in jails. Several youngsters went to the gallows.” He said the freedom fighters had suffered “despicable miseries and that is how we can

now breathe in a free India.”

He referred to the cellular jail of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and said the younger generation should visit it to understand the trouble and torture the freedom fighters had to suffer to achieve freedom. “You will realise why it was called *Kaala Paani* (black waters),” he added.

Mentioning the environment and cleanliness, he said that the Central government, with the help of State governments and people’s representatives, will launch a major campaign for waste management from June 5, the World Environment Day.

He said Reasi block in a remote area of Jammu and Kashmir, has been declared as ‘open defecation free’ and lauded the people and administrators of the area.