



EDITORIAL

The Congress celebrated its 130th Foundation Day on 28th December, 2014. The celebrations began with a flag hoisting ceremony at the party headquarters at New Delhi. It was a joyous event to mark this historic journey which has been very eventful. The Congress has much to be proud of while achieving this journey. The leadership of the Congress consisted of stalwarts who sacrificed their all in the interest of the nation. It led the country to independence from British imperialism and gave the new country a stable democratic establishment. Today India is a country which is counted as a leader amongst the comity of the nations and the credit lies greatly with the Congress party along with the people of the country. Congress provided stability, democracy and progress with inclusiveness to the country. During its journey it has seen many variations in its fortunes but the Congress has always had the resilience to emerge victorious from its adversities. The DNA of the Congress is the DNA of the nation. The Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi has been the longest serving president of the party in its history and has led the party selflessly since 1998. She is now ably assisted by the Vice President Shri Rahul Gandhi who is sparing no effort to evolve the Congress into a vibrant party of the twenty first century by inducing fresh blood, especially youth and women. We from Sandesh Congratulate the Congress for its historic journey and wish it many more years in the service of the nation.

The Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi has called upon all PCC Presidents through a letter to work on three core areas for the betterment of the party. They are Congress ideology; organizational reforms required to devolve power and increase accountability of all leaders, and way forward for the Party with a view to win confidence of all sections of society and expand its base. She has asked them to have series of small group discussions and prepare state level report by the end of February, 2015.

Much has been touted about the great administration of the new BJP Government in the last seven months. However a Magazine sought information through an RTI application to all ministries and their departments seeking information on the proposals initiated by them relating to new policies from June, 1, 2014 to October 30, 2014. However the replies burst the bubble of hype created by the BJP through media management. The RTI replies received till December 27, 2014 have revealed in 87.96 per cent of the crucial departments that there have been no new policy initiations. Such are the social initiatives of the Government which wants to bring transformation in society. Never before has there been a government which tries to earn laurels from the initiatives of its rivals simply by packaging them with a different nomenclature. The NDA Government has now exposed itself to admit that they can neither equal nor improve upon the policies and achievements of the UPA Government.

The nation remembers the 68th Martyrdom Day of the father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi. The journey of one of the greatest humans of the last century to India, 100 years ago, from South Africa was celebrated on 9th January, 2015. Mahatma Gandhi is revered the world over as a person who taught the world a means of peaceful resistance to convey its message of dissent and to move government thereby. The efforts of Hindu Mahasabha to glorify Nathuram Godse, the assassin of the father of the nation, and a personality revered as an apostle of peace by the entire world community: Mahatma Gandhi, by erecting a temple in the honour of Godse is nothing but a blow to the sensitivities of mankind. To portray a person such as Godse as a patriot is a harshly condemnable act and needs to be denounced by one and all. The nation is outraged by such a thought.

The Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chander Bose falls on 23rd January. Netaji was a young firebrand leader of the Congress who had an alternate thought process and was highly respected within the party. He formed the Indian National Army and started an armed struggle against British Imperialism with the assistance of other world powers.

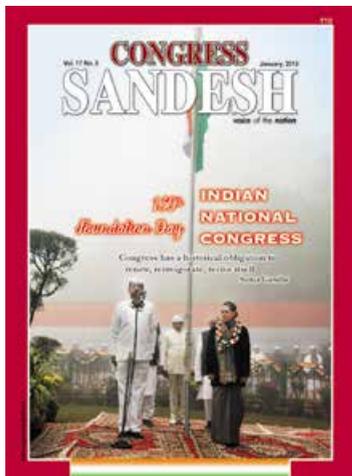
The death anniversary of Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, who passed away at Tashkent in the then USSR fell on 11th January, 49 years ago. He had gone there to sign an accord with Pakistani leadership, post a war, that was forced upon the nation by our neighbors. He is remembered for his slogan '*Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan*'.

The nation celebrates its 66th Republic Day on 26th January. Congress Sandesh greets all its readers on the occasion of the Republic Day. ❖

CONGRESS SANDESH

voice of the nation

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Just before the elections were to be announced in Delhi, the NDA Government announced that it has accorded Recognition to a large number of unauthorized colonies. It is a fact that at least 60 per cent of the population of Delhi lives in such unauthorized colonies. This announcement by the NDA Government was nothing short of a canard because such an act of authorization was already carried out by the Congress Government in Delhi more than 5 years ago. In fact the process of completing the formalities required to fulfill this act had already been completed in more than 300 colonies out of about 895 colonies which were in the pipeline in the first phase. Another about 400 were added to the list thereafter the names of which were also announced in a press notification. These could not be included in the first list due to technical deficiencies. The announcement is a fraud on the people only to mislead the people of Delhi and to win favor in election. This is only because the BJP is worried about the upswing in favour of Congress in the mood of the people of Delhi. The increase in the vote percentage was reflected in the elections to the Cantonment Board.

Besides being unable to create fresh initiatives, the NDA Government is also trying to demolish good work done by the Congress led UPA for favoring the rich and powerful. They form the support base of the BJP. Proposed amendments through ordinance in the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013, through back door, take away the rights of the poor farmers whose lands are taken for the purpose of industrial and urban development. The language is kept ambiguous so that interpretation deludes the poor land loser. Why this law has to be amended just a year later when it was approved after a wide consultation by the UPA with all parties and affected land losers. The BJP supported the bill after amendments and it was cleared by both houses of Parliament to become a law. It is a clear departure from the pro-farmer policies of the UPA Government and exposes the true colours of the BJP led NDA Government.

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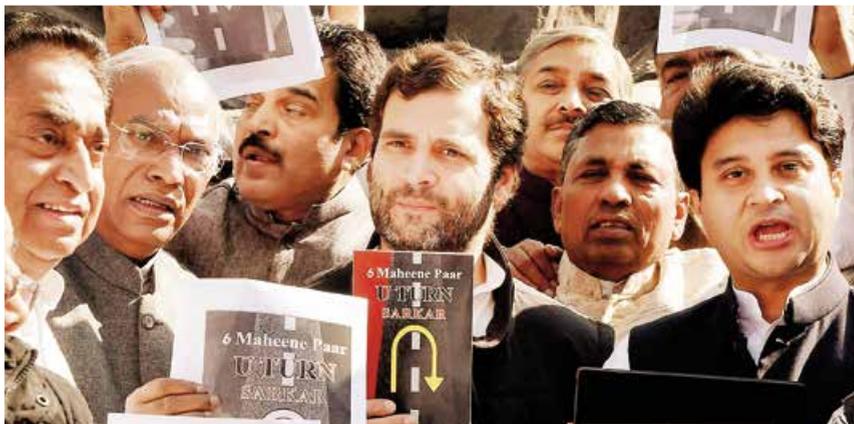
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CONGRESS HAS A HISTORICAL OBLIGATION TO RENEW, REINVIGORATE, REVIVE ITSELF: SONIA GANDHI

Opening Remarks by the Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi at Congress Working Committee on 13th January, 2015 at AICC Headquarters, 24 Akbar Road, New Delhi

We are convening for the first time this year therefore let me take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you a very Happy New Year. Given that the previous year was a challenging one, I am hopeful that the New Year will herald a new beginning for the Party. 2015 is also a very memorable year for us, as it marks 130 years of unbroken service to the nation. And it is also an occasion to prepare the party for many more years of service to the country.

A key instrument to achieving this goal will be the expansion of our party worker base. Our organizational structure must be such to allow for our membership drive to become a force to galvanize our workers. We will use our ongoing membership enrollment program to launch a mass contact mission, which has to be unprecedented in scale and scope.

As we are embarking on registering new members, we have to ensure that our internal processes and systems are sufficiently robust to recognize, reward and nurture talent.

You are aware that the Vice President has held extensive deliberations with colleagues and leaders from all the State. On the basis of the views that transpired in those interactions about the Party organization, the Central Election Authority has prepared a note on the membership drive and proposed amendments to the party constitution. This note is with you. We now need to apply our collective wisdom to discuss these reforms and its proposed implementations. While doing so we need to ensure that any change strengthens our commitment to organizational transparency and accountability.

While it is important that we reflect on the shortcomings

While it is important that we reflect on the shortcomings that caused our defeat, both in the Lok Sabha and recent assembly elections and the need to re-energize our party, we need to be extra vigilant about what is happening around us. While we debate on how to strengthen internal democracy in institutions within the Party, the country's democratic institutions are being undermined.

that caused our defeat, both in the Lok Sabha and recent assembly elections and the need to re-energize our party, we need to be extra vigilant about what is happening around us. While we debate on how to strengthen internal democracy in institutions within the Party, the country's democratic institutions are being undermined. The BJP government has already promulgate 10 ordinances in its seven month tenure. Which roughly translates to one ordinance every 28 days!

It is not just the frequency of ordinances that we should take cognizance of, but also the context, nature and timing.

The UPA government was guided by the Constitutional opinion that an ordinance is a provision of last resort, and executive discretion that needs to be used judiciously. On the contrary, today's Government is operating through

a perilous notion that ordinances constitute “good governance”.

We have to communicate effectively that the Modi government is not serving national interest by bypassing parliamentary scrutiny and debate. We need to question the extraordinary urgency to introduce some of these ordinances. “Is there any ulterior motive behind this hurry?”

The Land Acquisition Act came into effect after wide ranging talks and consultations. This government has effectively destroyed this landmark legislation and brought back the law passed by the British in 1894 through the backdoor.

The ordinance on coal mines has surreptitiously undone the spirit of nationalization of coal mines that had crucial safeguards.

It is not just the dictatorial tendencies of the government which are of concern for us all, but also its anti-farmer and anti-poor policies. While the Prime Minister makes much of lowering inflation, he doesn't mention how he has lowered the income of farmers. His government has increased the MSP to select crops only by 3%. The MSP of certain crops such as cotton has now gone below cultivation price causing several farmers to commit suicide. A range of other crops grown by over a crore farmers such as maize, groundnut, millet has not been given any increase in MSP. Rural wage growth is seeing a sharp fall. His government's policies have sown the seeds of acute agrarian distress.

The government is also diluting welfare policies such as NREGA, Food Security Act, Forest Rights Act and Self Help Groups institutions.

What is equally, if not more alarming, is that in the last few weeks, the true colors and intentions of the Prime Minister and the BJP have become abundantly clear. Influential members of the government and the party have been making provocative statements and speeches. This is, in many ways,

We have to communicate effectively that the Modi government is not serving national interest by bypassing parliamentary scrutiny and debate. We need to question the extraordinary urgency to introduce some of these ordinances. “Is there any ulterior motive behind this hurry?”

a continuation of the strategy of polarization adopted by them in last year's Lok Sabha elections as well as in recent assembly polls. The Prime Minister has chosen to ignore these disturbing statements and speeches raising questions on his real agenda, and agenda that causes sharp division, mistrust and hatred among communities, and agenda that can only cause grievous harm to our nation's pluralistic and secular ethos.

Friends, all of us have to contribute to reviving our party's electoral fortunes. Both structural changes and changes in leadership styles are required. We cannot be found wanting at such a crucial juncture of our country's political history. In its long history the Congress has faced adversity and adversaries, and we have collectively found our way forward. We shall go forward, again. The way forward should be that we go back to the people. All of us from AICC down to the block level need to renew ties and connections with the people everywhere; listen to their grievances and aspirations and then, find a way to articulate their hopes and desires. A mass political party has to reach out to all sections of society. The Congress has a historical obligation to renew, reinvigorate, revive itself. This is as much true of the organization as much of individuals as well. ❖





CWC MEETING HELD FOR PLANNING FURTHER COURSE OF ACTION

Dear friends, as you all know the meeting of the Congress Working Committee commenced at 10.30 am. The meeting continued for three hours and forty minutes and concluded at ten past 2 pm. All our members and permanent invitee members were invited for this meeting. Their number is 34 out of which 30 were present. Some of them were out of Delhi, they could not come. Before talking about today's issues I would like to inform you that two of our senior members Shri Abdul Rehman Antuley who was the General Secretary of the AICC, and obviously he was a Working Committee Member, was the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, has departed from our midst. Similarly, our senior leader from Andhra Pradesh G. Venkat Swamy ji is no more. A condolence resolution was passed for both of them. The same is being sent to their family.

There were two sections of this meeting. One section was for organization and organizational elections. The other section, was centered around farmers' issues. The discussion was to be held on MSP to farmers and the minimum support price. It was to be on procurement and on the purchase price of their produce. Discussion was to be held on the rising prices for the common man and the production cost of farmers. Alongwith this, also on the land acquisition ordinance which has come. Secondly, on the amendments on Forest Trade and Environment which are coming and on the Ordinance of Coal mines. First of all, the Congress President gave her opening remarks...

Apart from this a question must be arising in your mind, because what were the issues discussed regarding the organization. How to make the organization strong, how

the grass-root workers can be involved, how can they be involved, how to reach out to every village. How can the mood of the people be once again changed in favour of the party as earlier. Discussions were held on all such issues. In short, it was realized that some changes may have to be carried out in our Constitution. The particular issues that were discussed, I would like to say briefly something regarding them. You may remember that in 2010 a session was held at Burari and amendment was brought, that the term of the office-bearers and committees may be changed to from three years to five years. Some suggestions had come that it should be once again made three years, the change has not yet been decided. Discussion has been held today and suggestions have come about both. Opinion has come and thus it has been decided that our general secretaries and our pradesh presidents will ask for suggestions in the party and also from the people at the pradesh level and at district level and will learn their opinion. After all, those who have to make the party strong, their opinion has to be know, as to what they want and what amendment they want or do not want. When their opinion has also then there after come the AICC Meeting would be called which is usually called the AICC Session in which amendment will be made to the constitution. All these issues were discussed but this process will continue and this was the first part. The second is that forms are being filled, the Membership forms are filled alongwith a photo, now other channels according to new technology may be used. How much is



**Shri Janardan
Dwivedi**

to be used and what all precautions that have to take was also discussed. Then came the issue of membership, first there were ordinary members, who after two years became Active member and every Active member had to make 25 members. This was also a part of the discussion that old system be brought back as per this system and only one kind of membership be there. Another issue came that there should be separate membership for Youth Congress, NSUI, Mahila Congress, Sewa Dal on becoming member of the party. Any person, according to his age and status with NSUI, may work with NSUI. If his age is of Youth Congress, he may join the Youth Congress. The same rule applies for the Sewa Dal and Mahila Congress. But the membership should be same. It should not be that a separate membership be made for Youth Congress. The majority opinion was that the membership should be same. But this has been kept open till we get the opinion from the states, districts and we shall go according to the majority opinion and same will be the system for representation. At present there is a policy of Reservation in our organization but suggestions are that SC, ST, OBC and Minorities should each get around 50% reservation, another suggestion was also there, these are just suggestions and detailed discussion were held on it. Almost at all members placed their suggestions the matter has been kept open so that discussion on this gets completed in the states, districts and a majority opinion will be taken and that amendment will be kept in the AICC Meeting. After the meeting Two other people who were invited, Prof. K.V. Thomas and Shri Jairam Ramesh were asked to brief on MSP, Procurement price and to share position of what they have learnt. The report of the groups. Shri Thomas is in the Agriculture group, Jairam Ramesh is also in the Land Acquisition, Environment group. Shri Jairam Ramesh briefed on Land Acquisition, Environment, Forest Right and Coal. Shri Jairam Ramesh briefed on all those thing which we have already told you. You have been told about Land Acquisition that the first meeting was held. General Secretaries have been asked to make people aware about it, a sort of awareness programme. This was decided and one or two other things which I have already told you and I do not want to repeat it. Cause of concern was about compensation and a change which has come that a land which has been acquired and if it remains unutilized till five years then it should be returned to the farmers. This change in law about the farmer's right should be explained to the people and their minds should be cleared so that they understand the real purpose of the government. This was the jist of today's Working Committee meeting, was the central point which I have kept before you. ❖

CONGRESS PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT CONDEMN ASSAM VIOLENCE

New Delhi: Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi and AICC Vice President Shri Rahul Gandhi on 24th December, 2014 condemned the attack on civilians by militant groups in Assam.



“Killing of innocent people in Sonitpur and Kokrajhar is an act of cowardice and is totally unacceptable,” said Smt. Sonia Gandhi in a statement. She also expressed deep empathy with the families of people killed in the violence yesterday and hoped that all possible steps were being taken by the government to provide relief and instill confidence amongst the victims of this tragedy. Congress Vice President Shri Rahul Gandhi also condemned the “brutal killings” in Assam. “I strongly condemn the brutal killings in Assam. Such barbaric violence has no justification and no place in our society. My thoughts and prayers are with the family of those who were killed in these attacks,” said Shri Rahul Gandhi in a statement. More than 50 people were killed in Sonitpur district and 17 in Kokrajhar when heavily armed militants belonging to Songbijit faction of National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) attacked the ‘adivasis’.



The death toll in terror attacks by militants of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (Songbijit) on Adivasi villages and in retaliatory attacks by miscreants among the Adivasis in Assam's Sonitpur, Kokrajhar, Chirang and Udalguri districts has gone up to 72. ❖

APPROACH TO STRENGTHENING THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

Congress President's Message

December 28, 2014

Dear PCC Presidents

Over the last two months, on my request, the Congress Vice President has held a series of consultative meetings with Congress leaders from all over the country to elicit views and coalesce consensus on three core areas. Congress ideology; organizational reforms required to progressively devolve power and increase accountability of leaders at all levels, and way forward for the Party with a view to win the confidence of all sections of society and expand its base.



In consonance with the Congress Party's imperative to devolve power and strengthen the voice of Party workers in decision-making, I would like to seek input from State units before finalizing the agenda for action and the way forward for discussion and ratification in the next AICC Session.

Accordingly, I request you to organize a series of small group discussions at the state and district level on these three core areas and prepare a state level report by the end of February 2015, under the guidance of the AICC General Secretary in charge. The AICC General Secretary in charge of your state will also work with you to develop a state specific political strategy based on the local factors and circumstances of your state. I look forward to hearing from you.

*Yours sincerely,
Sd/-
(Sonia Gandhi)*

Approach to Strengthening the Indian National Congress Party Background paper for discussion

The following note summarizes the emerging consensus and view on a range of issues, based on discussion between Congress Vice President and senior leaders of the Party over the past two months. The purpose of the discussions was to define the way forward for the Congress Party, which will be consistent with its ideology and core imperative to devolve power to the Party workers.

In order to finalize the Party's Action Plan, feedback from the PCCs and committed Party workers is solicited. Congress Party's office-bearers in the States and Union Territories are requested to discuss the issues below thoroughly and define a concrete action plan for each issue. Suggested questions and template for report from PCCs are given to guide discussion and feedback.

The feedback received from the States will be incorporated in the note on draft agenda for action, and the resolutions to be discussed and adopted in the next AICC Session.

The summary of issues discussed is categorized as under in four thematic areas:

- I. IDEOLOGY
- II. ORGANIZATION

1. Distribution of Power
2. Party-Government Interface
3. Institutionalizing Congress Committees as Deliberative Platforms
4. Accountability
5. Discipline
6. Elections
7. Representation
8. Frontals and Departments
9. Research and Training
10. Booth Committees
11. Cadre
12. Conventions
13. Mass Contact and Social Media Outreach

III. COMMUNICATION

IV. POLITICAL STRATEGY

1. Leadership
2. Political Positioning
3. Revival from the States
4. Youth

I. Ideology

At a time when the ruling dispensation at the center is thriving on divisive politics, the Congress-led counter narrative is needed for the integrity, unity and security of the country, Socialism, inclusive democracy, secularism, equality and social justice are articles of faith for the Congress party. Devolution of power and empowerment of the common man too is central to the Congress Party. Above all, an uncompromising pursuit of harmony among all sections of the society in the country, as enshrined in the Constitution of India, shall distinguish the Congress party from other parties.

Congress Party is the only socially liberal political party in the country. The Congress Party has been at the forefront of agitations against all irrational hierarchies, which impose

unfair constraints on individual freedom and participation constraints of caste, religion, region, gender and economic inequality, and has been a platform for social change. This progressivism not only binds the various ideological strands of the Party but also differentiates it from other political parties of the Country.

While the Congress Party has historically been a broad National Coalition especially of SCs/STs/OBCs and Minorities, the Party has broad-based appeal which cuts across caste and religion. Accordingly, the Party must take up all progressive issues, including but not limited to secularism or welfare for the poor.

Moreover, in consonance with Congress Party's pursuit for social justice, the Party must develop a clear vision for holistic economic development of the society to address the immediate, short-term and long-term challenges facing the country.

We cannot ignore the aspirations of the section of urban middle class youth which cuts across caste and religion. We have to redraft our socio economic policies keeping their aspirations in view.

i. What are the core non-negotiable elements of the Congress Party's ideology, which must be respected and followed by every member of the Congress Party?

ii. How should the Congress Party communicate its ideology to its cadre and people at large?

iii. Which communities and groups should constitute the Congress Party base in your state and what are the issues, which should be taken up by the Congress Party to mobilize them?

iv. How should Congress Party communicate its stand on these issues in such a way that its stand reflects the Party's core values?

II. ORGANIZATION

As a political party, on one side we represent people, and on other side we are expected to distribute power within the Party. However there are inefficiencies in this distribution of power. Within the Party, power is in the hands of few leaders. As one grows higher in hierarchy in the party organization, one accumulates greater power to veto the decisions taken by subordinate levels. Congress Committees at all levels block, district and state do not feel fully empowered. Partly as a consequence, accountability of leaders and organizational structures is also weak. In the States, power is often exercised by a few leaders, often the CM and 4-5 others wherever the Party is in power. Elected representatives too, such as MLAs and MPs, are unable to exercise power vested in them by the Constitution. They are not fully engaged or involved in law making, policy formulation and governance. The bureaucracy, political executive and corporate combine have usurped this space, pushing elected representatives to the margins.

1. Distribution of Power

Distribution of power has to happen in multiple ways. On one hand, power usurped by the bureaucracy, political executive and corporate sector, has to be restored to the elected representatives, whether MLAs or MPs or representatives of rural and urban local bodies. On the other hand the Political Power has to be redistributed among the Party Cadres and Leaders. A clear road map for setting up a system, which would allow Decentralization of power instead of concentrating it in the hands of few individuals, needs to be put in place over a period of time. "Power" is actually "voice" in decision-making. Organization elections alone without genuine devolvement of power to the workers will not have the desired impact. It is

DISCUSSION

imperative to empower the grassroots structure of the organization (DCC/BCC) so that the Party can meaningfully mediate in local politics. At the same time, the Party needs to ensure ideological solidarity of its key office bearers. The Party will bring systemic changes in membership and organizational elections processes along with transformation of Congress Committees into transparent decision-making platforms, in an effort to move towards the goal of decentralization of power.

- i. What are the powers that can be devolved to the PCCs, DCCs and BCCs?
- ii. Which decisions taken by the PCCs, DCCs and BCCs should not be vetoed by higher level organization or leader?

2. Party-Government Interface

The Party must steer the Government, when in power. To ensure coordination between the Party and Government, the party leadership may choose to mandate that key government policies be first discussed and ratified by the Party, for instance through resolutions passed by a majority of the DCCs.

There should be a mechanism to involve lowest rung units at the time of preparing the Manifesto. Similarly strict monitoring by the Organization on the implementation of Manifesto in Congress ruled States is also desired.

There should be clear guidelines in Congress ruled states to ensure that the Congress Government involves the Party in key decisions.

- i. How should equitable distribution of power between the Party and Government be ensured wherever the Congress Party is in power?
- ii. What are the measures to be adopted for ensuring that the Party drives the Government?
- iii. How to ensure that the workers at the lowest level have more say

in preparing and monitoring the implementation of the Manifesto?

3. Institutionalizing Congress Committees as Deliberative Platforms

Congress Committees at all levels Block, District, PCC and AICC must meet regularly and be empowered to take decisions at their level. The committees at every level should have a fair share of the Party's political power. Attendance of all elected representatives should be mandatory to these meetings. The heads of SC/ST/OBC/Minorities cells and frontal organizations must be invited to all meetings of their level in order to give space in decision making to the weaker sections.

- i. Please suggest framework (agenda, periodicity, moderation and oversight, decision-making power, who can participate etc) to evolve Congress Committees into deliberative platforms for discussions and decision-making?
- ii. What are the decisions, which should be taken at the level of the BCCs, DCCs and PCCs?

4. Accountability

Accountability must be fixed for Party leaders at all levels. Accountability of the party leaders to the cadres also needs to be strengthened. In addition, senior leaders must become more accessible to those lower in the Party hierarchy.

The roles and responsibilities of important Party functionaries such as the General Secretary, PCC President, Secretary etc., need definition and formalization. This will aid in fixing accountability.

The Congress President/Vice-President will have quarterly meetings with all Congress Party CMs. General Secretaries, PCC Presidents, CLP leaders, and other state leaders to provide guidance and review

performance.

- i. What are the key areas on which performance should be gauged for Party office bearers at different levels?
- ii. What should constitute the roles, responsibilities and performance indicators for Party functionaries such as President BCC, President DCC, president PCC, Secretary AICC or General Secretary AICC.

5. Discipline

Discipline and adherence to the Party ideology is paramount and must be strictly enforced by the leadership at all levels. The leadership must promptly take action against instances of factionalism, working against party interests and speaking against the Congress line in the media.

Disciplinary Committee must review and dispose all complaints of indiscipline within a fixed timeframe. A summary of findings of relevant complaints may be discussed in the periodic Congress Committee meetings.

- i. What kinds of behavior should constitute as acts of indiscipline in the Party?

6. Elections

The power to distribute tickets will be progressively decentralized and more people from the relevant state will be involved in distribution.

Party leaders should be held accountable for the performance of candidates recommended by them at the time of ticket distribution.

Categorization of candidates and constituencies during elections will be done with local involvement to ensure accurate categorization and proper utilization of Party resources.

Suitable candidates to contest elections should be identified one year in advance.

The Congress Party must actively participate in all elections to the institutions of local self-government, cooperative bodies. For all such elections, where party is fielding candidates, the power to select party candidates should be decentralized. Appropriate Congress Committees such as Ward Committees or City Congress Committees or Block Congress Committees or District Congress Committees should be empowered to select the candidates.

i. How can the Party meaningfully extract accountability for poor distribution of tickets especially from regional leaders?

ii. How can the ticket distribution process be decentralized meaningfully? What should be the role of BCCs, DCCs and PCCs in ticket distribution? Should the panel of candidates recommended at each level be made transparent?

iii. How early should tickets be announced? What are the pros and cons of early declaration of tickets?

7. Representation

The INC constitution provided a minimum of 20% representation SC/ST/OBC/Minorities in the Congress Committees. There is no specific level of representation mandated to each of these social groups. Further there is no stipulation to provide representation in position such as Presidents of BCC, DCC or City Congress Committees. Because of this ambiguity in the Constitution, weaker sections particularly SC/STs may not adequately be represented as Presidents of Congress Committees at various levels.

At least 50% representation should be provided to SC/ST/OBC/Minorities in each State. In order to secure reasonable representation to all communities it is necessary to mandate specific level of representation to SC/ST/OBC/

Minorities for each State separately, based on the population proportion of these communities in the State.

Women's empowerment has been a repeated refrain of the Party. The Party should therefore ensure 33% representation of women in the Party organization.

i. What is the method to be adopted to ensure that in every State, certain level of representation for each social group such as SCs, STs, OBCs and minorities is ensured in Party Committees.

8. Frontals, Departments and Cells

There is a need to improve coordination between the Depts./Frontals and the PCC. General Secretary and PCC President could be charged with mainstreaming these organizations after restructuring, if required. A possibility that can be considered is that Presidents of these organizations be made ex-officio members of the Congress Executive Committee at that level. The Party also needs to take a view on the resources required to mainstream Party organizations. The DCCs and PCCs should not only provide office space for these departments but also invite their office bearers for all the Committees' meetings.

The role of the SC, ST, OBC and Minorities Departments should primarily be to mobilize these communities, nurture leaders from these communities, strengthen voice of these communities in the party and help them secure rights and entitlements guaranteed to them through various legislations and programmes. However the main party must proactively take up community issues as raised by the Departments.

Independent Cells to organize and mobilize communities such as weavers, fishermen, domestic workers, building and construction workers,

street vendors, auto rickshaw drivers etc. need to be established at PCC level.

A high-level coordination committee to ensure coordinated efforts between Congress and INTUC may be set up. INTUC members should be motivated to enroll themselves into the Congress Party.

i. How should Departments be empowered to ensure proper performance?

ii. How can the Congress Party mobilize occupation-based groups, such as unorganized workers (domestic workers, daily wage labourers, weavers, fishermen, domestic workers, building and construction workers, street vendors, auto rickshaw drivers, MGNREGA workers etc.) to create a separate political constituency?

9. Booth Committees

There was consensus on the need for genuine and strong booth committees. The PCC President should be charged with delivering strong booth committees in a fixed time period. Booth committees need to be trained on inclusion of new voters into the voters list. BLAs (Booth Level Agents) need to be appointed to guide the public to file appropriate application for inclusion, deletion, correction and transportation of entries in electoral roll.

i. How should it be ensured the Booth committees are constituted and participate actively in the election campaigns of Party candidates?

ii. What is the strategy to be followed to position BLAs and ensure that they perform duties assigned to them?

10. Cadre

The Party cannot be reduced to merely an election machine. We need to concentrate on the political and ideological education of our cadre.

DISCUSSION

The Party needs to develop mechanisms to devolve power, whether it is through internal elections, institutionalizing deliberative platforms etc. cadre morale needs to be raised through meetings, programmes and agitations. In addition, the Party must bring clarity on the growth path for its members.

- i. What are the various growth paths for Party workers? What should be the evaluation mechanism to promote Party worker to the next level in these growth paths? Who should be responsible for these evaluations?
- ii. Should a welfare fund be created to reach out to the party workers who are in dire need of financial support? If so what are the modalities to be adopted for creation and management of such a fund?

11. Mass contact and Social Media Outreach

The Congress Party must revive its mass contact organizations such as Bharat Sevak Samaj, Bharat Yuvak Samaj, Seva Dal etc. The Party may also organize sports events etc. to build people's association with the Party. Congress Party should create openings for new groups that want to be connected with it.

With the help of Youth Congress and NSUI along with Social Media savvy leaders in the parent organization, we should start utilizing social media tools in a more meaningful and effective manner for Mass Contact programmes and communication.

- i. Please suggest some concrete ideas for mass contact for the next one year.
- ii. Please suggest some ideas for a nationwide campaign that the Congress Party can undertake over the next year.
- iii. Please suggest how best to make use of social media and how to create a structure in social media for research,

content creation and dissemination?

III. Communication

The Congress Party will communicate at three levels: Party ideology; party's position on important longstanding political issues; topical issues of the day, Communication protocol for all three levels will be defined and should be followed by all Party office bearers. The Party must use aggressive communication through all available channels, including social media to shape the public narrative. At the same time, the Party should educate the public and its own cadre about the Party's leaders and their legacy, and achievements of the Party and stake ownership of important leaders and symbols of the Party. The Party should speak in one voice. There should be no confusion on important issues.

Senior leaders of the Party should be used to communicate Party stand on issues. Media is a force multiplier and must be effectively used during Party programmes and outreach by the leadership.

The Party should focus on regional media to effectively raise local issues and reach out to the people in their language. The Party can also run campaigns against social evils.

- i. Suggest 5-6 slogans or statements around which communication material in the State can be developed to disseminate our stand and vision effectively.
- ii. What should be the prioritization of medium and methods (e.g., Mass media, cadre outreach) used by the Party to effectively communicate its stand?

IV. PARTY'S POLITICAL STRATEGY

1. Leadership

Congress President and Vice President have enormous credibility and emotional connect with people and

the Party must harness this political capital and protect it assiduously. The Congress VP is a natural icon to rally progressive and liberal forces.

2. Political Positioning

Party's stand on various topical issues of political import will be disseminated throughout the Party organization. The Party has expansive expertise on all such issues and this expertise will be utilized through standing committees on core areas. These Committees will also develop position papers after due intra-party consultations wherever necessary.

Wherever the Party is in Opposition, the PCC may constitute shadow ministries to monitor implementation of key UPA programmes and Opposition Government Programmes and policies.

Where Congress is in opposition, it has to become the voice of the people and fiercely contest all anti-people decisions of the ruling party and also take up the issues of discrimination and atrocities against the SCs, STs and under privileged sections. Party should also actively promote communal harmony and stand up strongly to protect the rights of the minorities.

3. Revival of the Party from the States

Revival of Congress Party will begin from the states. The PCC must develop state specific strategy and positioning based on local factors.

4. Youth

Democratization of Youth Congress through membership and internal elections has opened doors to a large number of youth in the Party who may otherwise not have joined politics. However, the current system of elections to the Youth Congress is susceptible to subversion with the use of money and power and needs to be rectified. Elected Youth Congress Presidents should have

the discretion to build their own team instead of constraining them to work with those who had contested against them. Moreover elected bodies should be given a well-defined annual programme.

There should be better coordination between PCC and Youth Congress. One way is to invite Youth Congress Presidents of that level to DCC and BCC meetings. Youth should not be confined to the Youth Congress but instead must be given an opportunity to contribute to the main party by increasing opportunities for participation. Efforts should be made to increase representation of youth in organizational appointments and ticket distribution.

The Party must develop a plan to mobilize youth including the new voters in 2019.

The youth is increasingly focused on their personal aspirations such as jobs and the Party's messages must address their concerns. The Party's core principle need to be presented in a manner, which responds to their aspirations and contemporary issues.

- Please define some tangible measures through which the Party can reach out to the Youth, including those still in school.
- Please suggest concrete steps through which the Party can inspire confidence in youth, particularly with reference to job creation and their aspiration for a better life.
- Please suggest some programmes that the Youth Congress should take up in your state.

Suggested Template for PCC Report

V. IDEOLOGY

- Core non-negotiable elements of the Congress Party's ideology
- Core constituencies of the Congress Party

- Issues to mobilize Party's core constituencies

VI. ORGANIZATION

1. Distribution of Power

- Powers of the PCC, DCC and BCC
- Mechanisms to ensure involvement of party workers in manifesto preparation and implementation

Party-Government Interface

- Distribution of Power between Party and Government
- Measures to ensure synchronization between the Party and Government

Institutionalizing Congress Committees as Deliberative Platforms

- Please suggest framework (agenda, periodicity, moderation and oversight, decision-making power, who can participate etc.) to evolve Congress Committees into deliberative platforms for discussions and decision-making.
- Decisions to be taken at the level of BCCs, DCCs and PCCs

Accountability

- Roles, responsibilities and performance indicators for Party functionaries such as President BCC, President DCC, President PCC, Secretary AICC or General Secretary AICC.

Discipline

- Activities which constitute indiscipline
- Evidence criteria for each activity detailed above
- Mechanism(s) to deal with indiscipline in the party

Elections

- Action to be taken against Party leaders for poor distribution of tickets

- Role of BCCs, DCCs, and PCCs I ticket distribution

- Ways to mobilize occupation-based groups

Booth Committees

- Mechanism to constitute Booth committees and ensure participation in elections
- Identification and performance of BLAs

Cadre

- Growth paths for Party workers
- Evaluation mechanism to promote Party worker to the next level
- Desirability and management of a welfare fund for Party workers

Mass contact and Social Media Outreach

- Suggested mass contact programmes for the next one year
- Potential nationwide campaigns for the Congress Party over the next year
- Structure to effectively utilize social media for research, content creation and dissemination

VII. COMMUNICATION

- 5-6 suggested slogans or statements on Party stand and vision
- Suggested prioritization of medium and methods to communicate Party stand

VIII. PARTY'S POLITICAL STRATEGY

- Measures to mobilize youth, including those still in school
- Measures to inspire confidence in youth, particularly with reference to job creation and their aspiration for a better life
- Suggested Youth Congress Programmes for youth state

Other Comments ❖

EVERY CITIZEN IS GUARANTEED THE FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND THE FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION. FREEDOM IS GIVEN TO MAINTAIN THE UNITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE NATION



Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia

Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia's discourse on religious conversions in Uttar Pradesh during a discussion on the subject in the Lok Sabha

First of all I want to thank you that you have permitted easily a discussion on this important issue. Our reasons behind debating this issue are similar. Our agenda is not to malign the government, nor is it to embarrass anyone. This is an issue that is pertinent to 125 crore Indians. We live under India's democratic system. This is the biggest democracy in the World. The constitution of this great democracy is based on the principles of liberty, wherein each and every citizen is guaranteed the freedom of religion and the freedom of thought and expression. Freedom is given to maintain the unity and integrity of the nation. The need of the hour is not just for us to set an example of democracy and freedom in our part of the world, but at a global scale. We must strive to set an example to the whole world by setting the highest standards of secularism.

In my opinion, our country is akin to a bouquet. Not a homogenous bouquet, but one which is made from various types of flowers, which come together to spread India's fragrance to each and every citizen of the world. This specialty is there in my country and is not there in any other country of the world.

I am proud that I am a Hindu. But my religion does not preach bigotry. My religion introduces me to a broad

perspective with which to view the world and its various cultures. My religion does not preach fundamentalism. In fact, I believe my religion is not just a religion but first and foremost, it is a philosophy. We used to have a motto, which we still use widely and variously in spiritual discourse. However, I fear that we might be straying from the spirit of that motto. If we truly believe in the spirit of "Vasudev Kutumbkam", that the entire world is one family, then we should practice what we preach.

Today, an extremely sad incident has come to light. In Agra, Two hundred people coming from 57 families were made to convert. They were lured into abandoning their faith through promises of provisions such as ration card and BPL card. Isn't this a sign of desperation from this government that promised "Acche din" that it is resorting to such measures to get people to convert? Are ration card and BPL card befitting incentives to use to convert the religion.

People from various organizations say "the wise comprehend subtle signs." This is a "homecoming" and forgiveness is not part of this equation. They also say, this is just the beginning. After Agra, there was Aligarh. They will say they will continue to convert followers of not just one but many religions. Each year, 2000 religious conversions take place. This

change and this ideology surely coincide with a specific faith. Since Christmas is around the corner, we must discuss this issue today.

I will emphasize and reemphasize, that they claim that the government is in their control, and that they will continue to do what they have been doing. This is against our constitution.

They say that they have reconverted 2.75 lakh Muslims and Christians in the Brij region, and will continue to bring Muslims and Christians to Hindu religion.

This is gross violation of the country's constitution. This is an attempt to distract attention from the true issues facing the government, such as Black money, infiltration from China and Pakistan and Railway fair hike, and to lead the country towards religious polarization. I believe that this programme is continuing with plan and confidence by them.

Fresh attempts at polarization are being pursued. If this is not the case, will the government explain why the home ministry has failed to offer a proper justification on the status of the 'prevention of communal targeted violence bill?' Today, the parliament and the people of this country seek an answer.

In my opinion, our country is akin to a bouquet. Not a homogenous bouquet, but one which is made from various types of flowers, which come together to spread India's fragrance to each and every citizen of the world. This specialty is there in my country and is not there in any other country of the world.

The constitution of this country is "For the people, of the people and by the people". This has been made by the people and for the people. The government has pledged to uphold and protect the constitution. The government has taken a pledge to preserve it.

The excuse that this is not a central issue, but one which states must deal with, is not a valid one. These incidents are happening in several states. This is an outcome of the agenda of communal polarization that this government has been pursuing for the last seven months. Take a look at the state of nation today.

On one side we talk about Swami Vivekanand again and again many leaders take his name what was it that Swami Vivekananda had said? He said "Surely, one day, India will rise to become a global economic power". But let's remember at all times, India will rise to be an economic star, only when India's spiritual core will rise like a star. It is incumbent on you, me and every Indian to preserve that spiritual core.

In the last seven months, there have been 600 incidents of communal violence in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. In the last session, a Muslim man was force fed during the holy month of Ramzan. This is a cause for great shame. When, Sania Mirza, who has made our nation proud, was appointed brand ambassador of a state, members of a party called her "Pakistan's daughter-in-law". Can there be greater shame than this? A jagran was organized in Trilokpuri. During a

sensitive time, and ignoring the fact that it was an important time of the year for a particular community. The clear agenda was to incite communal violence. Never before has there been communal tension in Delhi during Tazia. This was the first time it happened in the history of our nation. Churches were burnt down in Delhi.

Honorable Deputy Speaker, A government minister, in her statement, used such inappropriate words, that I, despite being a youngster, cannot use



such words in the parliament even in a casual conversation. This act must be rebuked strongly and universally. Do we want to set one community against another in our nation? Are these the "Acche din"? Is this how we want to build our nation? We can only build our nation if we preserve its soul. If the body is in good health, but the soul degenerates, we will not achieve progress in the nation.

A minister in this government proposed to make a religious book the national text of the country. There can be only one national text in this country, and

that is our constitution, which professes secularism. There can never ever be another national text. In academics, third languages are being replaced with Sanskrit. This is unprecedented. Taj Mahal is being called an ancient Hindu monument. History is being twisted, culture is being twisted, and the fabric of the country is being toyed with. History and the present are being tampered with, but no one is sparing thought for the future.

I strongly protest against these acts. The government's duty is to uphold the constitution. Acts in violation of the constitution, must be checked by the government. Our country is a secular, democratic republic. Whether you stay in power or not, the secular ideology of this country will sustain itself, and undoubtedly, is in our genes. We want the honorable prime minister to provide a clarification on this issue. At one point in time, the leader of his party had advised him to follow "Raj Dharma" . In the last seven months, there have been various incidents that have demanded the observance of "Raj Dharma" from him. The Prime Minister is Prime minister for everybody regardless of caste and creed. Is it not his responsibility to issue a statement? To ensure that peace and harmony prevail and to protect the nation? He is accountable to

the Parliament and to the people of the country, and we demand an explanation and accountability from him. The entire World has it's sight set on India, today. We proclaim to the world with great pride, that our country is secular. Our core is secularism. This image is being tarnished today, and the government and the prime minister must step up to their responsibility and defend it from such attacks.

There is just one last thing that I wish to say "Mazhab nahi sikhaata, aapas mein bair rakhna, Hindi hain hum, watan hai Hindustan humara" ❖

A statement has come that 'MGNREGA' should be stopped, and the funds for the MGNREGA, should be spent in the industrial sector. This has created a doubt in our minds whether this government will give the same importance to MGNREGA like the previous government?

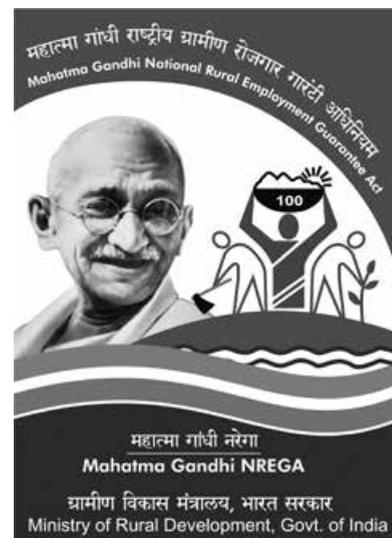
DEMAND FOR CLARIFICATION ON MGNREGA

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH : I congratulate Chaudhary Sahib for taking charge of the Rural Development Ministry. Sometime back Chaudhary Sahib had said that he was the tragedy king of Haryana politics. Today, he has got the opportunity to transform to Hero from tragedy king and this has come as a formal statement for which I would say that this is a positive step because various statements coming from the government ministry during the past six months, from advisors, representatives, gave an impression that many questions are being raised on "MGNREGA". The statement first came from the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, later it came from Nitin Gadkari Sahib and which has presently comes from one who claims to be the financial advisor of this government, a write-up came from him, a statement has come that 'MGNREGA' should be stopped, and the funds for the MGNREGA, should be spent in the industrial sector. This has created a doubt in our minds whether this government will give the same importance to MGNREGA like



the previous government?

Sharad Yadavji, I should not say because for the past three years I was a minister in this ministry. Ministers at times should keep quite. Even former Minister should also keep quite. This is a very important issue. There are two issues which are not mentioned in this statement. They are the real issues. In this regard the minister has said nothing. I hope when he gives his answer he would surely give clarification on these two issues the first issue is that the circular released by the ministry, it has created an impression in the minds of the people that MGNREGA is limited in just 2.5 thousand Blocks. Is this correct or not? If the MGNREGA is limited in 2.5 thousand blocks, then what will be the future of MGNREGA in the other four thousand blocks. Many questions have been raised about this. Nothing has been said about this in this statement. I want that the hon. Minister gives his clarification whether this is true. There are some blocks where more priority needs to be given. Those deprived blocks, the backward blocks and the blocks where the majority of population is of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The backward blocks particularly in Bihar, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, where naxalites are present in large numbers, there is the



need to give more stress. This means that in such blocks MGNREGA will not be implemented, then what will be the future of MGNREGA there, regarding this I would like to ask the hon. Minister. He may give his clarification in his reply.

We are not against allocation of priority, we are not against focus. There should be some blocks, where more stress has to be given. Does this mean that where the blocks have been left out, there the MGNREGA will be cut down, there MGNREGA will be reduced further, there a change will come in MGNREGA, the minister should give his clarification.

The second issue is this, about which nothing has been said in this statement, but the statement was made in the Lok Sabha by the earlier minister that the ratio of 60-40, there should be some changes in it. By your statement it becomes clear that for the past seven to eight years the ratio had been 70-30, in which labour is more and material is less. Despite it, Gadkari Sahib had said repeatedly that the wage-material ratio of 60-40, there is a necessity to bring some change. You have not mentioned about this. I want you to also put some light on this.

The two issues that you have raised in your statement, I would like to say

something on that. You have certainly brought some change during the past three to four months that the work that is done by gram panchayats, there should be a ratio of 60-40 in those works. The policy during the time of our government, was this that whatever work that the line department, Block Panchayat, Zila parishad carries out. We had discussed a lot about this. We had discussed with the states about this. The fear and the danger was that if these were to be left to the district level then more work would be taken from contractors. This would not be the part of the employment guarantee schemes. It would become the contractor guarantee scheme and the real backward areas named got left.

Minister Sir, I want to make a request that you have changed it to district level, but there is a danger. The danger is this that some blocks are developed in a district, some blocks are such, where there is more unemployment, where there is more demand for 'MGNREGA'. It should not be pushed back and their demand should be fulfilled. Will this happen or not by your policy, I am raising a question on this.

The second point you have said in your statement that the guidelines that has been issued that 60% of the expenditure should be on agriculture related work. Minister Sir, I want to say that if you see during the past 6-7 years, then 70-75% expenditure has been spent on water conservation, tree plantation, land leveling, work on the land of small and marginal farmers. It will be wrong to say that there is no relation between MGNREGA and agriculture. This happens to be more than 60%. The guidelines that you have issued, I feel is the reality, you are formalizing it by guideline. By the way, much can be said in regards to 'MGNREGA', but this is a limited calling attention motion and is also your statement.

I have only raised questions on the issues which you have mentioned. I would like to conclude this. I would only say that the repeated criticism that only labour wages is earned through MGNREGA, and no community assets are established from MGNREGA, this is absolutely wrong. If you see last year's record you would find that 28% expenditure was on toilets, around 15% was spent on the land of small and marginal farmers. If these are not community assets, then what can they be? I feel we should continue with MGNREGA programme, MGNREGA ordinance and MGNREGA Scheme and the priority that was given to it in the past few years, which you know, should be kept as it was before.

GOVERNMENT SHOULD CLARIFY ITS STAND REGARDING MGNREGA

SHRI MOTILAL VORA: I would like to say to the hon. Minister that ever since the NDA government was formed in the country, a feeling has



stopped, changes will be made in this scheme. The stand of the government is not clear on this scheme which provided employment to crores of people in the country.

I come from Chhattisgarh. I would like to explain that the wages to the labourers who had worked in various districts of Chhattisgarh have not been paid for the past four months. They are repeatedly asking for their wages, I do not know what difficulty has arisen before the government to give wages to them? I would like to say to the Hon. Minister that when this scheme was started, there was a feeling behind this that at least 100 days of employment is given to those people living in the rural areas, who do not get opportunity of employment. On the one hand the government is trying to abolish employment, while on the other hand it says that it will finish unemployment. The stand of the government is not clear. It seems that there is another scheme behind it to stop this scheme, because to curtailment of labour has been mentioned and it has been said that in the works that are going on, around 50% or 49% expenditure will be used on material.

I do not know what difficulty has arisen before the government to give wages to them? I would like to say to the Hon. Minister that when this scheme was started, there was a feeling behind this that at least 100 days of employment is given to those people living in the rural areas, who do not get opportunity of employment. On the one hand the government is trying to abolish employment, while on the other hand it says that it will finish unemployment.

been spread throughout the country in the past four months that Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is going to be

I would like to say to the hon. Minister to think about this and the present situation of doubt prevailing in the country, particularly in rural

areas, that the government is going to gradually stop the MGNREGA, is likely to make changes in it, the government should clear this situation of suspense. People should get employment through this, I would say that they should get employment for more than hundred days. I hope that the hon. Minister would give in his reply, where he would say clearly that this employment guarantee scheme would not be stopped.

Where the labourers have not been paid their wages for months, they should be paid their wages.

DO NOT DILUTE BUT CONTINUE WITH MGNREGA

SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA:

I would like to share that MGNREGA is in the name of Mahatma G a n d h i j i , which the UPA Government had started with an Act in 2005. In 2006, 200 districts established this programme. Subsequently, in 2007 and 2008, the entire country with more than 650 districts extended the programme.



It is being implemented properly. Those who are below poverty line like labourers, small and marginal farmers have no work for their livelihood during the summer time. Keeping this in view, under the able guidance of Smt. Sonia Gandhi and the then Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, a deep study was done by the UPA Government and we have extended this programme in the whole country and it is being implemented well. In 2012-13, a substantial amount of Rs. 30,000 crore was allocated and, before the end of the UPA Government, we have provided Rs. 33,000 crore for this

The UPA Government has given money for the purpose of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewable Mission in the cities and towns. We have given thousands and thousands of crore of rupees. This is the practical thing where we have given the money. This is given to see that drinking water, roads and all other facilities are provided. This is the practical thing that we have done at the time of our Government.

programme. Under the programme, every Panchayat can draw up its own plan. The Panchayats and Gram Sabhas will decide the type of works to be undertaken under the programme and, accordingly, when the States formulate the plans and send them to the Central Government, they are sanctioned.

The number of people who are below poverty line and who are without food is more than 37 percent in the entire country. Keeping the motto, "Live and let live", the UPA Government had started this programme.

Recently, the BJP-led NDA Government have planned to reduce the allocations to this programme. They have given only Rs. 1,000 crore extra this year as compared to the previous year's allocation. They are also planning to dilute and dismantle this programme. On one occasion, the hon. Minister said that they were not diluting this programme. He explained it by saying, "We cannot dilute this MGNREGA programme. NDA will further improve MGNREGA." This is what Chaudhary Birender Singh has said, who was earlier on this side and now he is on that side. Practically they are going to dilute this programme.

I would like to share what some eminent luminaries and economists have said. They have shared their anguish against the steps that this Government was going to take. Mr.

Zimmermann of the University of Michigan said, "The programme, when properly implemented, would arrest the distress." Similarly, a study done by Clement Imbert of Oxford University shows that the villages with early access to the programme have less temporary outmigration to the urban sector. These important people have mentioned these things. The People's Action for Employment Guarantee met the hon. Prime Minister on 8th October 2014 and submitted a memorandum signed by 200 eminent citizens. They have appealed to him that in no case this programme should be diluted and that it should be given more importance.

It is because it is the people's programme. It is the common people's programme and most of the people are below poverty line and the agricultural labourers, the small farmers and the marginal farmers are below the poverty line. I cannot understand what is behind this Government's thinking to dilute this programme. I urge upon this Government to increase the job and give more money for this programme for creating the infrastructure. Again, they are planning. Earlier, it was 60:40, that is labour oriented is 60 percent and the infrastructure is 40 percent. Now, they are diluting it to 51:49. More than two crore population suffering from this. While they are reducing the labour, the affected people are more than two



crore.

There is another important area which I want to tell in this House. They have provided work to the 8.3 crore population in 2014 with a balance of 2.3 crore population. Unemployment has increased in 2014. The demand is 10.6 crore households that is who have applied for work. They made the provision only for 8.3 crore. When our Government was there, the demand was 10.6 crores. We have provided to the 9.8 crore household. This is the programme. The left out household is 1.3 core and now the left out household is 2.3 crore. This is the difference between the NDA Government and the UPA Government. I think hon. Minister will take note of all these things and will try to correct these things. Otherwise, the people of this country cannot tolerate you. Because of magic, you have made to get into the power.

I would like to tell the hon. Minister this. On the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi that is 2nd October, 2014, our Prime Minister started to clean the nation. I think media has made so much of this well established programme. Where is the money? Where is the programme? Have you given the money to make this one to clean the country? The UPA Government has given money for the purpose of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewable Mission in the cities and towns. We have given thousands and thousands of crore of rupees. This is the practical thing where we

have given the money. This is given to see that drinking water, roads and all other facilities are provided. This is the practical thing that we have done at the time of our Government.

I have another most important thing which I would like to tell. In the name of Mahatma Gandhiji, we have started this programme but they have not given money for any one of the programme which they have announced. They have given only assurance.

There is another thing that is Jan Dhan. Jan Dhan is not a new thing. It was started at the time of Indira Ji's time. Abolition of privy purses, nationalization of banks, allow the poor people, the small and marginal farmers into the banks are the things done by our Government. This programme was not only for the landlords. After that, UPA Government has started the no-frill account. What is no frill account? Without paying a single paisa, the bankers should go to the villages and rural huts. More than 80 to 90 percent in the villages were enrolled through the Aadhar cards. They are given employment to the people directly in MGNREGA. This is the programme given by the UPA Government.

It has been named as Jan Dhan Programme. What is 'Jan Dhan'? What is the programme? They have started the programme when more than 80 percent work is over.

Under the Aadarsh Gram Programme, the gram will become orphan now. Neither the States Governments nor

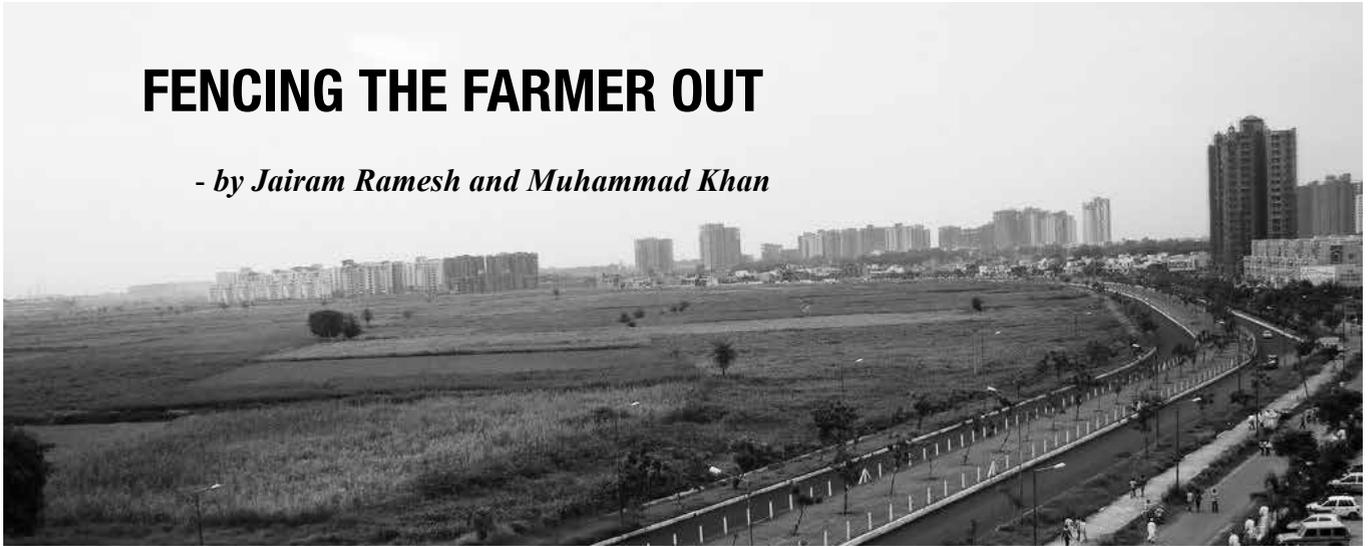
the Central Government nor the MPs will be able to take care of the village. If you ask an MP to take up a village under Aadarsh Gram Programme, on that day, that village will become an orphan.

I would like to suggest one thing. If they really want to make an Aadarsh Gram, if they want to make improvement in the villages and panchayats, we had started a programme under the Rural Development Ministry. We should not sanction a house without a toilet. That is the programme. If they take care of this programme and implement properly under the rural development, then only we can have an Aadarsh Gram. For this purpose, they can come with another programme.

In 1991-92, when Shri Narasimha Rao was the Prime Minister, it was he who started the MP Fund for the benefit of the villages, where it is required badly. We had increased this amount up to Rs. 5 crore. If you are to really develop the villages and gram panchayats as Aadarsh Gram, you give extra money for this purpose either in the Budget or to the MP Fund, then only this programme will be implemented. Otherwise, it will be difficult to implement it. I would like to mention one more thing that there are lot of people who speak, that there are lot of people who give assurance, there are lot of people who make announcements, but there is a dearth in the BJP Government of the people who can work with dedication. ❖

FENCING THE FARMER OUT

- by *Jairam Ramesh and Muhammad Khan*



On Monday, the Bharatiya Janata Party government cleared the proposed ordinance to amend the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013. This amendment, insofar as has been made known to the public, creates a separate category of projects which shall be “fast tracked.” The items covered under this category include industrial corridors, defence and defence production, rural infrastructure including electrification, housing for the poor including affordable housing, and infrastructure projects including projects taken up under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode.

The immediate and likely impact of this amendment is that land can now be acquired for these projects without having to exhaust the pre-acquisition processes that had been put in place, namely the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) and the determination of prior informed consent from affected families. A cursory analysis of this amendment shows why the same is not just problematic but is also a serious step backward.

Reason behind pre-acquisition steps

First, there is a reason why the consent

and SIA process had been hardcoded into the DNA of the law. Acquisition had become a tool for the use of brutal force by the state. Acquisition was almost always forceful, leading invariably to riots and protests (often violent in nature). By requiring the state to seek the consent of 70 to 80 per cent of the affected families, the law empowered those who were to be directly impacted against the arbitrary exercise of the power by the state. For the first time in the history of

took part. Two key amendments suggested by Ms. Sushma Swaraj and Mr. Arun Jaitley were also accepted (These related to providing for lease as an option and the share of an original owner in case his land was subsequently acquired). The BJP unambiguously supported the law in Parliament and even expressed support for these very provisions it now seeks to exclude. In this context, this sharp ‘U-turn’ becomes all the more surprising.

In the name of economic reforms and development, the government has taken a significant step backward in India’s march to land justice. The pushing through of the Land Act ordinance violates all democratic norms

independent India was the citizenry given a say in how the state would deal with their land. Now with this one step, the BJP has returned us to the days of the British enacted law where our citizens enjoyed no say in their development.

Second, the unamended law was enacted after unprecedented nationwide consultations which took place over two years. Two all-party meetings were convened. The Bill was subject to 12 hour debates in both Houses in which over 60 members

Infrastructure projects

Third, under the unamended Act, the only exemptions to the consent and the SIA clause were the 13 laws given in the Fourth Schedule to the Act itself. Mindful of the fact that some projects were of greater national importance than others, the framers had already created this separate class of projects which included acquisition for the purposes of railways, national highways, atomic energy, electricity, etc. Acquisition for defence and national security had

also been protected under the urgency clause. And even these 13 laws had to be amended within one year, i.e. by December 31, 2014 to ensure that compensation, rehabilitation and resettlement clauses were brought on a par with the new law (vide section 105 of the unamended law). With regard to this particular amendment, the government is attempting to make a virtue out of a necessity prescribed by their predecessors.

Fourth, crafting a set of categories which includes vague items such as infrastructure projects (including PPP projects) solely for the purpose of exempting them from consent requires enormous application of mind. The exemptions given in the unamended law were the result of sustained public consultation. In the case of the ordinance, exemptions have been created without any explanation as to why these activities or sectors are being placed in a class of their own. Such lawmaking practices veer dangerously close to arbitrariness in administrative decision-making.

Importance of a safeguard

Supporters of the amendment will undoubtedly argue that the law does not dilute the provisions of compensation, rehabilitation and resettlement but instead only makes the process for acquiring the land easier.

What they fail to realise is the gap between the bargaining power of the state and the lowest common denominator is a very wide chasm.

The SIA process gave these people (often farmers) the right to negotiate fairer rates of compensation while determining if the project was truly in the public interest. It had also removed the scope for the subjective use of discretion by the Collector and other representatives of the government.

“Exemptions have been created without any explanation as to why these activities or sectors are being placed in a class of their own. Such lawmaking practices veer dangerously close to arbitrariness in administrative decision-making.”

Now, with the SIA process being waived, the Collector can once again determine what constitutes a public purpose and how soon can land be acquired. It was this unchecked authority that was at the heart of the multiple abuses of the law chronicled over the last 70 years. Discretion had been replaced by verifiable systems and processes to check capricious decision-making. Now, this safeguard stands eroded.

The SIA was designed to ensure that no acquisition in excess of the bare minimum requirement took place. This was an important objective as most acquisitions were characterised by excess zeal on the part of the state. More land was always acquired than was needed for the project in question. Without SIA, the possibility of arbitrary diversions once again becomes a reality.

No restrictions

Also, the new law didn't introduce the concepts of rehabilitation and resettlement. It merely put in place a process that ensured compliance and enforcement. The Supreme Court of India had already mandated rehabilitation and resettlement even before the new law was enacted. There was even a national policy that existed on the subject but violations remained rampant. The SIA was created to provide a framework that would ensure its implementation.

Another fear is that this new ordinance will effectively undo the implicit limits that had been placed on the acquisition of agricultural or

multi-crop land by the unamended Act (done to ensure continued food security for our citizens). However, the amendments seem to allow such acquisitions without restrictions. This gives rise to worrying questions as to who is the natural constituency of the party in power.

The government should have instead used this opportunity to strengthen the legal regime governing land titles in States where it is now in power (since land is primarily a state subject). Knowledge asymmetry and an active land mafia lead to the purchase of land being a risky proposition (and hence making acquisition more attractive). It is a pity that the government did not take this opportunity given that it is in power in both the Centre and in key States where acquisition is a burning issue (Maharashtra, Haryana, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh). The amendments will only disempower gram sabhas.

In the name of economic reforms and development, the government has taken a significant step backward in India's march to land justice. An ordinance pushed through in this manner violates all democratic norms and is the shape of things to come in the Modi sarkar. Given this cloak-and-dagger approach becoming the norm for lawmaking in our country, we can only hope that in this era of acronym-anchored governance, 'Modi' does not come to stand for 'Murder of Democratic India'. ❖

(Jairam Ramesh is a Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, and Muhammad Khan is an advocate.)

PRICES NOT REDUCED COMMENSURATELY DESPITE REDUCTION IN CRUDE PRICES



Shri Randeep
Singh Surjewala

“Modi government’s ‘Dharma’ of profiteering at the cost of Aam Admi has eclipsed ‘ACHHE DIN’. Refusal to reduce the prices of petrol and diesel by Government of India is a betrayal of 125 Crore Indians that BJP and Shri Narendra Modi promised to serve. To hide its complete failure in reviving the economy, boost industrial production, bridge government’s deficit and increase growth rate; BJP government is pre-occupied with filling its empty coffers by burning a hole in the pocket of common man and farmers through sustained imposition of excise and customs duty on petro-products.

BJP, which once debunked the Congress Party for inflation and rise in fuel prices, is shamelessly refusing to pass on the benefit of historical and unprecedented reduction in International Crude Oil prices to the common men and farming community in India.

Shri Narendra Modi and BJP Government must answer the following 5 questions to people of India:-

1. Since formation of BJP government on 26th May, 2014; International Crude Oil prices have fallen from \$110.55 per barrel to \$56 per barrel i.e. a reduction of \$54.55 per barrel or 50% of the May prices.

As against this, petrol and diesel prices have been reduced by a pittance only as follows:-

(Prices in Delhi)

	Prices in May, 2014	Current Prices (Rupees/Litre)	Reduction (Rupees/Litre)	Reduction %
Petrol	72/-	61.33	11.33	15.73%
Diesel	57/-	50.51	06.49	11.38%

Even when converted from dollar to rupee, this contrast of non-reduction of prices and shameless profiteering is even starker, as demonstrated below:-

Prices of Crude Oil per barrel converted from dollar to rupee

\$110.55 per barrel X Rs. 58.63 (price of dollar on 26/05/2014) = Rs. 6481.54

\$56per barrel X Rs. 63.38 (price of dollar today) = Rs. 3549.28

Reduction in price between May 2014 and Today = Rs. 2932.26 (i.e. 45.23%)

As against this, price of petrol and diesel decreased by only 15.73% & 11.38%

Why are Shri Narendra Modi and BJP government betraying the farmer and the common man by refusing to pass on the benefit of historical reduction in International Crude Oil prices?

2. Most shocking anti-poor and anti-farmer, is the fact that the price of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) has been reduced twice, by Modi Government (November 2nd 2014 and January 1st 2015) from Rs. 76241 per Kilo Litre (Rs. 76.24 per Litre) to Rs. 52422 per Kilo Litre (Rs. 52.42 per Litre) today, i.e. a reduction of Rs. 23818.08 or 31.24%.

Irony of the matter is that aviation fuel has been reduced by Modi Government by 31.24% as against a mere reduction of 15.73% and 11.38% in prices of petrol and diesel respectively.

What is even more painful today is the fact that price of petrol paid by the common man of India is Rs. 61.33 per Liter as against price of aviation fuel, which is Rs. 52.42 per Litre.

Will the BJP and Shri Narendra Modi answer the fundamental reason of this grave injustice to the people of India, where they pay more for fuel in an ordinary scooter/motorcycle/car/tractor as compared to fuel used by airplanes?

3. In little over 6 months, Modi Government has increased Excise Duty on petro-products three times as follow:

a) 12th November 2014 = Rs. 1.50 per Litre on petrol and diesel.

continued on page 54

6 MAHEENE PAAR U TURN SARKAR

This article has been carried out in two parts.
This is the concluding part of the article.



11. Rail fare hike

BJP's stand while in opposition

- To bring down prices was Shri Modi & BJP poll plank before elections.
- In March 2012, after a marginal hike in rail fare by the then Government after 8 years, Shri Modi opposed the rail fare hike calling it “highly unjustified, since prices of a number of commodities are already ruling at a much higher level than people’s tolerance limits.”



- How ironical, Sh. Modi tweeted on 7th March, 2012 against rail fare hike bypassing the Rail Budget and Parliament; he does a UTurn within two weeks of coming into power.
- He even alleged that the hike was the result of a “communication gap” between the ministries of Railways, Energy, Coal and Environment.
- Shri Modi politicized the issue of inflation and spared no opportunity in attacking even on the most nominal fare hikes by the UPA government.

Does the same criticism now apply to his government as well? What happened to their claims of reducing prices?

Contradiction

- But instead of fulfilling his promise, one of his first major policy decisions as Prime Minister has been

to hike rail fares. His government even before the Rail Budget and without giving normal gestation period for passengers who have already purchased tickets, increased the passenger fares by 14.2%, the highest ever in our history, and freight charges by 6.5%.

- This move would fuel inflation and is against every promise he made in the election campaign. Higher freight charges will drive up the price of coal which will, in turn, make electricity more expensive.

12. Blow to Farmers

The UPA during its 10 years hiked the MSP on wheat from Rs.630 in 2004 to Rs.1350 in 2014 and on Rice from 550 in 2004 to Rs. 1310 in 2014. The BJP Govt. after taking over has nothing but stabbed the farmer on the face. One is forced to wonder as to where is the Indian farmer headed.

BJP's stand while in opposition

- On 6th Apr, 2014 Shri Modi said “Why should our farmers not get the right price? Farmers are not begging, they worked hard for it & should get good prices” (via twitter)
- On 13th April, 2014 at a rally in Karnataka Shri Modi sought votes on the promise of working hard for the farmers.

From UPA to NDA, Badals Change Stance on MSP

By IANS | Published: 08th November 2014 09:42 AM Last Updated: 08th November 2014 09:42 AM

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CHANDIGARH: For agrarian Punjab, wheat and paddy are not only important for its agriculture economy but an emotive issue as well. So is the minimum support price (MSP) for these crops. But for Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal, the stand on MSP changes, depending on who is in power in New Delhi.

Badal, who used to term hikes of even Rs.150 a quintal as a “cruel joke” with the farmers of Punjab during the past 10 years of Congress-led UPA government, is now only making muted noises about the meagre hike on MSP of wheat and rice announced by the Narendra Modi government.

- c) On 20th March, 2014 Shri Modi on the chai pecharcha event said - "If we have to revive the country's economy, we will have to boost the agriculture"
- d) The BJP manifesto (Lok Sabha Elections 2014) had promised MSP of 50% over cost of production.
- e) 25th April, 2014 Pathankot rally, Shri Modi said- "If NDA comes to power it will ensure remunerative prices to the farmers by adding 50 per cent profit into the peasants' input cost. We will fix the MSP (Minimum Support Price) of crops incorporating 50 per cent profit in farmers cost of production"

Contradiction

- a) In Oct, 2014 the Centre hiked the minimum support price of wheat by a meagre Rs.50.
- b) On 12th September the Modi Government issued a diktat to all state governments to not pay any bonus on paddy produce. The letter of the food and civil supplies ministry said "bonus by the state government distorts the market of the concerned commodity and drives private buyers out of the market in the state".
- c) The Ministry letter dated 12th June, 2014 cautioned if the state gives bonus, the Modi Government will limit procurement for Central pool only up to the requirements of PDS and other food-related schemes. Earlier, the UPA government lifted the entire paddy procured by a state. Source: Indian Express
- d) "A change in policy like this may result in significant reduction of cultivation of paddy", "reduce buffer stock" and "adversely the overall food security scenario of the country", said one of the Chief Ministers. Source: Indian Express

13. Promise of Clean Politics, delivering tainted Cabinet

BJP Stand as Opposition

- a) 22nd April, 2014 'With a promise to cleanse the political system and Parliament from anti-social elements should the BJP comes to power, Shri Modi said his first job as the Prime Minister would be to set up a panel to probe pending criminal cases against the new MPs. Addressing an election rally in Hardoi, Modi said he would ensure that all offenders, irrespective of their political affiliations, were sent to jail after pleading with the Supreme Court to hear the cases against them expeditiously.' Source: Indian Express

Contradiction

- a) Almost half of the 21 new faces inducted into Prime

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Criminal-free Parliament top priority, says Modi

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Minister Narendra Modi's Council of Ministers have declared criminal cases against them.

- b) Of the total Council of Ministers, 20 or 31 per cent have declared criminal cases against themselves, while 11 ministers or 17 per cent are facing serious criminal cases like attempted murder, inciting communal disharmony and electoral violations.
- c) HRD Minister Ram Shankar Katheria has a record of 23 cases, including one of attempt to murder against him, in the affidavit he filed with the Election Commission. Source: India Today
- d) This junior education minister also has fake educational degree charges against him. Source: NDTV
- e) Shri Nihal Chand accused of rape is a fugitive running from police and court summons. Even as he lords over his office in New Delhi and appears for public functions in Rajasthan, the Rajasthan police tells the court that he is not traceable.
- f) Shri YS Chaudhary, the Minister for Science & Technology from Andhra Pradesh is a financial offender who has defaulted on loans from Public sector Banks to the tune of Rs 317 Cr. Source: Bank Employees Union Letter to the Management
- g) Has Shri Giriraj Singh against whom the income tax department is probing a case of unaccounted cash worth Rs1.14 crore and jewellery been made a Minister and clean chit given by the Finance Minister himself so that he can influence the probe?

14. BJP's false announcement of Compensation to riot victims

False announcement on enhanced compensation

- a) As Delhi Assembly was about to be dissolved, the BJP on 30th Oct, 2014 planted stories on compensation for riot victims, however there was no such compensation in reality.

U Turn-Denial to the Election Commission

In reply to EC, MHA denies taking decision on compensation to 1984 riot victims

Last Updated: Monday, November 3, 2014 - 23:55

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Zee Media Bureau

- a) But the Government later denied announcing any such scheme.

It clearly shows the design and pattern on which the BJP intends to base its politics and governance, not that the country expects any better from a party which for months strategized on horse trading and poaching of MLAs in Delhi. The BJP bereft of any concrete agenda in Delhi will do well if acknowledge that politics based on communal/divisive agenda is only going to face muck and will be out rightly rejected by the electorate.

Compensation under Congress-UPA Regime

- a) In Nov, 2006, in move to depoliticize the topic of compensation, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had announced that based on the compensation given to anti-Sikh riot victims, Rs. 7 lakh ex-gratia would be paid to victims if communal riots take place anywhere in the country.

15. Diesel Deregulation

BJP Stand as an Opposition Party

- a) In 2013 when the UPA partially deregulated the price of Diesel, the BJP called it an “insensitive” decision and said that “people are being looted in the name of economic policies”. Source: Zee News 18th January, 2013
- b) “They (government) are saying that they are doing it in-principle and they will modulate it to the needs of the people. But this means that they are going to increase diesel prices and the diesel shock is coming in few days from now,” BJP spokesman Prakash Javadekar told reporters. “
- Ø What Kaushik Basu (PM’s Economic Adviser) was saying and has indicated is now confirmed by government in its written reply also.”
- Ø “..And we oppose such a move because diesel is a basic fuel for all types of transport and that will have a cascading effect on price rise,” he said outside Parliament House:- On 24th April 2012, Prakash Javadekar- The Hindu

Contradiction

- a) However, on coming to power the BJP continued with the UPA’s policy of deregulating diesel prices. Furthermore, in a complete U-turn from their stand on deregulation of diesel, Shri Jaitley in an interview to a news channel on 21st Oct, 2014 said that “we have only implemented the UPAs decision”, not only this ShriJaitley also went on to say that UPAs policy on Diesel was a sensible one.
- b) While the crude oil prices in the International Market are at their 46 month low, the Modi Government is not

ready to pass on the benefit to domestic consumers in the country. Since BJP assumed power in May, diesel prices have been increase at 3 occasions and even after the recent drop in the prices the reality is as follows-

- Ø While the crude oil prices have been dropped by a striking 35% since Modi Government came to power.
- Ø The Diesel prices in the domestic market have only been dropped by a meager 5.9%.

16. Non appointment of CIC, CVC

- a) Contrary to the high moral ground taken by the BJP in the run up to the election in regard to transparency and curbing corruption, the post of Chief Information Commission has been lying vacant since August, 22. This has further led to piling of various matters under the RTI Act, across all Government Departments.
- b) Another key constitutional appointment process is lingering under the 6 month old Modi Government. The Central Vigilance Commission which is the eyes and years to keep a check on corruption in Government Department has remained unfilled.
- c) During election speeches including in Amravati (29th March), Karnataka (30th March), Raigad (19th Feb) and several others - ShriModi often used the term “Good Governance”.

Contradiction

- a) Important mechanisms of checks and balances provided by our Constitution, of institutions like the CVC, CIC and Lokpal are indisplacable tenets- the crucial appointments the crucial appointments of them are stalled by the Modi Government for months. Were these issues only important during the Election campaign??

17. Appointment of PP Rao : UTurn on Lokpal Panel

BJP stand as opposition

- a) While the BJP was in opposition, Smt. Sushma Swaraj said that the panel should be “free from such people” (Feb, 2014).
- b) BJP leader Sushma Swaraj stated that PP Rao, senior Supreme Court lawyer who the UPA appears to be backing, is a Congress loyalist.1 (Source: Firstpost)
- c) On 3rd February 2014 Smt Sushma Swaraj said submitted her written dissent on the appointment of Shri PP Rao in the Lokpal selection panel - “I have sought time from the President, ShriPranab Mukherjee, as I feel that if in the first step of constituting a Lokpal body the government

would go by numbers and not consensus it would spoil the achievement of setting up this body. The people have waited for 40 years for a Lokpal to be set up and this is not the way to go about it”

After forming Government

- a) In an Affidavit before the Supreme Court of India (filed on September 12th, 2014) the BJP led NDA Government supported the appointment of Senior Advocate PP Rao to the post of eminent jurist in the Lokpal and the process put in place by the Congress led UPA for such selection. Shri PP Rao had been originally nominated by the Congress led UPA but due to disruptive opposition by the BJP the process could not be completed.

18. Flip Flop on Holding Elections in Delhi

BJP stand as Opposition

- a) The BJP twisted and turned the government formation in Delhi as per their whims and fancies, buying time for itself to try and form government by way of horse trading and other illegal means.
- b) On 13 December, 2013 the then Delhi BJP President Dr. Harshvardhan had said, “In view of the lack of clear mandate by the people of Delhi, BJP would like to sit in the opposition”.

The Contradiction (After forming Government at the Centre)

- a) “We will consider it (formation of government) provided Lt Governor Najeeb Jung calls us,” Satish Upadhyay, state BJP chief, said after meeting party MLAs on 17th July, 2014. Source: DNA
- b) In September 2014 the new Delhi BJP Chief Satish Upadhyay said that no party wants to face fresh elections and the BJP will explore possibility of government formation once it receives an invite to form government from the L-G. The reason why there was a change in the stance the BJP on this issue is that the BJP was actually exploring options to form government in Delhi by horse-trading and other illegal means.
- c) This was a shift in stand of the ruling BJP from what their stand was after the Delhi elections had concluded in December 2013. The BJP led Central Government appropriated the office of the Lieutenant Governor and the Ministry of Home Affairs to their advantage and deferred conducting elections to the currently suspended Delhi Legislative Assembly. So much so that the Supreme Court had to intervene and slam the centre over its undemocratic moves.

- d) The Hon’ble Supreme Court of India slammed the central government for not taking requisite action in government formation in the National Capital. On 10th September, 2014 - The Supreme Court told the Centre that horse-trading would continue if steps were not taken soon to form a government in Delhi. “Things better be done at the earliest, otherwise horse-trading will continue,” a five-judge Constitution Bench led by Justice H.L. Dattu told the Centre. Source: The Hindu

- e) Thereafter on 28th October, 2014 - The Constitution bench led by Chief Justice of India H L Dattu said:

- “They (petitioner) may be justified in saying that these people (government) are trying to hoodwink the court. Nothing sincere has been done by you. This cannot go on forever. It is not such a big issue that the LG will take so much of time in taking a decision. He should have decided it one way or another. With the greatest of respect, we say the LG should have taken a decision by now.”
- “Why was there a five-month delay in breaking the Delhi deadlock?” the apex court asked, adding, “The L-G should have taken the decision at the earliest.”
- “In a democratic set up, people have a right to a government. Nothing seems to be done on this issue by you people. Why wasn’t all this done earlier,” the Supreme Court asked.

19. 180 degree on Article 370

BJP while in opposition

- a) The BJP in their election manifesto for the 2014 Lok Sabha Elections had very categorically stated, “BJP reiterates its stand on Article 370, and will discuss this with all stake-holders and remains committed to the abrogation of this article”. Source: BJP website
- b) On 11th November, 2014- MoS, PMO Shri Jitendra Singh said “All issues (including Article 370) which have been part of the BJP manifesto all these years will be part of the agenda. They will continue to be so,” the MoS, PMO, told reporters while inaugurating BJP Media Centre in Jammu for its “Mission 44+”. “The ideological issue (Article 370), toward which you point to, BJP’s stand is very clear on it and it is known to you,” Source: India Today

Contradiction (After the poll process in J&K started)

- a) On 27th November, 2014, the BJP released its manifesto for 2014 assembly polls in J&K. The document is silent on Article 370, which was an important agenda for BJP

during Lok Sabha Elections. For several decades, BJP has been high-pitched in its demand that the article that grants special autonomous status to Jammu and Kashmir, be scrapped. Source NDTV

- b) On November 16, 2014 the Minister of state for external affairs VK Singh, however, took a conflicting stand, in an attempt to woo voters in Kashmir. “BJP never said Article 370 is to be removed or amended,” he said in Srinagar. Source: Hindustan Times
- c) On 20th November, 2014 - The BJP in-charge for J&K and Member of Parliament Avinash Rai Khanna said his party had never demanded the scrapping of Article 370. “Some elements are trying to create fear among the people by saying that the BJP wants to scrap Article 370.

20. Maximum governance, minimum government: a bad joke

BJP and Modi's stand before last reshuffle

- a) When the Modi Government took oath in May, 2014, it attracted much fanfare by announcing that it will have a “small & compact” cabinet. The Prime Minister himself promised a lean cabinet along with merger of ministries to create ‘synergy’. On May 25th, 2014 Shri Modi referring to his compact cabinet said “Keeping our commitment to ‘Minimum Government, Maximum Governance’ we have made an unprecedented & positive change in Ministry formation.”
- b) On 26th May, 2014 when Shri Modi's government took oath, 23 Cabinet minister and 22 MoS were sworn in.
- c) Much hype was created by the BJP quarter about this small sized cabinet and they claimed it to be unprecedented overhaul of the ministries. ShriModialo said - Some government departments would be “transformed into Organic Ministries for quicker pace of work & better coordination between departments” (25th May, 2014).

Contradictory stand:

- a) On 9th November, 2014 the Modi Government realising its failure on various fronts did a major cabinet reshuffle. The much hyped compact cabinet of 45 ministers was expanded to 65 ministers.
- b) The adamant Modi Government failed to find a full time minister for the portfolio of Defence for 6 months, while India faced unprecedented incursion on its borders along China and Pakistan.
- c) Were Ministers' in-charge of important ministries of Railways, Law & Justice and Health ministry were shunted out for their non-performance? Does this shunting out

reflect Maximum Governance?

- d) The outcome of recent cabinet reshuffle still poses glaring question- What is the ‘synergy’ between Ministry of Finance & Information & Broadcasting Ministry (Both with ShriArunJaitley)?
- e) While coal and power remain together, the department of Ayush is made a full-fledged ministry, carved out of Health. Was the consideration ‘Maximum Governance’ or to accommodate a Minister?
- f) 20 of the 65 Ministers in ShriModi's cabinet have self-reported criminal cases against them, including criminal cases like attempted murder, inciting communal disharmony and electoral violations etc.

This poses serious questions of ShriModi's much hyped pre-poll planks of a criminal free parliament and ‘Minimum Government, Maximum Governance’.

21. Statements on Rape

After having pitched the slogan of “Bahut hua nari par vaar, abki baar Modi sarkar” incidents of rape spiraled across the country, especially in BJP ruled states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat, the Prime Minister's colleagues in the Government, Shri Arun Jaitley, Sri BabuLal Gaur and Sri Ramsewak Paikra (Law Minister, Govt. of Chhattisgarh) came out with one insensitive statement after another. All trivialized rape and insulted women. The response of the Prime Minister to all this has been a resounding silence.

During Election Campaign to gather votes:

- a) On 2nd December, 2013 “It (Delhi) has earned a bad name as the rape capital. When you vote, do not forget this. Remember Nirbhaya for a while”. Narendra Modi
- b) On International Women's Day, I bow to Nari Shakti! Let us reaffirm our commitment to make women an integral part of our development journey. Shri Modi tweeted on Mar 08, 2014
- c) “This government is not bothered about women's safety or farmers' welfare,” said Shri Modi at an election rally in Maharashtra on 9th April, 2014.

After Forming Government at Centre

- a) “One small incident of rape in Delhi advertised world over is enough to cost us billions of dollars in terms of global tourism,” Mr Jaitley said at a tourism ministers' conference on 22nd August, 2014.
- b) On 8th June, 2014 - “Such incidents (rapes) do not happen deliberately. These kind of incidents happen accidentally”: Ramsevak Paikra BJP Minister

- c) On 5th June, 2014 - “sometimes it’s (rape) right, sometimes it’s wrong” : Babu Lal Gaur Ex-CM, Senior BJP Leader and now a Minister
- d) ‘Women safety’ which was an important poll-plank for the Shri Modi, found no place in the 10 point agenda announced by him on assuming the office of Prime Minister.
- e) The one stop crisis centre or the rape crises centre scheme conceived in the aftermath of the Nirbhaya case- has been rejected by the NDA government. The Rs.200 crore rupee project, which now stands scrapped, was expected to provide medical, legal, police and emergency services to women in distress. It has been reported that the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) is of the view that the scheme was ‘unnecessary’. Source: TOI

22. Arun Jaitely Demands Raise in Income Tax Limit to Rs 5 lacs but doesn’t grant after becoming Finance Minister Statement of BJP as Opposition

Raise IT slab from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 5 lakh, demands Jaitley

PTI [Updated 20 Apr 2014, 22:58:37]

Amritsar: BJP leader Arun Jaitley today demanded a raise in the Income Tax ceiling from Rs two lakh to Rs five lakh, which he claimed will benefit thirty million people.

- a) On 20th April, while campaigning in Amritsar Shri Jaitley demanded that the Income Tax ceiling be raised from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 5 lakh, which he claimed will benefit thirty million people.

After assuming the office of Finance Minister:

- a) Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on 10th July, 2014 raised the I-T exemption limit to Rs 2.5 lakh.

23. Ban Rs. 1000 currency notes only when it suits BJP

BJP Leaders Statement as Opposition

- a) On 29th June, 2011 supporting Baba Ramdev, Shri Modi said that 1000 Rs notes should be banned.



- b) On December, 2013 while holding consultations on BJP’s Vision 2025 document, Shri Nitin Gadkari said “There is another suggestion of doing away with Rs 500 and Rs 1000 notes... we are deliberating on these proposals as we want transparency...”

Contradiction

- a) On 26th November, 2014 Shri Modi while visiting Nepal for the SAARC leaders meet announced that the ban in Nepal on Rs 500 and 1,000 denomination Indian notes has been lifted.

24. Bangladesh Land Deal

When the UPA proposed land border agreement with Bangladesh to ensure greater safety of out border, the same was opposed by the BJP tooth and nail. The BJP protested on the streets, disrupted the parliament, Shri Arun Jaitley went to the extent of labeling the same as “unconstitutional”. However, after labeling the proposed deal as a “compromise”, the BJP after coming to power has uddently found it to be a viable solution.

Before Elections:

Bharatiya Janata Party-National Executive Meeting-New Delhi, 30 Sep. - 01 Oct., 2011

Resolution On Indo-bangladesh Land Transfer Agreement

The BJP National Executive notes with concern that the India-Bangladesh Land Transfer Agreement reached in Dhaka during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s visit to Bangladesh on September 5-6, 2011has ignored the feelings and sentiments of the people of the border States of Assam and West Bengal.

In the name of rationalisation of adversely possessed lands and exchanging enclaves of Bangladesh in India and vice versa, the rights and interests of the local population have been severely compromised, leading to unrest throughout Assam and in many parts of North Bengal. The BJP had, during the Monsoon Session of Parliament, warned the Government of India not to undertake this exercise without appropriate consultation with the affected people or taking the sentiments of the States into account. (Source: BJP website)

Sh. Arun Jaitely’s Letter on this issue Dec 5, 2013

Shri Arun Jailey’s letter dated December 5 to Secretary General of the Upper House, Jaitley had sought permission to oppose the Bill on Land Agreement with Bangladesh, saying it violates the basic structure of the Constitution as it seeks to alter the territory of India on Bangladesh border.

“My objection is based on the fact that after 1973 when the concept of basic structure of the Constitution was evolved in the Kesavan and Bharati case, Parliament has no jurisdiction to alter the territory of India. The territory represents the sovereignty and are both a part of the basic structure of the Constitution and thus unamenable,” Jaitley said. Source: Zee News

Contradiction on this issue by the BJP

- a) “Land swapping will be done for a permanent solution to the problem of infiltration.” Said Shri Modi on 30th November, 2014

25. Files on Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Before Election

- a) On 23rd January, 2014- Rajnath Singh “The entire country is impatient to know as to how Netaji died and under what circumstances.”
- b) Singh had claimed during the election campaign that there was larger public interest in the disclosure of the documents.

Contradiction

- a) The BJP-led government has refused to make public nearly 39 classified files on the mysterious disappearance of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in sharp contrast to the demands of disclosure raised by its senior leaders when in Opposition.

26. Changes in ‘Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010’

On 30 November, 2014 on the front page of a National Daily, a news item appeared that the Government is contemplating to amend the ‘Civil Liability For Nuclear Damage Act, 2010’ to dilute the provision of suppliers liability. The BJP had earlier opposed the stringent supplier liability clauses in the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010. Two days have passed, however the government has not denied the said reports till date (2nd Dec, 2014).

Stand before Elections:

- a) “The government of India under pressure from the nuclear vendors wanted to eliminate the ‘right of recourse.’” The same would be compromising with the state revenue - said Mr Jaitley on 23rd Sept, 2013. Source: NDTV

- b) “But it seems the government is attempting to bypass and annul the provisions of this Clause 17. Any attempt to annul the provisions of the nuclear liability from the suppliers would amount to violation of the Act passed by Parliament and against the established principles mandated by the Constitution,” said Rajiv Pratap Rudy said on 25th Sept, 2013.
- c) “BJP will oppose any such action which would violate the basic provisions of the Nuclear Liability Act passed in 2010,” party general secretary Rajiv Pratap Rudy told PTI on 25th Sept, 2013.
- d) “Why is the Prime Minister of India so keen to proceed with an agreement which will hurt the nation? BJP would like to question why the Prime Minister is so keen in moving ahead to sign this agreement subjugating Indian lawmakers?” Rudy said.
- e) BJP maintained that as per Clause 17 (b) of the Civil Nuclear Liability Act, the responsibility of any nuclear accident vests solely on the suppliers of the equipment.

Source: Firstpost Sept, 2013

Contradiction:

- a) It is reported that Shri Modi has given a personal assurance that vendors won’t be harassed unnecessarily in the event of an accident.
- b) Ironically, the BJP, which is now in power, pitched for rooting for the stringent supplier liability clauses in the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010 while they were sitting in opposition.
- c) Government sources said Shri Modi have asked his officials for an urgent alternative to the supplier liability clause (which they opposed before the elections) because suppliers aren’t willing to risk liabilities that could bankrupt them. The law holds suppliers, and not just the operator, liable if an accident occurs.
- d) The report of the National daily dated 30th Nov, 2014 says that - Foreign suppliers, including the American ones, wanted the liability attached to particular components to be fixed so as to ensure that their creditworthiness was not damaged because of the fact that they were operating in India. The same is now being addressed. The Modi Government’s Finance ministry and the Department of Atomic Energy are working to give final shape to this proposal. ❖

‘DAY OF DECEIT’ IN ASSAM AGAINST THE NARENDRA MODI LED BJP GOVERNMENT



**Bobbeeta
Sharma**

As per the directive of Hon’ble Chief Minister Assam, Shri Tarun Gogoi a ‘Day of Deceit’ was organised by the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee all over Assam on 11th December 2014. The APCC led protest rallies over the false propaganda of the Bharatiya Janata Party during elections against the Congress party and their anti-people policies after coming to power. Before the 2014 Lok Sabha elections the then BJP leader and PM candidate Narendra Modi had denounced the Land Swap Deal of the UPA government with Bangladesh in a meeting at the Khanapara field in Guwahati and said that he will not let an inch of land go to Bangladesh - his party and its MP’s led protest marches against the Congress party in Assam and this same BJP and now its leader Narendra Modi who became the Prime Minister of India after coming back to power, in a party meeting at the same Khanapara field in Guwahati on 30th November told the gathering that the land swap deal with Bangladesh will not in a way be harmful for the people of Assam and will in fact be beneficial for the people of Assam in the long run!

Time and again the BJP had left no stone unturned to paint the Congress as betrayers of the faith of the people of Assam - they went hoarse shouting

that the Congress are anti-nationalists because the Congress agreed to the land swap deal! They know that any issue related to Bangladesh is an emotional issue for the people of Assam and they used it as a ploy to win electoral benefits and they succeed to some extent as seen in the last Lok Sabha election results. Similar was the case of the Lower Subansiri Dam project which was supported by the Congress and the BJP manipulated it before the elections whereby leaders like present Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh also publicly denounced the Dam while on a campaign trail in Assam. But now of course they are leaving no stone unturned to support the dam and work towards its implementation at all costs. The Congress had never been double-faced on these issues - the party had supported it then and would continue to support what is right for the state and the country. The Congress did not play politics on these issues of national interest. But the BJP’s turn about has revealed their actual face and this has not deceived the politically conscious people of Assam.

Along with spreading such false rumours against the Congress party the BJP also went back on many promises made to the people. Narendra Modi had promised employment to the

youths of Assam before elections but now his government has stopped all Central government appointments for a year. The NDA had also stopped appointments for five years when they were in power earlier. But the Tarun Gogoi led Congress government has decided to go ahead with its employment policies of filling up all vacant posts in the state. Apart from these there are many other policies adopted by the Narendra Modi led BJP government at the centre which went against the interests of the people of Assam like stop of additional rice ration to tea garden labourers, decrease of fund for MNREGA etc. It is therefore important that the Congress party take up these anti-people measures adopted by the BJP government to the door step of the people of Assam.

Hence as per the directive of the Hon’ble CM a memorandum listing these grievances, addressed to the Prime Minister of India was submitted to the Deputy Commissioner in the Districts and Sub-Divisional Officers / Circle Officers in Blocks and Mandals.

The salient points of the memorandum to the Prime Minister of India are as follows -

1. Implementation of National Food Security Act 2013 (NFSA).

We strongly protest the in-ordinate delay in giving Govt. of India's approval to the state of Assam, for implementing the Food Security Act, 2013, after fulfilling all the mandatory conditions as envisaged in the Act. In this regard we draw your attention to the memorandum submitted by Sri TarunGogoi, Chief Minister, Assam on 29 the Nov-2014 during your visit to Guwahati, where this issue was correctly highlighted.

2. Additional allotment of Rice and wheat to the Tea Garden workers of Assam.

As per provision of the plantation Labour Act, an additional quantity of 12,590 MT of rice and wheat are being provided continuously to the Tea Garden workers at 50 paisa per Kg. for the last 65 years in lieu of wages. But surprisingly, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution by a recent letter informed the Assam govt. that no separate allocation of food grains can be made to Tea Garden workers of Assam. This decision of Govt. of India will not only create chaotic situation among lakhs of Tea garden workers of Assam but also bring black days to the world famous Tea-industry of Assam. As such, we demand you to reconsider this anti-people and anti-poor decision of your govt. and allow to continuing the present system of providing additional allocation of food grains to the Tea workers at the present subsidized rate.

3. Closure of recruitment in Central Govt. Jobs :-

This decision is contrary to your declared policy of rapid employment opportunities to the youths. This will certainly add fuel to the fire in the long standing unemployment problem and jeopardize the social economic structure of our country. Therefore, we demand you to withdraw this anti-youth decision immediately and

arrange employment of our youths in different central sectors as per your election commitment.

4. Drastic cut of Assam's Annual Labour Budget in MGNREGA for 2014-15:-

The decision of your Govt. to cut drastically the Annual Labour Budget of MGNREGA 2014-14 for Assam, reflects your partisan attitude towards Assam. It is pertinent to mention that under MGNREGA the annual Labour budget 2014-15, for Assam was approved at Rs 1,165 core by the Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India. But now there is cut of Rs. 540 crore, which is more than half of the total approval budget without any Justification.

This whimsical decision of your Govt. will very badly affect the rural development of our State at this very high time of working season in Assam up to the month of April 2015. We strongly demand you to withdraw this decision and give Justice to Assam, by releasing the approved annual Labour budget under MGNREGA.

5. Suspension of North East Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy (NEIIPP)- 2007:-

This whimsical decision will have very far reaching effect on the overall development of all the NE states. This policy of NEIIPP 2007 adopted by UPA Govt. has tremendous impact on the industries and development of all the NE States, which has the validity till 2017. But this sudden suspension will have very negative effect on the economy of the NE States.

6. Neither to sanction retained projects and nor to retain any new projects under NLCPR:-

The non-Lapsable central pool

of resources (NLCPR) was created in 1998-99 to address the special development needs of the North East Region. This pool consists of unspent amount of stipulated 10% of Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) of various Central Ministers/ Departments, which is supposed to support infrastructure development projects in the Region. It is learn that about Rs. 12000.00 Crore has got accumulated, out of the unspent balance of 10% of the GBS of these Ministries. This amount should be made available for taking up development projects under NLCPR, the decision of your Government neither to sanction retained projects and nor to retain any new projects, will hamper the overall development prospective of the region. It is therefore requested to withdraw the said whimsical order, so as to take up emerging infrastructure projects for roads, inland water ways, power, irrigation, water supply etc. which will help NE States to achieve the twin objectives of addressing the development need of the region and providing a congenial eco- system for more even economic relations between India and South East Asia.

The 'Day of Deceit' observed by the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee all over Assam on 11th December was a huge success. All the District, Block and Mandal Committees took out rallies with placards shouting slogans against the anti-people measures of the NarendraModi led BJP government at the centre.

In continuation of this programme another big rally was also held in Guwahati at the end of December under the leadership of newly appointed APCC President Sri AnjanDutta and Hon'ble CM Sri TarunGogoi along with other leaders and workers of the party. ❖

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COLLECTIVE SANITATION AS PRACTICED BY MAHATMA GANDHI



Collective cleanliness

As I grew up in the Sewagram Ashram founded by Gandhiji in 1936, the picture that is etched in my mind is of our joyous participation in the collective cleaning drive in the Ashram. Oh, what joy it was for us children to walk with our own jhadu (broom), tokri (basket) and a little khurpi (shovel) and phawada (spade) and march out in teams to our allocated area for taking part in systematic community sanitation for three quarters of an hour each morning under the leadership of our elders. The time that we spent in cleaning the surroundings, especially the toilets, are one of the happiest memories of my life. Everything became so clean and the night soil was composted into pits that turned magically into Sone khaad, used as manure in the farms. The habit of cleaning the toilets has continued even today and it is with great pride that my family gets involved in this task.

For centuries, perhaps from the feudal ages or even earlier sanitation is considered to be a mean activity in India. The job used to be done by the members of a particular caste of people who were treated differently. Although every mother does the cleaning of the children and women sweep the household, cleaning of streets and latrines were left to the so called untouchables.

Even as a child, Gandhiji could not accept the idea of untouchability. When Dedhabhai came to clean the toilets in the Gandhi household in Probandar, his mother Putli Bai forbade Mohan, or Moniya as she used to call him from playing with him. It was unbearable to Mohan who for once could not comply with his mother's orders. Dedhabhai and Mohan became friends. Many years later, he told Dr. Ambedkar that he was wedded to untouchability much before he was wedded to Kasturba. His tireless campaign against untouchability had undoubtedly shaken the very foundation of the system. However, untouchability was not eradicated from the country. Even today untouchability is present despite Gandhiji's campaign and Dr. Ambedkar's constitution and laws.

Phoenix Settlement

Gandhiji began cleaning the toilets in South Africa as well. Ever since he established a community in Phoenix, he made cleaning of the campus a common activity for everyone. Cleaning of the toilets, which was considered to be the dirtiest of jobs was voluntarily taken up by Gandhiji himself until it became a natural part of the whole process of sanitation.

In Sewagram too, the collective sanitation became a fine art and developed into a scientific activity, when most of the

members joined the activity and some of them became leaders in planning and organizing the activity for the whole community. Everyone, from Gandhiji to the little ones in the Ashram used to carry the basket on their heads!



**Shobhana
Radhakrishna**

Experiments with different types of latrines were also conducted in the Ashram to make the cleansing process free of offensive smell and to use night soil for fertilizing the farms. It developed into a process that made it both hygienic and economically productive. But perhaps the most important dimension of the process was the social one. A task that was abhorred by the higher caste Hindus was turned into a daily ritual by Gandhiji in his Ashram. One of Gandhiji's methods of introducing his Ashram life to newcomers was to allot the task of cleaning the toilets. It was both a test of their willingness to change their lifestyle and an act of initiation in the Ashram way of living.

Once Srimanarayan, a young educated youth from London School of Economics had come to seek an

audience with Gandhiji in the Sewagram Ashram. He had come with big dreams of changing the Nation; eagerly awaiting his turn to tell his ideas to Gandhiji. On the appointed day of his meeting, even before he could utter a word, Gandhiji with a smiling face and soft voice instructed him to join the collective sanitation for which he was ready to leave. My mentor, Narayanbhai Desai was a teenager at that time and was responsible to perform the role of the senior partner to the beginners. He told me that it was most interesting for him to see the novice passing through almost a mental crisis in the earlier stages. His task was to present them the process in as pleasant a way as he could!

The process

The sanitation duties would rotate from time to time giving the Ashramites experience in various processes and preventing them from being bored. Preparing some of the implements such as brooms and preparing compost-pits were also part of the community sanitation activity. Community sanitation was Gandhiji's revolutionary method of social change, being a constructive revolt against untouchability. When Gandhiji turned his steps towards the villages, the prosperous Indians could hardly imagine what kind of villages captured Babu's attention. From the beginning of his stay in Maganwadi, Babu had begun going to the adjoining village to clean the faces from the streets and yards, where people normally relieved themselves. This was no jungle hamlet far from the railway track, but a village right by the city of Wardha reminisces Narainbhai Desai.

This work had two purposes. One was to encourage the villagers to adopt better habits of sanitation and the second was to show that proper Hindus could undertake such work. The job of 'sweeper' was assigned to an outcaste community, to fulfill this function. But

teaching such lessons to the villagers was no easy task as we are seeing even in today's times. For months on end the villagers looked on Gandhiji, Mahadevbhai and their companions as ordinary sweepers. Only, these were better, because they took no money for their work!

'Go over there. It is dirtier on that side.' So said one who had just eased himself, pointing to the spot he had soiled. In the Sabarmati Ashram it was dumping the buckets of 'night soil' into compost pits, and to scrub the buckets with coconut-leaf brooms. But here things were different. When my father questioned him about what good was this work, as it doesn't affect people. To that Gandhiji said, 'the bane of untouchability is no ordinary blemish on our society. We will have to perform a prolonged penance to remove it.' Gandhiji was so enthusiastic about sanitation and a stickler for cleanliness that he maintained that if he had his way he would be out there sweeping those roads himself. Not only that, he would plant flowers there and water them daily. Where there was dung of heaps today, he would make gardens. 'Sweeping is an art in itself, he said.

Village sanitation program

Health, sanitation and beauty were apparent outcomes of village sanitation programme; Gandhiji wanted to tackle the question of the biological resource of natural fertilizers and disposal of human and animal waste. Perhaps his fastidious habits of personal hygiene were inherited from his mother Putlibai, who was particular about religious observances.

Perhaps it is also the time we learn from the Japanese people, how to keep the surrounding and the neighborhood clean. During my recent trip to Tokyo and Kyoto in October 2014, I chanced upon group of elderly in uniforms, brooms and cleaning materials, who were keeping the sub ways, hotels, rooms, roads and all the public places

CONGRESS PRESIDENT CONGRATULATES NEW SRILANKAN PRESIDENT

Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi has congratulated Shri Maithripala Sirisena for his emphatic and historic victory in the presidential elections in Sri Lanka. Also extending her greetings to the people of Sri Lanka, Smt. Gandhi applauded their commitment to democracy.

Underlining the historic and friendly ties that Sri Lanka and India share, Smt. Gandhi hoped that the relations between the two countries will continue to strengthen further under President Sirisena's leadership. She extended her good wishes to the President elect for his future endeavors towards the welfare and unity of the people of Sri Lanka. ❖

spic and span, like only the Japanese can. Their dedication, commitment and diligence is something to learn from. From their childhood, Japanese children are taught to clean. Called o-soji, this is a part of their education.

Even the Japanese audience of the recent World Cup matches in football demonstrated to the world how much they value cleanliness. Though their team lost, after the match was over, all of them rose as one and cleaned the stadium as though to do their natural duty of maintaining cleanliness and order all around. Can we learn from them? After all, it was just 66 years ago that our Father of the Nation demonstrated to us that cleanliness is next to Godliness. ❖

The author is an eminent Gandhian who has been involved in constructive activities through the Sarvodaya movement and has been re-inspiring the present generation about the Gandhian ideology for bringing change in the society. She is the chief functionary of the Gandhian Forum for Ethical Corporate Governance of SCOPE.

FUNDAMENTALS OF NEHRU'S SOCIALISM



Dr Shashi
Kumar Singh

Although the force of circumstances compelled Nehru to tone down his spirit for socialism, yet he remained the first and fore-most socialist of pre-independence India and preached the ideas of socialism through constitutional and peaceful means. While this is correct to assert that the Congress and the populace of India did not imbibe a good dose of socialistic doctrines, this is also correct that Nehru's role in spreading the ideas of socialism is matchless and beyond any suspicion. Above all, his contributions to the National Planning Committee, his trenchant criticism of the vested interests, capitalism and imperialism, his ideas on economic equality and his untiring efforts to improve the lot of the downtrodden, made him the best advocate of socialism.

In the end, if we make a final assessment of Nehru's socialism of pre-independence India, the following fundamentals come sharply over his ideology:

Firstly, right from 1927 to 1947, Nehru's concept of socialism was in constant evolution. In 1929, his philosophy was closer to Marxism than any other form of socialism, but in 1936 his experiences of the world and India too had made somewhat sober on the issue and during the 40's he had introduced certain good points of Gandhism in his own concept of socialism. Yet, certain fundamentals of Nehru's socialism remained unchanged. For Nehru, "it aims at the "Control by the State" of the means of production—that is, land and mines and the factories and the like—and the means of distribution, like railways, etc. and also banks and similar institutions. The idea is that the individuals should not be allowed to exploit any of these methods or institutions or the labour of others, to their own personal advantage."⁰¹

Secondly, Nehru's concept of socialism was a curious mixture of the west and the East. He had borrowed the term and, to a great extent its philosophy too from the west but

wanted to adopt it to Indian culture and tradition. Nehru never liked to copy the west blindly but to introduce "the ideal to the genius of her (India) race."⁰²

Thirdly, under the influence of Gandhiji, Nehru believed in the purity of means to achieve the end.⁰³

In the case of socialism too, he was particularly adhorrent to the cult of violence. He could never appreciate such methods and for this reason he looked quite away from the Marxists.⁰⁴ His ideal was non-violent and evolutionary transformation of society on a socialistic pattern.

Fourthly, Nehru's socialism stood for the freedom of the individual. The purpose of socialism was not to kill or suppress the individuality but to keep it free "from economic and cultural bondage."⁰⁵ It was on this account that he did not agree about the ways of ruthless suppression of individual freedom by the Soviet Russia.

Fifthly, Nehru wanted the nationalization of big industries and the decentralization of small-scale industries. But the machinery that was to control the industries was to run on the democratic pattern. Here lies the seed of democratic socialism which Nehru tried to translate into practice during the years of power. He had no faith in the dictatorship of the proletariat or in any other form of the authoritarian Government. He aspired for the establishment of a democratic socialistic state. ⁰⁶ Indian masses in order to enlist their support for the national movement of India. He always toned down his aspirations for socialism whenever the problem of Congress split or weakening of the national movement for independence was in sight.⁰⁷

And finally, socialism appealed to Nehru because of its scientific approach. But this theoretical juggling had made Nehru's concept of socialism most intellectual than real. To a great extent, it was abstract and idealistic in its flavor,

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NEHRU'S WORLD VIEW - ONE OF EQUALITY, ONE OF COOPERATION AND ONE KEEPING AWAY MORE REMARKABLY FROM THE MILITARY BLOCKS THAT LED TO THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT



Speech of Mr. Hamid Karzai, Former President of Afghanistan at International Conference on "Nehru's Worldview and His Legacy Democracy, Inclusion & Empowerment" Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi

It's a tremendous honor for me to have been invited to the commemoration of a personality with whom I was familiar even my younger age and as a teenager. Been an Afghan and being closed to India geographically, emotionally and politically, Of course Pandit Nehru was for us very often a name of household conversations. But for me as an Afghan, Pandit Nehru became closer as I began to get academic introductions to him through my years as a student in Simla. My first introduction to this great personality of the world and the great son of India was when I in the 1st year of college began to learn the English language and by going through my syllabus of English language a book called "Tribute to the English language" had an essay of Pandit Nehru. In that essay a part of it read this way "and I came out of the coal mine with my head spinning around me". This was the of Pandit Nehru visiting during the colonial rule a coal mine somewhere in India. Seeing the plight of the coal mine workers in the foreign rule and the connection between the two when he came out he said, I came out with my head spinning around me. For me at that time this was the curious question, why was he coming out of the coal mine with his head spinning around him.

Later on, as I studied, his Discovery of India one of the most remarkable books that anyone can read. I found out that by that he meant Independence for India.

Independence for India as an end itself but also independence for India as the means to the better improved life of the people of India and India's connection again to the surrounding region of India and to the rest of the world.

So, through that essay I learnt the connection of Pandit Nehru and all of the freedom fighters of India to the people of India to the masses of India.

A remarkable story that Pandit Nehru tells in his Discovery of India is of his needing with large gathering of people. During the campaign for Independence, during the struggle of Independence Pandit Nehru writes that he would go to meetings and people would say "Bharat Mata Ki Jai". And he kept hearing this and he kept hearing this and one day he asked "who is this Bharat Mata? What is this Bharat Mata?" And someone from the crowd called back 'Dharti'. And he said "Dharti yes", "the plants of India, the rivers of India, the mountains from Himalaya to Kanyakumari perhaps". But also he told him "the people of India" All the people of India and we say all the people of India that's exactly the essence of this message. No one is left out, of independence and the movement forward for India's Social and economic change, an epic story by all proportions, of a nation struggling for independence through such a quality of leadership without violence as the Mahatma would ask, and in pursuit of a greater good for the man-kind. As the leaders of the Indian movement for independence would ask.

And then linking free India to the rest of the world, In full light of India civilization, and culture and heritage and the beauty of the presence.

Pandit Nehru has been 2nd only you know of who.... Mahatma Gandhi. His disciple but also his intellectual counter-part, faithful and yet challenging.

The story ladies & gentleman inspires all of us and through the struggle for Independence India not only gained independence but it transmitted a broader, bigger message to all of the humanity... of Nonviolence of the greatest values that man-kind holds so dear.... of peace and of co-existence.

After independence as the honorable president of the

125TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF Pt NEHRU

Indian National Congress just mentioned India through the work of Pandit Nehru and his associates became the greatest democracy on earth.

Many years ago, during one of India's election, the Times Magazine or the News Week had a remarkable beautiful headline "India's elections the greatest show on earth". Indeed the greatest show on earth. And through democracy and through the revitalization of India's institutions in the modern configuration of it. The parliamentary democracy, the freedom of expression, the freedom of media and the reinvigoration of Indian culture and music and languages and the and the millennium old civilization and its presentation. once again to the world and its connection once again to the world.

Nehru's world view one of equality, one of cooperation and one keeping away more remarkably from the military blocks that led to the non-aligned movement.

All of this as an Afghan and as Afghan's inspire Afghan people. Our country was among the first to participate in the non-aligned movement. Our country also very luckily had a role and an association with India's movement for independence.

Raja MahendraPratap, Molvi Rahmatullah, Molvi Vaidulla in the 1915-16 came to Afghanistan and established a government in exile in Afghanistan for a while. Subsequent to that, the frontier Gandhi, Farukh Abdul Gaffar Khan as he is called in India and later in 1940s NetajiSubhashChandra Bose and all personalities and leaders who came to Afghanistan and from whom Afghanistan learnt as well.

So, we are as Afghans happy in many-many ways to be associated with this great struggle for independence and to have learnt from the tolerance that it should even today to the colonizing force.

We too ladies and gentleman in the past thirteen years have emulated all in the footsteps of India and its great leaders in trying to bring democracy to Afghanistan, In trying to recognize a multi ethnic country.

The freedom of the press, the freedom of speech and the principle of social harmony, indeed the practice has improved Afghanistan and because of that it is today that I stand before you as the former president of Afghanistan. It is democracy and the well of the Afghan people that brings me here.

Nehru as a nationalist, would say that he cannot tolerate alien domination. Nehru also as a nationalist would say but this also should lead India to economic and social change. It is this principle that we hold dear all over the world.

India is today indeed has a responsibility based on the principles that it evolved for itself and as a example for the rest of the world. There are many around the world who still are under one from the other of domination and in need. And I am certain that India's duty today will fulfill their responsibility in providing assistance and help to the rest of us around the world.

"The words are lovely dark and deep
but I have promises to keep,
and miles to go before I sleep
and miles to go before a sleep"

This lovely poem of Robert Frost was found on Pandit Nehru's desk the day after he left us.

His dream is fulfilled in many ways. I am sure his spirit is happy today seeing a great, strong and developed India.

And it is this dream and eagerness to continue to work that keeps us alive and working in Afghanistan as well. Though the words are lovely dark and deep but we in Afghanistan have miles to go further and miles to go further and India's help has been with us. And I am sure will continue with us as we move further. ❖

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FUNDAMENTALS OF NEHRU'S SOCIALISM

"Mr. Nehru's socialism should not be confused with real socialism, the socialism now being built in a number of countries and which is already a reality in others."08 ❖

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NETAJI, WAS AN OUTSTANDING LEADER OF THE INDIAN FREEDOM MOVEMENT AND A REVOLUTIONARY PAR EXCELLENCE



On 29 December 1929, the historic Session of the Indian National Congress took place at Lahore under the Presidentship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Mahatma Gandhi himself came forward to move the resolution on the national demand of complete independence. At the stroke of midnight of 31 December 1929, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, unfurled the flag of independence on the banks of the river Ravi in the presence of a mammoth gathering. Subhas Chandra Bose went a step further from the position he had taken at the Calcutta Congress. He moved a resolution that the Congress should aim at setting up a parallel Government in the country and towards that end, should undertake the task of organizing the workers, the peasants and the youths.

Prince of Wales was announced for November 1921. The Congress called upon the people to observe a total *hartal* on the day the Prince's landing was scheduled to take place in Bombay". Like other Indian cities, Calcutta too rose to the occasion. The Congress Committee vested all its powers

Subhas Chandra Bose, popularly known as Netaji, was an outstanding leader of the Indian freedom movement and a revolutionary *par excellence*. He effectively took the Indian Freedom Movement beyond the frontiers of India which is perhaps a rare feat in the history of our freedom struggle. His magnificent and inspiring words '*Jai Hind*', which echos in everyone's ears and ignites patriotic instincts in our heart, have truly become the national rallying call.

Subhas Chandra Bose was born on 23 January 1897 at Cuttack in Orissa. He was educated at Ravenshaw Collegiate School, Cuttack, Scottish Church College, Calcutta' and Cambridge University. In 1920, Subhas Chandra Bose took the Indian Civil Service examination and secured fourth rank. He, however, resigned from the Indian Civil Service in April 1921 and plunged himself into the national struggle. His desire was to understand the successive stages of the struggle that Mahatma Gandhi had planned which would, gradually, lead the country to capture power from the unwilling hands of the British Government. He got in touch with Mahatma Gandhi and put probing questions which Gandhiji answered with his usual patience, some of which satisfied him but others did not. After his meeting with the Mahatma, he met Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das in Calcutta. His first meeting with Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das was decisive and Bose felt convinced that he had found a leader to follow. Deshbandhu welcomed his new youthful lieutenant with open arms and entrusted him with a number of responsibilities.

In 1921, the country was vibrant with patriotic fervour and there was unparalleled popular enthusiasm in response to Gandhiji's call for boycott and non-cooperation. In the teeth of popular opposition, the British Government sought to prepare the ground for the inauguration of constitutional reforms recommended in 1919 by the Secretary of State for India, Mr. Montague and the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford and later embodied them in an Act. A visit to India of the

in its President, Chittaranjan Das, who in turn put Subhas Chandra Bose in-charge of the movement. In the second week of December 1921, Subhas Chandra Bose was taken into custody alongwith Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das and other leaders and later sentenced to six months' imprisonment. On 31 December 1922, Chittaranjan Das resigned as Congress President and formed the Swaraj Party alongwith Motilal Nehru. In 1924, Deshbandhu was elected as the first Mayor of Calcutta Corporation and Subhas Chandra Bose was appointed the Chief Executive Officer. Within a few months, Subhas Chandra Bose was able to give a new orientation and momentum to the administration of the Calcutta Corporation.

In the middle of 1924, the influence and prestige of the Swaraj Party and its leader Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das reached new heights. The British Government could no longer wait and watch as the Swaraj Party went on scoring one success after another. In sheer desperation, the Government decided to strike at the root of the organization and on 25 October 1924, Subhas Chandra Bose was arrested and sent to Rangoon. With the death of Chittaranjan Das in 1925, the members of the Swaraj Party quietly returned to the Congress fold.

At the Annual Session of the Indian National Congress of 1928 held in Calcutta under the Presidentship of Pandit Motilal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose emerged as the principal spokesman of the younger and leftist forces in the national movement. He was also the General Officer Commanding of the Congress Volunteer Corps. On 29 December 1929, the historic Session of the Indian National Congress took place at Lahore under the Presidentship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Mahatma Gandhi himself came forward to move the resolution on the national demand of complete independence. At the stroke of midnight of 31 December 1929, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, unfurled the flag of independence on the banks of the river Ravi in the presence of a mammoth gathering. Subhas Chandra Bose went a step further from the position he had taken at the Calcutta Congress. He moved a resolution that the Congress should aim at setting up a parallel Government in the country and towards that end, should undertake the task of organizing the workers, the peasants and the youths. The resolution moved by him was, however, defeated. At the Lahore Congress, Subhas Chandra Bose, Srinivas Iyengar and others of the leftist camp, were excluded from the Congress Working Committee.

In 1930, Subhas Chandra Bose formed a Congress Democratic Party to promote his programme of action. However, before he could proceed with his plans, he was arrested as soon as he returned to Calcutta from Lahore and sentenced to a year's rigorous imprisonment.

In January 1938, when he was in London he came to know

about his formal election as the Congress President, so he returned to India soon. In the meantime, the Congress Party had accepted office in seven out of eleven Provinces of the British India. In 1939, Subhas Chandra Bose was re-elected as the Congress President, defeating Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya who had been backed by Gandhiji and the Congress Working Committee. Soon after the election, the members of the Congress Working Committee resigned, and the Congress met at Tripuri under the shadow of a crisis within the Party. In April 1939, Subhas Chandra Bose resigned his Presidentship of the Congress and in May-1939, he announced the formation of the Forward Bloc within the Congress. In 1939-40, Subhas Chandra Bose felt dissatisfied with the political ideology of the Indian National Congress. He decided to chart out a separate path for the achievement of *Swaraj* for India. But the great hindrance in his way was the repressive policy of the British Raj which had lodged him in Jail. Even after his release on the condition that he would not move out of his home and would not meet anybody, a few dozens of CID personnel were posted around his home at Elgin Road, Calcutta. On 16-17 January 1941, Subhas Chandra Bose slipped out of his Elgin Road home in disguise, reached Delhi in the evening of 18 January, 1941 and boarded the train for Peshawar. He had to face quite a few problems before he could cross the Afghan Border and enter Kabul. Thereafter, he was in touch with German leaders and other European leaders in order to seek their support for the cause of *Swaraj*.

Ultimately, Subhas Chandra Bose reached Japan. The Prime Minister, Hikedji Tojo welcomed him and promised him support in his mission. On 4 July, 1943, he took over the leadership of the Indian Independence Movement from Rash Behari Bose in East Asia. He organized the *Azad Hind Fauj* with its headquarters at Singapore and became its Supreme Commander. On 21 October 1943, he proclaimed the formation of provisional Government of *Azad Hind* at a historic assembly in Singapore. The Provisional Government was recognised by nine countries including the then three world powers-Japan, Germany and Italy.

After the suspension of INA activities, Subhas Chandra Bose went back to Singapore and issued instructions to the civilian and army wings of the provisional Government of *Azad Hind* as to what they should do. The Cabinet Ministers agreed to leave Singapore and move further eastwards. In the meantime, the surrender of Japan was officially announced on 15 August and on 17 August 1945, Netaji took a plane from Saigon. Within two years when India became independent and commenced its journey towards securing its rightful place in the comity of nations, every Indian recalled what Netaji had said, "In this mortal world everything perishes and will perish, but the ideas, ideals and dreams do not". ❖

IYC PROTESTED NEW ANTI-FARMERS' LAND ACQUISITION ORDINANCE



Several Youth Congress office bearers, activists, workers & members were injured after they were brutally lathi charged by police while they were leading a peaceful protest towards the BJP HQ on 5th January, 2015 against anti farmers land acquisition ordinance. Many injured Youth Congress activist were admitted to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital and are undergoing treatment, while hundreds of them were arrested and detained in the Parliament Street Police station.

After the arrest and detention of Shri Amarinder Singh Raja, newly appointed President of IYC, thousands of Youth Congress workers gheraoed the police station, reiterating their demand to release all the youth workers.

Many senior Congress leaders Ghulam Nabi Azad, Motilal Vohra, C.P. Joshi, Mohan Prakash, Sheila Dixit, Janardan Dwivedi, Salman Khurshid, Mukul Wasnik, Ashok Tanwar, Sachin Pilot, Suraj Hegde, Deepender Hooda, Mahendra Joshi and others participated.

In his maiden address, Shri Amarinder Singh Raja assured that Youth Congress will be more pro-active in raising the voice of the people on various political and social issues. As the Youth Wing of the Congress Party it will be our aim to formulate & execute plans to connect with the masses on ground and understand their Grievances. He

appealed to thousands of Youth Congress workers gathered in the function to lead an agitation against the anti-people & anti-farmer Modi led government which has passed an ordinance to amend the Land Acquisition Bill to appease their election sponsors and big corporate houses.

Shri Raja underlined that there is a need to expose the incompetent Modi government, which has failed to deliver on any pre election promises made to the people. He told all the Youth Congress workers to aggressively launch agitation program across the country against anti-people policies of the Modi government and also against the growing incidence of communal, fascist and divisive forces in our nation which are trying to derail us from the path of inclusive economic development.

Addressing a mammoth gathering at IYC Office Shri Raja thanked the Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi and Congress Vice President Shri Rahul Gandhi for giving him this opportunity. He assured the Congress party that he

NEW IYC PRESIDENT

The Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi has on 25th December, 2014 approved the name of Shri Amrinder Singh Raja Brar, MLA (Punjab) as President of the Indian Youth Congress with immediate effect, according to AICC General Secretary, Shri Janardan Dwivedi.

would come upto their expectations and work at the grass-root level to strengthen the party organization.

Shri Raja also gave a call to the Youth Congress workers to be prepared for agitation on the streets at every level to oppose the policies of Modi Government. On this occasion he also remembered Tenth Guru Shri Guru Gobind Singh ji on his Jayanti on 5th January, 2015.

Former Youth Congress President, Shri Rajeev Satav in his address thanked Shri Rahul Gandhi and all the youth workers for giving him their enduring support in his five year's tenure. Speaking on the occasion the outgoing President Shri Rajeev Satav said that whenever the command is given to anybody from Punjab the Congress party makes a comeback. He assured the new president complete support in delivering his duties successfully.

Shri Gulam Nabi Azad, CWC Member, Ex. Union Minister and Ex. IYC President while addressing the gathering said that today organization needs to struggle at block and district level to get the desired results. He appealed the new IYC President to organize Youth Congress Conventions within 2 to 3 months and impart them training on prevailing issues in public interest. ❖



STATESWATCH

CHHATTISGARH

Adivasis not safe in BJP rule

Raipur: Former chief minister Shri Ajit Jogi has said that the Adivasis were not safe in the BJP rule in the state. He said that the innocent and illiterate Adivasis of the Mahasamund area who belong to BPL category and of the 'gond' community were being cheated by the bank and their agents.

Shri Jogi said on 1 December, 2014 that the BJP government in the state was enticing the protected tribes to go in for vesicotomy operations and are trying to kill them by giving them poisonous medicines. He said that the loan money was being withdrawn in a fraudulent way with the connivance of the bank officials and their agents so that they became indebted to the banks and thus their land can be snatched fraudulently.

Shri Jogi has warned the state government to immediately stop this fraud against the poor and innocent Adivasi people and an enquiry be made into this fraud.

Tributes to Dr. Ambedkar

Raipur: City Congress President, Shri Vikas Upadhaya paid tributes to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on his 58th death anniversary



here on 6th December, 2014.

Shri Upadhaya garlanded the photo of Dr. Ambedkar and then lighted a lamp and then recalled the services of Dr. Ambedkar towards the nation.

Others who paid tributes were Sunita Sharma, Jagdish Ahuja, Brijesh Satpathi, Raju Naik, Jeet Sharma, Barsati Ram Sahu, Divyakishore Niaal, Ashutosh Mishra, Baleshwar Sona with others.

NEW DELHI

Congress Foundation Day Celebrated

New Delhi: A convention of the Congress workers was organized on the occasion of the 129th Foundation Day celebration of the Congress Party at the Rajwada Banquet Hall in Model Town, on the GT Karnal Road, on 28th December, 2014. The Congress Foundation Day was celebrated in all the 70 Assembly constituencies of Delhi. On the occasion, 3000 workers of the Aam Aadmi Party pledged their support and joined the Congress Party. An impressive Congress



Foundation Day function was held at the Chattarpur Assembly constituency.

Prominent among those who attended the Foundation Day function at Model

Town were Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Shri Arvinder Singh, ex-CLP leader Shri Haroon Yusuf, ex-MLAs Kunwar Karan Singh and Shri Balram Tanwar. The Foundation Day functions at Kondli and Patparganj in



East Delhi were addressed by ex-MLAs Ch. Anil Kumar, Shri Amrish Gautam and Shri Shoaib Iqbal.

Addressing the Congress workers, DPCC president Shri Arvinder Singh said Congress was the only political party which did not divide the society for political gains, but it has always been the endeavour of the Congress party to carry all communities and all shades of opinion along in a true democratic manner, as the Congress has always strived for the welfare, progress and uplift of people from all castes and religions. He said Congress had always accommodated all shades of opinion, and women and youth had figured prominently in its scheme of things. He thanked the Congress workers for turning up in large numbers to attend the party's Foundation Day function. He said Congress had a solid history, and it was common knowledge about the Congress party's contribution in the independence struggle, and for building a modern India after gaining independence. He said the country could gain independence from the shackles of the British rule only because of the sacrifices made by the Congress leaders and workers, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and Congress' history was full of struggles and sacrifices.

Shri Haroon Yusuf said the Congress party, under the leadership of Shri Arvinder Singh, was one united family in Delhi, and the party would face the

coming Delhi Assembly elections with confidence and assurance. He said the Congress will inflict crushing defeats on the BJP and the AAP party and will return to power in Delhi, as the people wanted the development model implemented by the Congress Government during its 15-year rule to be carried forward with the same momentum. He said the people of Delhi should be wary of those parties who make false promises to get their votes, but then forget all about the promises after coming to power. He said those who had promised 50 per cent and 30 per cent reduction in the power tariff made a U-turn after coming to power as they made manifold hike in the power tariffs after coming to power. He said Congress president Smt. Sonia Gandhi's consistent stand has been that whether the party wins or loses elections, it should never mislead and misguide the voters to get their votes on the basis of false promises.

Ex-MLAs Shri Kunwar Karan Singh and Shri Balram Tanwar said the development works in the unauthorized colonies had been stopped completely, and pension for the old age, widows and the handicapped had been stopped. They said the local MLA had disappeared from the scene, leaving the people to fend for themselves.

Protest against bungling

New Delhi: Congress leader from Tikamgarh who is also a honoured Social worker, Shri Pawan Ghuwara staged a protest dharna at Jantar Mantar here on 21-22 December, 2014.

Shri Ghuwara protested against the corruption and bungling in the money given by the UPA Government as the special package for Bundelkhand development on the initiative of Congress Vice-President, Shri Rahul Gandhi.

Shri Ghuwara said that the bungling in this special package was much bigger than the bungling and scam in the state services selection Board.

The bungling was done in the name of development and not only done in water, forest and land but also in the cattle feed

for the animals. The officials who were experts in manipulation of figures were given the responsibility in Bundelkhand and now they are transferred back to Bhopal.

Congress Seva Dal Day

New Delhi: Heartiest greetings on the auspicious occasion of Congress Seva Dal Day. Its foundation day is celebrated on the last Sunday of every year with a view to review its previous performance and chalk out and plan its future endeavours with renewed vigour. Let us join millions of volunteers of Congress Seva Dal under the leadership of its commander in Chief Hon'ble Congress President. Celebration of this year falls on last Sunday 28th December, 2014.

One and all know that Congress Seva Dal is oldest frontal organization of Indian National Congress, oldest political party of our country. Congress Seva Dal was founded on 28th December 1923 with main aim of service before self motto. Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru was elected its First President. Congress Seva Dal provided steel frame on which Indian National Congress built its struggle for freedom, thus this is back bone of Congress.

Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru also encouraged Congress Seva Dal to contribute towards international understanding co-operation. Congress Seva Dal brotherhood was established on 7th May 1966 with main aim to gear up past and present cadre/force of Congress Seva Dal together in the service of Congress and country.

Dr. N.S. Hardikar Founder & Sanchalak of Congress Seva Dal was elected its first chairman, Shri S.V. Inamdar Chief organizer of Congress Seva Dal ex-officio, V. Chairman and Shri Ravi Dutt was an humble Uchch Sainik of Congress Seva Dal 1953, as secretary respectively.

Smt. Indira Gandhi, our great determined leader presided over its first annual meet on 7th January 1968 in Hyderabad at a time of 71st Congress Session.

Shri Rajiv Gandhi, our beloved leader

inaugurated its Historical National Conference on (Panchayati Raj) on 23rd August 1989.

He also provided much impetus to it to become more meaningful as a service organization.

Diluting MGNREGA

New Delhi: The Congress Spokesperson, Smt. Shobha Oza on 9th January, 2015 slammed the Government for systematically diluting NREGA and adversely affecting the lives of crores dependent on the scheme for their livelihood. Charging the Government with deliberately creating circumstances that are leading to low rural wages and farm distress, Smt. Oza wondered if the BJP and Shri Modi, elected on the slogan of "Sabka saath Sabka vikas" was in reality practicing "Abki Baar-Gharib ke pet par Vaar". Smt. Oza said.

Taking the earlier Union Rural Development Minister Shri Nitin Gadkari head-on for withholding MNREGA payments worth more than Rs. 10,000 crores to states, Smt. Oza said she wondered if the bureaucracy had started working at the whims and fancies of Shri Gadkari in disbursement of funds to the states.

Quoting a Rural Development Ministry report, Smt. Oza said that Shri Nitin Gadkari has created the impression through press statements that MGNREGA, which provides livelihood to crores of people, might be 'discontinued' across the country.

Smt. Oza questioned the intent of the Modi Government and sought an explanation as to why the disbursement of funds delayed by several months which has left crores of poor people throughout the country completely helpless.

Smt. Oza also highlighted that under the Modi Government the number of households benefitted from the MNREGA scheme has been reduced to 1/3rd.

Holy 'Chhadar' for Kaliyar Sharif

New Delhi: Under the leadership



of the All-India Congress Minority Department, the 'Chhadar' for "Kaliyar Sharif" from Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi was escorted to 'Kaliyar Sharif' here on 4th January, 2015.

'Kaliyar Sharif' is near Roorkee in Uttarakhand. The holy 'Chhadar' was received by Shri Hasan Ahmad, Shri Haroon Yusuf, Uttarakhand Minority Department head, Shri Manjoor Ahmad Baig, Shri Ali Mehandi, Shri Salim Ahmad, Haji Noor Hassan, Shri Shakeel Khan and Asif Mohammad.

GUJARAT

Historic decision on Sonia Nagar

Vadodra: On 29th December, 2014, the GOG has declared that Municipal Corporation cannot acquire Sonia Nagar land legally and without their permission. Truth Prevails, It is proved that forcing Mukhya Mantri Awas Yojana on Sonia Nagar residents was a planned deliberate Blunder, technically Residents of Sonia Nagar are owners of the land, and VMSS cannot force them to go in for Mukhya Mantri Awas Yojana and acquire that land. The Municipal Commissioner and Mayor in whose ward Sonia Nagar is located deliberately ignored the land status and formed a nexus with a Builder and entered into a contract of PPP model of Mukhyamantri Awas Yojana. This is live example of big fraud, and corruption by the Municipal commissioner and BJP Mayor.

This is a major victory of Congress and a big blow to BJP and Anandiben Government and Mukhyamantri Awas Yojana. A scheme to mint crores of rupees

by earning premium from demolition and selling prime land of slums. And not following any procedures in demolition and rehabilitation in a haste to earn money in all urban cities across Gujarat.

This victory will benefit lacs of families who are given such plots on ULC land as a part of rehabilitation by the Govt. in past across the state and stopped Government setting up a wrong precedence of occupying private land illegally in name of Development. A dictatorial decision of State Government is exposed and Congress has forced them to withdraw.

HARYANA

Protest against robbery from temples and cow killing

Gurgaon: Haryana Pradesh Congress spokesperson and patron of the 'Vikas manch' Shri Khazan Singh presided over the worker's meeting here.

The meeting raised the issue of stealing of precious idols and other religious things made of silver and other metals from a Jain temple. Shri Khazan Singh has appealed to the Police Commissioner of Gurgaon to take prompt action and recover the idols and other materials from the thieves.

Shri Singh also raised the issue of killing of cow in Manesar area and the rising crimes in Gurgaon. He also raised the demolition of houses of poor and backward class in the Shitala colony without giving any prior notice. He said the affected people were sitting on a dharna in this cold weather and added that the massive mahapanchayat stayagraha of 360 villages would be held later if the administration does not take any positive step.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Foundation Day Celebrated

Solan: The District Congress Committee celebrated the Foundation Day of the Congress at the Congress Bhawan here on 28th December, 2014.

On the occasion, it was pledged to spread the people's welfare programmes of the Congress to each and every citizen of the country. The work of the Congress since the beginning till now was remembered. The history of the Congress and its struggle for the independence of the country was recalled.



Those present were Social Welfare Minister of HP, Shri Dhaniram Shadil, Former MLA and Former All India Mahila Congress President, Ms. Krishna Mohini. Pradesh Chief observer Shri Harimohan Sharma, District Congress President, Shri Rahul Thakur, PCC Member, Shri Madan Chaudhary, DCC General Secretary, Shri Arvind Gupta, BCC treasurer, Shri Sushil Chaudhary, Usha Sharma, Jyotisana Thakur, Sudesh Parihar, Bhisham Chauhan, Malti, Nitasha with all office-bearers of the Frontal organization of the Congress.

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Post-election review in Leh

Leh: District Congress Committee (DCC), Leh, took a Post-Assembly Election review of Polling Station-wise poll scenario, thereby, giving a land-slide victory to Shri Nawang Rigzin Jora, Shri Deldan Namgyal and Shri Asgar Ali Karbalai in Ladakh. The Meeting was held under the Presidentship of Shri Tsering Samphel, President, DCC, Leh today on the 26th of December, 2014.

It was heartening that Shri Nawang Rigzin Jora, Shri Deldan Namgyal and Shri Asgar Ali Karbalai, have got extraordinary vote lead in almost 70% of polling stations in Ladakh.

The review meeting was attended by

all Congress Office-bearers, Strategists, Honorable MLAs, MLC, Honorable CEC, Honorable Councillors, representatives of Panchayat Co-ordination Committee, all Presidents and office bearers of District Congress frontal organizations. The meeting at the last adopted a resolution unanimously, thereby, extending heartiest congratulations to the politically enlightened voters of Ladakh region for their thoughtful, intelligent and decisive support extended in favour of Indian National Congress thereby depicting the wisdom of the Ladakhis different from those of other parts of the country having logic, rationalism and secularist approach.

MADHYA PRADESH

Foundation Day Celebrated

Bhopal: Secularism is our Constitutional heritage and every citizen has the moral right to abide and propagate their religion, said AICC General Secretary Shri Digvijay Singh during the Foundation Day function here on 28th December, 2014.

Shri Digvijay Singh said the BJP was trying to disintegrate India on the basis of Hindutva and religion. This can be good for politics but not for the country.

The function was held at the Indira Bhawan where freedom fighters were honoured after the flag hoisting ceremony. Shri Singh said that it was only Congress which carried forward the freedom struggle and attained freedom. He added that all classes of people, Hindu, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians participated in the freedom struggle.

BJP history revealed

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh Adivasi Development Council chairman, Shri Kantilal Bhuria on 29 December, 2014 has criticized the Modi government for celebrating 'good governance' Diwas despite the fact that many Adivasi in Assam were massacred.

Shri Bhuria said that the people of Bodo land who were behind the massacre

supported the BJP during the Lok Sabha elections. It is truly shocking that the BJP has a history of taking support from any terrorist group for their interest. It can be naxalites in Chhattisgarh, Babbar Khalsa in Punjab and separatist leaders in Kashmir like Sajjad lone and Shabirshah Gilani.

Freedom Fighters Honoured

Bhopal: The Pradesh Congress Committee celebrated the Foundation Day of the Congress Party here at the Congress Bhawan here on 28th December, 2014. AICC General Secretary, Shri Digvijay Singh was the chief guest.



The function started by unfurling the party flag and thereafter freedom fighters were honoured by giving them shawls and a coconut.

Shri Digvijay Singh addressed the gathering and said that Mahatma Gandhi had made the Congress, the party of the common man. Our youth should be praised as they have forcefully raised the issue of corruption in the Services Selection Board in Bhopal that people will not forget.

Also present were Shri Laxman Singh, Shri Rajiv Singh, Smt. Abha Singh, Smt. Mandvi Chauhan, Shri Kunal Chaudhary, Shri Kailash Mishra, Shri Jayvardhan Singh, Shri Chandrika Prasad Dwivedi, Shri K.K. Mishra with many others.

Suicides by farmers in Madhya Pradesh

Bhopal: Chief Spokesperson of the Pradesh Congress, Shri K.K. Mishra said the State was given an award for agricultural development in the state whereas 29 thousand farmers have

committed suicides in the period of Shivraj Singh's rule in the state.

Shri Mishra said that the government officials have played with the figures and have shown increase in the rate of GDP to get the award for the state which is not true. The farmers were burdened by the loan of Rs. 1584.69 crores and as they were unable to repay the loans. This is the reason that the farmers took the extreme step.

Foundation Day celebrated

Gwalior: The City Congress Committee (outer) celebrated the Foundation Day of the Congress Party here on 28 December, 2014. The function was presided over by City Congress President, Dr. Darshan Singh.



The function started by singing Vandematram and then tributes were paid to great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and K. Kamaraj. Thereafter, the party tricolor was unfurled.

During the function freedom fighters, former presidents and senior Congress leaders were honoured. Prior to this the statues of Shri Rajiv Gandhi and Shri Madhavrao Scindia were garlanded and their work and sacrifices for the party was recalled.

The function was conducted by DCC general secretary, Shri Latif Khan Mallu and vice president, Smt. Kamlesh Kaurav gave the vote of thanks.

MAHARASHTRA

Foundation Day Celebrated

Jalgaon: The District Congress Committee celebrated the Foundation Day of the Congress Party here on 28th December, 2014.



The function was presided over by DCC President, Shri Sandeep Suresh Patil. All the party office-bearers and party workers participated in the function. Flag hoisting took place and dhvaj vandana was sung.

PUNJAB

BJP needs to explain its alliance with the party having terrorist as minister: Bajwa

Chandigarh: The Punjab Congress President, Shri Partap Singh Bajwa on 24th December, 2014 called upon the Bharatiya Janata Party to explain its alliance with the Akali Dal which had terrorists in its ranks who had no reservation in proclaiming themselves to be the adherents of political violence.

In a statement, Shri Bajwa referred to the assertion made by the Chief Parliamentary Secretary Shri Virsa Singh Valtoha in the Assembly yesterday saying, "I was a terrorist, I am a terrorist and I will continue to be terrorist".

He said before 1997, the BJP had been fighting against terrorism in the state. However, when the leaders of its alliance partners had started referring to their past and that too on the floor of the Assembly, the people of the state had a right to question this party.

"The BJP leaders kept mum as Shri Valtoha in a fit of rage made this statement. The Akali Dal has the record of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. The Akali Dal has always adopted double standards. It was this party which had

MPCC organised "Prerna Yatra" to commemorate 100 years of arrival of Mahatma Gandhi to India

Mumbai: Mahatma Gandhi arrived at Apollo Bunder Mumbai (India) from South Africa on 9th January 1915 after successfully leading fight against racism. After his arrival in India Barrister Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi deployed "Satyagraha" in the Indian independence movement a nonviolent/civil resistance.

Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee organised a procession of Congress Party Workers from Apollo Bunder - (Currently Gateway of India) to Mahatma Gandhi statue near Mantralaya (Secretariat) Nariman Point to commemorate completion of 100 years of arrival of Mahatma Gandhi to Mumbai (India) from South Africa.

Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee organised a Public Rally/ Procession named "Prerna Yatra" from Barrister to Mahatma to highlight the role of Mahatma Gandhi and of the Congress Party in the freedom struggle of India.

About 5,000 to 6,000 Congress party workers gathered at Apollo Bunder (Currently Gateway of India) at 9.30 a.m. in morning. Grand procession of party workers carrying flag of Indian National Congress in a file of 2 rows proceeded from Gateway of India to the statue of Mahatma Gandhi near Mantralaya, Nariman Point. The procession passed through Shaheed Bhagat Singh Road, Hutatma Chowk and Churchgate Station. The procession was about 3 kilometer long and the atmosphere was fully charged with chants of "Congress Zindabad, Mahatma Gandhi Amar Rahe".

The procession was led by Shri Mohan Prakash ji, Hon. General Secretary AICC & In-charge Maharashtra, Shri Digvijay Singh ji, Hon. General Secretary AICC, PCC President and Senior Congress Leaders.

The Procession concluded at the Gandhi



Statue where the adjoining area was full with party workers. The statue of Mahatma Gandhi was garlanded and all leaders paid respect to Gandhi ji. Later on Senior Leaders Shri Mohan Prakashji & Shri Digvijay Singhji addressed the gathering. Manikrao Thakare (President, Maharashtra Pradesh Congress), Shri Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil (Leader of Opposition in Assembly), Shri Janardan Chandurkar (President, Mumbai Regional Congress Committee), Shri Narayan Rane (Ex. Chief Minister), Shri Prithviraj Chavan (Ex. Chief Minister), Shri Shivajirao Deshmukh (Speaker, Maharashtra Legislative Council), Senior Leaders Shri Patangarao Kadam, Shri Harshawardhan Patil, Shri Nitin Raut, Shri Kripashankar Singh, Smt. Varsha Gaikwad, Shri Naseem Khan, Shri Rohidas Patil, Smt. Kamaltai Vyavahare (Mahila Congress State President), Shri Vishwajeet Kadam (Yuvak Congress State President) and Shri Sunil Gokhle (Grandson of Late Gopal Krishna Gokhle) were present prominently.



been honouring the killers as martyrs. It is the BJP which must explain this shift in its stand as the party now shares power with a person like Shri Valtoha who has no hesitation in flaunting his terrorist credentials”, he added.

The PPCC chief said the BJP could not befool the people of Punjab after all this. Moreover, it was strange that after opposing the no-confidence motion moved by the Congress in the Assembly yesterday, the state BJP chief Shri Kamal Sharma reiterated his earlier view that the Revenue Minister Shri Bikram Singh Majithia who had been summoned by the Enforcement Directorate in the synthetic drug smuggling racket must resign. He said the BJP must explain its stand on the issue of Shri Majithia as Shri Sharma had gone back to the earlier stand hours after opposing the no-confidence motion.

He also referred to the statement made by the Industries Minister Shri Madan Mohan Mittal that the party was with the Chief Minister Shri Parkash Singh Badal. Shri Sharma must tell the people as to what was the real stand of the party on the issue of resignation of Shri Majithia. The people of Punjab were confused on this issue as the BJP leaders were speaking in different voices.

He said with utter confusion in the ranks of the state BJP leaders, the party high command should clarify the stand on this sensitive issue.

PCC celebrates 130th Foundation day of Indian National Congress

Chandigarh: 130th Foundation Day of Indian National Congress was celebrated on 28th December, 2014 at Punjab Congress Bhawan, Chandigarh. S. Fateh Jang Singh Bajwa & Smt. Lakhwinder Kaur Garcha both General Secretary PPCC, S. Paramjit Singh Randhawa Secretary PPCC, S. Gurpartap Singh Mann Secretary PPCC, S. Gurwinder Singh Bali Secretary PPCC, Shri Lakha Ram Davesar Chairman Bazigar Cell, S. Pritam Singh Bhatti Chairman Grievances Cell, PPCC. S. Jang Bahadur



Co-Chairman SC Deptt. PPCC and a large number of Seva Dal volunteers attended the Foundation Day function held here.

The Congress leaders remembered the contribution of the Party towards the Nation. They also remembered pivotal role of Indian National Congress and its leaders in the freedom movement of India. Role of Congress was equally important in the post freedom era. The Congress leaders emphasized in their speeches that Party leaders Smt. Indira Gandhi, Shri Rajiv Gandhi and S Beant Singh made supreme sacrifice for the unity and integrity of Independent India. Rich tributes were paid to these Congress leaders who preferred to sacrifice their lives than compromising with the divisive forces.

The Congress leaders speaking on this occasion remembered the contribution of Congress Party in building the modern day Punjab; be it Bhakra dam, new capital Chandigarh; green revolution and building infrastructure.

SAD-BJP Government have lost moral right to govern; should be immediately dismissed: Bajwa

Chandigarh: Reacting sharply on Sukhbir Badal's announcement that his party will hold 4 massive dharnas on the border to pressurise BSF to stop drugs from entering Punjab territory on January 5, S. Partap Singh Bajwa, President PPCC said on 28th December, 2014 that both

SAD and BJP are bent upon befooling the people of Punjab.

While Amit Shah has announced to start anti drug campaign from Amritsar on 12th January, Sukhbir has announced dharna against BSF; meaning thereby, a dharna against the Centre Government. Both BJP and SAD are now severely confronting each other to take credit on the drugs issue.

Both parties have not realized the gravity of the situation and are just trying to score points, he said.

S. Bajwa said that both these alliance partners are strange bed fellows, who are fighting with each other, while chose to remain together for sole intention of looting the people of Punjab. They are cursing each other by the day and sleep together in the same quilt at night.

This confrontism between the alliance partners leaves no doubt that they have completely lost moral ground to be in the Government and Badal should seek fresh mandate.

S. Bajwa said that this action of Sukhbir Badal led SAD should be seen as a anti national step and his Government should be dismissed immediately in the interest of National Security and PM Modi should prove his sincerity and commitment to what he said in his “Mann ki Baat”.

This action of SAD will demoralize the armed forces and para military forces who are doing their duty diligently, while Sukhbir is totally ignoring the fact the synthetic drugs are manufactured locally.

RAJASTHAN

Panchayti Raj Convention

Jaipur: The Convention of the District-level Rajiv Gandhi Panchayti Raj organization, Jaipur district convention was held today on the occasion of Congress Foundation Day on 28th December, 2014.

Shri Jaswant Gurjar, coordinator of the organization said that the convention was addressed by National Vice-President of the Panchayti Raj Organization Shri



Harshwardhan Sapkal.

The programme was conducted by former Union Minister and District Congress President, Shri Lalchand Kataria. The speakers urged the people to make the party strong and to vote for Congress candidates in the coming Panchayati Raj elections.

TAMILNADU

Foundation Day Celebrated

Trinimalai: The District Congress Committee celebrated the 130th Foundation Day of the Congress Party at the K. Kamaraj crossing near the statue of Shri K. Kamaraj here on 28th December, 2014.

District Congress President, Shri A.



Subramanian unfurled the Congress flag and presided over the function while District Vice-President, Shri N. Chennaduvai distributed sweets.

Others present were General Secretaries, Shri Veetavallam A. Rajedran, G. Anmachi, City Congress Vice-President, G. Nagaraj, M.C. Manohar, N.P. Chandi, Anna Lakshpakhai, M. Srinivasan, P.Mukandan, Advocate N. Chandershekhar. T. Taranae Karasu, Dr. Mani, S. Chinnayagam, D. Darshanamurti, SC/ST Chairman, Guna Shekharan, Paichal Moon Swamy, P. Sanmugam, J.L. Velu, G. Badibigden,

S. Shrinivasan, S. Shivlingam, Subramani, D. Shanmugam, Armugan, Ennamulai with others.

UTTAR PRADESH

Senior leaders honoured on Foundation Day

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee celebrated the Foundation Day of the Congress Party here on 28 December, 2014. On the occasion senior party leaders were honoured.

AICC general secretary and incharge of UP, Shri Madhusudan Mistri, while honoring the party needs their cooperation and help in once again making the Congress Party strong as it was before. Shri Sudan said that a camp would be held in the coming months in Banaras where efforts would be held to hear the problems of the people and to



also bring them to the Congress party. We have to become the voice of the people and we should make a pledge today on the occasion of the Foundation Day.

UPCC president, Dr. Nirmal Khatri said that the Congress Party will gain momentum after the senior party leaders take active participation in the Congress party programmes and will certainly return to power. Dr. Khatri said that we have challenges before us but we have to move forward towards our goal.

Former Union Minister, Shri Shriprakash Jaiswal said that people who have served the party should be honoured and said that people who have tried to dilute the Ganga-Jamuna tradition have perished themselves.

Meeting with party presidents held

Lucknow: A meeting of senior Congress leaders and presidents of the district and City Congress was held at the UPCC headquarters here on 8 January, 2015.

The meeting, as per the directive of the Congress president, Smt. Sonia Gandhi, was called to obtain suggestions and ways to make the party strong and as to how to join the Congress Party once again with the people. The questionnaire of the Congress president point wise was discussed. The Block presidents and the grassroots workers have been asked to give their suggestions to the Pradesh headquarters by 28 February, 2015 so that a complete report can be sent to the Congress president.



The meeting was held in the presence of AICC general secretary incharge of UP, Shri Madhusudan Mistri and UPCC president, Dr. Nirmal Khatri with senior party leaders and the District and City Congress presidents.

Congress membership training workshop

Allahabad: Member of Congress Working Committee Anil Shastri has observed that BJP deliberately raises controversial issues to hog the limelight. While inaugurating the Congress membership training workshop here at Shankar Lal Memorial hall on 12th December, 2014 he observed that all issues raised by it like celebrating birthday of Nathuram Godse, terming Taj Mahal as temple and the statement of Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti created controversies. He alleged that it seems that BJP is in the habit of creating controversies. It is following the policy of divide and rule which was practiced by the British to rule India.

Congress MLA Anugrah Narain Singh said that Congress is the biggest political party, which has played an important role in the development of the country.

Former mayor Ch. Jitendra Nath Singh observed that there is considerable excitement among the party workers and they should work for increasing the membership.

City President Upendra Singh assured that party in all three assembly segments of the city would touch the mark of 1.5 lac membership.

UPCC spokesman Kishore Varshney who conducted the function claimed that Allahabad would be the no. 1 in membership drive in Uttar Pradesh.

Virendra Mohiley, Ajay Srivastava, Dr. Ramesh Jaiswal, Abhishek Shukla, Media incharge Parvej Siddique, Dinesh Gupta, SS Malviya, Rajesh Nishad, Abhinav Varshney, Dr. Praveen Charan, Mohd. Sahab, Jai Shankar Mishra, Javed Urfi, Irshad Ullah, Sandeep Middha, Aman Kushwaha, Sikha Mishra, Md. Aslam and many others address the workshop.

Worker's meeting held

Unnao: The annual monthly meeting of District Congress Committee was held on 10 January, 2015. The meeting was called

Paying tributes to Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri



New Delhi: Former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh paid floral tributes to late Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri on his 49th death anniversary at Vijay Ghat. Some of the prominent leaders who were present on the occasion were AICC Treasurer Shri Motilal Vora, Former Chief Minister of Delhi Smt. Sheila Dikshit, Former Haryana Minister Capt. Ajay Singh Yadav, AICC Secretary Shri Manish Chhatrath, Former Minister of Delhi Smt. Kiran Walia, Chief Organiser of All India Seva Dal Shri Mahendra Joshi and Spl. Invitee, CWC Shri Anil Shastri.

to discuss ways and means to make the party strong.

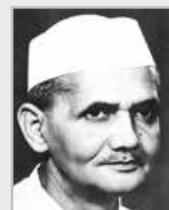
Addressing the meeting, former MP, Smt. Anu Tandon said that all party workers, big or small, should understand their responsibility and should do their work in the interest of the party. They should give strong reply to those who make wrong criticism of the Congress. The party workers by their humble attitude and their willingness to hear the problems of the people should win the hearts of the people.

Smt. Tandon said that all party workers should read the look U-Turn released by Congress vice President, Shri Rahul Gandhi. Suggestions have also been invited from booth-level grass-root workers for making the party strong by the Incharge of UP, Shri Madhusudan Mistri. ❖



TRIBUTES

Nation pays tribute to our freedom fighters and distinguished leaders.



Lal Bahadur Shastri
Death Anniversary
11th January

(1904-1966)



Subhas Chandra Bose
Birth Anniversary
23rd January

(1897-1945)



Lala Lajpat Rai
Birth Anniversary
28th January

(1865-1928)



Mahatma Gandhi
Death Anniversary
30th January

(1869-1948)

We have started publishing a series of a special interview with the grass-root workers of the Congress Party. The first such interview was published in the July, 2014 issue.

-Editor

INTERVIEW WITH A DEDICATED CONGRESSPERSON

Born in 1921, 93 years old Smt. Kamala Rai belongs to a freedom fighter family from Kushinagar (Eastern UP). She had become active in Congress movements since her teen-age.

- Interviewed by Dr. Jaya Shukla

Q. When and how did you get initiated in the Gandhian Congress principles?

A. Getting married at the age of 13 years, I came to a family steeped in the Gandhian thought. My father-in-law Shri Rajvanshi Rai, who was a freedom-fighter, spun thread from the spinning wheel for his use. The whole family also spun the charkha daily. My husband was active in the Swaraj Movement, and was in school at the Pdrauna Inter College. Seeing his activities, he was expelled from school. He came to Benaras, and Mahamana Malaviyaji had him admitted in the Central Hindu School. After his expulsion, the women of our family became more active in the movement. I came to Benaras. Shri Kamalapati's family, Shri Rajaram Shastri, and others were regular visitors, and our house also became like a center of Congress.

Q. When did you become an active Congressperson?

A. The election for the Legislative Council of the province was held in 1937, where I campaigned for Shri Ramdhari Pandey. In 1939 my husband was arrested in Calcutta. I left the "Purdah" completely, and became active in Congress activities alongwith my sister-in-law Chandra Sharma in the women's group of Smt. Sucheta (Kripalani), Smt. Chandra Tripathi, etc.

Q. Which was your most memorable time as an activist?

A. When I went to meet my husband in Fatehgarh prison, I couldn't speak, the visit duration ended before I could stop crying. A lot changed inside me at that time. Earlier I was attached to the Congress and was active emotionally. Now I started reading Gandhian and revolutionary literature. Now my activities were based upon ideologically thought-out steps. I changed a lot by the time my husband was released after 31/2 years.

Q. What was the role of Congress in nation-building?



A. Independence from imperialism was gained by Congress. Then, the country divided in small fiefdoms, was united into a strong nation by Congress. There was no development possible without it. The Congress movements gave women awareness, and no nation can become strong without this. Living in Lucknow after independence (where first my father-in-law was an MLA, then my husband), I saw how the Congress governments' policies and plans developed the country holistically.

Q. What differences do you find in Congress now from earlier times?

A. The Congressmen earlier were wholly dedicated and had simplicity. Now this quality is not very visible. Also, there is a distance between the activists and leaders. The main reason for this is that the leaders who could be links between these two levels, are themselves not connected to the grassroots. They have also left the social organization of their areas. They also do not seem interested in social work.

Q. What steps would you suggest for Congress to regain its strength?

A. The differences in Congress that have arisen from the earlier dedicated Congress, need to be removed. They should also indulge more in social activities. They are shifting from their roots, the society's fabric should be re-recognized. People see the sincerity in work, not merely the show.

Q. What are the basic qualities of a Congress person?

A. They are always connected to their roots. Also, their door is always open for helping others.

Q. Who are your ideals?

A. Mahatma Gandhi and Mahamana Malaviya.

Q. What were your interests other than the Congress?

A. Embroidery and cooking tasty dishes.

EXTRACTS FROM THE ADDRESSES OF CONGRESS PRESIDENTS

Following are the extracts from the speeches of the Congress Presidents who have placed their vision and opinion for building the destiny of India.

K. KAMARAJ **(BHUBANESHWAR-1964)** **Land Policy**



Our land policy is one example of legislative action on these lines. We have passed measures for abolition of intermediaries in land and establishing a system of peasant proprietorship, for fixation of ceiling on land holding and fair rents and for providing security of tenure to the tenants. May be, many of the provisions of these legislative enactments are not being zealously enforced in various parts of the country. Such instances should make us watchful and redouble our efforts to ensure that the legal benefits are enjoyed in fact by those for whom they were enacted. It will be useful if each Pradesh Congress Committee would constitute a small sub-committee to study the adequacy of legislation and the degree of implementation of the various land reform laws in its respective State and report to the All India Congress Committee which in its turn would review the progress made in the States.

Economic Progress

While reviewing the economic progress of the country since independence, we can look back with pride on the great strides that our country has made. I do not want to weary you with statistics of achievements in the fields of agriculture, industrial production, education, health, hygiene and social welfare. Anyone can see visible advances in every one of these fields during the last decade.

But great as the progress had undoubtedly been, the problems of India are greater still.

For one thing, this progress has not been attended without certain disquieting trends in the functioning of the economy.

I may refer, firstly, to the concentration of wealth and economic power in fewer hands resulting in monopolistic control over certain industries. Evasion of taxes, black-marketing in scarce materials, adulteration of food and general deterioration in business standards and commercial practices have assumed proportions against which effective steps are needed. It is necessary to cleanse our society of these evils before they disrupt organized community life.

In my view the development of the co-operative system, in which the divided is controlled, the shareholders are widespread and the management is democratic, will go a long way to prevent the concentration of wealth. If this policy is thoughtfully pursued it will build up the industrial base of the country at a rapid pace. This will also help in curbing the growth of monopolies.

Problems of Unemployment

The rapid economic development which takes place in the country should reflect itself in increasing employment opportunities and improving the standard of life of our people. I would urge the Government to give special attention to the problem of the young educated unemployed and devise means of absorbing them in fruitful occupation. Government should consider the question of starting a number of work centres with varied types of production so as to suit different aptitudes. These centres will help young men to get work-oriented and also to acquire technical skills. They should be able to train a large number of young men not only to find employment in industries and trade, but also to equip themselves to become self-employed. Opportunities should be provided for young boys and girls to become independent self-employed artisans, craftsmen and technicians by providing them with necessary loans, technical assistance, machinery on hire-purchase and the like.

Organizational Work

I have so far dealt with the social and economic problems that face the country. I shall now turn my attention to a few matters relating to our own organisation and its working. There is no doubt that the Congress in order to function effectively as a mass organisation should have its roots firmly grounded in the villages. In my view there should be a Village Congress Committee in every village as the Village Congress Committee is the best medium of mass contact. A serious handicap for Congress Committees is the lack of trained personnel who can organize and canalize the energies of the rural population into fruitful channels. It is necessary to have at least one wholetime trained Congress worker in each block so that both the organizational and development functions of the area may be attended to properly.

In the days of the national struggle the Congress worker had only the simple task of preparing the masses for the struggle ahead; but after achievement of independence our responsibilities have change and we have to attend to the social and economic needs of our people. This cannot be done without preparing a cadre of workers and giving them adequate training in various aspects of our work. It is important that the Pradesh Congress Committees should arrange for training of a large number of workers.

Fund Collection

The Congress Committees should mobilize financial support to the organisation through small collections from the masses. I am convinced that the people will be ready to make such contributions if they are properly approached. The advantage of such collections are obvious. It would enable the Congress workers to learn at first-hand the problems and grievances of the masses and undertake programme for redress.

It will be useful if the executive of the Pradesh Congress Committees meet and exchange ideas and experiences in regard to the common tasks which the Congress organisation has undertaken throughout the country. In such a meeting it would be possibly for the respective Pradesh Congress executive to explain the steps taken for implementation of the Congress programmes, the difficulties encountered and the ways in which they have been overcome. One of the ways in which this can be done is for the Pradesh Congress executives of neighbouring States to discuss common problems. It may also be useful to have a joint meeting of the Pradesh Congress executives of more than two neighbouring States. I think the mutual exchange of experiences amongst the Pradesh Congress executives will go a long way to tone up the general organisation work.

JAGJIVAN RAM (BOMBAY-1969)

Organisation versus Parliamentary Wing

An organisation of moderates wedded to the method of constitutional representation, the Congress underwent a transformation when Gandhi emerged on the scene. It functioned since then till the advent of independence as a mass movement and a united anti-imperialist front. It developed a massive organisation conforming in structure roughly to the British administrative apparatus. Beginning at the village level and extending up through the district and provincial levels to the Working Committee which approximated to the cabinet of independent India and a President who was a symbol of the people, it dominated the Indian political scene for decades. It was relatively easier during this phase to reconcile the varying and conflicting view of its highly differentiated following because of unanimity on the objective of political independence. After the achievement of this goal, however, in 1947, it had to adjust itself to a new situation in which the locus of power shifted from Party to Government. The adjustment did not prove easy. Two Presidents quit office and some sort of a convention appeared to have crystallized. But it proved to be illusory. There was no convention; there was only an adjustment. Therefore, when Panditji passed away, instead of the Congress Parliamentary Party electing its leader, through the established democratic procedure of a free election and the organisation accepting the decision without reservation, a reverse process was initiated which sought to circumvent the free expression of the will of the members of the parliamentary party, put it in the background, and put the organisation chief in the position of a king-maker. I want to make it clear that in saying this, I am emphasizing a principle and no reference to personalities is intended. The reference is made only to underline that abridgement of denial of internal democracy invariably produces distortions.



Road to Socialism

It is sad to reflect that even though we had leaders who could compare in stature, dedication and ability to the best that the world ever produced, even though we had an organisation more massive than any political party in the world, the country has not reached anywhere near the goal which it set for itself. Many are doubting if it is on the right path. Is this debacle due to a confusion of ideas and ideals? Is it entirely because of the mass character of the Congress with its various pulls in different directions? Does the Congress have a philosophical framework with reference to

which Congressmen can come to a definite conclusion in respect of matters which confront them?

The post-independence Congress had in its election manifestoes laid down as targets, the achievement of a national minimum standards, opportunities for full employment, a ceiling on personal incomes, not exceeding 40 times the national minimum to be brought down eventually to 20 times and a very elaborate programme for industries, agriculture, village and cottage industries, industrial relations, cooperation, and recommended the appointment of a permanent Planning Commission to advise and assist Central and State Governments in the practical steps that should be taken. Even before these resolutions could be implemented and the pledges made fulfilled, we set new targets. We declared that the objective of planning should be the establishment of a socialistic pattern of society and we envisaged achieving of full employment within a period of ten years.

Within a few years, even before we were anywhere near these goals, we gave a call for a revolution to be brought about through radical changes in the attitudes, outlook and ways of thinking and living of the people through fundamental changes in the social and economic structure, and made noble declaration that caste and class had no place in the social order. Karachi, Lucknow, Nagpur, Avadi, Bhubaneshwar are all important milestones on the road to socialism which has yet to be traversed.

Democracy, Socialism and Secularism: Three Pillars of Congress Policy

The humanistic strands in Indian thought which regard man as a part of divinity, as something sacred, are part of our heritage. Gandhiji's teachings are there. Nehru's vision is there. We have been able to synthesise these great strains or our thought with the humanistic strands of Western thought into our ideology of democratic socialism. We are committed to democracy, socialism and secularism—the three pillars on which the Indian National Congress stands. We all realise that in a traditionalistic backward society, democracy without socialism implies the rule of the privileged by the privileged and for the privileged and socialism without democracy implies totalitarianism. We know that secularism is in a way an old Indian ideal and not just a Western inheritance. Equal respect for all religions is ingrained in the thought structure of his country. Unfortunately, the humanistic and liberal strands of Indian thought never got integrated into the social structure, were never practiced in daily life. The West lived up to it. The concept that man is born with certain inalienable rights forms the very foundation of Western democratic society. And the West progressed. Indian society reared on built-in-

cumulative inequalities and disregard of man, languished. The thoughts are not new to us. In any case modern man is the inheritor of all that is noble and good in human thought. And thus, our democratic socialism is a synthesis of all that is best in the thinking of the East and West and provides an ideology superior to other sectarian ideologies, which are 'Communalistic' or 'Communitarian'.

What is to be Done?

What is to be done? Let us begin from the root—the reorganisation of agriculture and our rural economy. It is true that the method of production determines the method of distribution. If, therefore, there has to be an equalization of economic power in the rural areas, a new method of production must be adopted. Village leadership today consists of the substantial and middle farmers, and the small farmer and the landless labourer still has no place. It is still the old zamindars turned substantial farmers who rule the village. It is still the old dominant castes which continue to dominate the village life. The governmental machinery reflecting the caste, and class structure in the village, plays a supporting, if not a subservient role in perpetuating the existing order. All this has to change. A new leadership has to emerge and reliable agencies at the village level have to be created. These agencies must consist of local people who have a stake in development and who are dedicated. Such an agency must consist of all those who have hungry stomachs and willing hands, meager or no land and no means of production. The agency must emerge in this manner, as it were, from the soil of the village.

Land reform shall not brook delay. Elimination of intermediary tenures, ceiling on holdings, distribution of surplus and Government land among landless agriculture labour should be expedited.

The problem of landless agriculture labour is creating an explosive situation. Available surplus land will not be adequate for distribution among all of them nor will all of them be absorbed in rural works and other agricultural operations, etc. Greater attention will have to be paid, therefore, to self-employment of these millions of the submerged section in productive effort.

The programme outlined will transform Panchayats into real organs of people's will. Today, their structure, constitution, functions, powers, differ from area to area. To think in the existing context of effectively functioning Panchayats in rural areas where the majority live below the subsistence level is a mockery of the democratic ideas of Panchayati Raj. It is true that Panchayats did function in the old days and survived where nothing else survived. But those were

days when the starving and the poor were content to starve. They were content to accept the privileged or the affluent as their natural overlords. That past cannot be resurrected. All men are now equal. Men can now cooperate willingly and effectively only on a footing of equality. And, there will be no equality between a needy starving person and the privileged and the affluent. The new threads, therefore, that will bind the village to the Panchayat must be different.

Another vital item of our programme-cooperation, has not made much progress in all parts of the country. Its development has not been even. In our rural areas, loyalty is still to caste or some power-group rather than to any cooperative image. Perhaps the one form of cooperation which could have broken the barriers and contributed to optimum results from agriculture was the service cooperatives. In some areas it has made spectacular progress. But there also the small farmers have not benefited much.

Indian society is a plural society. Social contact between various religious and caste groups are few and far between. Localities and habitations of these groups are also separate. In the new India that we want to create, it should be ensured that in all housing schemes, Government or otherwise, only mixed schemes are encouraged which include persons of various religions and castes. Similarly, religious festivals of all communities should be collectively observed so that it may encourage greater social integration.

Problems of Weaker Sections

I have always maintained that the problems of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes cannot be fully appreciated much less solved except in the framework of a radical reorganisation

of the socio-economic order. That will take long. But even the scope of welfare projects and the manner of their implementation leaves much to be desired. It was to be expected that when the condition of these communities improved they would aspire to live as decent human beings. It was equally to be expected that with the growth of consciousness and an understanding of their rights, they would refuse to be treated as before. But wherever this trend has manifested itself, particularly in the rural areas, oppression and harassment has been renewed. It is an indication of the fact that upper caste psychology has not undergone any real change; there has only been some kind of grudging adjustment. Even the so-called liberals share the same attitude: only its expression is different. How else would one explain the much vaunted talk of pity, the much publicized desire to do some good to the depressed and suppressed communities. I have no quarrel with them but I wish that they realised that, at root, their attitude is not different in kind from the attitude of society at large. The extension of the constitutional reservation of seats for these classes for another 10 years has been a step in the right direction. But many more steps, as I have indicated, will have to be taken. All practices which segregate the Scheduled Castes from Caste-Hindus and perpetuate the discriminatory attitude should be removed. Separate colonies for Scheduled Castes should not be established. They should be mixed ones both in urban and rural areas. For all students of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes liberal stipends should be provided, technical education encouraged and facilitated, and proper representation in public service ensured. ❖

continued on page 24

PRICES NOT REDUCED DESPITE REDUCTION IN CRUDE PRICES

b) 2nd December 2014 = Rs. 2.25 per Litre on petrol and Rs. 1 per Litre on diesel.

c) 1st January 2015 = Rs. 2 per Litre on petrol and diesel.

In addition thereto, Government has hiked Customs Duty on Crude Oil from 2.5% to 7.5%.

Additional revenue from excise duty alone in the current year is estimated at Rs. 20,000 Crores. Added will be the revenue from increase in customs

duty. Why is the Modi Government profiteering at the cost of the common man and the farming community?

4. Why is the Modi Government not truly reforming the oil companies by introducing transparency and proper price discovery methods in order to truly benchmark the fuel prices instead of relying upon the 'under-recover' mechanism? Why is the final market price not being decided on the basis of cost of Crude Oil plus refining costs and

margins of oil companies?

5. Why is the Modi Government not following the true policy of decontrol of petrol and diesel? As per the current policy, benefit of decontrolled prices shall not apply when the price of these products fall with the reduction in international prices. But when the prices rise, cost shall be passed on to the consumer to pay. Why is this dichotomy being heaped upon the common man of India? ❖

Author is a spokesperson, AICC