



# EDITORIAL

**D**reams have a bad habit of vanishing once a person wakes up. People are now waking up from the pipe dreams woven by the dream merchant Prime Minister who sold so many of them to the people of India, to win the election. The people have already started realizing that the BJP and its leader the Prime Minister have no miracle cure that he has been promising to bring down the prices or to boost the economy. It is easy to give flowery speeches while addressing an election meeting but difficult to implement the false promises made to the people of the country. Not only the prices continue to rise, the budget has neither shown a direction to boost the economy nor implemented any new steps to evince in which direction the BJP Government wishes to take the economy in order to fulfill promises made during elections. The budget is expected to translate the aspirations of the people into reality and fulfill the commitments of the ruling party to give a fillip to the economy and to set a new direction for the future.

Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi, when asked for her reaction after the budget was announced in the Parliament said, “The budget has nothing new. It has merely copied our policies and schemes”. Replying to the debate in the Lok Sabha Congress leader said “ It is said that imitation is the best form of flattery and we accept this compliment with great exuberance “.While replying to the budget speech of the FM in the Rajya Sabha the leader of the Congress Party said that ‘wisdom is required even to copy’. And that wisdom is not visible in the budget speech of the FM. Congress Vice President said that there was nothing extraordinary in the budget. He said, “The Budget doesn’t quicken the pulse but slows it down.”

We have provided figures of the achievements made by the Congress led UPA over the last decade in this issue. Starting from a negative cash balance when UPA came to power in 2004 of Rs. 2730 crores, the UPA has left for the BJP Government a surplus cash balance of Rs 26,510 crores. Starting with foreign exchange reserves of US \$ 113 Billion, the UPA has left foreign exchange reserves of US\$ 304 Billion before demitting office. The BJP has inherited a sound economy, large reserves and well entrenched policies from the Congress led UPA. If they cannot still capitalize on them then it is unfortunate for the people of the nation who reposed faith on them. So far there is nothing to show that they know what they are doing.

The fact is that most of the policies and programs of the Congress had come to the point of peak but could not be finally implemented due to some compulsions. The bureaucracy was feeling threatened by being subjected to excessive public criticism and probity. The introduction of the Lok Pal also affected the confidence of the bureaucracy in taking bold decisions.

The various inaugurations by the new PM like the train to Katra, the launch of the rocket PSLV 5 by ISRO, the introduction of INS Vikramaditya did not happen in the six weeks that BJP has been in power. The nation must remember that Ex Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and Prime Minister of Japan agreed on a Joint feasibility study for Mumbai- Ahmedabad High speed Corridor which has started in December 2013.

The Budget is clearly a pro rich budget. The Social programs started by the UPA have not been given any additional resources. The sudden huge increase in the Railway fares both for passengers and freight have added to Price rise. The availability and costs for electricity is deteriorating every day. Speaking after the Railway budget, Shri Rahul Gandhi said it was a “hopeless budget that lacks strategic vision.”The back bone of the aam aadmi is already under unbearable strain. The Government must come up with innovative ideas to provide relief to the common man. Just at the moment it appears as if the Government has no clue and is direction less.

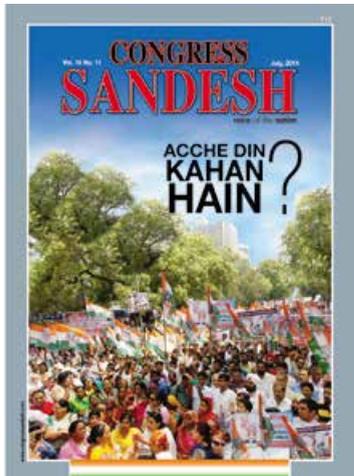
The nation remembers Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, one of the stalwarts of our freedom movement who was born on 23rd July, 1856. He was a great nationalist and a social reformer. He was a great votary of Swaraj and coined the slogan “Swaraj is my birthright” He influenced the nation with his ideas which resulted in a mass movement for freedom struggle.

The nation also remembers one of its great sons Babu Jagjivan Ram who was the beloved leader of the backward, a valiant freedom fighter and a crusader for social justice. He passed away on 6th July, 1986. Babu ji served as a Minister in the Union Cabinet for 33 years and held many important portfolios. ❖

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The visit of Shri Ved Pratap Vedic a journalist who is said to be close to the current leadership of the BJP to meet one of the most wanted terrorists from Pakistan, who is one of the most vocal adversaries of India, who spills anti India venom in his speeches and spares no effort while using the choicest phrases for spread of hatred against India, cannot be written off as just a casual visit of a journalist seeking an interview. An interview incidentally, which since the time it has happened has not found a place in any important news forum except in TV debates. Even to a casual observer it is clear that there is more to it than meets the eye. By the admission of the powers in Pakistan Shri Ved Pratap Vedic introduced himself as a person who was very close to the powers that be in India. India has built its position of relevance in the international world in a careful and calculated way. We cannot afford to lose our pre-eminent position of diplomacy by acting in a ham-handed way. We may also be stepping on the feet of world powers that treat this terrorist as a most wanted person. The silence of the Government on the true facts is very deafening and disquieting. It is a matter concerning National Security. The Government must take the people of the country into confidence about their intent and the reasons for this Track II diplomacy.

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## THE LEGACY WHICH UPA LEFT BEHIND FOR NDA

**H**on'ble Madam Speaker, first of all I would like to thank you for giving me a chance to debate on the first Budget of this government. This Budget is the first for NDA Government and Shri Arun Jaitelyji. I want to offer my good wishes. The work of any Finance Minister is not easy. To keep everyone happy and to give proper direction to the economic progress is not an easy job. But for past one year we were hearing that the BJP government would create miracles. The prices would be lowered, big changes would be made and during this one-year period we heard lots of slogans like good days are going to come or the good days have come. That we will not consider poverty alleviation but poverty elimination. "Sabka Saath, Saabka Vikas". "Ek Bharat, Shresth Bharat", talent for every hand, and the expectations of the people rose by these slogans. But this Budget has shattered the hopes of the people.

Budget is not just a financial statement. Budget is also the vision statement and particularly the first Budget shows what the economic status of the country in the five years will be? The hopes and aspiration of the people are attached to this Budget whether he be a poor person, or be a farmer or a youth, he be a weaver or any other person. Like a sculptor who brings life into a piece of stone or like the spirit which decides which way the heart would beat? This is the responsibility of the Budget. We did not see any direction in this Budget. The BJP says that we have come with full majority. This is a fact. The country has hopes and aspirations that bold steps would be taken. If we look into this Budget the target that has been set that in a steady state the economic growth would remain limited between seven to eight percent of the domestic product. The UPA government in five years of their ten-year period showed nine percent rise of the domestic product on the basis of which the country made progress. On the same basis if you look at the 11th five-year Plan you will see that there was an increase of eight percent of the domestic production which is a record by itself. How will you tackle inflation, there is no analysis about it, how will the tax GDP be increased, there is no analysis about it, how will you give impetus to social sector and the farming sector, there is no analysis about it. The finance Minister must have taken proper review of the world economy, the Iraq crisis will put pressure on the price of crude. It is a matter of inflation, there is possibility of a drought, the emerging economy in the neighbourhood is slowing down. The strong economy like the United States is facing head winds. The world economy is not strong but has gained strength

during the past two years. I would like to thank the Finance Minister that he realized that the Budget of the UPA government was on the right path and which he has fully adopted and once again I would like to thank him for this.

It is said that imitation is the best form of flattery and we accept this compliment with great exuberance. Our revenue targets have been accepted and they have even been raised to about 18 percent. Our fiscal deficit roadmap of 4.6 percent this year, 4.1 percent of fiscal deficit for the next year, 3.6 percent of fiscal deficit the year after and three percent eventually have also been accepted. Our revenue deficit target of 2.9 percent has been accepted. Not only this all the projects of the UPA government which have been approved have been included in this Budget for this I would like to thank them. For many months we were hearing slogans that India should be sans Congress but in this first Budget of the NDA government has presented a Congress inclusive Budget. For the past so many days we have been hearing in Parliament about a word 'inheritance' which is being used repeatedly. That UPA has given inflation to the country, UPA has given corruption, maybe my colleagues and friends have forgotten that they are no more sitting in the opposition but are in the ruling side. They have the responsibility to govern the country. I want to thank the Finance Minister that he has a positive attitude. I expect that his colleagues would follow on his foot-prints. We cannot keep this habit, like our friend Gaurav Gogoi had said three days ago that when a driver sits on the driving seat he should not drive the vehicle by watching the rear-view mirror God forbid if any mishap occurs. The country has to progress, the country has to move forward, the poor have to be uplifted. Now comes the matter of governance, for which I would like to present some facts before you. In 2004, when we had formed the government, the domestic GDP was 500 billion dollars.

Today, after ten years the country's GDP is two trillion dollars, our country has become the world's third power because of UPA's



**Jyotiraditya Scindia**  
MP & former Union Minister

welfare programmes. If we look at the domestic production rate, it remained 5.7 percent of the GDP growth rate during the six-year period. In the ten-year period of our government the decadal growth rate remained at 7.7 percent, which was the first in history of India. On the basis of this the public expenditure increased and on the basis of this money was put in basic infrastructure, on the basis of this growth rate in the past three years on increase of 150 percent budget was allocated to education and health and on the basis of this GDP growth rate what we feel that the states should get it on the basis of a federalism. The Central allocation to states has grown to about one lakh crore, which is not a favour. But we believe that it is the duty of the government to give it to the state. If we evaluate any government, then the most important thing is whether the poor have been uplifted or not and in the UPA period, whether you look at the Rangarajan Panel or the Tendulkar Panel, both agree that the UPA government has elevated around 9.5 crore people above the poverty line. This country will not grow like an island. If we really want to see progress in this country then we have to make progress in the form of a sea.

Sir, if we look at the power generation sector, then in 2004 the power generation capacity in the country was one lakh 13 thousand mega watt. Today, after ten years our country's capacity has risen to 2 lakh 44 thousand MW, which is almost double. We have added another 20-20 thousand mega watts in the last two years.

The Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana which was one of the prestigious project of Shri Vajpayeeji and which the UPA government moved ahead, during the past ten years 3 lakh 90 thousand kilometers has been made throughout the country under the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana.

Our country is a agriculture based country. Here it is necessary that progress of the farmer, development of farmers takes place. In the field of agriculture what we inherited in 2004, was a growth rate of minus 3.1 percent of the agriculture growth and now when you are in the government, the UPA government has left behind for you an agriculture growth rate of 4.7 percent increase in the growth rate. If we see the production, 265 million tons of food grains were produced which is a record for this country. The production in oil-seeds was 32 million tons, production of pulses, which we import was 11 million tons during your times, this year produced 20 million tons that we have handed over to you is a new record. The progress and development of the UPA is the real heritage which is like a sea to take this country forward.

Now, I would like to talk on issues. The biggest issue before the country today is inflation. In this Budget there was no mention of inflation. The Prime Minister of this country had talked about in the address of the President and I would like to quote him – “We have promised to bring down inflation and we are committed to give it priority in our effort as this was not just an election promise that we have to fulfill, but this was our thinking that evening meals are cooked in the poor man's household, the poor man's son should not sleep drinking his tears, this situation should change. It is our commitment that no poor person in the country remains empty-stomach.”

Sir, what is the reality? That within a few days there was 14 percent hike announced in the rail fare and that too out of Parliament.

When the rail budget was to come. In 2012 when our colleague Dinesh Trivedi had decided to raise the rail fares, at that time Modiji had criticized Manmohan Singhji as to why this decision has been taken out of Parliament. You have taken this step just in a few days after coming to power and this is a decision made outside Parliament. The price of petrol and diesel has been raised twice. And they say what can we do, it is the inheritance from UPA. Have you come in the government, to accept all our policies on priority, did the people take the decision for that. If you say that whatever decision that you take will be accepted on priority by us then the question is that you have stopped the rise in the gas pricing issue, but you did not stop the rise in the price of petrol and diesel. The price of sugar has risen by two rupees, the price of onions have risen from Rs. 14 to Rs. 40 per kilo, the price of potato is Rs. 27 per kilo, the price of tomato is Rs. 60 per kg, the price of ladyfinger has risen to Rs. 40 per kg. the price of vegetables is not that much in the wholesale market. ....You should learn to listen.... We heard you for ten years.... There is a two to three fold increase in the price of vegetables between the mandi and the house.

Madam Chairperson there is too much excitement for the rear-view driving. Looking at the drought situation in the near future and the hoarders have started their game. What is the government thinking on tackling this issue. In their manifesto they had mentioned that special Squads will be created who will arrest hoarders and black marketers. I want to ask as to how many hoarders and black marketers have been arrested?

Madam Chairperson the truth is that if we take the example of onions, there are around 12 to 15 wholesalers who control the business of onions in the country. To tackle them it is the responsibility of the government. I am happy that the Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan has given directive to implement the Food Security project within three months. This project was of the UPA and Smt. Sonia Gandhi so that no poor person of this country sleeps empty stomach. It was also said in the conference of the Food Ministers that this is just the start of inflation. The inflation's critical period is between July and December. Therefore, the prices will keep rising till December. If we glance at the budget to see what products have become cheap – petrochemicals, yarn, computer, soft drinks, TV and what all products have become costly – vegetables of the common man, pulses and the sugar of the common man. In this budget people expected that the exemption limit of the earnings world be raised to five lakhs from Rs. two lakhs. But the Finance Minister raised the limit to just Rs. 2.5 lakhs. The exemption limit has been raised by 50 thousand. This has given relief to everyone and every household will be able to save Rs. 416 every month. But while every family has saved Rs. 416 every month, the burden of Rs. 1200 per month has increased on the family on the basis of inflation, on the one hand you have given and you have taken three times that amount through the other hand. Rs. 500 crores has been allocated for the Price Stabilization Fund. We all know if we take any agro market, farmer's market in any big city, it will be seen that any deal done through the APMC at the minimum

## COMMENT

transaction comes to around Rs. 1000 crores, thus this fund is just a drop in the ocean. The Finance Minister had said that the people don't have to worry about it because we have enough food grains in the FCI godowns. Yes, the stock of wheat is 34 million tons, the stock of rice is 28 million tons and these are the heritage of the UPA government to this government.

Sir, we are happy that the GST has been announced, but no time-limit has been given. We are also very happy to know that the present Prime Minister who was the former Chief Minister has ended his opposition completely. The issue of GST started in 2004 and Shri Sushil Modi, the deputy chief minister of Bihar, had given full support to it, but you opposed it for ten years. But we feel that GST and DTC was the demand of the moment for the country. To decide on one single market, doing business in India being made easy, to bring the policy of no tax on tax, this is the demand of the time. In the insurance sector you have raised the FDI from 26 percent to 49 percent. Our former Finance Minister Shri Chidambaram tried much to bring unanimity with the NDA leaders, but he failed. Narendra Modiji had tweeted in December 2000, when we wanted to bring 49% FDI in the insurance sector. I am quoting him – “the Congress is selling India to the foreigners, we have to oppose this with all our strength.”

Sir, you see for yourself how they change colours? They announced big projects for the Railways that food courts will be established, packed food will be served, office in train will be provided. Do we know this, do we have to experience that the person who travels on the train, two crore thirty lakh people, of them 80 lakh people come from the poor class, they have nothing to do with packed food, they have nothing to do with Broadband Wi-Fi, they have nothing to do with office? Announcement of Bullet Train was made, it is a dream project of Rs. 60 thousand crores and within the allocated budget of Rs. 100 crores. What is this project, does it have economic feasibility or not, in the last stage when this will be implemented, the fares would at least be Rs. 8 to 10 thousand, the person will take a train or a plane. But in the present time the priority should have been on modernization and safety. There are so many proposals already pending and you have added another proposal to it.

Madam there has been no increase in the allocation for agriculture sector. Today there is possibility of drought. The UPA government started the employment guarantee scheme, which today has become the largest welfare scheme for employment in the world. The budget allocation for it is only Rs. 500 crore more.

More bold steps are required.

Madam more bold steps are required to be taken. Bold steps like the UPA did by waiving off loans of farmers, the UPA had made a scheme to wave off Rs. 72 thousand crores worth loan of the farmers. Special talks were held on agriculture.... Ganesh Singhji, you will get a chance to speak.... The scam happened by the officers of your Madhya Pradesh government, this too I will tell you.... Do not make me open my mouth, otherwise I would start talking about it as to how the leaders and officers made money on the basis of employment guarantee scheme. Wrong muster-rolls were prepared there the leaders and ministers have become coroepati's. your MP's names have been written there for the employment guarantee scheme, do not make me speak. You want that I should name them, I know them.

Alongwith the agriculture sector, the Finance Minister has raised the issue of progress of agriculture which is appreciable. Rs. 7 lakh crore has been raised to Rs. 8 lakh crores. But I would like to say that this was started by the UPA Government. In 2010, Rs. 3 lakh crore was with the agriculture sector and in four-year time the UPA government did not make it 15%. But increased it by 300% and increased it to Rs. 7 lakh crore and gave it to the farmers.

The progress of manufacturing sector is very important. On the basis of manufacturing sector – opportunities of employment are created. The manufacturing sector wanted, the corporate world wanted that the Finance Minister give his decision on the issue of retrospective taxation but assumed that such thinking will not be kept in the future except in exceptional circumstances, where this government has taken a decision on retrospective taxation, and on the other hand have increased the holding period of dept investment from 12 to 36 months and those investors who would disinvest their debt fund after 1st April, 2014, he would have to give short-term capital gain at the rate of 30 percent and if he comes in the long-time capital gain then he would not have to pay at 10% but at 20% which will become a different kind of retrospective tax, because the person who has invested two to three years ago, he would not have thought that rules would be changed. I would like to politely request the Finance Minister that this rule be changed and retrospective tax is kept out of this sector.

Madam for the past so many days we have heard the slogan of 'minimum government, maximum governance'. This is not wrong at all. One does not necessarily follow the Governance requires capacity. That capacity has to be created and



## “ACCHE DIN” WAS GETTING “EXPOSED”

### Congress sweeps Uttarakhand bypolls

**Dehradun (Uttarakhand):** The by-elections from these constituencies were held as two seats were vacated by BJP -- former chief minister of Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank (Doiwala) and former minister Ajay Tamta (Someswar), who got elected to Lok Sabha last May. The third seat – Dharchula – was vacated by Congress legislator Harish Dhami to facilitate election of chief minister Harish Rawat to the state assembly.

The results are extraordinary as in the Lok Sabha polls in May this year, BJP had swept the state winning all five parliamentary seats despite the Congress replacing its chief minister Vijay Bahuguna with Harish Rawat just ahead of the polls.

Chief Minister Shri Harish Rawat won

the Dharchula assembly by-poll by defeating BJP candidate BD Joshi by a margin of 20,000 votes. This is Rawat's maiden entry into state legislature. He was elected Member of Parliament for the first time in 1980 defeating then Janata Party MP Murli Manohar Joshi from Almora seat. Party candidates Hira Singh Bisht and Rekha Arya won Doiwala and Someshwar seats respectively.

Smt. Ambika Soni, AICC in-charge of the Uttarakhand state, said, “It is more important than an ordinary victory. It is a sign that people are already regretting having voted for BJP based on their outlandish promises.”

The AICC Spokesperson Shri P.C. Chacko said it showed that the



Narendra Modi “myth” of “acche din” was getting “exposed” within sixty days of NDA coming to power at the Centre. He further told reporters that the verdict was also significant in view of the fact that the party has been able to snatch two seats from BJP besides ensuring a good win for the chief minister by a margin of over 20,000 votes. State Congress President Shri Kishore Upadhyay credited Shri Harish Rawat for the clean sweep by the party. ❖

in order to be able to create that capacity, you need to devote lot of resources. For quite many a days we were hearing about corruption and that Black money has to be wiped out. The Prime Minister in his thanks giving proposal of the Presidential address has said that the perception has been formed about India, that our identity has become ‘Scam India.’ It is necessary to bring change into this then I would like to ask the government whether there would be any action taken against it or not, they have to reply to this, because if we cannot keep our house clean, how can we keep our country clean. This is a reality, you cannot stay away from this reality.

Madam many projects have been mentioned in this budget. The country today requires out of the box solutions.

Madam the slogan of this government was ‘Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas.’ India is a bouquet of flowers from which sweet smell comes out because it has the issue of unity in diversity. But for the minorities just 61 words have been said in this budget and only Rs. 100 crore has been allocated, is this not injustice?

Madam if we talk about fulfilling the targets. The government has decided many important targets. For investment they have kept a target of Rs. 65 thousand crores.

Madam, the economy of any country depends on the basis of tax buoyancy. The tax buoyancy of India at present, when GDP increased by one percent then the tax revenue rises by less than one percent. The assumptions that has been kept in this budget, it has been kept that the tax revenue growth would be 18 percent but the GDP growth rate was a nominal 13.5%. We will not be able to broach this gap. This rate depends on the basis of investment. That investment is either based on public investment or on private

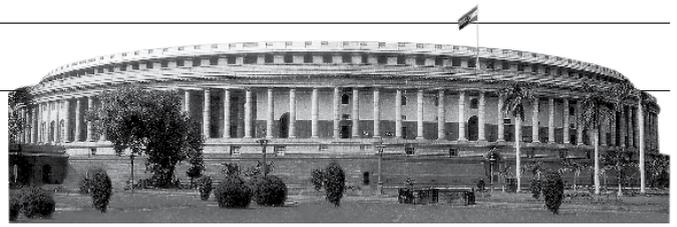
investment. In the public sector the target has been kept at Rs. 2 lakh 50 thousand crores so that we may increase the investment cycle. But last year the investment was of Rs. 2 lakh 60 thousand crores, which means that there was an increase of ten thousand crores and then we were able to meet 5% of the growth target. Private sector just got eight months and mostly only DPR and feasibility will be met. If there is no increase in investment in the public and private sectors then we shall not be able to achieve the GDP growth rate target. The result of which will be that there would be an environment of slow growth rate. Revenue and subsidy would increase in the shortfall because there is a possibility of a drought and subsidy has to be raised. The fiscal deficit will not remain below 5 % and the issue of price-rise is most important for our poor people.

Madam, through you we want to give assurance that we shall give our full support to any resolution which this government brings in public interest. But any proposal that is anti-people or that will bring burden on the people by this government will be fully opposed in this temple of democracy, by the UPA and Congress Party.

Today, every citizen of India wants that his contribution should be in the progress and development of India. Our hopes are many. India is competent to develop as a star nation, not as an island but an ocean in which every person feels his involvement.

It is simple to weave a dream, it is easy to create hopes but it is difficult to realize it. This will be a big challenge for this government. Leadership is the art of the impossible but managing the political economy is the art of only the possible.

*Hazaron khawishen aise ki har khawish pe dam nikle,  
Bahut nikle mere armaan, lekin phir bhi kam nikle. ❖*



## UNINSPIRING AND INSIPID BUDGET WHICH LACKS VISION

Reaction of Shri Anand Sharma, Dy. Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha on the Finance Bill 2014-2015

The Finance Minister has presented an uninspiring and insipid Budget, which lacks any bold vision. There was considerable expectation of the people of India that the Government will translate its lofty promises into a concrete action plan through the Budget. Several of the new schemes are populist in nature drawing upon the announcements made by Shri Narendra Modi during the election campaign. FM has adopted a cautious approach and has been prudent in retaining the targets of fiscal deficit as part of the Fiscal Consolidation Plan prepared by the UPA Government. He made a clear acknowledgement that given the precarious global economic situation, the UPA Government left behind an economy which is healthy.

The Finance Minister had identified inflation, employment, infrastructure and manufacturing as areas of key priorities. However, most of the announcements in the Budget are a mere repackaging of schemes initiated by the UPA Government. 16 new industrial townships had already been launched and 4 Industrial corridors Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, Amritasar-Kolkatta Industrial Corridor, Bengaluru-Mumbai Economic Corridor and Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor, were under implementation during the UPA Government. Shri Narendra Modi had promised creation of 100 smart cities for which the Finance Minister has made a meagre allocation of Rs. 7,060 crores, which would perhaps be inadequate to create even a single city.

There has been only an incremental movement on the foreign investment regime in defence manufacturing. An announcement of 49% cap with substantial Indian control will not enthruse any major foreign investor to invest in the country. This sector held the potential of catalyzing and reviving the growth of manufacturing and in absence of a bold announcement, it is a missed opportunity. The Finance Minister was also silent on the Government's official stance on the FDI regime in Multi Brand Retail, especially so in the context of creating supply chain efficiencies and developing cold chains for agricultural produce. There was need to clear air so that foreign investors who were waiting for a clear signal can move forward.

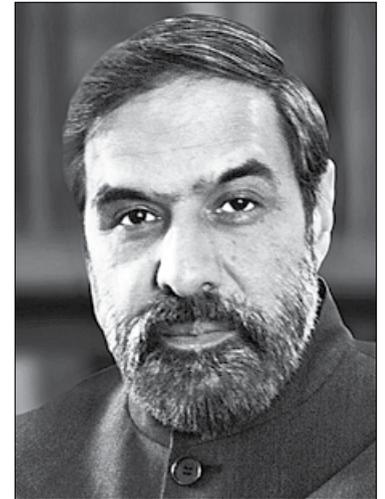
The announcements on Special Economic Zones have been very vague. It was expected that greater clarity would be provided on the taxation regime as well as the infrastructural strengthening in these zones.

There is no substantive measure for accelerating the growth of manufacturing in the country. While the establishment of Rs. 10000 crores venture capital fund for start-ups is a welcome development, a differential rate of credit for manufacturing would have provided considerable relief for promoting the growth of this sector.

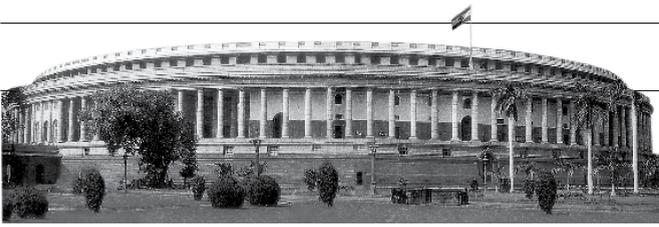
There are some general announcements about reform of the subsidy regime on the fuel and food to make them more targeted. The details of which have not been spelt out.

On the issue of retrospective taxation on IT Act, it has been announced that there will be High Level Committee to scrutinize all levels before initiating action. Prudence and due diligence would be required in all such matters.

It is clear that the focus of this Government is primarily towards promoting private enterprise and urbanization. While industrial activity, manufacturing, job creation and urbanization must receive priority attention of the Government, it cannot be at the cost of social sector spending which is a fundamental obligation of a welfare state. The FM was silent on the allocations for MGNREGA, health and education sector allocations. It appears that the focus of the Government is to promote the interests of the urban residents at the expense of the majority of Indians who still reside in rural areas. We wish that primary health care, education and rural employment had received adequate attention of the Government. ❖



**Anand Sharma**  
MP & former Union Minister



## INDIA NEEDS AN ECONOMY WHICH IS EFFICIENT, IS COMPETITIVE

Discussion on General Budget -  
Demands For Excess Grants (General)  
on 16th July, 2014 in Lok Sabha, Parliament House

I would like to join my hon. colleagues in congratulating the Finance Minister on his Budget speech, the longest Budget speech, I think, in living memory. In fact, my dear friend Shri Sudip Bandyopadhyay was actually wrong when he held the two speeches up and said that Shri Chidambaram's and his were equal in length. Shri Jaitley spoke 16,473 words for nearly two hours and a half, whereas Shri Chidambaram spoke 6,581 words in less than one hour. So, the result is the real

inflation here, from 6,000 to 16,000. But still since we know that it is a backbreaking work for the Minister, we should be sympathetic.

After hearing my friend, Shri Jaitley's views on the UPA's Budgets over the last five years, I must confess that I am a bit disappointed at his own Budget's lack of big, bold ideas. To cite a phrase he has often used against the UPA, for the last decade the BJP has been critical of the UPA's Budgets, we could have assumed they have a pretty good idea of what they would have offered in our place, some path breaking reforms, some radical departures from the UPA policies and, of course, a few of Prime Minister Modi's bitter pills. We got none. He said we have got 29 projects that have been allocated Rs. 100 crore each, like Bollywood box office hits. A Budget cannot be a laundry list of assorted Rs. 100 crore sops to various constituencies. We do understand these are meant to be initial allocations for this year alone and not complete numbers for these projects. But there should be a vision and a clear policy and a direction behind all these programmes. Where is that? These Rs. 100 crore allocation actually raise real questions about the mindset of the Government in this regard? What is the desired overall outcome? How does each Rs. 100 crore serve their objective? For example, a mere Rs. 100 crore for gender security is meaningless when there is not enough outlay for core, sovereign functions like law and order, as Dr. Thambidurai pointed out. The hon. Jayant Sinha said that the economy is like a battle ship. But clearly this ship is not ready yet for battle. But anyway in keeping with Shri Jaitley's own preferences when he was in Opposition, let me just stick to the big picture.

What are the big questions that we need to ask about the Budget? First, as this is the new Government, does it have an overall

vision? Is it clear how it is going to be implemented? Second, has the economy's problems been diagnosed properly and is there a prescription to fix these remedies? Third, who gains and who loses from this Budget? Fourth, does it live up to the expectations generated by the ruling party's own statements

when it was in Opposition? I am sorry to say that there are serious grounds for disappointment in analyzing the Budget along these questions. What is the *aam admi* looking for in this Budget? At the personal level, everyone wants more income and a lower cost of living and at the macro level, policies that will create growth and job opportunities, that would reduce prices, that would widen each Indian's life prospects. India needs an economy which is efficient, which is competitive, and which is at the same time, in an era of growing inequality, is also humane. We have not got that from this Budget. In fact, in his Rajya Sabha speech on the UPA's 2012 Budget, Shri Jaitley said that the Budget should increase I am quoting him the width and the volume of the economic activity. That is a pretty good yardstick. But his own Budget has failed to meet it. Where is the roadmap for national recovery? Any Budget today you ask any economist has to address five issues, fiscal consolidation, the policy aimed at reducing Government deficits and debt accumulation, job creation through boosting manufacturing, increasing savings in order to boost investments, inflation control, price rise and improving investor sentiment, both domestic and foreign so that we can have more growth revival. Now, you can throw into this list a few subsidiary points as some of the Members today have done, like some tax policies, energy policies, human resource development incentives, issues of banking and pension. We do not have time to address each one of these in detail. But the Finance Minister did, but he did not fully address any. Take one item, manufacturing. An hon. Member from the BJP blamed the UPA.



**Dr Shashi Tharoor,**  
MP & former Union Minister

## IN THE PARLIAMENT

To be internationally competitive, India requires policies that will reduce the cost of manufacturing; affordable interest rates, improved infrastructure, better trade facilitation, lower cost of power and so on. One of the key reasons for the fall in the GDP growth rate is the slowing Index of Industrial Production. But this Government's Budget has not addressed any of these let alone have a coherent set of policies to improve manufacturing. You are not going to get manufacturing just by announcing that you are going to create more factories. All these policies are required to be framed.

For a Government that had long deprecated the UPA's alleged 'indecisiveness', there were no concrete decisions on offer on any of these or our country's other fiscal priorities. For instance, after decrying UPA's tax policies for years, the hon. Finance Minister announced no decision on introducing the pending Direct Tax Code. Instead he gave us a series of Committees - an Expenditure Management Commission, a high-level Committee of the CBDT on Retrospective Taxation, another Committee to interact with industry on taxation, a

fourth Committee to examine MSMEs. This from a Party that routinely blamed the UPA for delegating decision-making to Groups of Ministers".

Now, I come to the Expenditure Management Commission which they are all so much excited on. We have actually heard this story before. The Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government too had an Expenditure Reforms Commission, headed by Shri K.P. Geethakrishnan. Its report, which covered 36 subject areas, was consigned to the archives. As usual, a Commission becomes an excuse for inaction. So, I must ask the Government how many times must the wheel be re-invented for the NDA engine to start cranking?

No specific measures were announced to reduce inflation. Price rise is the worst kind of tax on the poor and the lower middle-class, the issue that most hurts the *aam aadmi*, but the Party that rode to power on public resentment of high prices had no inflation-busting solutions to offer. In fact, the cuts in fuel subsidies by about Rs.22,000 crore are going to ensure that the prices of petrol and diesel will keep going up, leading to a cascading impact on other essential commodities, needless to say the price rise for everybody. We would at least, Mr.

Chairman, have hoped the Finance Minister would say that he encourages and supports the

Reserve Bank of India to manage interest rate policies that complement the fiscal efforts to reduce inflation. But he has not even addressed this concern.

People below the poverty line have got short shrift in the focus on the so called "neo middle-class" that we hear about from the BJP. But for aspirational young Indians, there is no indication of where new jobs will come from for the 12 million young people who are entering the employment market each year.

Let me turn briefly and boringly to macro-economic perspectives because there are some real worries about how the Finance Minister will achieve any fiscal consolidation with his Budget. After accusing the UPA of fudging the numbers in claiming a fiscal deficit of 4.6 per cent, the NDA Budget now accepts those numbers. But it gives no specifics on how it will bring that down to 4.1 per cent, a target it endorsed without cavil. In fact, the Finance Minister based his deficit calculations on a nearly 20 per cent increase in revenue which, in a year of slow growth period in our lives, is implausible. Some of the Budget numbers strain

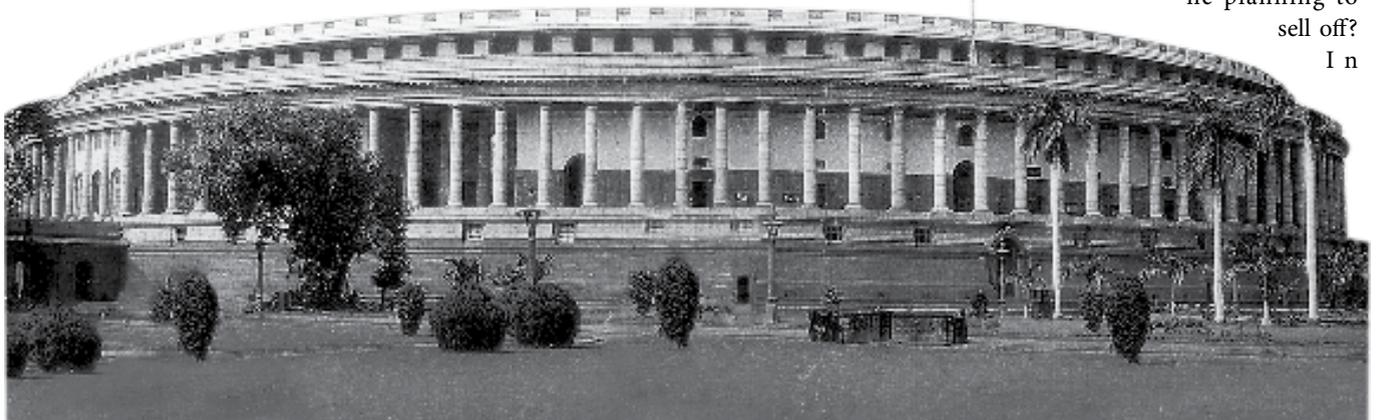
credulity. Tax revenues are projected well above the GDP growth. That defies credibility given that nominal GDP growth is unlikely to exceed 13 to 14 per cent (9 per cent for inflation plus 5 per cent for real GDP growth). It also defies credibility because already in the first quarter of this fiscal year, 45 per cent of the annual deficit number has already been reached. Despite just having a 6 per cent growth in customs revenues last year, the Government has budgeted a 15 per cent jump in customs revenue this year. On what basis?

The fine print shows that the Government expects Rs.99,000 crore from non-tax revenues. Where is that coming from, if not from selling national assets? Yet, the hon. Finance Minister did not even mention the word "disinvestment" in his speech. Still, disinvestment proceeds for this year are projected to rise from Rs.25,000 crore in 2013-14 to Rs.63,000 crore in 2014-15, much higher than the Interim Budget of Shri Chidambaram. I think in his reply to this debate,

spell out exactly

the Finance Minister needs to what he will do on disinvestment. Which bits of the family silver is he planning to sell off?

I n



fact, I quote the International Rating Agency Moody's: "The Budget lack details on revenue and expenditure measures to lower the deficit, making it difficult to assess the likelihood that future deficit targets will be met. I am sure the hon. Member Shri Jayant Sinha can tell us: Will foreign investors listen to Moody's views or Modi's views.

Anyway, on the other side of the picture, let us turn to taxes from *aam aadmi's* point of view. As Leader of the Opposition, Arun Jaitley *ji* had demanded that the IT exemption limit be raised to Rs.5 lakhs, which he has not been able to fulfil as Finance Minister. The very fact that the BJP's promise of increasing the exemption limit to Rs.5 lakh has resulted in only a 25 per cent increase in exemption limit from Rs.2 lakh to Rs.2.50 lakh has disappointed people across the country. So, we have lost on both sides. As I said, on the macro economic side, Mr.

Finance Minister, I am sure, would brief on later; and the average taxpayer who, as my colleague pointed out, will only save Rs.416 per month which won't even cover the increased price of tomatoes, onions, sugar and milk for a family of four today. Similarly, there is no comprehensive roadmap to step up the country's tax to GDP ratio, which is at a low level of 17 percent. And there are no measures to address the lack of progressivity in the country's tax structure, which depends on indirect taxes to the extent of two-thirds of our total tax revenue.

In the absence of clear measures as I had explained on increasing revenues or tax collection efficiency, how will the NDA manage the fiscal deficit? Won't there inevitably be cuts in developmental expenditure?

Persistent inflation is due in large part due to Government borrowings and is the cause of high interest rates that have hurt investment, consumption and job creation. So, clearly, debt must be reduced, even retired altogether, we agreed with the hon. Finance Minister who said in his speech "We cannot leave behind a legacy of debt for our future generations." Yet, this year, the Government of India will spend more than it did last year, borrow more than it did last year approximately Rs.69 crore an hour and spend more on subsidies than it did last

year. How is he going to retire the debt?

The Budget did not spell out clear plans for rationalising these subsidies; recapitalizing public sector banks; and did not repeal the retrospective tax amendment that was expected by the investing community. In fact, the *Economic Survey*, which the Finance Minister himself presented to us, the day before the Budget, envisaged reducing direct taxes to the ASEAN level, an FRBM Act with real teeth, food stamps and cash transfer instead of subsidized goods but Mr. Jaitley has avoided all these reforms.

No wonder the BSE Sensex extended its losing streak to a fifth straight day during which the blue chip index has shed over 1,000 points. So, while the Rs.100 crore giveaways make it look a 'something for everybody' budget, the stock market reaction proves that it is really a 'not enough for anybody' budget.

Agriculture, one area in which our country actually been doing

quite well has been woefully neglected by the NDA Budget, in a year where farmers are particularly vulnerable to a bad monsoon. Yes, we have the Rural Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme which is a good idea but is Rs.100 crore really going to go very far in a country where 67 per cent of our population is rural and 65 per cent is young. How can you manage to tackle their needs in that kind of time?

I want to address about pensions, instead of addressing some of the needs of poor people. I have got pensioners in my constituency who are trying to live on Rs.500 a month. We have not seen a significant increase there. We have not seen any proposal on employees contributions to life and health insurance which should have made mandatory as with the provident fund. But these easy wins have been spurned. Instead they have grand, uneconomic, unviable ideas like the bullet trains a classic example of the NDA going on the wrong track - the gap between dreams and realities.

You can talk all you want about affordable housing and 100 smart cities but where is the land available to build them? As my colleague pointed out, the NDA adopted a number of UPA policies which it had earlier criticised and blocked but on the Goods and Services Tax, which we were very pleased they have adopted, and which they had opposed their State Governments had opposed we are again concerned about the lack of deadline or specific assurances to the States.

About various schemes that have already been mentioned that have actually been renamed, demonstrates, once again that this is not a game changing Budget but a name changing Budget. There is lot more to be said, Mr. Chairman, but I just want to conclude with two last words. I do want to stress that women have done very badly out of this Budget because we have got some concerns about the lack of addressing the problems of their security, their education, the balance between the money allocated to them. Even the National Crime Record Bureau says that there has been a 26 per cent increase in crimes against women but there has not been a two per cent increase in the budget allocated to women.

Let me conclude now. Since the Finance Minister did not favour us with the usual couplets we have become used to in Budget speeches, I thought I would offer him a couple that are appropriate to this story. The first, with your permission, Mr. Chairman, is this.

“कहाँ तो तय था, उजाला हर घर के लिए,  
कहाँ चिराग मयससर नहीं शहर के लिए।”

“The promise was to illuminate every home. Not even a lamp lights up the city today.” But, we, on this side of the House, are not surprised, Mr. Chairman. After all, as the immortal Ghalib put it,

“तेरे वादे पर जिये हम, तो ये जान झूठ जाना,  
कि खुशी से मर न जाते, अगर ऐतबार होता।”

“I lived by your promise as I knew that it was false. Would not I have died of happiness, if I had believed it to be true?”

I hope that the NDA Government will help us to die of happiness, Mr. Chairman, rather than live in false hope. Thank you very much. ❖

## WHY THE BUDGET WAS A DAMP SQUIB?

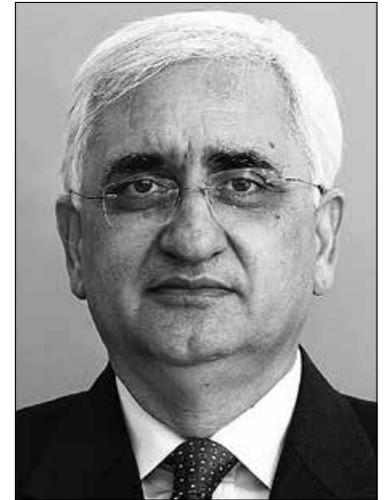
I chose to keep away from the budget debate on the media channels for good reason. The budget is what the budget will do. All people can do is to parrot some words of approval (if they are Modi acolytes) or disapproval (if we are still coming to terms with what he did to us)! There is very little talent it seems or indeed sensible people willing to spend time telling us what, why and how of the budget. But having seen it all and heard it all ad nauseum I am tempted to say something about the politics of the budget: it was thankfully not a saffron budget even if the FM periodically slipped in a bit of saffron hue to give the right 'politically correct' colour to his language. The point about FM Arun Jaitley being much better as a speaker than a reader is well taken but surely that is the story of the BJP and the real politics of this budget. Despite the chanting of the matra of good governance in the 45 days they have been in power it is clear that as yet they have no idea of what is good leave alone excellent in the first part of the phrase and governance in the latter part.

Our party has a dilemma: much of it is merely borrowing from our budget ideas we believe. But we also believe it lacks vision and road map. So to be politically correct we have to say that they are not very good at borrowing! Be that as it may though it may be yet too early to dub them paralytics, one can certainly sense weakness in the limbs if not the heart. Theirs was no ordinary election campaign and their rewards were not ordinary either. They debunked everything we did or wanted to do, generously helped by institutions that we failed to convince of our honest intentions. But that is history. The new rulers must deliver or at least show an intent to deliver. Would it be entirely unfair to ask how they intend to do it? To begin with what is the budget supposed to do? It was said to be directional but admittedly without a road map. It was said to be developmental, but without a plan or the benefit of a Planning Commission. It was supposed to be for all but I dare say there was little about many. It was supposed to think big but started with things very small. 24x7 one had heard of but 29x100? Even if we accept that in the months that are left the capacity to absorb or consume is limited the country was at least entitled to know what exact future figure the 100 crore were to be part of.

So how should one describe the budget: 'Mr fix-it promises to be back with more.' The good thing is that the industry that doubled up as cheer leaders were too embarrassed to drop their buntings and in carefully chosen words welcomed the meagre offerings of comfort. The common citizen, no longer the voter (except in three States), must sup on a staple diet of bad monsoon and middle east crisis. Achche din might not have come but sache din have come. Having fed the country colourful dreams the great leader is now busy giving the wake up call. 'Desh me agar hoga sookha

har ek sath rahega bhooka.' Any one could have said that. You don't have to ride a whooping big wave of electoral approval to crash to such inane pragmatics. We were told India was in search of a leader and sort of found one. But in 45 days the voice is already dropping, what to say of the morale. The BJP Leadership should know that the Congress will not let them get away with lame excuses but because we love this country we will support all that is good for our people. We know that it is difficult to be good and equally difficult to govern. We do not intend to add to that difficulty but nor will we be forgiving of confusion where the country needs clarity. Please tell the people how the thorns of discontent you nourished will blossom into glorious flowers of comfort. And when?

The first thing that the people want to know is when inflation will ease. We heard a great deal about hoarding and State responsibility but not a word about system reform to address inflation. Is it that your inflation is better than ours. Economic fundamentals that we are being taught are the ones that were true for our tenure as well. Black money banked in cooler climes and corruption were supposed to be the cause of inflation but neither have been addressed. Presumably that is why inflation continues to plague us. Tax terrorism as a term coined by the BJP in Opposition. But the right to retrospective tax has been reasserted with the throw away promise of doing it with care. Similarly our FDI was debilitating but theirs is the panacea for growth. There will be bullet trains and more bullets as well, both with foreign investment. The party that screamed the loudest about sovereignty has suddenly taken U- turn. If anyone wants to know what such a turn looks like in real life just watch the BJP spokespersons on the media reacting to Shri Vaidik's meeting with Hafiz Sayeed the self confessed enemy of our country. Instead of sharing with the people the real philosophy of the government on weapon export, foreign penetration into strategic sectors, commitment on social sector safety nets, the role of the common citizen in economic growth, rule of law, etc, the government merely tells the country please wait. Meanwhile having repeatedly questioned us on deficit and economic reform the NDA government could not find different figures to project. Will it at least admit that many things said to displace the UPA are indeed what they will have to deny to make their feet stable. Managing elections might prove to be a lot easier than managing the economy. ❖



**Salman Khurshid**  
former Union Minister

## SPEAK ONLY AFTER OBSERVING THE FACTS: SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM ADVISES THE NDA GOVERNMENT

Shri P Chidambaram said that a few days ago, the Prime Minister said:

*"I have taken over reins of the country in circumstances where there is nothing left behind by the previous Government. They left everything empty. The country's financial health has hit the bottom."*

We would have ignored the remarks as part of the political rhetoric that started during the election campaign. However, similar remarks have been made by others as well.

We are therefore obliged to ask a few questions:

### 1. Did the Prime Minister refer to the cash balance of the Government?

The opening cash balance on 1.6.2004, just after the NDA Government demitted office, was *negative* Rs.2730 crore. There was a 'ways and means' advance on that date. On the other hand, the opening cash balance on 1.6.2014, just after the UPA Government demitted office, was Rs. 26,510 crore. We do not subscribe to the "empty coffers" theory but, for the sake of argument, we would like to ask "who left behind an empty treasury"?

### 2. Did the Prime Minister refer to the foreign exchange reserves?

Strictly speaking, the foreign exchange reserves do not belong to the Government. Nevertheless, if the Prime Minister was referring to the reserves, at the end of 2003-04, just before the UPA Government assumed office, the reserves stood at USD 113 billion. On the other hand, at the end of 2013-14, just before the NDA Government assumed office, the reserves stood at USD 304 billion. At the end of 31.5.2014, the reserves stood at USD 312 billion. So, who left behind more foreign exchange reserves?

### 3. Did the Prime Minister refer to the outstanding liabilities of the Central Government?

Since 1950-51, the Central Government has always had liabilities which include public debt and other liabilities. Assuming that the Prime Minister's argument was that the Government has high debt, that is indeed true. For many, many years, the Government has incurred a fiscal deficit every year, which means that the Government has added to the public debt every year. It was no different when the Congress had formed the Government, it was no different when the NDA was in office between 1998 and 2004, and it was no different when the UPA was in office between 2004 and 2014. And if we may make a prediction, it will be no different during the period of the Modi sarkar.

### 4. What did the Prime Minister mean when he said "There is nothing left behind"?

We may remind the new Government that we left behind 243,000 MW of installed power capacity and 207 million tonnes of petroleum refining capacity.

We left behind an economy that had raised coal and lignite production to 562 million tonnes; steel production to 82.2 million tonnes; fertilizer production to 36.5 million tonnes; and cement production to 25.6 million tonnes.

We left behind a farm sector that produced 263 million tonnes of food grain last year. We left behind a stock of 34.4 million tonnes of wheat and 28.4 million tonnes of rice with FCI on 1.5.2014.

We left behind 389,578 kilometers of rural



**P Chidambaram**  
former Union Minister

roads built under PMGSY.

We left behind a universal mid-day meal scheme, a generous education loan programme and a scaled-up National Skill Development Mission which have touched the lives of millions of people.

We left behind an economy where the fiscal deficit has been reduced, the current account deficit has been sharply contained, and a clear path of fiscal consolidation has been laid out. We also left behind a 10-point agenda which contains a vision for the future.

In conclusion, we would like to say that the state of the Indian economy has to be seen in the context of the world economy. There will be ups and downs, and these will be reflected in the state of the Indian economy. We enjoyed a golden period between 2004 and 2008. Thereafter, the international financial crisis, now described by economists as the Great Recession, hit all countries including India. The crisis is not yet over. Estimates of world economic growth have been revised downwards in the last few days. For example, the US which was expected to grow in 2014 at 2.8 percent

is now expected to grow only at 2.1-2.3 percent. Hence, the Indian economy will face head winds. The government of the day is obliged to assess the situation from time to time and take appropriate measures.

We would be happy if the BJP/NDA comes out of 'campaign mode' and gets on with the business of governing the country. We wish the Government well in its efforts.

In response to a question, Shri Chidambaram said in the immediate future since the world economic growth is likely to be depressed or low we have to take a number of measures to restore growth. It won't be easy but I don't think task is beyond the government.

To another question, he said that he was not competent to say why the Congress Party lost the election but he assumed that inflation was one of the reasons. That's a very logical conclusion.

In response to a question, Shri Chidambaram said there are head winds and one of the head winds will be situation in Middle East. Remember when the NDA was first in power, the crude prices did not rise beyond 32 dollars a barrel. When UPA was in office there was a time when the crude prices touched 147 dollars a barrel. If crude prices rise the government will face difficulties. But any government will soon learn that not all factors are under the control of the government. This is what we had said when we were in the government that not all factors are under our control. We have to deal with the situation as we find them. I sincerely hope that situation in Middle East moderates or cools down. But if crude prices remain high as they were 115 dollars a barrel I am afraid it will pose difficulties to the government in management of the economy.

To a question on Planning Commission, Shri Chidambaram said my personal view is that Planning Commission must be much more limited body and tasked with drawing up prospective plan. Planning Commission, as it is today, is too big, too flabby and too unwieldy. But that's my personal view and I have expressed it earlier within the government.

To a question on advise to the Finance Minister, he said he does not give advice. We have included a 10 point agenda in the interim Budget speech and which has been reproduced in the Congress Party's manifesto. It is not a partisan agenda. It is not a Congress Party agenda. The 10-point

### Economic Survey: A Statement of P. Chidambaram

I appreciate the restrained language of the Economic Survey 2013-14 that has resisted the temptation (as the UPA resisted in 2004) to point an accusatory finger at the outgoing Government.

I have read only Chapters 1 and 2 and, therefore, I shall confine my remarks to the subjects of those Chapters - the State of the Economy and Issues and Priorities.

I am glad that the ES has acknowledged the measures taken by the UPA government on the macro stabilization front and the successes achieved in containing the current account deficit and reducing the fiscal deficit. I am also glad that the ES has noted several significant developments - the increase in foreign exchange reserves; the decline in WPI inflation from 8.9% to 7.4% to 6.0%; and the restoration of exchange rate stability.

The ES has correctly placed the slowdown witnessed in the last two years in the global context marked by the Euro crisis, the general slowdown of the global economy, and the declining growth in emerging markets and developing economies including China. The ES has also appreciated the measures taken by the UPA government and the RBI in mid-July 2013.

I welcome the clear declaration of the NDA Government that "the emphasis of policy would have to remain on fiscal consolidation and removal of structural constraints."

I am in broad agreement with the "issues and priorities" identified in Chapter 2, particularly the affirmation of the "reform agenda" and the advocacy of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the Direct Taxes Code (DTC). I also welcome the statement that "the Indian Financial Code is on the legislative agenda."

However, I am disappointed that the ES envisages a five year period to "put in place" the reforms followed by a period within which the economy would fully absorb the new environment. I would urge the Government (that has an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha) to show a greater degree of urgency and spell out specific steps that it will take according to a definite time table. ❖

agenda is something that I would commend to the Government.

To a question on imposition of Hindi, he said there will be a backlash in non-Hindi States, especially Tamil Nadu. The government will be well advised to proceed with caution.

To a question on incursion of a Chinese helicopter, he said international boundary there is a matter of dispute. These are matter of perceptions. I do not think we should exaggerate or get alarmed about on reports about a helicopter having crossed a particular point. These are matters best dealt by local Army and Air Force commanders. If the matter is serious enough it would be brought to the notice of the government and the government would deal with it. Without full information, how do we comment on this?

To a question on asking Governors and others to resign, he said some people may want to resign voluntarily. Some people may decide that they will hold office until the end of the term. If I were Prime Minister, I

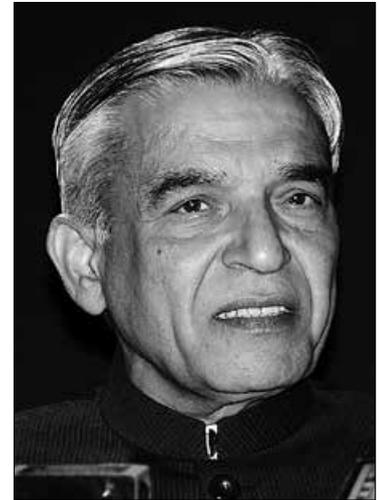
would respect both views. The only case for intervention is when there is proven case of misconduct. The law has been restated by the Supreme Court in May 2010.

To a question on Vodafone, he said our Government's position was if Vodafone come forward and settled the matter in a mutually satisfactory way through conciliation then that settlement can be reflected by amending the Income Tax Act.

To a question whether Congress deserves the position of the leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, he said the position of Leader of Opposition rightfully belongs to the largest political formation in the Lok Sabha. Since the Congress is a largest group or formation in Lok Sabha, the leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha deserves the position of the leader of Opposition.

To a question, he said Foreign Trade Agreements (FTAs) are bilateral agreements. We can review them to learn lessons for the future. But as long as there is an agreement it will bind signatories to the agreement. ❖

## THE RAILWAY BUDGET: CLAIMS AND THE REALITY



**Pawan Kumar Bansal**  
former Union Minister

**A**fter the Railway Budget speech, Prime Minister Modi declared that had the earlier governments (which include the period of NDA government when Shri Ram Vilas Paswan and Shri Nitish Kumar were Railway Ministers) laid emphasis on railways as the driver of growth, it would not have landed in the 'present precarious position.'

The Railways Minister was also critical of his predecessors and termed the declaration of New Lines in the past as irrational and expenditure thereon as frittering away of resources.

The Budget was hailed as a never before event and a precursor of true development.

Both the Prime Minister and the Railway Minister, who have been swayed by political flamboyance, seem oblivious of the facts to overlook all the development the Indian Railways(IR) have registered so far and contributed to the overall development of Indian economy.

In Eleventh plan period alone, IR exceeded the targets in completing 2,207 km of New Lines bringing many new areas in the railway network. Doubling of tracks was completed in 2,758 km route length and 4,556 km of tracks were electrified.

During the year 2013-14, UPA Govt. completed 1532 km of New Line, Doubling & Gauge conversion against a revised target of 1525 km. further, during Eleventh plan period 64,875 new wagons

were added besides the addition of 1,288 new diesel locos and, 1,218 new electric locos.

Also in early 2013, Indian Railways joined the elite international club of 5 nations carrying more than 1,000 million tons of freight annually. Target of 1,047 million tonnes for 2013-14 also was surpassed. Importantly, UPA took up Eastern and Western Freight Corridors projects which are making good progress with no mean task of land acquisition for 2,800 km of the corridors completed and award of nearly 1,100 of civil works in 2013-14. Another 1,000 km of civil construction was targeted for 2014-15 besides award of systems contracts. Surprisingly while earlier announcements about new lines have been criticized, fresh announcements have been made for new surveys even by Shri Sadananda Gowda. That too as political award to some and not for a balanced development of different regions of the country.

Announcements of Bullet Trains projects for Mumbai- Ahmedabad and other sections have been touted as a great initiative. There is nothing new in this announcement, but we have a proverbial short memory. As agreed between Dr. Manmohan Singh and Prime Minister of Japan in May 2013, a Joint Feasibility Study for Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Corridor has already started in December 2013. A Business Development

study by French Railways, SNCF also has been undertaken for this route.

Mumbai-Ahmadabad sector alone will entail an expenditure of Rs. 60,000 crore by today's prices. This is an iconic project, which needs to be pursued. But this kind of expenditure will give no benefit to the common man who will not be able to afford a fare almost equal to air fare.

In most of the fifteen countries where high speed (280 to 350 kmph) trains operate, project cost is met from public funding and the average fare structure ranges from .13 to .39 US \$ per km( Rs.8 to Rs.24), except China where it is between Rs. 3.5 to Rs. 8.00 per km. Our Shatabdi trains already have a fare structure of Rs. 2 to Rs. 4 per km. If the high-speed project with entire route length being a new dedicated line is FDI funded, very few will be able to afford the journey. Inherent in FDI in Railways is the privatization of rail operations, which is not permissible.

In the same vein, much credit is being taken for "innovative" Semi-high Speed projects. This can be a viable option to high speed for the present. Regarding this also, consultations had been going on and possibilities explored during the last two years. Strengthening of Delhi-Agra sector tracks was also undertaken. As a result, in the Interim Budget, 2014, the then Railway Minister Shri M. Kharge

announced the proposal to raise speeds of some trains on existing select routes to 160-200 kmph. Yet this again is claimed to be part of a new revolutionary 'out of the box' thinking.

To impress the Corporate Sector, the Railway Minister has emphasized on Public Private Partnership (PPP) model and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Railway projects.

UPA had, in 2013, cleared 5 participative models for linking ports, large mines, industry etc. to the main lines and announced manufacturing facilities under PPP. A target of Rs. One lakh crore had been set up to attract investments through PPP mode during 12th plan period on projects including Elevated Rail Corridor in Mumbai, parts of Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC), redevelopment of stations, power generation/ energy saving projects, freight terminals, logistic parks, loco and coach manufacturing and High Speed etc. but the NDA Minister of Railways assures us that PPP will be forthcoming for Over Bridges and Under Bridges. I'll salute him if he can find takers for RUBs & ROB, cost and inconvenience to road users notwithstanding.

Announcements about the 'initiative' to start skill development institutes again are not new. In 2013 budget it was announced to setup a multi-disciplinary training institute at Nagpur for imparting training in rail related electronic technologies and to start skill development centres in railway related trades at 25 locations (mentioned in the speech). Also setting up of Indian Railways Institute of Financial Management at Secunderabad was announced besides 5 fellowships in national universities to undertake research on Railway related issues at M. Phil and Ph. D levels. Further, proposal to set up a Chair at TERI to promote Railway related research to reduce our carbon footprint was also cleared.

These steps would be adequate if pursued vigorously and Indian Railways cannot afford to start a University because of the resource crunch. This is likely to meet the

same fate as a proposal about Medical Colleges.

Rightly, due importance is given to deploy I.T. enabled services to improve passenger-railways interface. But again there is an effort of self-glorification and self-applause.

It is amusing to see the erstwhile opponents of introduction of computers by Sh. Rajiv Gandhi, seeking credit for deploying new ITES in Railways. Looking back, it is difficult to imagine how ticketing would be possible today for 2 crore 3 lakh daily commuters without computerization, as then felt by the BJP.

Adverting back to the contemporary scenario, all the modern tools had been deployed by the UPA. Wi-Fi facility was launched in Delhi- Howrah Rajdhani in 2013. This had to be extended to other important trains and stations. Introduction of one modern coach 'Anubhuti' with aesthetic interior ambience and quality services in select trains was announced to provide disturbance and hassle free travel experience to business executives etc.

Other steps included extension of Internet ticketing from 0030 hrs to 2330 hrs i.e. 23 hours a day, e-ticketing through mobile phones, SMS alerts on reservation status, Real Time Information System and Next-generation e-ticketing system to bring in ease of use and support 7200 tickets per minute and 1,20,000 simultaneous users.

There is nothing new at all in announcements related to passenger facilities and amenities; it is only an on-going & continuing programme to improve passenger services. The last government had started installing lifts and escalators on stations and introduced Centralized Catering Services Monitoring Cell with a toll free all India number. The Congress President and UPA Chairperson, Smt. Sonia Gandhi took particular interest in promotion of cultural tourism by Indian Railways and installation of bio-toilets in trains to provide clean environment to rail users. As a result, 2500 coaches were provided

bio-toilets, including the comparatively costly and difficult retrofitting in the old existing coaches.

As regards the announcement about religious circuits Budget speech of 2013 included addition of more trains to religious places and also about connecting all 5 Sikh Takhts with railways.

UPA built the railway line in the difficult terrains of Kashmir Valley to connect it to the rest of the country. Kashmir to Kanyakumari was the vision of late Smt. Indira Gandhi. This route has the all-weather Bannihal tunnel and a unique high bridge is also coming up. Multi-modal transport up to Baramulla and provision of "parchi" facility to Vaishnu Devi pilgrims at the time of rail booking itself formed part of the 2013 Budget speech.

The Budget-2013 included introduction of "Azadi Express" train connecting important places of freedom movement for students. Further effective steps were taken, including systemic ones, to curb malpractices in ticketing and reservations.

Premier trains with dynamic fare structure were introduced by the UPA on certain routes to provide direct AC travel to passengers between important stations. It was an instant success and become immensely popular.

Any government of the day is expected to take policy decisions and initiate action for public welfare. It would rightfully deserve credit where it is due. But terming predecessors' decisions irrational, yet building on the same and calling them 'Innovative' and engine of growth sounds comical.

It would have been innovative to not administer a heavy dose of fare and freight hike just a few days before the presentation of the budget and instead ponder over mobilization of non-tariff sources of revenue like advertisements in trains. 2.30 crore people travel daily by trains running on 1.06 lakh km. of tracks.

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## PM'S BURDEN LIES IN OVER-SELLING "ACCHE DIN"

M.K. Venu

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has claimed that his government has got much less of a "honeymoon period" than other regimes in the past. Indeed, the NDA government has looked somewhat besieged from the word go, and as it completes one month in office, there is worry over many economic challenges the government is likely to face in the months ahead.

The sharp increase in railway fares and the subsequent roll-back did dent Modi's image as a decisive leader. Mind you, this time around, the blame for the partial roll-back cannot be put on some intransigent ally because the BJP has a majority of its own. "Coalition Dharma" had ceased to be an excuse anymore.

Why did Modi roll back the hike in fares for suburban Mumbai trains? If it was because of the impending Maharashtra state elections, then Modi hasn't shown himself to be any different from other coalition regimes in the past which would constantly put off economic decisions with an eye on some assembly election around the corner.

The fact that Modi has chosen to do it so early in his tenure, even after winning so convincingly in North and Western India, possibly betrays an attitude that can best be described as defensive. Why such defensive behaviour so early in the tenure?

The answer to this lies in the huge over-expectation of "Achhe Din" (good days) that Modi had built in his election campaign speeches. He promised everyone the moon against the backdrop of sharply slowing growth and rising inflation. But Modi realizes only too well that many economic problems are beyond the government's control and that his promise of "Achhe Din" will take time to materialise. Even with reasonably good economic management, it could take nearly two years to get growth crawling up to 6% and inflation down to 5% on a sustained basis.

We don't realize that cumulative consumer inflation of about

50% over the past four years has deeply eroded both rural and urban incomes. The negative wealth effect in terms of real erosion of real estate and stock values, especially in urban India, has caused lasting demand pessimism.

True, the arrival of Modi government and the perception of relative stability has taken the BSE Sensex to over 25,000, but real problems on the ground such as inflation appear to be intensifying again. In any case, the stock market directly impacts only about 3 to 4% of the population which is invested in shares.

So Modi is now busy lowering the expectations that he had built before the elections. Consequently, there are tentative statements coming from the government about the common man having to swallow the bitter pill. The economic managers of the government sound very defensive when they say it will take two years to merely repair the economy. The idea is probably to keep blaming the UPA for sometime to come. This would be a bad strategy. Even Prime Minister Vajpayee who had inherited a much worse economy in 1999, post the East Asian crises, did not say he would need two years to repair the economy!

Modi's first month was marked by news of a particularly bad monsoon in North and West India with 43% deficient rainfall. Modi is acutely aware that it was these two regions which gave the BJP a massive mandate. He could quickly lose some of the support of farmers and rural folk in UP and Bihar if he is not seen as tackling drought on a war footing. Modi must be particularly worried that the widespread drought in the North and West, which produce upto 50 % of food grains, pulses and vegetables, could send food inflation spiralling. On top of all these problems has come the Iraq crises and the consequent increase in oil prices by over \$10 per barrel in the past few weeks. This will further fuel inflationary expectations and tend to weaken the rupee.

In the midst of these externally-driven economic ills, Modi's

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## **BAHUT HUI MEHANGAI KI MAAR- AB KUCH KARO MODI SARKAAR**

Rejaul Karim Laskar

“Bahut hui mehangai ki maar. Abki baar Modi Sarkaar”, was one of the most prominent slogans of the billion dollar publicity blitz of the BJP in the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections. The BJP manifesto too gave top priority to price rise. In fact, price rise occupied the top slot among the issues on which it promised to take “immediate and decisive action”. The manifesto declared, “our immediate task will be to rein in inflation”. As a result the BJP leaders were able to successfully tap public anger over inflation which helped them come to power at the centre.

However, after coming to power, they took no time to forget their pre-election slogans and the promises they made to the people. Instead of taking strong and immediate steps to check inflation, the BJP led NDA Government, on the contrary, has taken some reckless measures which has increased inflation and can have a long term harmful impact not only on the price level but also on the economy in general. As expected, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tried to justify these anti-people policies by claiming that “bitter medicine” is need to revive the economy.

As soon as they came to power, the NDA Government rewarded the people who voted for them with increase in price of LPG, Petrol and Diesel; then came the 6.5 percent hike in rail freight charges as well as 14 percent hike in fares for railway passengers. The hike in passenger fair will severely affect those poor and lower middle class people who have to travel daily by rail to reach their work place. Many working class people may find the increased transportation cost unbearable and may be compelled to leave their job. Thus, this faulty policy of the NDA government can lead to increase in unemployment.

Most, unwanted and egregious are the decision's by the NDA to increase price of diesel and the decision to increase rail freight. Strangely, the NDA government ignored the fact that the increase in price of diesel and the increase in rail freight will have a cascading effect on the prices of the commodities which are transported through rail or other diesel based



transportation. It did not occur to them that increased rail freight will not only lead to increase in food grain prices but also prices of farm inputs like fertilizers, seeds, pesticides, etc leading to many fold increase in food inflation over the long run. Even transportation costs of goods like iron ore, coal etc, which are transported mainly through rail and which are crucial for economic growth, will increase heavily hampering economic growth.

These misguided policies of the NDA government have already led to soaring inflation, in particular food inflation. The prices of potatoes and onions have reached 30 to 40 Rupees in the national capital. Similar is the case with other fruits and vegetables. The overall food inflation has already reached nearly ten percent. If urgent monetary and other policy interventions are not taken by the central government, the prices may rise even higher.

However, going by the behavior of BJP leaders so far, one will have to be not very optimistic to expect the NDA government to take effective measures to check inflation. They, it seems are more interested in taking the easy way out, i.e., putting the onus of taming inflation on state governments. The NDA government is busy giving sermons to the state governments about amending

APMC acts to delist fruits and vegetables, acting strongly on hoarders, etc. These actions, though necessary and are already being taken by the congress ruled states, are not sufficient to check the mounting inflation unless there are strong monetary and other policy interventions from the central government. However, such sermons can serve two political purposes for the BJP. First, they will be able to divert attention of the people from the faulty policies of the NDA government which led to high inflation. Secondly, they will be able to create a misperception in people's mind that their own state government, and not the BJP led central government, which is responsible for the back braking inflation which is making their life miserable. In particular, in election going states like Maharastra and Haryana, the BJP cadres and sympathizers will try to convince the voters that the respective state governments are responsible for the price rise.

Amusingly enough, when the UPA government was in power, the governments of BJP led states blamed the policies of the central government for inflation in their states. The present Prime Minister missed no opportunity to blame the UPA government for price rise. Now that the NDA has come to power at the centre, Prime Minister Modi and other leaders of the BJP and its allies are trying to make a u-turn and trying

to shift the responsibility to the state governments' shoulder as if central government's policies have nothing to do with inflation. This 'U' turn, which is another example of the habitual hypocrisy and double standard of the BJP, is nothing short of cheating with those voters who voted for BJP out of the hope that they will be able to tame inflation.

One can only hope that better sense prevails over the NDA leaders, and they desist from shifting the responsibility to the state governments and, instead, take all the necessary measures to tame inflation and give succor to the people of the country. As regards Prime Minister Modi's desire to give bitter medicine to the people of the country, he has already given an overdose of it and the people of the country are reeling under its side effects.

Common people who voted had expected that the NDA Sarkar would bring "acche din" as promised by Hon'ble PM through his election campaign. The decision to increase prices seems a part of BJP's policy. This has placed common people under serious financial stress and so called 'acchhe din' has already proved to be just a dream. ❖

*(The author is a Research Scholar of the Jawaharlal Nehru University and a Secretary of the AICC Vichar Vibhag. The views expressed here are personal.)*

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## **PM'S BURDEN LIES IN OVER-SELLING "ACCHE DIN"**

economic managers have taken some bad decisions which by themselves are inflationary. For instance, the government took the ill-timed decision to help the sugar industry by raising import duty on raw sugar from 15% to 40%. The idea was to improve the balance sheets of the sugar companies so that they are able to pay farmers' dues. The intention seemed right but the outcome was a 35% to 40% increase in sugar prices in the market at a time when inflationary expectations are building on account of bad monsoon and the Iraq crisis. The sugar package was badly timed.

Modi had also promised farmers the moon. He has specifically offered them 50% profit margin over and above all their costs. If implemented at this stage, this would also fuel inflation. The BJP -affiliated Kisan Majdoor Sangh is in no mood to take a "no" from Modi and is demanding the promised profit on the farmer's produce.

The problem is all the measures so far, starting from the Railway fare hike and sugar package, have hit the common man. The BJP is also grappling with a power crisis, particularly

in North India. There is talk of power tariff hikes across the board in order to make the power sector viable. This will also hit the common man. The NDA government has deferred the decision to double the price of gas - a decision already taken by the UPA Cabinet. This shows a growing tentativeness creeping into what was repeatedly promised as a decisive government under Modi's Prime Ministership.

One had thought Modi would use his considerable communication skills to explain tough economic decisions to the people. He has shied away from doing so. It is one thing to speak with flourish in an election campaign, it is quite another to do so in government when you are dealing with complex realities. ❖

***Disclaimer: The opinions expressed within this article are the personal opinions of the author.***

*(M.K.Venu is Executive Editor of Amar Ujala publications group)*

Courtesy: NDTV

## VAIDIK-SAEED MEETING: THE NDA MIRROR HAS CRACKED

Kumar Ketkar

**A**bout two years ago, Ved Pratap Vaidik, the well-known writer-journalist had said publicly that Mohammed Ajmal Kasab, the only 26/11 terrorist captured alive, should have been tortured and hanged in a public square. That was on November 21, 2012. Today, the same RSS sympathizer, Vaidik, is in the news for attempting to bring about a “change of heart” in the man who masterminded Kasab’s terror operation, Hafeez Saeed, by meeting him in Pakistan. Vaidik is also known as a “philosopher” who is close to the self-styled yoga guru Baba Ramdev, a known BJP sympathizer.

In June 2009, the special court which tried Kasab issued a non-bailable warrant against Hafeez Saeed, the chief of operations and the head of the Lashkar-e-Taiba accusing him of planning the attack on Mumbai and killing over 160 innocent people. The warrant is still pending. For years, the Pakistani authorities have refused to even recognize that Hafeez was propagating hatred against India and was also organizing terrorist groups. Hafeez had also said that there will be more terrorist attacks on India and his aim is to cut India into pieces.

Hafeez himself has always claimed that he is a social worker and an Islamic preacher. However, recently Hafeez, the head of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, was declared by the United States government as one of the most dreaded terrorists in the world; it even announced a \$10 million award for his capture. Hafeez is an expert in changing the names of his terrorist groups to evade arrest and trial. But it is common knowledge that the Pakistani authorities, both political and military, always protect Hafeez and even use him for anti-India propaganda. He is also a fanatic campaigner for the “freedom of Kashmir.”

Yet, the journalist cum self-declared track-2 negotiator with Pakistan, Vaidik thought that he would serve the patriotic and humanist cause of building confidence and friendship with the neighbour who has been at war with India since Independence.

The timing of making public the ill-famed meeting, which

took place a fortnight ago, of the the terrorist with the yogi-disciple, is also intriguing. Almost immediately after Prime Minister Narendra Modi left for Brazil for the BRICS summit, the relaxed photo of the twosome appeared in the media, with the bizarre conversation that has embarrassed the NDA government to no end within just two months of coming to power.

The reported conversation makes it reasonably clear that Vaidik was acting on behalf of the Sangh Parivar, and therefore the BJP and NDA, notwithstanding their hypocritical denial. We have only Vaidik’s version of the conversation. We have no idea as to what actually transpired between the two and whether Vaidik has given some kind of “veiled message” to Hafeez. We don’t know whether Vaidik asked in his “friendly conversation” about how he recruited Kasab and his terrorist gang, how he runs the terrorist camps, how he manages to get support from the establishment of Pakistan.

The BJP denial about having blessed the meeting is absolutely not convincing, because it is well known that Baba Ramdev is not only close to Modi, but also a guru to a large number in the Parivar. Also Ajit Doval, the NSA boss and top intelligence man of the NDA government, is part of the Vivekanand Trust run by Ramdev. That raises doubt about the claim made by Vaidik that he was merely being a well-meaning journalist.

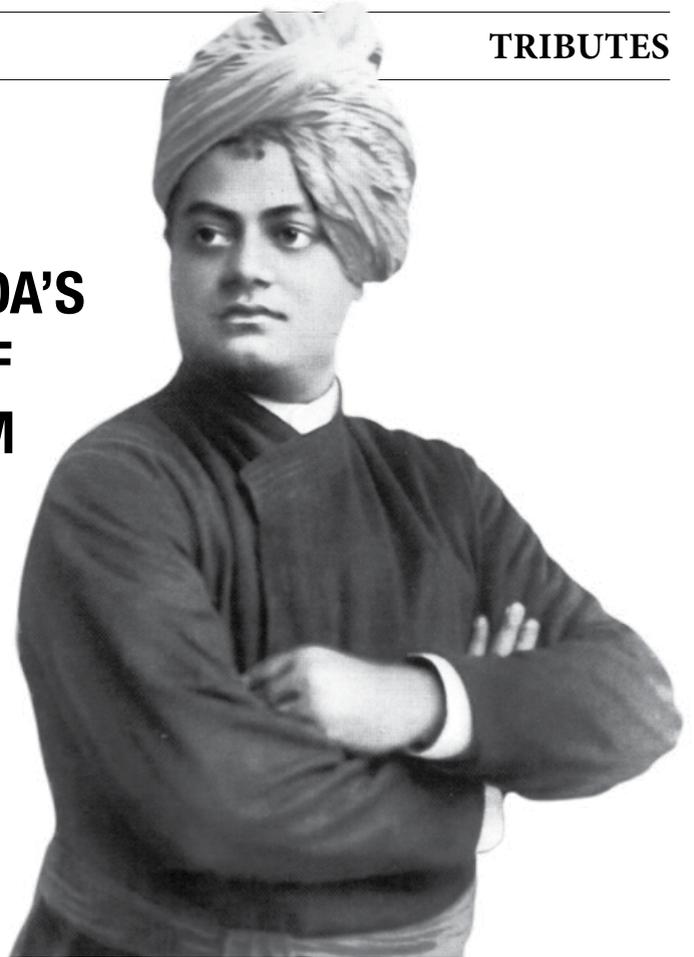
Vaidik, in fact, has given a clear enough indication that he was meeting Hafeez to persuade him to even welcome Modi, if not invite him. The BJP is red faced because during the UPA regime, their partymen had virtually taken the Parliament by storm and fire for even establishing a dialogue with Pakistan. The BJP and Shiv Sena protested when there was a proposal to hold a cricket match between the two countries. The debate in the House was stalled by noise and gheraos.

But we can just imagine how the BJP and the whole Parivar

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## VIVEKANANDA'S LEGACY OF UNIVERSALISM

K.N. Panikkar



**H**e believed that no religion was superior to another. There can be no meeting point between his message and that of the sangh parivar

A variety of activities is in the offing to commemorate Swami Vivekananda's immense contribution to the making of India as a nation. The occasion: the 150th birth anniversary of Swamiji. Seminars, workshops, publications and such other means to perpetuate his memory and assess the significance of his contribution form part of the celebrations. Strangely, at the forefront of this celebration are the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and its front organisations. Strange because Vivekananda hardly had anything in common with the sangh parivar, except being Hindu by birth.

Devoted Hindu, not communal

The ideology of the sangh parivar is rooted in religious hatred and Swamiji stood for social harmony and inter-faith dialogue. There can be no meeting point between these two. Yet, the Hindu fundamentalists trace their lineage to the neo-Hindu movement of which Vivekananda was the central figure. None of his observations on Hinduism, unless taken out of context, seems to give credence to the proposition that he had a communal outlook. He was a devoted Hindu, passionately involved in bringing about cultural and spiritual welfare of the people. He indeed realised that changes were necessary but he was unhappy about the course the reform movements had followed. He decried the primacy ascribed to caste in concepts and practices of social reform movement. Any attempt to find a solution, he believed, "was a difficult task, because religion had become rigid and inflexible," on the one hand, and obscurantist and superstitious, on the other.

It is only in the light of early reform movements their success, failures and limitations that Vivekananda's quest for a resurgent India could be assessed. By the end of the century, almost all early movements had lost much of their vigour and following. The decline in the reform atmosphere paved the way for the

emergence of a powerful spiritual leader. This void was filled by Swamiji, by initiating a movement, based on individual worship in place of collective congregational worship which Ram Mohan Roy and his contemporaries had favoured. The organised religious reform movement was an anathema to him, although he himself started one, though of a different order, which was based on compassion, social service and humanitarianism.

Vivekananda's plan of action was not limited to the religious realm. He was equally sensitive to social and economic issues. In other words, Hindus should strive towards a total transformation and inclusive growth. Caste is omnipotent in Indian society but he discarded it without any hesitation. He had observed the working of the Brahma Samaj and that experience seems to have coloured his general attitude to all reform movements. By the time Vivekananda came on the scene, except in a few pockets like Kerala and Punjab, reformation had lost its vitality. He believed that reform had already run its course. By the last quarter of the 19th century, the religious movements had almost vanished, even if popular religion was on the ascendant. To the Indian middle class which formed the social base of these movements, he had choicest epithets: "cursed by the wheels of divisions, superstitious, without an iota of charity, hypocritical, atheistic cowards," etc.

This is not to argue that Vivekananda did not recognise the importance of the contributions of the middle class in creating an atmosphere of reform. Instead, he took great pride in what the Brahma Samaj had already accomplished in the social and

religious life of people.

Spirituality alone was not the only concern of Vivekananda. He spent a major part of his life travelling, which undoubtedly influenced his world view. He was particularly sensitive about poverty and the inhuman caste practices. He prophesied that, one day, the Shudra would rule. The stark reality of caste oppression in Kerala made a lasting impression on his mind.

The process of Indian reformation had three facets. The first was a liberal modernising phase in which reformers like Ram Mohan Roy attempted to change some of the traditional practices. The second was a rejection of all that was alien to society, and an attempt at indigenous mode of modernisation. The third was to build an alternative model of modernity which would embrace the traditional and the modern. The path chosen by Vivekananda was the third. The first group was that of the reformers for whom he had undisguised contempt, dismissing them as babu reformers. The conservatives and traditionalists formed the second group. The members of this group were mired in superstitions and ritualism. Swamiji's method of reform was not merely advocacy of reform, but also through constructive social work.

The central idea in the life and teaching of Vivekananda was religious universalism. In the eyes of those who believed in universalism, there was no difference between the followers of different religions. All religions are universal equal and true. Vivekananda, however, argued that in Hinduism, universalism found ideal articulation. And was hence a leader in spiritual matters. Equally important was his notion of social service for which he set up the Ramakrishna Mission. The mission gave an entirely new ambience to reform.

The popular and academic perceptions of Vivekananda's role are highly influenced by his famous speech at the World Congress of Religions and the religious discourses he delivered during the extensive tours he undertook in India. In his highly applauded speech at the Congress, he tried to highlight the universalism inherent in all religions and then to demonstrate that it was best exemplified in Hinduism. Such a position was derived from his belief in Vedanta which, he argued, transcended the

limits of any particular religion or cultural tradition. "Truth, alone is my god; the entire world is my country," maintained Vivekananda. Thus he tried to reconcile his understanding of universalism with the Hindu philosophical system. His perhaps was the most creative understanding of universalism. Because he argued that all religions were universal and that there was no superiority of one over the other. He said "every religion is an expression, a language to express the same truth, and we must speak to each other in his own language."

'Language of Ramakrishna'

His language was not the language of puritanical Hinduism but "the language of Ramakrishna. Let Hindus call it Hindu religion let others similarly name it (what they like). Does our master belong only to India?" asked Vivekananda. India's degeneration is the result of the narrow attitudes that he argued against. Any beneficial outcome is impossible unless these are destroyed. The idea of religious universalism which preached that all religions are true, and not that there is truth in all religions, was central to the thought of every reformer, both Hindu and Muslim. He was not advocating reform which he perceived as a worthless preoccupation of the alienated English educated middle class. He did not expect anything tangible from this class. They were "crushed by the wheels of caste divisions, superstitious, without any iota of charity, hypocritical, atheistic cowards."

He had nothing but contempt for this class which formed the social base of reform. The implication of this critique was that he made a clear break with the past efforts at reform from the time of Ram Mohan Roy. The alternative he envisioned was social change, to be effected through education and social reform. That is the reason for his initiative for the formation of the Ramakrishna movement which organised its activities in the field of education and social service.

Finally, did Hindu revivalist movements gain from his ideas? Unfortunately, they did. But if he were to be back in contemporary India, it is most unlikely that it would be in the communal camp. ❖

*(Author is a former Professor of History, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)*

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### **VAIDIK-SAEED MEETING: THE NDA MIRROR HAS CRACKED**

would have gone to town shouting and screaming if the government in Delhi was that of the UPA and Hafeez had met with someone close to the Congress. It is not a question of a journalist being free to interview or converse with anyone. Indeed, a journalist does enjoy considerable freedom. But clearly Vaidik was not exercising his journalistic right.

The meeting with Hafeez could not have been even arranged without the involvement of the ISI and the political establishment

of Pakistan. That makes it a sinister track-2 approach of the NDA government. Hafeez has a clear agenda. He wants to overcome the American warrant on him and whitewash his sins. Vaidik has helped the most dreaded terrorist in the Indian subcontinent to enter into the dialogue between India and Pakistan. The NDA mirror has cracked and now there are multiple mutilated images. ❖

*(Kumar Ketkar is a senior journalist, political commentator, globe trotter and author. He has covered all Indian elections since 1971 and significant international events. He is a frequent participant on TV debates.)*

**Courtsey : NDTV**

## THE MESSIAH OF DALITS - BABU JAGJIVAN RAM

**J**agjivan Ram, endearingly called Babuji, was a valiant freedom fighter and a crusader for social justice. His rise in public life saw him emerge as an eminent and popular political leader who devoted his entire life for the welfare of the country and its teeming masses. As a national leader, a distinguished parliamentarian, an able administrator, Union Minister and a vocal champion of depressed classes, he had a towering presence and played a long innings spanning half a century in Indian politics with great commitment, devotion and sincerity.

Born at a small village, Chandwa in Shahabad District, now named Bhojpur District in Bihar on 5 April 1908, Jagjivan Ram passed his matriculation examination from Arrah town school. Despite facing various problems and difficulties, Jagjivan Ram went on to successfully complete Inter Science Examination from the Banaras Hindu University and later graduated from the Calcutta University.

During his student years, Jagjivan Ram successfully organized a number of *Ravidas Sommélons* and had celebrated *Guru Ravidas Jayanti* in the different districts of Calcutta. In 1934, he founded the *Akhil Bhartiya Ravidas Mahasabha* in Calcutta. The other organizations that he founded for bringing about social reforms were *Khetihar Mazdoor Sabha* for the agricultural labour and the *All India Depressed Classes League*. Through his organizations he involved the depressed classes in the freedom struggle. He was of the view that Dalit leaders should not only struggle



for social reforms but also demand political representation.

Jagjivan Ram played a very active role in the freedom struggle. Inspired by Gandhiji's Civil Disobedience Movement, Babuji courted arrest on 10 December 1940. After his release, he took part in the Civil Disobedience Movement and *Sathyagraha*. Babuji was arrested again on 19 August 1942 for active participation in the 'Quit India Movement' launched by the Indian National Congress.

Babuji had a long and distinguished political career spanning over five decades. Starting his public life as a student activist and freedom fighter, he went on to become a legislator in the State at the young age of 29 as a nominated member of the Bihar Legislative Council. Again in 1937, he stood as a candidate of the

Depressed Classes League. He was elected unopposed to the Bihar Legislative Assembly from the East Central Shahabad (Rural) constituency. When the Congress Government was formed, Babuji was appointed the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Co-operative Industry and Village Development. However, in 1938, he resigned along with the entire Cabinet.

Jagjivan Ram again won unopposed in the 1946 Central Elections from the Same Constituency and was inducted into the Interim Government on 30 August 1946 as a Minister of Labour. Thereafter, he remained a Member of the Union Cabinet for nearly 33 years.

He played a pioneering role in the Indian National Congress right from 1937. During the pre-Independence period, Babuji held important offices at the State level in the Congress. After Independence, he became the axis of the Party and indispensable for party affairs as well as governance of the country. He was a member of All India Congress Committee from 1940 to 1977 and was in the All India Congress Working Committee from 1948 to 1977.

Babu Jagjivan Ram had the unique distinction of serving as a Member of the Central Legislature uninterruptedly for as long as 40 years. Till his last breath, he was a sitting member of the Lok Sabha-his Eight term-consecutively since the First General Election. Babuji has had the distinction of being the longest-serving Minister in the history of Indian Parliament and was known for his brilliant handling of parliamentary business. His oratory was well- acknowledged and admired in Parliament. As a Union Minister, he introduced numerous Bills in the Lok Sabha and piloted their passage in Parliament.

In post-independent India, Babuji's contribution to nation-building is unforgettable. He was the Minister of Labour during 1946-52, a portfolio he held again in 1966-67. Besides the Labour Ministry, the other Ministries he held were Communications (1952-56), Railways (1952-56), Transport and Communications (1962-63), Food and Agriculture (1967-70), Defence (1970-74) and Agriculture and Irrigation (1974-77). When the Janata Party Government headed by Shri Morarji Desai was formed in 1977, Jagjivan Ram joined it as a Cabinet Minister holding Defence portfolio. He also became the Deputy Prime Minister and held the Defence portfolio from 24 January 1979 to 28 July 1979.

As Labour Minister, he introduced time-tested policies and laws for the welfare of labour. He was instrumental in enacting some of the important legislations for labour, viz. the Minimum Wages Act, 1946; the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947; the Indian Trade Union (Amendment) Act, 1960; the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965, etc. He laid the foundation of social security by way of enacting two important Acts, namely, the Employees State Insurance Act, 1948 and the Provident Fund Act, 1952.

Jagjivan Ram held charge of the Ministry of Communications from May 1952 to December 1956. He also held both-the Ministry of Communications and Ministry of Transport from April 1962 to August 1963. Nationalization of air transport was one of the most significant developments of his term. As Minister of Communications, he spread the postal facilities to the remote villages. Babuji was successful in enacting the Air Corporation Act, 1953 which substantially strengthened the civil aviation sector and resulted in the evolution of Air India

and Indian Airlines as the national air carrier while holding the portfolio of the Transport and Communications Ministry. Realising the huge potential of the shipping sector, Jagjivan Ram emphasized the expansion of its fleet and covered all the important trade routes of the world, which ultimately resulted in substantial increase in the total cargo shipment, and in turn, gave a boost to foreign trade and increase in foreign exchange reserves.

As the Railway Minister, he modernized Railways and took innumerable welfare measures for Railway employees and set a record by not allowing any increase in passenger fares for five years.

As Food and Agriculture Minister, he tackled severe drought, heralded the Green Revolution and made India self-sufficient in food. He also organized the Public Distribution System to ensure that food is made available to the masses at a reasonable price.

Babu Jagjivan Ram's dynamic and inspiring leadership as Defence Minister galvanized the entire nation and the Armed Forces to deal with the grave crisis in East Pakistan, which ended in the creation of a new country, Bangladesh. The moments of acute national crisis in December 1971 bear testimony to the confidence, patience and immense courage of Babuji. It was during his tenure as the Defence Minister that India entered into the landmark Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation.

Babu Jagjivan Ram symbolized the dawn of a new era of assertion, equality and socio-economic empowerment for the deprived and the downtrodden. As a member of the Constituent Assembly, he played a remarkable role in formulating provisions for safeguarding the interests of depressed classes. The provision for State intervention for the overall advancement of socially backward classes by way of reservation in public employment and reservation of seats in legislatures for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes also owes its success to leaders like Babu Jagjivan Ram. He was instrumental in the making of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955. For his unwavering support and relentless struggle for the cause of the downtrodden, he has been rightly called the 'Messiah' of Dalits.

Leaving behind the message of human dignity and equality, Babuji breathed his last on 6 July 1986. As a national leader who shared his political career with many generations from Mahatma Gandhi to Rajiv Gandhi, he has left the legacy of a sincere and dedicated political leader, a committed public servant, a brave freedom fighter, a social reformer, revolutionary and a great humanist. ❖

## A REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALIST LOKMANYA BAL GANGADHAR TILAK

23 July 1856 - 1 August 1920



**B**al Gangadhar Tilak was a great nationalist, social reformer and a mass leader who influenced generations of people with his ideas and ideals. He played a pioneering role in arousing mass political consciousness during the freedom movement. He was one of the strongest advocates of 'Self Rule' (Swaraj). His famous slogan "Swaraj is my birthright, and I shall have it!" inspired millions during India's Freedom Movement. Acknowledged as 'Lokmanya' by the nation, Tilak was also a great scholar and a visionary leader.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak was born on 23 July 1856 at Ratnagiri in Maharashtra. His father Gangadhar Ramchandra Tilak, better known as Gangadhar Shastri, was a Sanskrit scholar. Tilak inherited from his father a strong determination and indomitable will, a healthy mind, a capacity for industry and achievement, and a way of methodical work.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak was a brilliant student and received most of his education at Pune. He was known for his razor-sharp intellect, passion for reading, fierce self-respect and intense abhorrence of injustice. After his matriculation, he joined the Deccan College, Pune. He secured a first class in his B.A. examination with Mathematics as the main subject; and in 1879, he obtained his Law Degree. He was well read in Hindu scriptures and was also greatly influenced by Western thoughts on politics and

metaphysics. He was particularly fond of Voltaire, Rousseau, Hegel, Kant, Spencer, Mill and Bentham.

After completing his education, Tilak spurned the lucrative offers of Government service and decided to devote himself to the larger cause of national awakening. He firmly believed that modern education had to be taken to the masses by the Indians themselves if they were to grow in stature to overcome the pathetic acceptance of the concept of the ruler and the ruled which the British wanted to perpetuate. He was instrumental, along with his three friends G.G. Agarkar, M.A. Chiplunkar and Mahadev B. Namjoshi, in starting the New English School at Pune in 1880 and later in founding the Deccan Education Society and the

Fergusson College, both at Pune, in the years 1884 and 1885, respectively.

In Maharashtra, Tilak, Agarkar and Chiplunkar were the rising stars of the new generation, whose aspirations for a new order in India far surpassed those of the earlier generations. While working in the field of education, they took upon themselves the task of educating the people to a new height by launching two journals in 1881-*Mahratta*, an English weekly and *Kesari*, a Marathi weekly. Both the weeklies evoked an enthusiastic response from the people.

The last decade of the nineteenth century witnessed great turmoil in different parts of the country and the people had to pass through untold sufferings. Tilak, who started his social activities in 1880, championed the cause of the people and won the hearts of many with his selfless services. His stature as a social worker grew while facing difficult situations. When famines and epidemics took a very heavy toll by the end of the nineteenth century and the measures adopted by the Government to contain these disasters proved to be inadequate and defective, Tilak, through his writings and speeches, led the radicals in rousing public indignation against the callous indifference of the British administration to the sufferings of the people.

The period between 1900 and 1908 is characterized by the birth of revolutionary nationalism in India. Lokmanya Tilak, along with Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai, all blessed with great political foresight, emerged as the shining stars in our national firmament. The trio-Lal, Bal, Pal-championed Indian nationalism by strengthening the bonds of unity among the people. Lokmanya Tilak, with his strong sense of realism, came forth with a four-point programme of Swadeshi, boycott, national education and Swarajya, thus involving the people in different activities and enabling them to contribute to the freedom struggle.

In 1907, Tilak wrote two articles in the '*Kesari*', "The Country's Misfortune" and "These Remedies Are Not Lasting" wherein he demanded that the Government should try to understand the changing circumstances in the country. These articles which were a scathing criticism of the governmental policies of oppression, invited the wrath of the British Government. Consequently, he was arrested in 1908 on the charge of sedition and sentenced to a six-year imprisonment in the Mandalay Jail in Burma. While in prison at Mandalay, he composed the '*Gita Rahasya*', a monumental philosophical treatise containing the message of the Bhagwad Gita and his own interpretation of life.

After his release from the Mandalay Jail in 1914, Tilak became closely associated with the Home Rule Movement. When Annie Besant founded her own independent Home Rule League, Tilak made an alliance with her. The movement that Tilak led jointly with Annie Besant was a part of his mass-based politics. With Annie Besant, he made a whirlwind tour of the nation to propagate 'Home Rule'. Tilak wrote several editorials under the title 'Hindu Swarajya Sangh' in 1915 through which he dwelt on the concept of 'Home Rule' and put forth a plan of action for achieving it. In 1918, Tilak visited England as President of the Indian Home Rule League and intensified the Home Rule Movement there by addressing public meetings and contacting eminent leaders of the British Labour Party. He succeeded in getting the confidence of the British Labour Party. He came back to India in 1919 and re-immersed himself in the

freedom struggle.

Lokmanya Tilak was radical in his political outlook, and with his fearlessness and burning love for the country, he challenged both the westernized social reformers as well as the spirit of orthodoxy. Being a political realist, Tilak was aware that spiritualization of politics could well bring his dream of Swaraj nearer. A

devout Hindu, he equally believed in the fundamentals of secularism and tried to divorce the public life of society from religious precepts. He believed in Hindu-Muslim unity and was keenly aware that the yoke of foreign domination could not be thrown away unless the country stood united.

Tilak's contribution towards the freedom struggle, in rousing political consciousness among the masses and thereby drawing them into the freedom struggle, was legendary. He had a rare insight into the working of the society and he was one leader who fully recognized the strength of the masses in the fight against foreign domination. He evolved programmes such as *Shivaji jayanti* and *Ganesh Pooja* with the sole motive of bringing people together to ensure their awakening and involvement in the freedom struggle. His demand for 'Sampoorna Swarajya' as his birthright was radically different from what the moderate leaders had then been seeking. His speeches and writings had a new, vigorous and assertive quality which electrified the nation.

Lokmanya Tilak's entire life was a 'Karma Yajna'. He worked tirelessly and selflessly to rouse the nation out of its slumber and apathy. With his indomitable will power and tenacity of purpose, exceptional organizational ability and, above all, an implicit faith in himself and his ideals, he always strived to do the best for the people and the nation.

The emergence of Lokmanya Tilak on the political horizon of the country was thus truly a watershed in the life of the country. In a tumultuous period of Indian history, he brought to the political arena a new kind of leadership which was intellectual, had a clear vision and an intense patriotism but at the same time had its roots and

strength in the vast illiterate and poor masses. The transformation of the freedom struggle from a political perspective of the sophisticated, westernized and educated few to a mass movement drawing strength from the millions of the poor and the downtrodden was possible because of the new orientation given to the liberation struggle by Lokmanya Tilak. The 'Tilak Era', thus, constituted a significant landmark in our movement for independence.

Tilak's ceaseless social and political activities had put a heavy strain on his health. In July 1920, being unwell, he was under treatment in Mumbai. His condition deteriorated and finally he breathed his last in the early hours of 1 August 1920.

Across the nation, leaders and the masses expressed their profound sorrow at the passing away of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the *Young India* on 4 August 1920:

No man of our times had the hold on the masses that Mr. Tilak had. The devotion that he commanded from thousands of his countrymen was extraordinary. He was, unquestionably, the idol of his people. His word was law among thousands. A giant among men has fallen. The voice of the lion is hushed. What was the reason for his hold upon his countrymen? I think the answer is simple. His patriotism was a passion with him. He knew no religion but love of his country.

The Special Session of the Congress held at Calcutta\* from 4 to 9 September 1920 passed the following resolution:

The Congress places on record its sense of deep and profound sorrow at the death of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. The stainless purity of his life, his services and sufferings in the cause of his country, his deep devotion to the welfare of the people, his arduous endeavours in the fight for national autonomy these will enshrine his memory in grateful recollections of our people and will be a source of strength and inspiration to countless generations of our countrymen. At this crisis in the history of the nation, the Congress will sorely miss his wise, helpful and courageous leadership, the lofty inspiration of his radiant patriotism and healing benediction of his counsel in difficulty. ❖

## ARUNA ASAF ALI (JULY 16, 1909 - JULY 29, 1996)

**A**runa Asaf Ali was born as Aruna Ganguly on 16 July 1909 at Kalka, Punjab, British India, but now in the state of Haryana, into a Bengali Brahmo family. She was educated at Sacred Heart Convent in Lahore and then in Nainital. She graduated and worked as a teacher. She taught at the Gokhale Memorial School in Calcutta. She met Asaf Ali, a leader in the Congress party at Allahabad and married him in 1928.

She became an active member of Congress Party and married Asaf Ali. She participated in public processions during the Salt Satyagraha. She was arrested on the charge that she was a vagrant and hence not released in 1931 under the Gandhi-Irwin Pact which stipulated release of all political prisoners. Other women co-prisoners refused to leave the premises unless she was also released and gave in only after Mohandas K. Gandhi intervened. A public agitation secured her release.

In 1932, she was held prisoner at the Tihar Jail where she protested the indifferent treatment of political prisoners by launching a hunger strike. Her efforts resulted in an improvement of conditions in the Tihar Jail but she was moved to Ambala and was subjected to solitary confinement. She was politically not very active after her release.

On 8 August, 1942, the Indian National Congress passed the 'Quit India resolution' at the Bombay session. The government responded by arresting the major leaders and all members of the Congress Working Committee and thus tried to pre-empt the movement from success. A young Aruna Asaf Ali presided over the remainder of the session on 9 August and hoisted the Congress flag at the Gowalia Tank maidan. This marked the commencement of the movement. The police fired upon the assembly at the session. Aruna was dubbed the Heroine of the 1942 movement for her bravery in the face of danger and was called Grand Old Lady of the Independence movement in her later years. Despite absence of direct leadership, spontaneous protests and demonstrations were held all over the



country, as an expression of desire of India's youth to achieve independence.

An arrest warrant was issued in her name but she went underground to evade the arrest and started underground movement in year 1942. Her property was seized and sold. In the meanwhile, she also edited Inquilab, a monthly magazine of the Congress Party. In a 1944 issue, she exhorted youth to action by asking them to join the revolution. The government announced a reward of Rs. 5,000/- for her capture. She fell ill and was for a period hiding in Delhi.

She joined a new party, Socialist Party in 1948. She however left that party along with Metadata Granary and they visited Moscow along with Rajani Palme Dutt. Both of them joined the Communist Party of India in the early 1950s. On domestic front, she was bereaved when

Asaf Ali died in 1953.

In 1958, she was elected the first Mayor of Delhi. She was closely associated with social activists and secularists of her era like Krishna Menon, Vimla Kapoor, Guru Radha Kishan, Premsagar Gupta, Rajani Palme Joti, Sarla Sharma and Subhadra Joshi for social welfare and development in Delhi. She was the first elected Mayor of Delhi.

She and Narayanan started Link Publishing House and published a daily newspaper, Patriot and a weekly, Link the same year. The publications became prestigious due to patronage of leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru and Krishna Menon. In 1964, she rejoined the Congress Party but stopped taking part in active politics. Despite reservations about the emergency, she remained close to Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi.

Aruna Asaf Ali was awarded International Lenin Peace Prize for the year 1964 and the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding in 1991. She was awarded India's second highest civilian honour, the Padma Vibhushan in her lifetime in 1992, and finally the highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna, posthumously in 1997. She died on 29th July, 1996. ❖

## 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.*

### Dadabhai Naoroji

(Calcutta-1906)

“Swadeshi is not a thing of to-day. It has existed in Bombay as far as I know for many years past. I am a free-trader, I am a Member, and in the Executive Committee of the Cobden Club for 20 years, and yet I say that “Swadeshi” is a forced necessity for India in its unnatural economic muddle. As long as the economic condition remains unnatural and impoverishing, by the necessity of supplying every year some Rs. 200,000,000 for the salary, pension, &c. of the children of a foreign country at the expense and impoverishment of the children of India, to talk of applying economic laws to the condition of India is adding insult to injury. I have said so much about this over and over again that I would not say more about it here-I refer to my book. I ask an Englishmen whether Englishmen would submit to this unnatural economic muddle of India for a single day in England, leave alone 150 years? No, never. No, Ladies and Gentlemen, England will never submit to it.

Among the duties which I have said are incumbent upon the Indian, there is one which, though I mention last, is not the least. I mean a thorough political union among the Indian people of all creeds and classes. I make an appeal to all-call in mendicant, if you like-I am not ashamed of being a mendicant in any good cause and under necessity for any good cause. I appeal to the Indian people for this, because it is in their own hands only, just as I appeal to the British people for things that are entirely in their hands. In this appeal for a thorough union for political purposes among all the people, I make a particular one to my friends the Mahomedans. They are a manly people. They have been rulers both in and out of India. They are rulers this day both in and out of India. They have the highest Indian



Prince ruling over the largest of Native State, viz., H.H. the Nizam. Among other Mahomedan Princes they have Junagad, Badhanpur, Bhopal and others.

Notwithstanding their backward education they have the pride of having had in all India the first Indian Barrister in Mr. Badrudin Tyabji and first Solicitor in Mr. Kamrudin Tyabji, two Mahomedan brothers. What a large share of Bombay commerce is in the hands of Mahomedans is well-known. Their chief purpose and effort at present must be to spread education among themselves. In this matter, among their best friends have been Sir Syed Ahmed and Justice Tyabji, in doing their utmost to promote education among them. Once they bring themselves in education in a line with the Hindus, they have nothing too far. They have in them the capacity, energy and intellect, to hold their own and to set their due share in all the walks of life-of which the State services are but a small part. State services are not everything.

Whatever voice I can have, I wish Government would give every possible help to promote education among the Mahomedans. Once self-government is attained, then will there be prosperity enough for all, but not till then. The thorough union, therefore, of all the people for their emancipation is an absolute necessity.

All the people in their political position are in one boat. They must sink or swim together. Without this union all efforts will be vain. There is the common saying-but also the best commonsense-”United we stand-divided we fall”

Mahomedans and Hindus were, he said, the two eyes of India. Injure the one and you injure the other. “We should try to become one in heart and should act in unison; if united, we can support each other; if not the effect of one against the other will tend to the destruction and downfall of both.”

Lastly, the question of social reforms and industrial progress-each of them needs its own earnest body of workers. Each requires for it separate devoted attention. All the three great,

purposes-Political, Social and Industrial- must be set working side by side. The progress in each will have its influence on the others. But as Mr. Morley truly and with deep insight says: "Political principles are, after all, the root of our national greatness, strength and hope," and his other important utterance which I repeat with this one sums up the whole position of the Indian problem. He says: "the meddling wrongly with economic things that is going to the very life, to the very heart, to the very core of our national existence.

## Annie Besant

(Calcutta-1917)

### The Awakening of the Women

The position of women in the ancient Aryan civilization was a very noble one. The great majority married, becoming, as Manu said, the Light of the Home; some took up the ascetic life, remained unmarried, and sought the knowledge of Brahman. The story of the Rani Damayanti, to whom her husband's ministers came, when they were troubled by the Raja's gambling; that of Gandhari, in the Council of Kings and warrior chiefs, remonstrating with her headstrong son; in later days, those of Padmini of Chittor, of Mirabai of Mal'War-the sweet poetess, of Tarabai of Thoda the warrior, of Chand Bibi the defender of Ahmednagar, of Ahalya Bai of Indore the Great Ruler-all these and countless others are well-known.

Only in the last five or six generations has the Indian woman slipped away from her place at her husband's side, and left him unhelped in his public life. Even now, they wield great influence over husband and son, but lack thorough knowledge to aid. Culture has never forsaken them. But the English education of their husbands and son, with the neglect of Sanskrit and the Vernacular, and that of the wife, have shut the woman out from her old sympathy with the larger life of men. While the interest of the husband have widened, those of the wife have narrowed. The materializing of the husband has tended also, by reaction, to render the wife's religion less broad and wise, and by throwing her on the family priest for guidance in religion, instead as of old, on her husband, has made the religion entirely one of devotion; and lacking the strong stimulus of knowledge, it more easily slides down into superstition, into dependence on forms not understood.

### Why India Demands Home Rule

India demands Home Rule for two reasons: one essential and vital, the other less important but weighty. First, because Freedom is the birthright of every Nation; secondly, because her most important interest are not made subservient to the interest of the British Empire without her consent, and her resources are not utilized for her greatest needs. It is enough



only to mention the money spent on the Army, not for local defence but for Imperial purposes, as compared with the money spent on primary education.

### Enough of myself. Let us think of the Mother.

To see India free, to see her hold up her head among the Nations, to see her sons and daughters respected everywhere, to see her worthy of her mighty Past, engaged in building a yet mightier Future-is not this worth working for, worth suffering for, worth living and worth dying for? Is there any other land which evokes such homage for her spirituality, such admiration for her literature, such homage for her valour, as this glorious Mother of Nations, from whose womb went forth the races that now, in Europe and America, are leading the world? And has any land suffered as our Indians suffered, since her sword was broken on Kurukshetra, and the people of Europe and of Asia swept across her borders, laid waste her cities, and discrowned her Kings. They came to conquer, but they remained to be absorbed. At last, out of those mingled peoples, the Divine Artificer has welded a Nation, compact not only of her own virtues, but also of those her foes had brought to her, and gradually eliminating the vices which they had also brought.

## Chittaranjan Das

(Gaya-1922)

### Nationalism: The Ideal

"What is the ideal which we must set before us? The first and foremost is the ideal of nationalism. Now what in nationalism? It is, I conceive, a process through which a nation expresses itself and finds itself, not in isolation from other nations, not in opposition to other nations, but as part of a great scheme by which, in seeking its own expression and therefore its own identity, it materially assists the self-expression and self-realisation of other nations as well: Diversity is as real as unity. And in order that unity of the world may be established it is essential that each nationality should proceed on its own line and find fulfilment in self-expression and self-realisation. The nationality of which I am speaking must not be composed with the conception of nationality as it exists in Europe today. Nationalism in Europe is an aggressive nationalism, a selfish nationalism, a commercial nationalism, of gain and loss.

I contend that each nationality constitutes a particular stream of the great unity, but no nation can fulfil itself unless and until it becomes itself and at the same time realize its identity with humanity. The whole problem of nationalism is therefore to find that stream and to face that destiny. If you find the current and establish a continuity with the past, then the process of self-expression has begun, and nothing can stop the growth



of nationality.”

We have, therefore, to foster the spirit of Nationality. True development of the Indian nation must necessarily lie in the path of Swaraj. A question has often been asked as to what is Swaraj. Swaraj is indefinable and is not to be confused with any particular system of Government. There is all the difference in the world between Swaraj and Swarajya. Swaraj is the natural expression of the national mind. The full outward expression of that mind covers, and must necessarily cover, the whole the true development of a nation begins, because as I have said, Swaraj is the expression of the national mind. The question of nationalism, therefore, looked at from another point of view, is the same question as that of Swaraj. The question of all questions in India today is the attainment of Swaraj.

### Scheme of Government

It is hardly within the province of this address to deal with any detailed scheme of any Government. I cannot, however, allow this opportunity to pass without giving you an expression of my opinion as to the character of that system of Government. No system of Government which is not for the people and by the people can ever be regarded as the true foundation of Swaraj. I am firmly convinced that a Parliamentary Government is not a Government by the people. Many of us believe that the Middle Class must win Swaraj for the masses. I do not believe in the possibility of any class movement being ever converted into a movement for Swaraj. If today the British Parliament grants provincial autonomy in the provinces with responsibility in the Central Government, I, for once, will protest against, it because that will inevitably lead to the concentration of power in the hands of the Middle Class. I do not believe that the Middle Class will then part with their power. How will it profit India, if in place of the White Bureaucracy that now rules over her, there is substituted an Indian Bureaucracy of the middle-classes. Bureaucracy is bureaucracy, and I believe that the very idea of Swaraj is inconsistent with the existence of a bureaucracy. My ideal of Swaraj will never be satisfied unless the people co-operate with us in its attainment. Any other attempt will inevitably lead to what European Socialist calls the “Bourgeois” Government. In France and in England and in other European countries it is the middle class who fought the battle of freedom, and the result is that power is still in the hands of this class. Having usurped the power they are unwilling to part with it. If today the whole of Europe is engaged in a battle of real freedom, it is because the nations of Europe are gathering their strength to wrest this power from the hands of the middle classes. I desire to avoid the repetition of that chapter of European history. It is for India to show the light to the world Swaraj by non-violence and Swaraj by the people.

To me the organisation of village life and the practical autonomy of small local centres are more important than either provincial autonomy or central responsibility; and if the choice lay between the two, I would unhesitatingly accept the autonomy of the local

centres. I must not be understood implying that the village centres will be disconnected units. They must be held together by a system of co-operation and integration. For the present, there must be power in the hands of the provincial and the Indian Government; but the ideal should be accepted once for all, that the proper functioning of the central authority, whether in the Provincial or in the Indian Government is to advise, having a residuary power of control only in case of need, and to be exercised under proper safeguards. I maintain that real Swaraj can only be

attained by vesting the power of Government in these local centres, and I suggest that the Congress should appoint a Committee to draw up a scheme of Government which would be acceptable to the nation. ❖

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*...continued from page 16*

### THE RAILWAY BUDGET: CLAIMS AND THE REALITY

If marketed well, IR can attract advertisers to avail of this useful medium in good measure. Another source is disposal of scrap worth thousands of crores of rupees lying scattered all over and prone to pilferage. This will also help in cleaning up railway property across the country. Wooden sleepers removed years back and stacked haphazardly at New Delhi, for example, present an unseemly sight. However, the most important measure would be to start longer freight trains with larger capacity for better market share and track utilization. This can be done by increasing the loop length at some stations. Sh. Kharge spoke about it in the interim Budget. Rail transport is 6 to 10 times energy efficient as compared to road transport in terms of energy consumed. A 59 wagon freight train is hauled by one electric loco of 5000/6000 Horse Power (or two Diesel locos of 3000/4000 HP). It carries a payload of 4060 tonnes - 400 trucks each carrying 10 tonnes and having 150 HP would carry the same load. Imagine a two-kilometer long heavy haul train carrying goods which would otherwise require over 1200 trucks on roads, chocking them and polluting the environment.

In the Budget speech there is only a passing reference to freight terminals. Containerization and logistic parks need to be promoted in a big way. The 14 lakh Indian Railway family works in trying circumstances around the clock to keep the wheel of progress moving. It has been, as we all agree, a veritable engine of growth.

To accelerate growth there is need to continuously upgrade, modernize and ensure safety. Deployment of automatic train protection systems, including track side equipment and onboard equipment for locomotives and motor coaches (of EMUs/MEMUs) has to be taken forward. Shri Sadananda Gowda would do well to recognize the strides made by Indian Railways so far and to build on them for further growth. ❖

*(The author is a Senior Congress leader and former Union Minister of Railways)*

## INTERVIEW OF A DEDICATED CONGRESS PERSON

Smt. Savitri Dubey belongs to a famous Congress family from Bihar, who got connected to the Congress by birth, and became an active volunteer since childhood. Her husband Shri Vidyanand Dubey belonged to the first batch of IAS, and had been jailed for 2 years as a teenager. Smt. Dubey is a famous writer who has also worked on Madhubani paintings. This is an interview by Dr. Jaya Shukla.



ideology from village to village. People took Congress as their saviour. Now the Congress workers do not work with such dedication, also they do not check if the aid is reaching the village or the needy.

Then the common man became Congress member, and they advanced to become leaders. Now the leaders think first of their own families and bring them forward. The common members remain discouraged and do not work with complete wilfulness.

Organizations like the Arya Samaj which do social work, were with the Congress earlier. Now BJP and others have grasped them.

### Q. When did you get initiated in the Congress?

A. In a way by birth, when I was born on March 23rd, 1930. My grandmother Smt. Anup Devi (Famous as "Maiji in Bihar) was running the "Gandhi Ashram" in Gogri, Jamalpur, and was completely dedicated to the Movement of Bapu. She had come for the delivery of my mother Smt. Kaushalya Devi. But the "Salt Satyagrah" was to start in Bihar at Garhpura (where the water was salty) near Begusarai, on 5th April, 1930. Salt packets were auctioned to collect funds for "Satyagrah". My father had left for the "Salt Satyagrah", grandmother had gone to Garhpura. She was actively leading women groups for "Jail Bharo", "Dharnas" at shops of foreign clothes, and propaganda. When I entered my 3rd month, my mother took me and joined my grandmother. The government noticed the whole family being active and my grandmother and mother had to abscond with me, roaming on foot from village to village and doing Congress propaganda.

### Q. When did you first see yourself as a devoted Congress worker?

A. In 1942, I was living in the hostel, studying at the Mission School, Devghar. I put up a Congress Flag that I had made, and got severely punished by the British Headmistress. I left the school and came to Patna to my grandmother. Mahatma Gandhi had come from Noakhali and was staying at Shri Anugrah Narain Singh's residence. We girls used to give him Guard-of-honour daily when he went to the prayer meeting and he affectionately put his hand on our heads. Our whole family was absconding, and I remained active in the Congress movement with my mother and grandmother. My studies were not continued that year, and I proudly called myself a Congress volunteer.

### Q. Which was the most memorable time of your life as a Congress member?

A. when Mahatma Gandhi stayed in Patna and we got his affection and could attend and learn from his meetings.

### Q. What differences do you find in the Congress of then and now?

A. Then the Congress was always the first to help, it maybe either a natural disaster or help needed by people. The Congress had the main role in conducting help work after the Bihar earthquake. The Congress volunteers, while giving help, also propagated Congress

### Q. How do you think Congress can overcome the present crisis?

A. Whatever I have just said, is the basics for this. Congress governments gave very good schemes. Especially in the last 10 years several revolutionary schemes were created. If they were implemented properly, it would have been very beneficiary. Organizations like the Sevalal could have kept a watch over these. The Congress governments' control over the govt. officers and workers had diminished, who mostly lookout their own benefit or conduct the work very slowly. Development remains imbalanced, and the government being of Congress, this party faces loss of trust, and is blamed for corruption. The other parties give the credit for the good schemes to themselves. Proper propaganda by the Sevalal is one means to overcome this.

### Q. How to attract the youth to Congress?

A. Today, youth constitute the major part of voters. They are emotional and excitable and are affected by propaganda soon, without analyzing the issues thoroughly. It is important to recognize the problems faced by them and then do the publicity.

### Q. What are the qualities of a true Congress person?

A. Truth and non-violence, in mind, intent and practice.

### Q. Who are your role models in politics and other fields?

A. My grandmother, with whom I started working in the Congress movement, Mahatma Gandhi, whose speeches I heard in Patna became the foundation of my value system, then my husband Shri Vidyanand Dubey, who was also jailed for 2 years as a teenager.

### Q. What does the country need most today?

A. Economic development, Education and Holistic Development.

### Q. What are your fields of interest other than the Congress?

A. Writing (Several novels published) and folk painting (Madhubani). ❖

## STATESWATCH

### BIHAR

#### *Rahul Gandhi's birthday celebrated*

**Gopalganj:** The District Congress Committee here celebrated the birthday of Congress Vice-President Shri Rahul Gandhi on 19th June, 2014. District President, Smt. Raj Kumari Gupta cut a cake and distributed cake and sweets among all those present there. All present took a pledge to implement various issues on women's empowerment.



Other present there were Shri Dhananjay Kumar Dwivedi, Shri

Pankaj Kumar Tiwari, Shri Shailesh Kumar Singh, Shri Manoj Kumar Mishra, Shri Khalid Hyder, Shri Aafaq Khan, Shri Sanju Dubey with others.

**Patna:** The Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee Scheduled Tribe Department celebrated the birthday of Congress Vice-President, Shri Rahul Gandhi at the Sadaquat Ashram here on 19th June, 2014. Those present recounted the dedication for upliftment by Rahulji towards downtrodden, backwards and minorities.

The function was organized by ST Department Chairman Shri Umesh Kumar Ram who celebrated the birthday of Shri Rahulji by distributing sweets and the day was called "Yuva Prerana Diwas."



### CHHATTISGARH

#### *Split-lips operations held*

**Raipur:** The Chhattisgarh Pradesh Congress Committee Handicapped Department celebrated the birthday of Congress Vice-President, Shri Rahul Gandhi here on 19th June, 2014.



On this occasion Pradesh President, Shri Mahender Singh Kochhar organized a free operation camp for children with split lips in which eleven children were examined and operated at the Kalra Nursing House. Dr. Sunil Kalra carried out the operations.

#### *Modi has failed in the first month's Test*

**Raipur:** City Congress President, Shri Vikas Upadhyay issued a statement on 26th June, 2014 which said that the Prime Minister Modi has failed in his monthly test.

Shri Upadhyay had called a public meeting over tea at the Budapara area of the city where he addressed the people. He said that more than a month has passed-by and the claims promised before the elections have failed to control the rising prices of everyday use like potato and tomato, the train tariff had already been increased and the power rates have been increased.

Shri Upadhyay said that the people feel cheated by the Modi government and that they have forgotten the promises he had made before the elections.

#### *Start working in public interest: Jogi*

**Raipur:** Former Chief Minister Shri Ajit Jogi has blamed the state BJP government inaction by which the Chhattisgarh has become the hub of naxalism.

In a statement made on 29th June, 2014 Shri Ajit Jogi said that during the Congress rule the affect of naxalism was limited to just two districts but now the naxal problem has covered nine districts. Shri Jogi said that 28 Railway stations in the state have become sensitive because of naxal problem.

Shri Jogi said that the BJP government of the state was responsible fully for the growth and development of naxalism in the state because of their workers in controlling this menace, their inaction and their willingness to control them.

Shri Jogi said that the BJP which was making sensational speeches before the elections should now start working in public interest.

### ***Protest rally against price rise***

**Raipur:** City Congress President, Shri Vikas Upadhyay led a massive protest rally of the Congress against the increase of price of petrol and diesel prices by the BJP Government and gheared the house of Chief Minister of the State here on 1st July, 2014.

Shri Vikas Upadhyay said that ever since the BJP came to power at the centre, they are cheating the people who had voted them in



controlling price rise but instead they have increased the railway fare by 14.2 percent, the rate of petrol and diesel has been increased which has affected the price of all other commodities.

### ***Good time for hoarders***

**Raipur:** In a press statement made by former Chief Minister, Shri Ajit Jogi have on 2nd July, 2014 stated that the good time has come for hoarders and black marketers.

Shri Jogi said that the BJP government at the centre had given a directive to the state government to stop hoarders and black marketers to bring down the rising prices. Shri Jogi said that this was a mockery as the same people had elected the BJP government at the centre.

The people who were put in prison by the earlier government under MISA were now released and are in the BJP in the state government who are back with their old business of hoarding and black marketeering.

## **DELHI**

### ***Police lathi-charge 'Halla Bol' rally***

**New Delhi:** Under the leadership of Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Shri Arvinder Singh, over 20,000 Congress workers from all over Delhi on 7th July, 2014 held a demonstration outside the Parliament House on the first day of the Congress party's "Halla Bol Andolan" against the BJP-led Central Government to protest against the hike in the passenger and freight fares by the Railways and demanding roll back, and warned the Government against the soaring prices of essential commodities and food items, imposition of any tax burden on Delhi in the budget, and the statement to hike the power tariff. When the Congress workers



set out from Jantar Mantar to gherao the Parliament House, police lathi-charged the workers. Over a dozen Congress workers, including women, were injured in the lathi-charge. Before the lathi-charge, the police arrested Congress leaders Shri Arvinder Singh, Shri Haroon Yusuf, Shri Sajjan Kumar, Shri Jagdish Tytler and Shri Mukesh Sharma. The effigy of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi was also burnt.

After the arrest of the Congress leaders, the demonstrators climbed on the police barricade, and started shouting slogans against the BJP-led Central Government. AICC secretary and in-charge of Delhi affairs Shri Kuljit Singh Nagra, MLAs Jaikishan, Hassan Ahmed, Asif Mohammed Khan, Prahlad Singh Sahni and Devendra Yadav, Youth Congress leader Amit Malik, vice-president Tasvir Solanki, Muslim leader Mehndi Majid, ex-MPs Ramesh Kumar and Mahabal Mishra, Tarvinder Singh Marwah, ex-Ministers Ramakanth Goswami, Mangat Ram Singhal, Dr Narendra Nath, Dr Yoganand Shastri and Ch. Prem Singh also tried to break the barricade. As the Congress workers jumped on the barricade, the police beat them up mercilessly. The Congress workers, shouting anti-Government slogans and carrying playcards, started assembling at the Parliament street road leading to Jantar Mantar, and all other roads, since 10 a.m.

Addressing the demonstrators, Shri Arvinder Singh and Shri Haroon Yusuf said the BJP-led Central Government had failed to stop the price rise, and instead, by giving protection to the hoarders by the BJP Government, the prices have risen sky high. The Congress leaders said the BJP Government at the Centre was



pursuing the same policies which they had criticized during the UPA rule at the Centre. They said Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi should tender an unconditional apology to the people of the country for telling lies.

The demonstrators were also addressed by Shri Jagdish Tytler, Shri Sajjan Kumar and Shri Kuljit Singh Nagra. All the three leaders said under the nose of the BJP Government, which was talking of women's protection, the number of cases of assaults on women was increasing, and the BJP was now silent on this matter. Addressing the demonstrators, Shri Mukesh Sharma announced that the Congress workers will continue the Halla Bol Andolan, and will hold demonstrations in different parts of Delhi.

## JAMMU AND KASHMIR

### *Mahila Congress J&K protest against hike in Petrol, Diesel and Rail Fare*

**Jammu:** Mahila Congress has started a campaign against price rise.

Indu Pawar, President Mahila Congress has started holding processions to educate people about the hike in the prices of essentials.



Indu Pawar spoke in the procession that BJP government before coming to power had said "Achhe Din aane wale

hain" but Bure Din aa gaye. BJP has increased the rail fare which affected the common man a few days back only. Now BJP has again increased prices of Petrol and diesel which will again effect the poor common man of our society. Indu Pawar while addressing protesters asked them to be vigilant of the anti-people steps being taken by Modi led government of BJP. She asked authorities to roll back the hike of petrol and diesel prices to provide relief to common man of the society. Prabha Statha, Vandan, Suman Choudhary, Sunita, Rani, Chavka also spoke on the occasion.

## MADHYA PRADESH

### *Memorandum given to President*

**Bhopal:** Pradesh Congress President, Shri Arun Yadav alongwith Congress workers met the President, Shri Pranab Mukherjee on 28th June, 2014 and handed over a memorandum.

The memorandum asked the President for a CBI inquiry into the Services Selection Board of Madhya Pradesh selection criteria. Shri Yadav in the memorandum had mentioned about the corruption being carried out in the examinations that are held by the selection board.

Shri Yadav alleged that the influential people of the BJP and the RSS



were hand-in-glove with the corrupt officials of the selection board and were messing up with examinations by which the genuine applicant was denied entry into government services.

### *State Government Budget is anti-people*

**Bhopal:** Pradesh Congress President, Shri Arun Yadav has said on 1st July, 2014 that the budget presented by the State BJP Government in the Vidhan Sabha showed no indication of stopping the rising prices and unemployment.

Shri Yadav said that the Industrial Development rate has fallen down and there was no efforts made in the budget to stop this decline. For the farmers, no rebate has been given in seeds, fertilizer and farming implements.

### *CM's resignation demanded*

**Bhopal:** Pradesh Congress Committee, led by Pradesh Congress President, Shri Arun Yadav and the Leader of the Opposition in the Vidhan Sabha, Shri Satyadev Katare staged a protest dharna at the Roshanpura crossing here on 1st July, 2014.

The protest was held to demand resignation of the State Chief Minister for the alleged corruption in the examinations conducted by the Services Selection Board.

The Congressmen jammed the road and the traffic was stopped and the police resorted to lathi-charge to disperse the gathering in which many Congressmen got injured.

Shri Yadav said that corruption at all levels was being done in a systematic way by the Chief Minister, minister, BJP Leaders and the concerned officials and we demand that this issue should be inquired into by the CBI.

### *Tributes paid to Birsa Munda*

**Jabalpur:** Congressmen, led by former AICC Secretary, Ms. Kaushaliya Gontia, paid tributes to freedom fighter and tribal leader Shri Birsa Munda on his martyrdom day on 9th June, 2014.

The Congressmen garlanded the statue of Shri Birsa Munda at the Aadhartaal crossing here alongwith former Mayor N.P. Dubey, Shri Kunjilal Gontia, Bhaiya Lal, Jhethu Lal, Roshan Lal Kaul, Jitendra, Ganesh Kaul, Indira Pathak Tiwari, Rekha



Jain, Rahul Gupta, Rajni Nigam with others.

### **Protest Rally**

**Jabalpur:** The Congressmen staged a protest rally here on 30th June, 2014 against the Madhya Pradesh Services Selection Board corruption racket worth crores in medical and other selection examinations.



The rally, led by former Minister in the Congress government in MP, Ms. Kaushaliya Gontia, began from Dena Bank, Aadhartaal and culminated at the Birsa Munda crossing at Aadhartaal. The Congressmen demanded the arrest of main culprit Dilip Suryawanshi and Sudhir Sharma and former Minister Laxmikant Sharma.

Many Congressmen attended the rally.

## **PUNJAB**

### **Bajwa joins agitation by dalits in Balad Kalan**

**Chandigarh:** The Punjab Congress President, Mr. Partap Singh Bajwa, on 2nd July, 2014 joined the dharna being organised by the dalits in Balad kalan village in Sangrur district who are fighting for their rights over the panchayat land.

He was accompanied by the dalit leader Chaudhary Santokh Singh, MP from Jalandhar and Sangrur leaders including Mr Vijay Inder Singla, Ex MP, Mr Surinder Pal Singh Sibia Ex MLA, Mai Roop



Kaur President District Congress Committee Sangrur, Sh. Paramjit Singh Mann President District Congress Committee Barnala and Sh. Rajinder Raja Secretary PPCC.

Mr Bajwa said the dalits had been agitating for the last several days over the fraudulent auction of panchayat land reserved for them. They have been demanding that the auction should be organised by lowering the reserve price arguing that the one fixed by the panchayat was too high. In the process, three dalit members of the panchayat had resigned. The police had arrested 41 agitating members from the dalit community. He also strongly condemned the police lathicharge on the agitating dalits in which even a woman of about 80 was injured along with several others. She was discharged from the hospital without providing her proper treatment. She also joined the dharna today and narrated her woes to the PPCC chief.

Demanding immediate withdrawal of cases against dalits and acceptance of their demand for lowering the reserve price for the auction of 478 bighas of land reserved for them in the village, he termed the lathicharge as unprovoked.

He said the Congress had always articulated the concerns of the dalits historically and the party in Punjab would continue to plead their cause vociferously at every level. He said the Akali Dal had always betrayed the weaker sections and had only been concerned with getting their votes. He asserted it was the Congress which was fully committed to their uplift.

He said the dalits at several places had been agitating against the policies of this government and the Congress would take up their issues at the state level. He said the Akali Dal-BJP government had been ignoring dalits as evident from the lackadaisical implementation of the schemes meant for their welfare which also included scholarships for the dalit students. He said grants under the shagun scheme for dalit girls had not been paid for months.

The PPCC chief said the Congress in Punjab would always be in the forefront so far as the issues concerning the dalits were concerned.

He demanded that the panchayat land reserved for the dalits in every village should be auctioned in a transparent manner and at affordable reserve price and as per law 1/3 rd land is to be reserved for SCs. He alleged in most of the cases, such auctions were benami and this practice must stop.

He also visited the Sangrur Jail to meet the 41 dalit of Balad Kalan Village who have been retained by police.

## RAJASTHAN

***Protest against policies of BJP***

**Jaipur:** Protesting against the anti-people policies of the NDA Government at the centre and the state BJP Government which has failed in controlling the rising prices, the Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee directed all its district Congress Committee to hold protest demonstration at all District Collector's office all over the state here on 9th July, 2014.



Pradesh Congress President, Shri Sachin Pilot alongwith the City and Rural Congress Committee led the protest demonstration at the Jaipur Collectorate. Leader of the Opposition in the Vidhan Sabha, Shri Rameshwar Dudi was also present.

Addressing a massive crowd of Congressmen Shri Sachin Pilot said that the NDA Government at the centre fought the Lok Sabha elections on the issue of rising price but on coming to power the price rise and inflation has risen tremendously and they are unable to control it. He said that the BJP Government at the centre first raised the price of Railway tickets and the freight rates, then they raised the price of diesel and petrol and the price of subsidized cooking gas cylinder. Similarly, the Rajasthan State Government of the BJP has raised the cost of travelling in Roadways buses by 16 percent. Price has gone up for milk and milk products, vegetable prices have also gone up including onions, potatoes, tomatoes. Shri Pilot said that the party which collected votes of the people on false claims has increased 25 percent excise duty on sugar and has encouraged the hoarders to make money.

Shri Pilot said that the Chief Minister of the State has discontinued with the MGNREGA Scheme which the previous UPA Government had introduced as a guarantee of 100 days job for the poor people in the rural areas and this will prove very harsh for the poor people and said that Congress as the opposition party will always be with the poor and will fight with the government for their cause.

Others who were present were Leader of the Opposition, Shri Rameshwar Dudi, Pradesh Congress Vice-President, Shri Ramachandra Saradhana, General Secretary incharge, Shri Suresh Chaudhary, Spokesperson, Dr. Archana Sharma, Secretary Incharge, Shri Ajitsingh Yadav, former MLA, Shri Pratapsingh Khachiryavas, former Union Minister, Shri Lalchand Kataria and Shri Ameen Kagazi also expressed their views.

Also present were Pradesh Congress Cashier, Shri Chiranjilal Badaya, General Secretary, Shri Pukhraj Prashar, former MP, Dr.

Mahesh Joshi, PCC Secretary, Dr. Khanu Khan Budhwali, Minority Commission Chairman, Md. Mahir Azad, former Minister, Shri Brijkishore Sharma, Shri Mumtaz Mashih, District Chief, Shri Hazarilal Naagar, Jaipur City District President, Shri Saleem Kagazi, Shri Shankarlal Meena, Shri Sanjay Bapra, Dr. Prahalad Raghu, District Vice-President, Shri Narayan Kulhariya, Pradhan Smt. Urmila Sharma, Jaipur City and Rural Congressmen.

## TAMILNADU

***Rahul Gandhi's Birthday Celebrated***

**Trichy:** The Congressmen here celebrated the birthday of Congress Vice-President, Shri Rahul Gandhi on 19th June, 2014. Prayers were offered at various temples here for the good health and long life of Shri Rahul Gandhi.



The function was organized by the Tamilnadu State Trade Union Congress secretary and State PCC Member, Shri B. Balasubramanian. Sweets were distributed among the people.

## UTTAR PRADESH

***Tributes paid to Rani Laxmibai***

**Kanpur:** Congressmen paid tributes to Rani Laxmibai who with the help of Tantia Tope fought the war of freedom on her martyrdom day here on 19th June, 2014. The family members of Tantia Tope were facilitated on this occasion.

The function was organized by the former secretary of the UPCC, Shri Pradeep Mishra. Later, the surviving relations of Tantia Tope were also honoured.

***Effigy of Modi burnt***

**Lucknow:** The District Congress Committee, led by former Vice-President, Shri Mehendi Hassan staged a protest demonstration against the Modi Government at the centre here on 25th June, 2014.

The protest was held at the Roomi Gate, Bada Imambara against the anti-people policies of the BJP Government at the centre. The protest was also against the raising of price of sugar and the people showed their anger by burning the effigy of Narendra Modi.

Shri Hassan said that the Modi Government which had come to power by showing dreams to the people by promising to bring down the price of thing down in the country have instead raised the price of sugar and this amounts to cheating the people of the country. ❖

## MAHILA CONGRESS

The National Council Meet of Mahila Congress was held on 10th-11th June 2014 in the Media Briefing Hall of the AICC which was chaired by AIMC President Smt. Shobha Oza. The meeting was attended by AIMC Office Bearers and PMC Presidents. All the Presidents came with their Activity Reports and future action plan. Detailed discussions were held regarding Party debacle in the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections. Strategies were drawn out to rejuvenate the rank and file of the Party. The reports of election campaign of Mahila Congress in the recently concluded Parliamentary elections were also submitted by the PMC Presidents.

Braving water cannons, Madhya Pradesh Mahila Congress, under the leadership of AIMC President Smt. Shobha Oza, gheraoed the residence of Home Minister Shri Babulal Gaur on 14th June, protesting against a gang-rape in Khandwa district. Demanding his resignation, they burnt his effigy and tried to break the barricades.

The AIMC President went to Jabalpur on 26th June to participate in programmes organized on the occasion of Hon'ble President of India's visit.

On 18th June 2014, the All India Mahila Congress in coordination with Delhi PMC held a demonstration at the BJP Headquarters in New Delhi to demand the resignation of Union Minister Shri Nihal Chand Meghwal, who is accused in rape and sexual exploitation of a girl.

Meghalaya PMC called an emergent meeting of State Executive at Congress Bhawan on 4th June to condemn the shooting of a woman by Garo militants in Chockpot. On 5th June, Meghalaya and Assam Mahila Congress units observed World Environment Conservation Day by planting trees at various places.

West Bengal PMC President Smt. Kavita Rehman and Smt. Anuradha Ghosh, President Birbhum District Mahila Congress took up the case of a minor tribal girl who was brutally raped by some influential people of the ruling TMC. A delegation of Mahila Congress activists went to meet the Superintendent of Police who though refused to meet them initially, was forced to register the complaint. They tried to contact victim's family also but they refused



to interact with them, saying that they do not want any political interference in the case.

Since the parliamentary elections are over, the AIMC Office Bearers have started regularly visiting the States under their charge for organizational work. ❖

All India Mahila Congress

## AICC DIARY

### NO ORIGINAL VISION

**Spokesperson: Shri Anand Sharma:** He said that Rashtrapati Ji today outlining the approach, the priorities of the present government is deeply disappointing. There is no original vision of the government, no new initiative which can be termed different from what this nation is presently implementing. The approach as such is superficial. There is generalization and the specifics are missing, is full of platitude and is a repeat of the glitches and slogans used by the Prime Minister and the BJP during the elections. The President address could have been different because the country has heard and the country has responded and we have accepted the verdict in all humility. Therefore, all these slogans finding prominent place in the President's address 'Ek Bharat shreshth Bharat'; 'sab ka saath sab ka vikas'; 'minimum government maximum governance'. We have been listening to these slogans for the last six months.

Secondly, we have heard of 5 Ts in this address. 3 Ds again find a mention. Naturally democracy word in English will have alphabet 'D', demography in English will have word 'D' and demand in English you cannot spell it without 2 Ds in it. This is just jugglery of words which does not give any sense of direction. Now coming to what they have said about the grand design to transform India. They have talked of new Indian Institutes of Technology, investing more in Science research. Now let me remind the government that they would looked gracious if they had acknowledged that the number of IITs in India given the paucity of resources for decade, we were not able to add after the decade of 1960s, then 5 and 2 more were established later. That it was the UPA government which took the number from 7 to 16. The Indian Institutes of Management were 6 in the country and during the UPA government; the number was taken to 13. 20 new triple IITs were established. The contribution for the allocation of budget funds for R&D was raised by UPA government from 1% of the GDP to 2% of the GDP and you can calculate that how it multiplies because India's GDP which we have informed earlier quadrupled in UPA's time from 500 Billion US Dollars to 2 Trillion US Dollars. That is a statement

of fact. From one National Institute of Design, 5 National Institutes of Design were already established. When we are talking of manufacturing and industry, design finds a prominent place anybody having knowledge of industrial manufacturing, establishment of institution and stimulation of modern technology in manufacturing. India had one Mega University of the National Institute of Science, 4 more were added to take the number to 5. There is no reference even to what India has achieved because these are national achievements, not individual and that is why I said that this address lacks grace or the accomplishments of the people of India.

There is a vague reference to manufacturing without any specifics. Equally vague is the reference to urbanization of 100 new cities. China took more than 20 years to establish 100. But just to remind, on 25th of October 2011, the Cabinet had approved the National Manufacturing Policy with the objective to raise the share of manufacturing from 16%age points to 25%age points. The principal objective being the national investment and manufacturing zones that stand alone integrated green field industrial cities of the future. 16 of these were notified by our government, 4 were launched - one in Maharashtra, 1 in UP, 1 in Rajasthan and one in Madhya Pradesh - that is Vikram Udyog Puri. So, this is a fact which the present government has lost over because here is generalization. We had a focused approach. This government, I am happy, has talked of industrial corridors and freight corridors. Again it is important to underscore that the industrial corridors - the first one Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor got all approvals and budgetary allocations way back in 2010 November and Japan came as a partner country in 2011 having taken an equity of 5 Billion dollars in the DMIC. DMIC, according to World Bank, is the second biggest infrastructure project ever conceived, the largest or most innovative under implementation currently anywhere in the world. It is in advanced stage of implementation.

Shri Sharma further said we know that it takes time and efforts and complete participation and involvement of the State governments, the people and stakeholders

when you establish mega cities dedicated to manufacturing and industries. It does not happen overnight as it is portrayed to be. It is not like quad ring coffee or getting a cup of coffee from the instant coffee machine or dispenser. There are three other Industrial Corridors which were approved by the Cabinet Amritsar-Kolkata Industrial Corridor which will be connecting with the dedicated industrial corridor is the largest. I am just trying to inform the present government that they should have looked at it before making such statement and not acknowledging what this country is already doing or has already done. The third one is the Chennai-Bengaluru and the last one where UK is the partner is the Bengaluru-Mumbai Economic corridor.

On e-governance, there has been loud statement made which is surprising. First of all, there is a national e-governance plan in India. There are 27 mission mode projects. This national e-governance plan was launched on May 18, 2006. As I said, 27 mission mode projects which are currently under implementation and in order to promote e-governance in a holistic manner, various policy initiatives and projects were undertaken and the major ones are state data centre, state wise area net works, common service centers, middle way gateway, national e-governance delivery gateways, state government e-delivery. This has already happened in India and the states are very much partners in this because the government of India - whether it is UPA government or the present government - can do and will have to do with the active and real participation of the states and also provision of resources to the states.

We have another project because the President's address did talk of single window approval mechanism when it comes to businesses and to investment to cut red tapes and delays. First of all, National Manufacturing Policy which is referred to has effective single window mechanism in place with the new cities being developed. Funds stands allocated and given to the states for the trunk infrastructure which the government of India is funding for these new cities and for the business climate the e-Biz project is there. E-biz project. The portal was launched at the Partnership Summit in Agra last year on the 27th January by me because this project is executed by the government in partnership with the Infosys which is actually the agency and the platform was launched on 20 Jan this year which has integrated payment gateway all central state and para state agencies have been brought on board.

All industrial registration, approvals, filing is electronic through E-Biz project. There is payment gateway which has already been put in place for the apportionment of the payment which the applicant makes in a single form electronically.

### FOREIGN FDI

I would also like to inform about Broadband Highways. That mission is under implementation. It is coincidence this was also approved by the then cabinet on 25.10.2011, if my memory serves me right. Now when it comes to the foreign FDI the country is aware of the attitude and approach of the BJP when they were in opposition. Despite the best of our efforts, the initiatives in FDI were regularly opposed and the parliament was stalled. It does not mean that we intend doing that. We believe in constructive engagement and cooperation and to debate and discuss national issues in this highest forum of democracy but the President's address has talked of investments in agriculture, creating infrastructure, bringing in technology. My straight question is why did they oppose FDI in multi-brand retail which was endorsed by both the Houses of Parliament which was unnecessarily dragged and then taken to Supreme Court and a three Judge Bench gave the ringing endorsement saying that it is in the benefit of farmers, it is in the benefit of consumer and that policy which made it mandatory for any investment more than 50% to go in for creating rural infrastructure. That is a question which we would like to post to them. All major sectors, as you may be aware, the rationalization and simplification of policy was done in January 2010 when a single compendium on FDI decision was taken - a single book - earlier the FDI policy since 1996 was communicated through the Press notes of the calendar year and RBI circulars - to be precise there were 178 documents or press notes and 100s of RBI circulars and guidelines which was subsumed in a single document which was released on the 31.03.2010. They were the sectoral route changers and sectoral cap were raised in many sectors in Sept last year raising FDI in Telecom to 100%. There was also significant decision taken on defence for private sector participation which they have put emphasis on that, I would like to put it straight on record. 26% was allowed FDI - 100% by the Indian private sector permitted that is the stated FDI policy which you can check but above 26% in all those cases where the state of art technology transfer was informed to manufacturer in India and reduced dependence on import,

the FDI policy tweaked that we will accept all these proposals when they will be cleared by CCS and not by the CCEA. That is known to the investors globally. I still do not understand that how they will be able to address this fundamental issue when this comes in particularly the post harvest crop management given the high losses of perishable of 40% and at least 15% of other agro-commodities because of lack of infrastructure having opposed FDI or having sent a wrong signal to the investors, now sudden U-turn but again without getting into the specifics, they have talked of policy stability. My question is predictably and the stability of the policy has always been emphasized by us and when we were in government, we pleaded with the then opposition and urged them to ensure that the stability of the policy regime for the confidence of the foreign investors and partners to stay intact. Yet they did not do so.

### MINIMUM GOVERNMENT

I would also like to comment before I come to the World View on this minimum Government Issue - what is meant by that. Does it mean minimum government by the states as opposed to the federalism? Does it mean minimizing the role of the Ministries and the Ministers in the cabinet form of government and maximization of governance only through the PMO? That is a fundamental question. India has 76 Secretaries in government of India. There are approximate 80 departments. I would like to ask through you the government, the Prime Minister and his cabinet colleagues; on what basis they have instructed every Secretary to the government of India, every department in this country to repeal ten archaic laws.

Now with regard to the World view. It is a truncated world view. There is no reference to multi-lateralism and a new global order to the UNSC expansion for India to find its rightful place, to the WTO and to various multi-lateral organizations where India is effectively and meaningfully engaged. I am equally surprised that the World view excludes any references to BRICS which is a major initiative of India. The World view of this government excludes any reference to West Asia. ASEAN is excluded; there is no reference to look east policy where India is engaged in negotiation as a Member of the East Asia Summit. There is no reference at all to Africa or Latin America. Which World view are you talking? It sends a very negative message.

We as a previous government and as Congress party are happy that the President's address does mention two things which we endorse

one is 33% reservation for Women. I am sure that this country and the institutions have the recall as to how difficult it was despite best of our efforts to get that 33% but we will wholeheartedly support the 33% reservation for Women as this has been our commitment and stated policy also over the years. Second is about the nuclear agreement. The President's address acknowledges its significance and a commitment of the government to implement it in letter and spirit to enhance our nuclear capacities and electricity generation. It is always important to still have a recall from the pages of history as to what we faced when we negotiated and when we piloted it this nuclear cooperation agreement where the government was literally brought to brink but we are happy that they have realized that the stand taken by the BJP was wrong and they are correcting it, we welcome it. Lastly on GST - better late than never you will recall that the Hon'ble President of India who was the then Finance Minister had been making best of his efforts to bring in GST in the country and a Committee was also formed in this regard with the hope that possibly they stop criticism but the GST once implemented will raise India's GDP by 2%age points but despite our pleadings, this was not done spearheading the opposition to the GST, the CMs of the BJP ruled states in particular the then CM of the State of Gujarat but we have always been in favour of the GST. So these are the three which I have mentioned that Yes, we will welcome.

As far as parliament session is concerned, we will have a positive approach and we will respect the dignity of the Parliament. We will oppose the policies which are not in the interest of the nation. Monday, 9th June, 2014.

### CONTENTIOUS STATEMENT

**Spokesperson: Shri Randeep Surjewala:** He said that BJP and its Ministers are resorting to politicizing a great neutral and secular institution like Indian Army by making highly contentious, irresponsible and contradictory statements. Former Army Chief and current Union MOS for External Affairs with Independent charge of North Eastern States Shri VK Singh, his successive comments through tweets and otherwise questioning the role, position and integrity of the next Army Chief, reeks of a personal vendetta of disproportionate proportions. Shri VK Singh's latest tweets questioning the validity, authenticity and even correctness of the Affidavit filed by Defence Ministry before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India lets the position of the Defence Ministry

## PRESS BRIEFINGS

and the Defence Minister untenable. We also heard the Defence Minister clarifying today in Rajya Sabha as also earlier stating that the appointment of Indian Army Chief is beyond question and should not be politicized. In light of these tweets, comments and remarks passed by Shri VK Singh questioning the correctness, authenticity and validity of the Affidavit filed by the current BJP before the Hon'ble Supreme Court. Wednesday, 11th June, 2014.

### GOLDEN DREAMS SHOWN

**Spokesperson: Shri Shakti Singh Gohil and Smt. Shobha Ojha:** He said that for the BJP and Modi good days have come but bad days have come for the countrymen. They had shown golden dreams to the people that a new sun shall arise for a brighter future. The promises that were made will not be fulfilled and they cannot implement them either and one now putting the blame on the Congress Party and started with goa. That the economic condition of the country is in a very bad state because of poor administration and have said that the people have to be ready to face harsh steps and even has to take bitter pill. But when they talk of economic condition I do not demand for any clarification and the Prime Minister who is talking so much on the economic state of affairs of this country and cursing the previous UPA Government for this condition, I would like to make you aware about the socio-economic review which he presented in the Gujarat Vidhan Sabha when he was the Chief Minister and I would like to repeat his words: Weaknesses in the major developed economies are at the root of the continued gloomy global economic environment and several European economies are already in recession. In fact, countries like India, China and Brazil have largely been responsible for stroking the engine of global economy during the year 2012. This is the report of 2012. They say that the economic situation was bad all over the world, but to take ahead the economically it was India which was first of the three nations in lacking ahead a stable economy, then came China and thereafter Brazil. Here he writes that the economic condition of India was very good, then when coming to power how can this become so bad. I would like to give some figures that has been given in the socio-economic review. This benchmark has been drawn by the United Nations. It has been mentioned here about the Gross Product which is an indication of development rate

and these figures are not mine.

I would like to mention about other things. The average growth rate during the ten-year period of the UPA Government was 7.6 percent. During the NDA rule till 2004 the average growth rate was 5.99. Though there was economic recession throughout the world but the UPA Government's economic condition was two trillion dollar of the GDP and during the NDA rule this was 500 billion dollar which became two trillion dollars today. The Foreign reserves had increased 300% during the UPA period. From 110 Billion dollar it increased to 312 Billion dollars. The per capita income was Rs. 24000 during the NDA period which increased to Rs. 69000 per person during the UPA period. In 2004, the exports were 63 billion dollars which became 313 billion dollars during the period of UPA. This was our export target when there was recession all over the world. The power generation was 113000 MW which increased to 242000 MW. There was 17 percent increase in the FDI which was 28 billion dollars. Education loans during the NDA was 46000 crores and which increased to 57,700 crores during the UPA period. The Current Account Deficit which is very necessary, got lowered down to 0.2 percent in 2013 to 2014. They say that inflation is the gift of UPA and gathered votes on the promise of bring down inflation. The whole Sale Price Inflation jumped to 6.01 from 5.2 percent, that is, the inflation rose by one percent after their coming to power and what they say about the present situation, they say that they are not able to control it because this situation was kept like this by the UPA Government. I would just give you a small example that growth the world over from 2010 to 2014 had reduced but the growth rate of India had gone up. The per capita income has been given, at the present price and with the past price. If any country that has maintained growth rate during the recession period, it was only India. The person who is Prime Minister today, was the Chief Minister then and in 2012-2013 has Socio-Economic Review are mentioned on pages III, IV and V. they also carry the remarks about the positive

economic position of the UPA Government. And in this situation those who showed the dreams of good days are going back on their words. When we formed the government in 1991, the country's gold reserves were matgauged abroad, we did not complain that the last government did this. Within a few months we improved our economic condition and brought back the country's gold from outside. We never asked ten-year period for improvement, we acted in a few months. You have come to power by showing the dreams. Maybe we lacked proper marketing with the government funds or through some agency but we could not manage and at times good people cannot convey the truth to the people and the untruth takes advantage and the truth gets beaten. So this is what happened but we were rejected and you did not get vote percentage. The something was being said by the BJP people that I was rejected and I do not have the right to speak. Despite the full cabinet of Modiji, the people from there have voted me so, now I want to ask the BJP people that they should at least listen to my words as the people have reposed their trust in me. Monday, 16th June, 2014.

### BJP GOVERNMENT STILL IN ELECTION MODE

**Spokesperson: Shri Raj Babbar:** He said that 40 Indians who had gone to work in Mosul City of Iraq were kidnapped. This is a matter of concern, because the situation was not normal there and the whole country knew about it. It was astonishing fact that when the situation was not normal why were the Indians working there were not evacuated from there and this is the Congress Party is concerned. This is not a matter of just 40 Indians, it is about the safety and welfare of 18 thousand Indians who are working there and what has happened to them? On this the government has given no reaction. The Congress Party demands that priority should be given to this issue as these Indians have been kindenapped by the terrorists and how will they be brought back to India at the earliest. It is our demand that the government give its reaction and makes its stand clear. Wednesday, 18th June, 2014.

**Tom Vadakkan,**  
*Media Secretary, AICC*

