

EDITORIAL



The hands of the enemies of the nation struck again when they carried out a terrorist attack on innocent victims at Hyderabad. The barbaric and cowardly attacks serve no purpose as precious lives of innocent victims are lost leaving many families bereaved of their loved ones. Offering her condolences to the victims of the tragic incident Smt. Sonia Gandhi expressed her anguish on the tragedy.

The Budget Session of the Parliament commenced on 21st February. This is an important session of the Parliament where not only the Finance Bill has to be discussed and cleared, many pending legislations also need the approval of the parliament. Parliament is the forum for debate from where the view of the spectrum of political parties gets reflected. It is important for the views of all political dispensations should be recorded on important legislation. The manner in which several sessions of the Parliament have been lost due to the obstructionist attitude of the party in opposition has only caused delays in important laws being enacted in the interest of the common man. We hope that this session will go smoothly and all differences would be resolved through debate rather than raising slogans in the house and disruption of proceedings.

Empowerment of Women has been the key note in the thought process of the Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi. At every opportunity she wishes to do something which would make the women of the country more and more self-reliant and independent. The recent unfortunate event of barbaric rape and subsequent death of a young paramedic had upset Sonia ji no end. True that almost all the nation was shocked by the event and was seething in anger to take revenge against the perpetrators of such violence against women the UPA immediately started the process of strengthening the laws which would lead to awarding exemplary punishment to those who treated women as a weaker gender.

Women's security being a vital concern of the UPA Government the Government immediately constituted a 3 member committee headed by former Chief Justice of India and the Former Chairman of Human Rights Commission. The other two members were ex Chief Justice of Himachal Pradesh and the former Solicitor General of India. The committee tabled its report on 23rd January in less than 30 days. Within 8 days of the tabling of this report, the Union Cabinet on 1st February introduced and approved an ordinance effecting changes based on the suggestions of the committee. The President accorded his approval on 3rd February. The fact that the ordinance named as the "Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance, 2013" was made in a record time speaks volumes about the commitment of the UPA to ensure that women feel safe in the country and those who perpetrate such brutal crimes against women are brought to book and made to regret having carried out such heinous acts. Some path-breaking amendments were carried out through this ordinance and the scope of harassment against women expanded. It was kept in view that if the smaller mischiefs are not nipped in the bud it would embolden such people in taking on to more heinous crimes. The Ordinance would now be placed on the floor of the house and would require the approval of the Parliament to become a law.

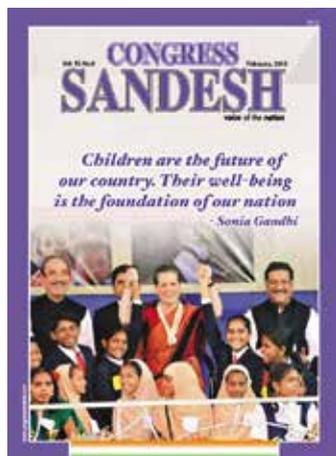
Speaking on the occasion of the award of Indira Gandhi Award for Peace, Disarmament and Development to Smt. Ela Ramesh Bhatt, Sonia ji said that Smt. Bhatt has dedicated her life to the cause of the most poor, most vulnerable and most marginalized working women. Smt. Gandhi said that they have been inspired by the thinking of Smt. Indira Gandhi and they have worked towards evolving a unique model.

The tragedy at the Kumbh Mela at Allahabad was a very sad and unfortunate incident. Innocent and valuable lives were lost due to inadequate arrangements at the site where it is traditionally known that a huge number of people come due to their religious beliefs especially on the day of the 'Mauni Amnavasya'. Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi expressing her anguish said "the loss of even one innocent life grieves me". She offered her condolences to the family of those who were bereaved in the stampede at the railway station. ❖

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After taking over as Vice President of the AICC amongst the first things Rahul Gandhi did was to announce that his faith ran on positive thinking and he was not prone to build the foundation of his policy upon negativity. He emphasized that there was abundance of wisdom, experience and fresh talent in the Congress and a judicious blend of Experience and Youth would lay the foundations of the future policies of the Congress. The Congress would continue to be an “instrument of change” to bring glory to the nation.

He emphasized on the need for a greater interaction within the party leaders and workers and called for greater number of meetings to have open discussions to understand grass root realities.

True to the traditions set by his peers who brought glory to the Grand old Party the concept of ‘Samvaad’ was emphasized by him as the proper way ahead. Having embarked in the right direction by setting up frequent meetings with office bearers and party workers, the Congress workers would have means to bring to the notice of party organization their suggestions and grievances so that the party could provide them with solutions. The party would be able to take full advantage of the myriad of hidden talent available to the party which remains dormant due to lack of opportunity to project their thoughts.

In his speech at Jaipur he had said that “I meet people who have tremendous understanding, deep insight and no voice. He added that ‘almost always they are kept out of the system’. Having realized this reality he has laid the foundation to ‘Samvaad’ and this would make the party stronger and more meaningful to the grass root workers.

We congratulate him for the direction he has embarked upon and are confident that the Congress organization would benefit from his Youthful wisdom and enthusiasm to become the true harbinger of growth in the 21st Century.

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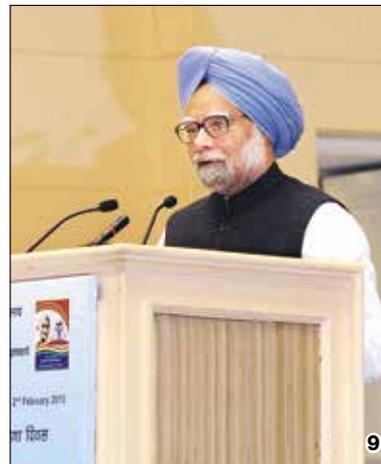
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NATIONAL CHILD HEALTH PROGRAMME



CHILDREN ARE THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY. THEIR WELL-BEING IS THE FOUNDATION OF OUR NATION

UPA Chairperson, Smt. Sonia Gandhi's speech on National Child Health Programme launched at Thane-Maharashtra on Feb 6, 2013

I just met a few children. They showed me how care is being taken of the unwell children here. I am deeply impressed and congratulate all these children.

It gives me immense pleasure due to the fact that the National Child Health Programme is being launched from here, hence I congratulate you and offer you my best wishes.

After being launched from here, the message of the National Child Health Programme would be spread across the country.

The format and structure of the Programme is such that several issues related to child health would gain strength. This scheme would prove to be very fruitful. I would like to see that implementation and supervision of this Programme is done in the best possible manner, so that its influence reaches door-to-door at a fast pace.

Children are the future of our country. Their well-being is the foundation of our nation. That's why child-health and maternal security has always been important for the Congress-led UPA Government.

In this series we launched programmes like Mother-Child Protection Programme. Our focus remains on the remote areas where there is a paucity of basic health facilities. Therefore the Child-Health Programme is being launched from this area, because here there is a huge population of our tribal brothers and sisters.

Our effort has been that there is no shortage of money for social-welfare and human resource development. We have disbursed Rs 90,000 crore to the states through the National Rural Health Mission in the past seven years. Maharashtra has derived benefit amicably, as a result of which the rate of infant and mother mortality has dipped.

Under the National Rural Health Mission, nine lakh "Asha" workers

are extending health services to the rural women and children. These self-help women have proved to be a very important bridge between the rural community and administration.

Permission has been given to around 270 Nursing Schools in the past two years. I am confident that women belonging to SC-STs would adopt this noble profession after training in these nursing schools.

Only sometime ago, every year around two lakh fresh cases of polio were detected in our country. But, India is a polio-free country, this is a great achievement, this programme was launched by Rajiv ji.

We have taken many steps to make children healthy and happy. We implemented Right to Education to ensure that no child remains away from benefits of education. ICDS Scheme was expanded for children below six years.

12 crore children are getting fresh and healthy food through the Mid-day Meal Scheme. To protect their rights, we have set up a Child's Rights Security Commission. Last year the parliament passed a law to check sexual abuse of children.

But despite on one hand there are all these achievements, we are aware that there are several challenges facing us even now. The infant-mortality rate is still high at the national level. Around 40 percent of children are still undernourished, and this remains a matter of concern to us.

Now our UPA government is going to bring about an important food security law. This historical move would ensure adequate nourishment for children.

Infant-mortality and mother health are inter-linked. Several schemes are being run for women in pregnancy and delivery stage. If pregnant

THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN HAS A DIRECT AND POSITIVE IMPACT ON SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN, PARTICULARLY THE GIRLS. WE HAVE TAKEN MANY INITIATIVES FOR THEIR WELL BEING. RECENTLY WE ISSUED AN ORDINANCE TO COMBAT CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN. WE IMPLEMENTED LAWS TO PROTECT THEM FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HAVE SHARE IN ANCESTRAL PROPERTY. UNDER THE "AAJEEVIKA" SCHEME WE HAVE LINKED WOMEN SELF-HELP GROUPS WITH BANKS IN ORDER TO INCREASE THEIR INCOMES.

mothers would be weak and un-well, it would have an adverse impact on their children. I believe that unless there is an improvement in social status of women, till then our programmes would not bear the desired results. The empowerment of women has a direct and positive impact on social and physical development of children, particularly the girls. We have taken many initiatives for their well being. Recently we issued an Ordinance to combat crimes against women. We implemented laws to protect them from domestic violence and have share in ancestral property. Under the "Aajeevika" Scheme we have linked women self-help groups with banks in order to increase their incomes.

50 percent reservation is given to women in panchayat and Nagar Palikas, as a result of which they are emerging as a big force.

I want to tell the tribal sisters, brothers and children present here that we realise the problems faced by you. That's why our government has implemented the Forest-Right Act and they have been given the right to land in forest and produce thereon, so that their confidence gets a boost and there is a change in their lifestyle. I strongly believe that the Chief Minister and his colleagues would take constructive steps in this direction.

Today the kind of encouragement I have seen, it would undoubtedly give strength to Child-Security Scheme. By the way I acknowledge that exemplary work has been done in Maharashtra in the field of Child-health. For example, the ongoing scheme "Raj-Mata Jijau Swasthay Aur Poshan Mission" is a successful scheme in Maharashtra. I congratulate Chief Minister Shri Prithviraj Chauhan ji, Health Minister Shri Suresh Shetty ji, and all their colleagues.

I also congratulate Union Health Minister Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad and his ministry with the belief that this scheme would also prove to be successful.

I am thankful to you all for the way you have welcomed this scheme and I assure you that our UPA Government will remain committed for the well-being of children and Generation Next.

With these words, once again I congratulate you all and offer my best wishes. Thank You! Jai Hind! ❖

A REPORT

Soniaji launches Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram



UPA Chairperson, Smt. Sonia Gandhi said in Thane (Maharashtra) on 6th February, 2013 that the government is paying maximum attention to the health and welfare of women and children, especially those in the backward areas of the country.

'Children are the future of this country and their welfare is our prime concern. The health of children is directly linked to the well-being of the mother, for which the central and state governments have taken several measures,' Smt. Sonia Gandhi said. Her remarks came at the launch of the government's pet scheme, Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK), initiated under the National Rural Health Mission. The scheme aims to provide comprehensive health care benefits to over 27 crore children across India. Smt. Sonia Gandhi described the RBSK as 'a significant step towards controlling malnutrition' among children.

Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad and Maharashtra Chief Minister Shri Prithviraj Chavan were present at the launch function, attended by a large number of tribals from Palghar and surrounding areas of Thane district, adjoining Mumbai. Under RBSK, the government has assured a package of health services for all children up to the age of 18. The scheme has been launched in Palghar and is set to extend across the country, in different phases.

Children will, under the scheme, be screened for 30 common ailments/health conditions, so that there is the possibility of early medical intervention, in case there is such need. Birth defects like Down's syndrome, congenital cataract, deafness and heart defect, deficiency conditions like anaemia, malnutrition and goitre, developmental delays and disabilities like hearing impairment and vision impairment are among the conditions for which children will be screened under this scheme. Mobile health teams will be dedicated to the screening of children, and two AYUSH doctors (one male and one female), nurse and a pharmacist would be available for the service in every block. ❖

INDIA HAS 8 MILLION PERSONS WITH AUTISM AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT DISORDERS – SMT. SONIA GANDHI



Congress President's inaugural address at the conference of the first South Asian Autism Network (SAAN) for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) concluded with the adoption of Delhi Declaration on Monday, 11th February 2013 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi

I am happy to be here to inaugurate the 2nd, "South Asian Autism Network Conference" My visit to Dhaka in July 2011 for the first conference, convened at the initiative of Professor Saima Wazed Hossain, is still fresh in my mind. We owe Her Excellency, Prime Minister Sheikh Haseena, a great debt for having hosted the Dhaka Conference and set in motion this meeting of minds that can make a great difference to the lives of millions.

The Dhaka Conference laid the foundation of a South Asian Autism Network. The Dhaka Declaration propounded the vision that "all individuals with autism and developmental disorders ought to receive adequate and equal opportunities to enjoy health, achieve their optimal developmental potential and quality of life, and participate in society." Today, we take a major step towards turning this idea into a reality.

Let me start by sharing a rare and moving account of how an autistic person experiences the world. Tito Rajarshi Mukhopadhyay was diagnosed with severe autism 20 years ago, at the age of three. His extraordinary mother, Soma Mukhopadhyay, rejected the prognosis that her autistic son had no ability to ever understand anything. With boundless love and compassion, with untiring effort, she devised ways to teach him to read, write and communicate. He is today an acclaimed author of several books of prose and poetry.

In his own words, I quote, "Men and women are puzzled by everything I do. My parents and those who love me are embarrassed and worried. Doctors use different terminologies to describe me. I just wonder. Every move I make interprets my helpless way to show how trapped I feel in the continuous flow of happenings.... I did not know what the rules of the world were and what other people experienced. I concluded that everybody and everything experienced what I did." Unquote.

If only everyone did understand Tito's affliction, which he shares with millions around the world. It is simply not acceptable that we perceive people with autism as people who, in Tito's words, "don't have any understanding."

We need to change. We must make the world a comfortable place for those with autism. We need to learn to respect those who may perceive and experience the world differently from us, we need to empathize with them. We need to focus not on what is *different* about them — unfamiliar movement, unexpected expressions, unusual silences, uncommon imagination — but on the vastness of what we have in *common* as equal members of one humanity.

Human society has expanded the frontiers of knowledge and seen the eradication of many a debilitating disease. Yet, in the case of

TOGETHER, WE MUST STRIVE TO BUILD A MORE HUMANE SOCIETY THAT IS ANCHORED IN SOUND ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS AND PROVIDES A LIFE OF DIGNITY FOR ALL. WE CAN ONLY HOPE THAT SCIENCE WILL ONE DAY BE ABLE TO SECURE A BREAKTHROUGH WHICH WILL HELP US, NOT ONLY TO UNCOVER THE ROOT CAUSES OF AUTISM, BUT ALSO TO CREATE THE RIGHT TOOLS OF THERAPY AND CURE.

autism, despite its widespread prevalence, an understanding of its causes remains elusive. Prof. Saima Wazed Hossain has just given some figures to us that autism spectrum disorder is on the increase. In India alone we probably have over 8 million individuals with autism spectrum conditions. However, the formulation of public policy in our countries has not kept pace, and not enough attention has been given to the disability sector. In the absence of adequate institutional support mechanisms, the differently abled remain deprived of their rights.

Our societies need to develop sensitivity towards people with disabilities and full

recognition of their inherent right to lead a life of dignity. We are better placed than ever before to do so, thanks to technology. Autistic children seem to have a natural affinity for computers and electronic gadgets such as iPads and iBooks. Whether it is these new tools, music or other therapies, we have seen considerable advances in behaviour training and newer ways of communication. However, let us not forget that the poor have hardly any access to such advances. In our part of the world, the challenge is all the harder, as millions are still steeped in superstition and ignorance, with a passive, fatalistic approach to life. Parents of autistic children have always found it difficult to share their burden of pain, for fear of social stigma and discrimination. Our first task is to reach out to them and give them confidence and hope.

If we can bring about changes in policy and changes in public perception, the returns and rewards will be immeasurable. Not only will the lives of millions improve, human society at large will be enriched. As Tito demonstrates, autism masks beautiful, creative minds. Many autistic individuals have been highly gifted, excelling in music and painting, and have surprised people by their prodigious memory and computational abilities. It is our collective duty to encourage and guide, and not to disappoint or dissuade. Who knows, some day they may turn out to be the geniuses of their times, as have been some of the masters of the past, ranging from Socrates and Michelangelo to Newton and Darwin, all of whom had shadows of Asperger's syndrome.

I am happy that civil society has helped create a greater awareness on the challenges of autism. Popular mainstream films portraying the emotional aspects and the challenges that the parents of autistic children face, have helped in building sensitivity and creating awareness in the wider population. However, even now the primary focus remains on children. The issues of adults and adolescents haven't yet captured the popular imagination. Research tells us that mothers of adolescents and adults with autism can experience the worst kind of acute chronic stress. Among parents of autistic children there is always a real concern for what will happen to the child after they pass on. It is therefore important to reinforce the point that this lifelong affliction needs lifelong support and care.

I am hopeful that this conference will be a productive platform, bringing together parents, doctors, researchers and civil society to deliberate on different aspects of autism. Let us collectively ensure that the "South Asian Autism Network" makes it possible for our countries, even with our limited resources, to develop adequate support services for all families irrespective of their financial means. The Network needs to bring about a rapid and measurable change in the quality and availability of such services, especially to those from the socially and economically excluded sections who are the hardest hit.

Together, we must strive to build a more humane society that is anchored in sound ethical foundations and provides a life of dignity for all. We can only hope that science will one day be able to secure a breakthrough which will help us, not only to uncover the root causes of autism, but also to create the right tools of therapy and cure. I am also confident that the "South Asian Autism Network" will play a major role in bringing about a revolutionary change in the mindset of society.

While inaugurating the Conference, I wish you success in your deliberations. Thank you, ❖

A REPORT

Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi inaugurated 'South Asian Autism Network Conference' at New Delhi on 11th February 2013



New Delhi : Inaugurating the South Asian Autism Network Conference, Smt. Gandhi said mothers of children with autism and other development disorders suffer a lot by thinking about the future of their children. Because life-long afflicted children need life-long support. For this reason, we should come forward and help them. The International Conference on Autism Spectrum Disorder and Developmental Disabilities held in July 2011 at Dhaka is a momentous event in this regard. This conference has helped in focusing the attention of the region and world children with autism and other development disorders. Credit goes to H.E. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh for having organized the event.

In his welcome address, Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare said in Dhaka Declaration, we endorsed 9 priority actions to realize our vision to meet healthcare needs of children with developmental disorders. Today we are meeting again to take forward this important public health initiative to safeguard against discrimination and social exclusion. He thanked the Government of Bangladesh for being the true spirit behind this regional co-operation. He also thanked "Autism Speaks" and "World Health Organization", who have been the technical partners to this regional dialogue. He hoped that the outcome of the deliberations leading to the Delhi Declaration would be another historical guidepost in the long journey of meeting the unmet needs of children, families and communities suffering from Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Prof. Saima Wazed Hossain, Chairperson, National Advisory Committee on Neuro Developmental Disorder and Autism, Ms Krishna Tirath, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Women and Child Development and Ms Selja, Minister of State of Social Justice & Empowerment also addressed the inaugural session. ❖

MGNREGA CAN PLAY A BIG ROLE IN FULFILLING OUR DREAMS OF SECOND GREEN REVOLUTION: SONIA GANDHI

UPA Chairperson, Smt. Sonia Gandhi's speech on Mahatma Gandhi NREGA Meeting- 2013 at Vigyan Bhawan-New Delhi on February 2, 2013



History was written seven years ago at Anadhra Pradesh's Anantpur district when Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme was launched from here and a fundamental legal right became an essential pillar of our country's scheme of things – a new strength was born.

Today, this initiative of the UPA government is known as the world's biggest welfare scheme. Employment was generated on a large scale, income and well-being increased, and creation of immovable and useful properties took place in villages.

MGNREGA is an important part of our government's policy of inclusive growth. One of the focal points of this scheme has been the empowerment of panchayati raj institutions.

You all have been attached with the success of Mahatma Gandhi NAREGA scheme from the very beginning. I welcome you all from the core of my heart.

In today's programme, some of our friends who have done commendable work are being honoured. I congratulate them with the hope that their special contribution does not limit to being an example only, but emerges on a large scale.

Today is also the day of review. A lot has been achieved under this scheme, but while taking into account the achievements we have to plan how to improve its implementation, and how the panchayati raj institutions can be empowered at a faster pace.

Many challenges are confronting us. Distribution arrangement has to be improved.

Despite the right to employment, a large number of people, particularly those living in far-flung areas, are deprived of its benefits.

The provision of guaranteeing jobs to workers within 15 days has to be strengthened. Full payment of their labour has to be timely made.

Apart from giving jobs to workers, there is a challenge of ensuring that immovable properties are created and they prove meaningful in overall rural development. With this objective in mind, besides water-conservation, land-development and laying of roads, construction of schools and Anganwadi Kendras and sanitation drive have also been included in this Scheme.

I believe that under the MGNREGA there is an immense scope of increasing agricultural output, which we have not been able to optimise till now. Not only there is a provision of making community properties, but also helping small and marginalised farmers in arranging irrigation equipment and the scope of increasing land development and gardening. Agricultural output can be increased manifold by combining the modern agro-techniques with this Scheme. There is no doubt that MGNREGA can play a large role in fulfilling our dream of second Green-revolution.

Often we hear complaints of misuse of this Scheme and corruption. These need to be checked. Social audit should be done on time and according to the rules.

Simultaneously, its deficiencies need to be checked using the modern techniques of information and broadcasting.

Though women's role is at par with the men at the national level, but there are several states where due to lack of information or lack of facilities, women are not being included. This deficiency has to be done away with.

This Scheme has proved to be an important medium of empowering the Scheduled Tribe (ST) families in districts affected by Left-wing terror. This Scheme needs to be implemented more strictly in these areas.

Our UPA government is committed to rural development. Apart from the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, there are many more Schemes which have been strengthened even more.

The support extended through the "Indira Awas Yojna" has been enhanced. The Pradhanmantri Sadak Yojna is being expanded. Women Self-Help groups are being made more self-reliant through the "Aajeevika Yojna".

The "Pension Yojna" has been given a better shape.

Sanitation will be ensured to one and all through the "Nirmal-Bharat Abhiyaan".

Once again I want to congratulate all those attached with the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA.

These people are putting in their untiring efforts to carry forward this historic move, so that the pace of social and economic change in our rural areas gets increased.

Let us all appreciate the achievements of this Scheme, and pledge ourselves to resolve all challenges related to it. Thank You, Jai Hind. ❖

THERE IS NO SUCH SCHEME IN ANY COUNTRY ON SUCH A LARGE SCALE: PRIME MINISTER, DR. MANMOHAN SINGH

PM's address at the MGNREGA
Divas Sammelan



As you are all aware, this meeting is taking place on the completion of seven years of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. This is an historic occasion. This is one of biggest Schemes run in the country till date to eliminate poverty. There is no such scheme in any country on such a large scale.

Till now around eight crore people have benefited under this Scheme. An amount of around Rs 1.3 lakh crore have reached them.

This Scheme proves that how much importance our UPA Government gives to the policies and programmes of inclusive growth. If we look back at the records of seven years, we will find that the poorest of the poor, especially marginal farmers and landless labourers have been immensely benefited. SCs and STs have benefited out of more than half of the jobs. Women participation has been to the tune of 47 percent.

Perhaps this is for the first time when women are getting equal wages as men. More than 80 percent of the amount which women are getting is going to banks or post-offices. Because of this Scheme, number of those women is increasing who can take economic/financial decisions regarding their families. I consider this as a big step in the direction of empowerment of women.

Besides extending direct economic benefits to the people, this Scheme has given us many indirect benefits also. Due to this Scheme, the numbers of those who used to leave their homes for earning is on the decline. Good results have started coming in management of natural resources, particularly in the country's rainfed areas. There are enough proofs that the Rural Employment Programme has helped small and marginal farmers in getting better produce through saving of water and increasing land-productivity.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act has resulted in rise in financial inclusion of our rural population. More than four crore accounts have been opened in banks, and even number of accounts in the post-offices. These accounts will also prove helpful

A REPORT

8TH MAHATMA GANDHI NREGA SAMMELAN

New Delhi: Congress President and UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi today said that Congress-led UPA Government's flagship employment guarantee scheme- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)- can play a big role to usher in second green revolution in India. It also can increase agricultural production, said Sonia Gandhi.

While addressing the 8th MNREGA Sammelan in New Delhi on 2nd February, 2013, the Congress President said, "I am of the belief that MGNREGA has tremendous potential to increase agriculture production, which we have not been able to tap fully till date. There are many possibilities not only for creating community assets in villages but also providing irrigation facilities to small and marginalised farmers, developing land and promoting farming".

Smt. Sonia Gandhi also warned regarding the challenges in the implementation of MGNREGA and said, "We frequently hear complaints of corruption and misutilisation of funds in this scheme. It is very essential to put a check on this" and added, "The government will take steps to reduce its shortcomings through the tools of modern communication and information". Sonia Gandhi also maintained it was necessary that social audits happened timely and according to norms.

Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh inaugurated the conference. In his opening address Dr Singh said 30 new works have already been added to the list of works permitted under MGNREGA, whose focus is by and large on providing employment in rural areas mainly through agriculture. Apart from direct financial benefit, the scheme has given many indirect benefits to the people and brought down the migration graph, he said. ♦

in implementing the Direct Benefit Transfer Scheme. Besides, information technology is being used in this Scheme in various ways. This has improved administration, transparency in government functioning and accountability.

Under this Scheme the Central Government has taken many new initiatives in the past one year. As many as 30 new jobs have been added to the list of jobs. Most of these jobs are aimed at ensuring source of livelihood to the people in rural areas, particularly through agriculture. Setting up of "Anganwadis" is an important development. If ICDS and the resources available under the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Programme are clubbed, then the services provided under the ICDS can be improved to a large extent.

The amended rules of the Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Scheme are being formally launched today. I am happy for the fact that under this Scheme stress is laid on making better planning, increasing the role of panchayats and improving the quality of assets.

I heard with attention the experiences of people linked with this Scheme. Taking a lesson from their experiences, we should keep trying to make this Scheme better. I will request the Rural Development Ministry to coordinate with the state governments and ensure proper technical assistance to the panchayats. This would help in making labour budget under the Local Development Plan, and all possible resources will be included under the Scheme. Besides, panchayati raj institutions will get more powers and peoples' participation will increase at a fast pace in developmental works. I will also request the Ministry to making this Scheme more beneficial working on the foundations of achievements till so far.

I congratulate all those who received awards for adopting novel ways for implementing this Scheme. We should focus on their successful formulas and others should learn from them.

We all should work in the direction of fulfilling Mahatma Gandhi's dream of rural development through the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Scheme. I once again repeat my Government's commitment towards this Scheme and wish for its success. ❖

ALLAHABAD PILGRIMS STAMPEDE



On Mauni Amavasya, over three crore devotees and ascetics swarmed the ghats of the Sangam here for the holy dip. This was the biggest bathing day at the Kumbh and probably the largest human gathering on a single day.

Mauni Amavasya has traditionally attracted the largest crowds at the mela, held here every 12 years. The day marked the second and the biggest Shahi Snan (royal bath) of this event.

On this day at least 36 persons were killed and scores injured in a stampede that broke out at the railway station here during the Maha Kumbh Mela on 10th February, 2013 evening.

The incident occurred at 7 p.m. near platform no 6, where a footbridge reportedly collapsed due to the heavy rush of pilgrims who had converged on the sangam for the Mauni Amavasya Snan.

Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi expressed her grief on the death of pilgrims. In her condolence message she said:-

"I am deeply saddened by the loss of precious lives at Allahabad Railway Station yesterday evening. Innocent citizens of our country, who went to the Kumbh for Snan on the occasion of Mauni Amavasya would not have thought that this could be their last journey. The loss of even one innocent life grieves me personally. I convey my condolences to the tragedy struck families and share their sorrow."

The Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, has also expressed shock at the loss of life in the stampede at the Allahabad Railway Station. In a condolence message, the Prime Minister said:

"I am deeply shocked to learn of the unfortunate incident at the Allahabad Railway station today, in which precious lives have been lost and many pilgrims to Kumbh Mela among other people have been injured. I send my heartfelt condolences to the members of the bereaved families and wish those injured a speedy recovery. I have issued instructions to Ministry of Railways to provide all necessary assistance to the affected persons. My government assures an ex gratia payment to the families of those who have lost their dear ones and to those who are injured from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. The Central government will extend all possible help to the state government in relief operations." ❖



A REPORT

RAHUL GANDHI GETS ROUSING WELCOME IN AMETHI ON HIS FIRST VISIT AFTER ELEVATION

Amethi: AICC Vice President, Shri Rahul Gandhi received a rousing reception in Amethi on his first visit on February 7, 2013 since his elevation in the party. He also held a meeting with party workers and office bearers in Bhetya area before leaving for Delhi.

Striking an emotional chord with the people of Amethi, Rahul said, "I have been given additional responsibility but first I am the MP of Amethi and its people, and the future of the children are most important for me."

Landing at the Fursatganj airport for a two day visit, Shri Gandhi was greeted by the people of the constituency amidst playing of 'Dhol' and 'Nagara'. He was greeted with slogans like 'Yuvaon me hai nayi umang, aao chalo Rahul ke sang' (Youth have new enthusiasm, let us support Rahul). Getting on to the dais erected at regular intervals for his welcome, Shri Gandhi said his relation with the constituency and its people was that of a family and not a political one.

"Though I live in Delhi, when I come here I feel this is my home...may be because my family lived in UP this is my home and family and I am not going to leave it," he said in identical brief speeches at about two dozen places

"Whenever I get a chance to come, I come here. It is relationship of love. This (you people) is my family and I am not going to leave it," he said.

"I enjoy the most when I come here as this is my family and I do not have political relations with the people... and your problems are mine," he said.



When his attention was drawn to jobs at the local petroleum institute, he said things needed to speed up for which he would talk to the concerned minister and ensure that people could get employment.

At the same time, he tried to drive home a political message referring to development of Uttar Pradesh. Shri Rahul Gandhi said that the pace of development in the Samajwadi Party-ruled state did not match the works done by the Centre.

"The pace of development is not what it should be... whatever we can do from Delhi we are trying to do but the government here is not doing as much as is required but I do not want to speak on it.

"We do not have our government in UP but

a day will come when we have a Congress government here," he said and pointed out that a lot of development has taken place in Maharashtra and Delhi where Congress is in power.

"It should also be the same in UP as there is no dearth of funds... lack of money was there about 40 to 50 years ago but not any longer... Delhi (Central) government is sending money through which work can be done twice but it is usurped by contractors and corrupt people in the government. This is a matter of concern," he said.

Shri Rahul Gandhi, who had to visit the constituency on February 5, but cancelled the plan due to bad weather, apologized for any inconvenience to the people. ❖



A REPORT ON ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS CONG WILL WORK TOWARDS RESOLVING VEXED NAGALAND ISSUE: SONIA GANDHI



Dimapur : Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi has said that the central government is committed to finding a solution to the six-decade-old Naga problem and taking the peace process forward.

Smt. Sonia Gandhi, who addressed in a election rally at Dimapur district, the main commercial hub of Nagaland, on February 7, 2013 accused the ruling Naga People's Front-led Democratic Alliance of Nagaland government of corruption and betrayal of the people of this mountainous state.

Smt. Gandhi, dressed in a colourful Naga 'mekhela' (skirt) and shawl, said that the Congress has always been committed to preserving the Naga identity and developing the Naga way of life, which has been enshrined in the Article 371 of the constitution that protects the Naga tradition, land and resources.

"It was the Congress-led UPA government that took the bold decision to invite NSCN-IM leaders for talks which was going on for a year now to ensure that peace was achieved," Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi was formally launching the party campaign for the assembly elections in Nagaland.

"It was not the BJP-led NDA government but the Congress-led government who took a bold decision to invite the NSCN (I-M) leaders for talks to sort out their issues and to bring an era of peace and development in Nagaland," the Congress chief said.

Smt. Gandhi said the experience of people of the state in the last 10 years under the ruling Naga People's Front-led Democratic Alliance is bad as it neglected and wasted opportunities.

She said "if Congress is voted to power in the

state, it would work towards finding a solution to the vexed political problem of the Nagas as early as possible".

"The Congress-led UPA government at the centre under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has granted huge public funds for agriculture, education, infrastructure, health service, water supply and electricity, which have been siphoned off by the NPF government," Sonia Gandhi said.

"The misuse Rs.72 crore for development of the Sovima Cricket Stadium and Rs.233 crore provided for rural electrification were just a few examples of the corruption of the NPF-led DAN government, and the cause of your misery," Smt. Gandhi said. She said this was a historic opportunity for the Naga people as the Congress was committed to take the peace process forward and do the utmost to ensure that peace returned to Nagaland in a manner which was honourable and acceptable to all the sections of the people.

She urged the people of Nagaland to make a wise choice and vote for the Congress in the Feb 23 polls.

END LEFT FRONT RULE IN TRIPURA: RAHUL

Agartala :AICC Vice President Shri Rahul Gandhi, into his first election campaign after being appointed Vice-President, on 11th February, 2013, called upon voters in Tripura to end the Left Front rule in the State and vote for an alliance of the Congress, the Nationalist Party of Tripura and the National Conference of Tripura in the Assembly elections to be held on 14th February, 2013.

Addressing four election rallies, he said the Left Front government was an "all-round failure."

"The Union government has been sanctioning schemes and funds to execute development activities, but the State is behind in the national development index," he told a huge gathering at Sonamura, 65 km south of here.

Dharmanagar in north Tripura and at Khayerpur, near Agartala, Shri Rahul Gandhi alleged that the long rule of the Left Front had failed to provide employment to the youth, eradicate poverty and implement welfare schemes.

He said the Congress would implement the Sixth Pay Commission recommendations for State government employees and give benefits to security personnel of the State on a par with those of the Central forces.

"We will implement whatever is said in our election manifesto," he told a rousing crowd at Khayerpur.

He denied rumours that the Congress and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) had a tacit understanding. The CPI(M) had "confiscated" the rights of the common people and even for simple reasons, they were made to visit the party office.

"My mother Soniaji could not come for the campaign as she is sick, but she has asked me to take part actively in the election campaign," he said.

He said the Congress, with the support of the people, could rout the communists in Kerala and caused their defeat in Bengal. "It is now time for us to repeat that in this State. The Communists are nowhere, except in China and Tripura," he said.



TIME TO TOPPLE LEFT FRONT GOVT. IN TRIPURA: RAHUL GANDHI

Agartala, Feb 12: Congress Vice-President, Shri Rahul Gandhi on 12th February, 2013 delivered speech at an election rally here ahead of the state polls. Shri Gandhi began campaigning for the party candidates in the prestigious Dhanpur constituency in Sonamura where Chief Minister Manik Sarkar is contesting.

Shri Rahul Gandhi, who was addressing an election rally said the Congress is committed to carry out its poll promises if it returns to power. He attended four rallies covering west, south, north and central parts of the state and although he was supposed to return to New Delhi in the evening, Shri Gandhi said he would stay back to address two more rallies. The visit of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to the state was also cancelled.

Shri Rahul Gandhi said he would address both the rallies that mother and party president Sonia Gandhi was supposed to address in eastern Tripura and Agartala on Sunday. He said the Congress president could not come owing to health reasons.

Shri Gandhi stressed Congress's commitment before the polls besides initiatives for unemployed youths and state employees who constitute a significant part of the voters. He said the Congress, if voted to power, would provide at least one government job to every family in the state besides implementing the central pay commission for the government employees besides delegating more power to the Autonomous District Council.

Saying the Congress was committed to uproot communist rule from Tripura after West Bengal and Kerala, Shri Gandhi accused the Left Front of failing to address problems like poverty and unemployment. He also emphasised on the success of the UPA's government flagship programmes for development.



CENTRE SEIZED OF IMMIGRATION, ILLEGAL MINING IN MEGHALAYA: SONIA GANDHI

Jowai (Meghalaya) : Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi said the Centre and the Meghalaya government are seized of the problems of immigration and illegal mining which are core issues of the people in the state.

"The governments both at the Centre and the state are engaged in talks with Bangladesh to see how to stem illegal immigration and I am hopeful that we will reach a solution to the satisfaction of all sides," she told an election meeting at the Kiang Nangbah College ground here.

Smt. Sonia Gandhi said, "I am also aware that illegal mining is a threat to the environment...I must say some measures have already been taken and we will continue to do so in our efforts."

Noting that Meghalaya was one of the fastest growing states, she said it excelled not only in development, but also in administration. "In many ways Meghalaya has grown far more rapidly than most other states in the North East and perhaps in the country," she said.

The Congress president spoke on improvement of sports activities and infrastructure in the state.

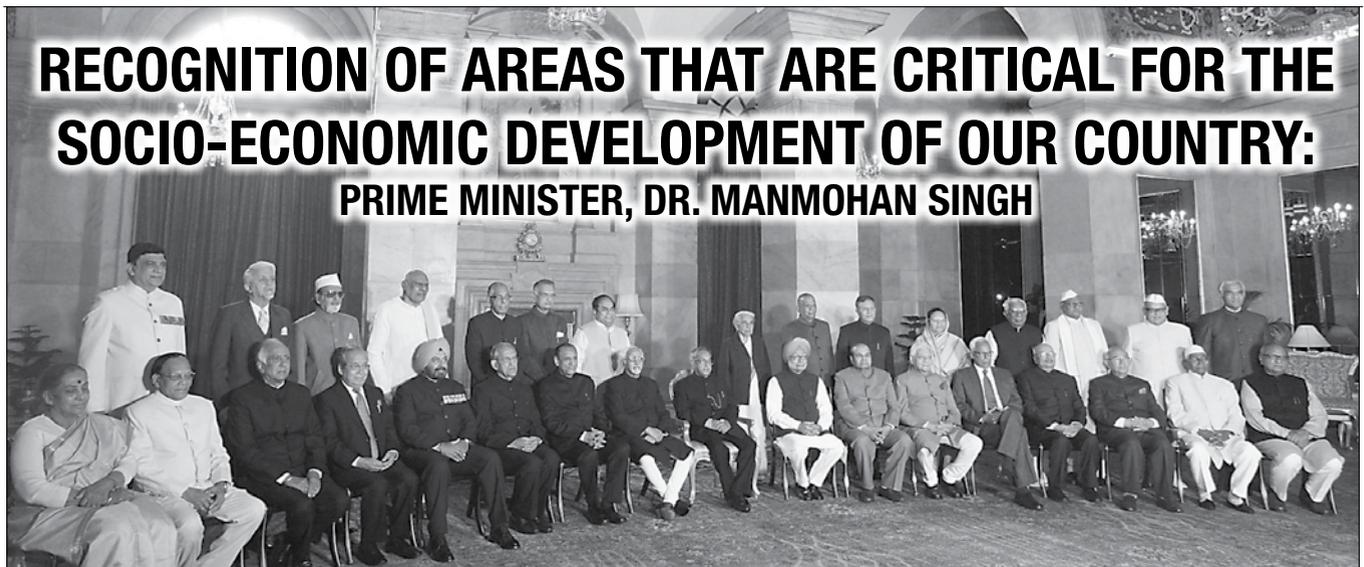
She also said, "We also have not forgotten our farmers. They have received financial support and we will continue to implement our agricultural development schemes especially for the marginal farmers of the state."

Stating that the February 23 election was of great significance, Smt. Sonia Gandhi said, it allowed the people to judge "how we, as a party, helped the people realise many of their expectations".

"We are always mindful of the expectations and aspirations of the people and we do not intend to rest on our laurels. Having been in power has not rendered us complacent," she said.

At another election meeting at Tura, Smt. Sonia Gandhi spoke on the development undertaken by the Congress-led government in the state.

Urging the people of Garo Hills to repose faith in the Congress, she said, "We have ensured an era of peace, prosperity and stability. This is a development of which everyone can be proud, this is yours in which everyone has a share." ❖



Following is the text of the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh's address at the Conference of Governors at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on 12th February, 2013:

“Over the last two days, we have all benefitted from the presentations and discussions that have taken place in this conference. Occasions like this help us not only in developing a deeper understanding of issues of vital national importance, but also in prioritizing and planning for the tasks ahead. The agenda before us covers some of the areas that are critical for the socio-economic development of our country. I would like to thank Respected Rashtrapati ji for organizing this conference.

I would also like to place on record my deep appreciation of the contribution that the participating Governors have made in the last two days. You are all very distinguished men and women, and your knowledge, wisdom and experience constitute a very valuable asset that our country should make full use of.

I have listened very carefully to all the participating Governors. Your deep insights in many areas are truly impressive. As I go ahead, I will attempt to respond to some of the views that have been expressed.

As you are all aware, our economy has slowed down considerably in the last two years. Growth in this fiscal year will be much below the average growth of about 8.0% that we have achieved in the last decade. The factors that have caused this slowdown lie both outside and within our country. The Finance Minister has dealt with the causal factor's in some detail. I can therefore be very brief in my remarks on this subject. It is imperative that we do everything possible to reverse this trend and the Government has made concerted and serious efforts in recent months to revive investment and growth.

At the Central Government level, efforts are being made to streamline the process of clearance of investment proposals, paying particular attention to clearances from the environment and forest angles as well as towards removal of infrastructural bottlenecks. However, the climate for investment is also affected by the activities of State Governments. Factors like the state of law and order, and how easy or difficult it is to acquire land and obtain electricity connections also have an important influence on the climate for investment.

Policy measures announced in the current year have generated optimism which is reflected in an upturn in the Business Expectations Index for the October-December quarter, the Purchasing Managers' Index in October- December and buoyancy in capital markets. Internal accruals

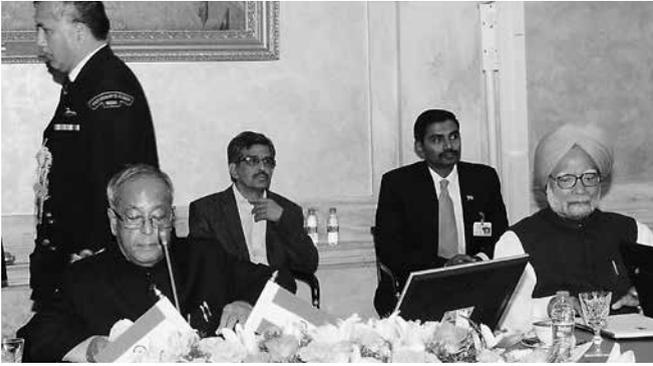
of the corporate sector, necessary for a pick-up in investment, have also started improving. There has also been a moderation in core inflation. These factors point towards recovery in GDP growth in the second half of the current year.

A high level of fiscal deficit has been a specific cause of worry for us in the recent time. Our Government has broadly accepted the recommendations of the Kelkar Committee which was appointed to recommend a road map for fiscal consolidation. We intend to contain the fiscal deficit for the current year at 5.3% of GDP and reduce it to 4.8% in the next year. The fiscal deficit is targeted to be reduced by 0.6 percentage points each year thereafter.

We have also taken steps to bridge the infrastructure deficit in areas such as Railways, roads, airports, ports irrigation, and water-supply, which have come under additional stress because of our rapid economic growth in the last decade. These include the setting up of the Cabinet Committee on Investments to expedite decisions on approvals and clearances for implementation of major projects.

The year 2012 saw clear signs of improvement in the Internal Security situation, including in Jammu & Kashmir, the North East and Left Wing Extremism affected areas. However, there is a lot which still needs to be done. The Home Minister has briefed us of our plan of action to meet challenges such as terrorism and Left Wing Extremism, which have both external and internal dimensions.

Before I proceed further on security issues let me say that I have paid particular attention to the remarks of the Governors of Jammu & Kashmir and North Eastern States on security issues. Shri Vohra, Governor of Jammu & Kashmir has made some suggestions for more coherent action on the part of security agencies which I think are well worth exploring. Similarly, there have been suggestions from Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, General J.J. Singh about border roads, porter tracks and suspension bridges. His suggestion to pay adequate attention to the improvement of living conditions in border villages is also well taken. He as well as other Governors have suggested strengthening of the Border Roads Organisation and improving infrastructure in our border areas. The suggestion of Governor of Assam and some other Governors of North Eastern States to accelerate the pace of fencing along the Indo-Bangladesh Border also has merit. I am sure my esteemed colleagues Raksha Mantri Shri Antony and Home Minister Shri Shinde will have all such suggestions on security issues examined to see what action is possible on them.



The Government has taken several steps for the improvement of mechanisms and instrumentalities to counter terrorism. These include strengthening of the Multi Agency Centre (MAC) and the Subsidiary Multi Agency Centre (SMAC), creation of four new hubs of the National Security Guard (NSG), construction of coastal police stations and provision of high technology boats, setting up of the National Investigation Agency, and creation of NATGRID. The passage of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (Amendment) Bill in Parliament has given more teeth to the extant anti-terror regime and is at par with international standards.

In a secular polity that India is, the need for maintaining communal harmony can hardly be overemphasized. Both the Centre and States have to pursue a well coordinated strategy to achieve this objective.

On the external front, we remain committed to working for good relations and peaceful existence with our neighbors. However, we are also firm in our resolve to deal effectively with any threat to our country. Incidents like the one that took place on the LoC last month are against the norms of civilized international behavior and are simply unacceptable to us. We have also to recognize that our neighbourhood is characterized by growing instability and uncertainty.

To meet the entire spectrum of security challenges, the capabilities of both the Armed Forces and the Police forces are being constantly strengthened through provision of cutting edge technology and modern platforms. We are also undertaking infrastructure development programs in the border areas to enhance mobility as well as connectivity.

As I have said on a number of occasions earlier, our strategy for dealing with the menace of Left Wing Extremism is two pronged. Even as we have intensified operations against the extremists, we have also endeavored to bridge the development and governance deficit in the Left Wing Extremist affected area, many of which have predominantly tribal populations. The steps we have taken include deploying additional Central forces, raising specialized forces, strengthening police stations and imparting training to State police personnel in counter insurgency, jungle warfare and anti-terrorism operations. The need for greater inter-State coordination in operations against Left Wing Extremists was emphasized by Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Shri E.S.L. Narasimhan. One cannot agree more with him.

The Integrated Action Plan for 82 select and backward districts, most of which are affected by Left Wing Extremism, is beginning to show encouraging results. Road connectivity in these districts is also being improved. We have also taken steps to streamline the process for vesting of forest rights under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act to the entitled people.

Due to all these efforts, the geographical spread of the menace of Left Wing Extremism has shown a shrinking trend. Further, the number of incidents of Left Wing Extremist violence in 2012 showed perceptible decline compared with the previous year. However, much more remains

to be done and we will make all efforts to accomplish what we still have to do. As has been pointed out by Governor of Assam, the expansion of Maoist activities to upper and lower Assam is worrisome.

Rashtrapatiiji began his inaugural remarks in this conference by mentioning that the horrific incident of gang-rape in Delhi had shaken the collective conscience of the country. The Government has been prompt in acting on the recommendations of the Justice Verma Committee by promulgating an Ordinance to strengthen the law to deal with crimes of sexual assault of an extreme nature against women. We have also taken a number of administrative measures to enhance the safety and security of our women, particularly in public places. However, as Rashtrapatiiji said, real and effective change in the status of women in our country can come only if there is a change in our societal values. This is a goal that all of us need to collectively work for.

Here, I would also like to point out that there is a need to sensitize the police forces towards showing special care in dealing with crimes against the weaker sections of our society, including women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Minorities and Children. There is also a need to induct more women in our police forces. I urge the Governors to guide their State Governments in this direction.

Under the Constitution, Governors have been given special responsibility for administration of the Scheduled Areas. They have a direct and critical role in ensuring speedy development of these areas. These Constitutional arrangements have played a very significant role in addressing the long standing demands and aspirations of our tribal brothers and sisters, especially those belonging to the North East. In the Sixth Schedule areas, the process of regular elections, coupled with greater devolution of funds and functions, has strengthened the Tribal Councils. In the Fifth Schedule areas, the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) has ensured a greater say for the population in both local governance and control over community resources. However, we still have a long way to go in terms of strengthening democratic processes and ensuring devolution of funds, functions and functionaries to the institutions of local self governance in the Scheduled areas. I would urge the Governors to pay particular attention to the effective implementation of the provisions of PESA and the Forest Rights Act. Shri Ram Naresh Yadav, Governor, Madhya Pradesh had urged that the office of Governors be suitably equipped to discharge the constitutional mandate in Fifth Schedule areas. He had also raised the matter of formation of Tribes Advisory Councils. These issues need to be looked into.

My ministerial colleague, Shri Sharad Pawar has outlined the measures being taken to ensure our food security and increase crop productivity, particularly in the Eastern Region of our country. It is heartening to note that the programme for 'Bringing Green Revolution to Eastern India' (BGREI) is yielding encouraging outcomes. Adoption of modern agricultural practices through this programme has resulted in record production of rice during the last year. Some States have even doubled their rice production.

It is very satisfying for our Government that the average rate of growth in agriculture and allied sectors during the 11th Plan improved to 3.7% compared with 2.4% in the 10th Plan. However, there are many challenges in this area which need to be addressed on an urgent basis. These include environmental degradation in many parts of our country that witnessed the Green Revolution, bottlenecks in farmers' access to affordable and timely credit facilities, weaknesses in Agricultural R&D, inadequate food processing facilities, and barriers to the free flow of agricultural products. The States in general need to strengthen extension services. Smt. Margaret Alva, Governor of Rajasthan has suggested that students of Agricultural Universities should be involved in extension efforts. I would request the

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Agriculture Minister to examine how this can be done.

One of the items on the agenda for this Conference is the issue of Water Management and Sanitation. There are several concerns that need to be addressed in this area. These include a widening gap between availability and demand of water, depleting ground water levels, polluted water bodies, and inadequate sanitation facilities. These concerns were part of the deliberations during the meeting of the National Water Resources Council held in December 2012. I am happy to inform you that based on a broad consensus, the National Water Policy, 2012 has been adopted by the Council. The New Water Policy contains several significant recommendations like access to potable drinking water and sanitation for all, uniform norms for urban and rural people, independent statutory Water Regulatory Authorities for water pricing and water use efficiency benchmarks. I would request Governors to encourage their State Governments to bring their respective State Water Policies in alignment with the National Water Policy.

Over the past several years, our Government has been implementing the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) and the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM) to assist States in enabling the availability of safe drinking water in rural and urban areas of our country. Reports indicate that approximately 74% of our rural habitations have been provided with access to adequate safe drinking water. I am happy to note that the Bharat Nirman target of providing adequate and safe drinking water to identified and hitherto uncovered habitations has been achieved. However, we still need to address the issue of contamination of drinking water sources which affects many rural habitations. We also need to ensure that Gram Panchayats and local communities are fully involved in the planning, implementation and Operation & Maintenance of rural water supply systems.

We are now giving much more attention to the area of sanitation than before. In order to accelerate the progress of sanitation in rural areas, a paradigm shift has been made in the Total Sanitation Campaign which is now called the 'Nirmal Bharat Abhiyaan' in the 12th Plan. Our goal is to achieve 100% access to sanitation for all rural households by 2022. While on the subject of Sanitation, I would also like to inform Governors that last year we introduced a new Bill in Parliament for the elimination of manual scavenging and the rehabilitation of manual scavengers. The new Bill seeks to put an end to the dehumanizing practice of manual scavenging. I am hopeful that Parliament will soon enact the proposed legislation.

The need for access to good quality education for our citizens cannot be over emphasized. Our potential demographic dividend can very easily turn into a liability if we are not able to equip our youth with the right types of education and skills.

We have invested in and expanded access to Higher Education on an unprecedented scale. During the 11th Plan period, 16 new Central Universities were established. In addition 7 new Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), 8 new Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), 10 new National Institutes of Technology (NITs), 5 Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (ISERs) and 2 new Schools of Planning and Architecture (SPAs) were set up. Several measures were taken to enhance the quality of education and research in institutions of higher learning, and address the concerns for equity. Our initiatives have shown positive results. For example, the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for higher education has grown to 18.1%, from 12.3% in 2006-07.

During the 12th Plan, we will continue our focus on expansion, equity and excellence with greater emphasis on the quality of Higher Education, while consolidating the gains of the 11th Plan. Our goal is to raise the GER in Higher Education to 25.2% by 2017 and 30% by 2020. We also propose to

launch a Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) in the 12th Plan to provide strategic funding to State institutions in an outcome based manner. A National Mission on Teachers and teaching is also being launched. The National Mission in Education through ICT and the National Knowledge Network will provide the backbone and content for greater collaboration among students and teachers. A national initiative for greater inclusion of socially disadvantaged sections of SCs, STs, Minorities, Backward Classes, Girls and Persons with Disabilities is also planned along with a National Initiative in Indian Languages.

The State Governments have a critical role to play in the formulation and implementation of educational policies. I would urge Governors, as Chancellors of State Universities, to take an active interest in toning up the quality and administration of higher education in their States, and guiding the State Universities to lay much greater emphasis on research and innovation. Some Governors have complained about lack of clarity of the role and functions of the Chancellors. I would request HRD Minister to examine if guidelines could be formulated to clarify these matters.

Our Government has been alive to the need to curb corruption in public life and improve the processes of governance. This is a pre-requisite for achieving our efforts towards the development and progress of our nation. We remain committed to the enactment of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas legislation. We hope Parliament will pass this Bill shortly. The Public Interest Disclosure and Protection of Persons Making the Disclosure Bill, The Prevention of Bribery of Foreign Officials and Officials of Public International Organizations Bill, Citizens Right to Grievance Redressal Bill are all under consideration of the Parliament. Shri E.S.L. Narasimhan spoke about the need for providing effective protection to well-meaning civil servants, particularly those who have retired. The Government is considering amendments to the Prevention of Corruption Act not only to enable faster punishment of the guilty public servants but to also provide more effective protection to those who are honest.

The Direct Benefits Transfer Scheme is an important step that the Government has taken to improve targeting, reduce corruption, eliminate waste and enhance efficiency in the public delivery system. We plan to incrementally roll out the scheme from identified districts to the whole country to deliver benefits of identified schemes to the beneficiaries. The Aadhar Numbers being issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) constitute an integral element of the Direct Benefits Transfer strategy. This Scheme is also expected to bring about unprecedented financial inclusion of our rural masses.

Smt Margaret Alva, Governor of Rajasthan and Shri Nikhil Kumar, Governor of Nagaland have advised caution in going ahead with the Direct Benefits Transfer Scheme. Their concern is about inadequate coverage under Aadhar and unsatisfactory coordination with the State Governments respectively. I am sure that the Finance Minister, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission and Shri Nandan Nilekani have taken note of these concerns and will take action to address them.

Shri E.S.L. Narasimhan, Governor of Andhra Pradesh has emphasized the need for more efficient use of scarce resources by concentrating them on fewer programmes, and better targeting of beneficiaries. I am happy to inform all of you that the Government is actively considering reduction in the number of Centrally Sponsored Schemes so as to make them more focused and useful.

These are some of the thoughts that I wished to share with you today. Let me conclude by once again thanking Rashtrapati ji. I also wish the Governors all success in your efforts towards building a modern, prosperous and liberal India. Thank you. *Jai Hind.* ❖

IT IS THE TRUTH THAT EDUCATION ALONE IS THAT STRONG MEDIUM BY WHICH WE CAN RID OURSELVES OF THE MORASS OF POVERTY : SONIA GANDHI

Congress President's Address at the 60th convocation of Aligarh Muslim University on 16th February, 2013

I am delighted that today is the 60th Convocation of this famous university. I feel happiness in seeing all you students and scholars who are standing on the threshold of a new life. Due to the inclement weather I have not been able to come amidst you and for this I have regret. I congratulate you for your great success from the depth of my heart. I also congratulate the parents who are here to share this moment of glory with their children and are having a feeling of pride. I too share their happiness with them.

On this occasion today, how can we not remember Sir Syed's life and achievements. His life is an unequalled example of how a person can for the sake of his country and society, make extreme contribution. It is the truth that education alone is that strong medium by which we can rid ourselves of the morass of poverty, Rid ourselves of backwardness and become a part of a bright future. He was a visionary, a social reformer, educationist, an institution builder and a reformer. He was among the first who understood the importance of education amongst the Muslims and laid the foundation of their modern education.

With his foresight Sir Syed dreamt of a world, where knowledge would liberate us from our age

old prejudices, and superstition, our wrongly held beliefs and fears and our orthodoxy, a fact that was amply demonstrated by his establishment of the scientific society, first at Ghazipur, and then at Aligarh. For a better reach in the society he published a journal by the name of "Tahzeebul Akhlaq".

Aligarh Muslim University has made a place for itself as a strong pillar of secular and nationalist educations and remained firm an Modern Education for a Century by continuing on the path and keeping alive of the great teachings and principles of the founder.

The key factor of our Indian democracy is its unity in diversity. Aligarh Muslim University's represents the commitment to this culture in its true spirit. The commitment to pluralism is not some form of facile political correctness but emanates from the life experiences of its founder. It also demonstrates vividly that pluralism is not an abstraction but a commitment and these principles are built on the strong foundation of this University the example of this is fully visible in its education, tradition and in its daily curriculum.

I am familiar with the fact that the "Minority

BAD WEATHER PLAYS SPOILER TO SONIAJI'S VISIT TO ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY

New Delhi: Congress president Sonia Gandhi, who was to address the 60th convocation of Aligarh Muslim University on 16th February, 2013, cancelled her visit due to bad weather.

Smt. Gandhi's plane could not take off due to inclement weather.

Smt. Sonia Gandhi would have been the second woman to make a convocation address at the university. Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum of Bhopal was the first woman to deliver the convocation address on January 26, 1925.

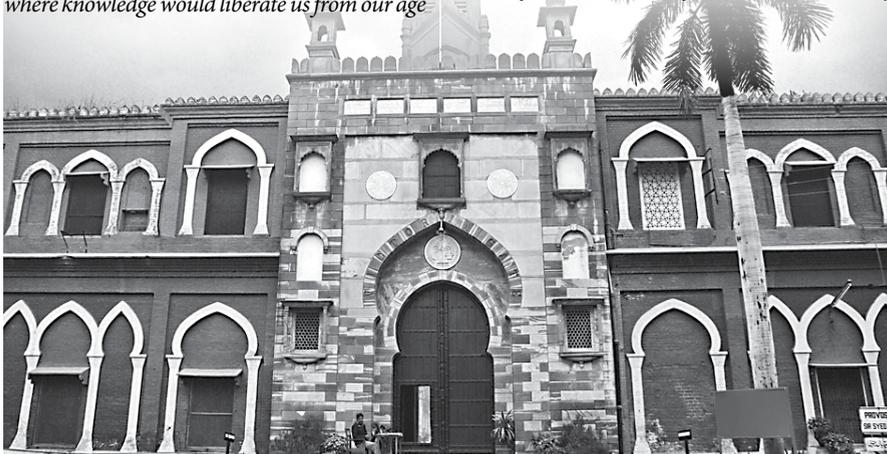
Making the best of the circumstances and using modern technology Smt. Sonia Gandhi delivered her address through video conferencing. ❖

Status" to the Aligarh Muslim University is subjudice before the Supreme Court. I want to assure you that I will do all within my power to maintain the historical character, and individuality. Hon'ble Vice Chancellor has spoken to me about the need to improve the infrastructure. A few day earlier, I had also received a memorandum from your student union. I will certainly take up these issues with the government and do my utmost to meet your expectations.

My family's connection with Aligarh Muslim University has been deep Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru was so attached that despite all his preoccupations he found time to come here many times. This university conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctorate of Law. He was also conferred upon the honorary life membership of Students Union.

I am proud of the encouragement and honour provided by you to our family. You have named many institutions after the names of our family members.

The pluralistic culture of Hindustan is one of the greatest encounters of the civilization. No facet of life whether – social, cultural, political, arts has remained untouched by this. Architecture, turning the pages of the grand





history, music, shayari or the world of painting their examples are available everywhere. The core issue is that it has become a part of our soul. Islam has become so much a part of the Indian being it has become an inseparable part. Muslims have developed a unique identity of their own and have made solid and lasting contribution to the growth and development of the country.

As underlined by Pandit Nehru in his path breaking book, *Discovery of India*. This community has given us leaders of the stature of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Maulana Abul Kalam, and a host of others. They have provided impetus to the coming generation.

It gladdens me to know that so many young women are receiving their degrees today. No community can really progress or prosper if half of its population lags behind, Aligarh University's Abdullah Girl's college has produced remarkable women – Dr. Rasheed Jahan and Ismat Chughtai among many others – who through sheer grit and perseverance confronted social prejudice and antagonism to earn their place in life and the respect of their peers. They are inspirational figures, they should be your ideals. The path to independence and success has never been easy, and change is never given to anyone on a platter. You have to struggle, to work hard, to persevere, and never to despair. You will confront situations, you will meet people who will tell you that things can't change. Do not believe them. The country needs women professionals in every sphere of life. You owe it to your parents, your teachers, and to this great institution that has given you the opportunity to pursue your dreams. You can and will succeed.

All of you, young women and men, have had the good fortune and privilege of spending some years in the portals of AMU deriving the intellectual and moral sustenance that prepares you for your future. Many of you will also go on to great endeavors and high achievement, as indeed you should. But it is my hope that as you make your way through life that you will give thought to those who have been less privileged than you, that whenever you can you will extend them a helping hand. The world is an unequal place but its harshness can be mitigated greatly if we all remember that we are members of a larger society in which all of us must live and share. It is up to us to and it is our responsibility not just to do well for ourselves but to ensure that the country at large and our people as a whole make progress.

Today's youth are the future leaders of the nation. We want you to develop a questioning outlook, to look beyond the obvious, to question what you see and to engage with the real issues. Only then can you provide leadership, not only in areas of knowledge but in order spheres as well. You must believe in yourself and in your ability, always tempering it with the knowledge that however imperfect the world may be, there is always a larger good, a loftier goal and a greater community than the individual. As Iqbal has said; I quote (sky is not the limit) सितारों से आगे, जहां और भी है। (sitaron se aage, jahan aur bhi hain) unquote.

If you bear this in mind, you will be in harmony with Sir Syed's vision and wisdom which led him to establish the institution from which you are graduating. And if you do, then this university, its faculty, scholars and students will remain in the forefront of

India's continuing resurgence. The ideals of this great institution are to touch the skies. They echo in your University Tarana 'जो अब यहां से उठेगा, वो सारे जहाँ पर बरसेगा।' मेरी दुआएं हमेशा आप के साथ हैं! ('jo ab yaha se uthega, vo sare jahan par barshega' meri duain hamesha aap ke sath hain!) Jai Hind! ❖

DEADLY BOMBINGS HIT HYDERABAD CITY

New Delhi: Two bombs planted on bicycles killed at least 13 people and wounded over 70 in a busy shopping district in Hyderabad at the height of Thursday's evening rush hour, the largest terrorist bombing in the country since September 2011.



Hyderabad, has suffered other such attacks in recent years, usually linked to sectarian friction.

The blast sites - in the Dilsukh Nagar neighbourhood, packed with shops, restaurants, theaters and a huge produce market - were mobbed by protesters, reporters, the curious, and politicians.

In a message, Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi has expressed her sorrow and anguish on the blasts in Hyderabad.

Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh said. "This is a dastardly attack, the guilty will not go unpunished."

Prime Minister has appealed to the public to remain calm and maintain peace. He has also directed the central agencies to extend all possible help to the Andhra Pradesh state authorities in relief operations.

The Prime Minister has also sanctioned ex-gratia from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund to the tune of Rs. 2 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased persons and Rs. 50,000/- each to the persons seriously injured in bomb blasts. ❖

INDIRA GANDHI PRIZE FOR PEACE, DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT -2011



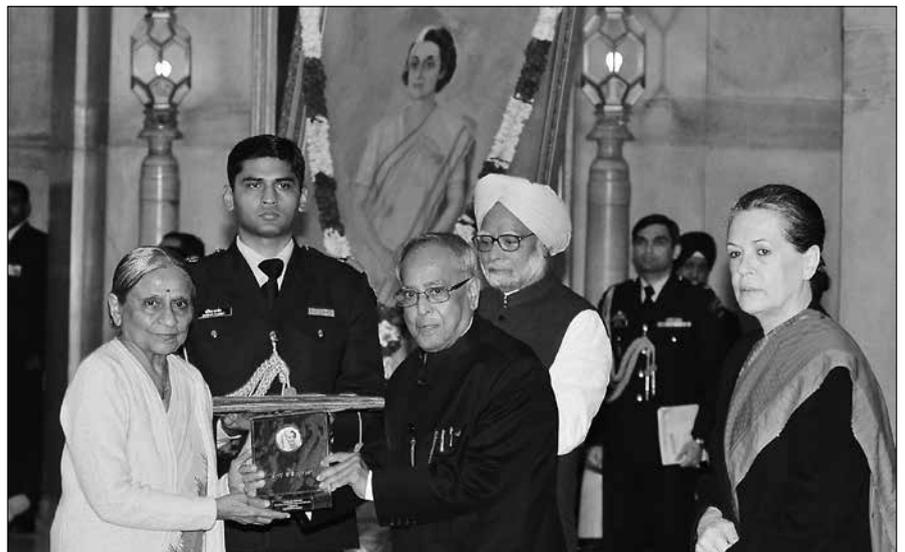
New Delhi : Gender disparity in the country can be tackled only through proactive intervention in areas such as economic empowerment of women, building of adequate social and physical infrastructure and improving women's role in governance, said President Pranab Mukherjee on Monday.

Presenting the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2011 to Ela Ramesh Bhatt of Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) at Rashtrapati Bhavan here, Mr. Mukherjee said empowerment of women was the key to not only meeting the objective of gender equality but also to eliciting full participation in nation-building.

Congratulating Ms. Ela Bhatt, the President said her life and work was reflective of the philosophy and ideals espoused by the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The prize bestowed upon Ms. Bhatt "is a tribute to her unflinching zeal towards the betterment of women in society and progress of humanity".

Expressing hope that Ms. Bhatt's example would spur many more initiatives in the country and elsewhere, the President said there was a need to strengthen the systems and processes that facilitated women to take control and claim ownership of their lives.

"Rural backwardness can be addressed only through concerted efforts to create equality in access and unearth the potentialities hidden in people. Ms. Bhatt's work has underscored this approach to socio-economic upliftment," he said. "Women comprise 48.5 per cent of our total population. Though the overall sex ratio has increased by 7 points during the



decade 2001 to 2011, the ratio of 940 females per 1,000 male population in 2011 is [a] disappointing figure and reflects the distance that remains in achieving true equality."

The President said that as poor women were often incapacitated to act individually, social mobilisation for their economic redemption was a critical necessity. "Participatory institution building through self-help groups has been found to be one of the most effective tools for the empowerment of women in developing countries. As on 31st March 2012, there were around 63 lakh all-women self-help groups in India that had combined bank savings of more than Rs. 5,100 crore. The number of such self-help groups is increasing, with a growth rate of 9.2, 14.8 and 3.3 per cent during 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12 respectively," he pointed out.

Speaking on the occasion Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi said "Indira Gandhi prized courage above all other qualities: physical courage of course, but moral courage even more, the courage of conviction, the courage to swim against the tide, and to do what we believe is right. Ela Bhatt personifies these qualities. She has focused her mind not just on a vision, but on how to actually make things happen, so that wasted human potential can be realized".

Adding further Soniaji said "In recent weeks, issues of gender justice and gender equality have loomed large in our minds. From the very start Ela Bhatt has rightly seen women as the true nurturers of society and the bedrock of social progress. Invest in women. Rely on women's leadership. Put women at the centre of economic planning and development. Give



women voice. These have been Elaben's watchwords. She has been ahead of her time. We know from hard experience that women's involvement in development programmes makes all the difference between success and failure. Gender equity is also the key to a more prosperous economy".

Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said the government's own efforts at empowerment would also benefit from studying the working of SEWA. "This is particularly true, for example, for the National Rural Livelihood Mission, which seeks to organise the members of nearly 7 crore households, including women, across 6 lakh villages into self-help groups," he said.

Praising Ms. Bhatt's efforts, Dr. Singh said: "The story of Ela Ben and SEWA is not just a story of organising poor women for economic empowerment. It is also the story of women's rights and protection of women. It is the story of holistic empowerment of the poor, for ensuring them equality and rights guaranteed under the Constitution, for ensuring timely delivery of entitlements and for countering all forms of discrimination. Above all, it is a story of leadership."

Dr. Singh expressed hope that Parliament would "urgently" pass amendments to strengthen criminal laws dealing with sexual offences against women. "It is indeed a matter of shame that, notwithstanding the gains we have made, incidents of violence and sexual offences against women are on the increase."

He said the government has adopted a mix of legislative, institutional and procedural reforms to deal with the rise in crime against women.

"The recommendations of the Justice J.S. Verma Committee have resulted in the promulgation of an ordinance, amending and strengthening the criminal law to deal with sexual offences against women. It is our hope that Parliament will urgently pass the necessary legislation to enact a comprehensive law in this regard. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Bill, 2012 has been passed by the Lok Sabha and is awaiting passage in the Rajya Sabha. Schemes aimed at giving restorative justice to victims of rape through financial assistance and support services, a national helpline for women and a 'One Stop Crisis Centre' in 100 public hospitals under the aegis of the National Mission for Empowerment of Women are also under consideration of the government," he said. ❖

PRE-BUDGET MEETING

PARTY URGES UNION FINANCE MINISTER TO KEEP FARMERS, MIDDLE CLASS IN MIND

NEW DELHI: Congress persons counselled caution over the coming budget, by telling Union Finance Minister Shri P Chidambaram that he should focus on providing relief to the poor and the middle class through LPG subsidy, loans and raise the income tax exemption limit.

Congress treasurer, Shri Motilal Vora underlined that government should look at a loan amnesty as was done earlier. Another office-bearer said farmers were not a happy lot and they could be helped by slashing the input cost of agriculture with cheap seeds and fertilizers.

The government should write off interest payment on loans to ease farmers' burden while ensuring that bad loans also get repaid. They pushed for a pro-farmer tilt in the budget.

For the middle class, income tax exemption limit was sought to be raised from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 3 lakh.

The views formed part of the pre-budget ritual that brings the finance minister to Congress headquarters on February 15, 2013 for consultations with party office-bearers.

With a populist budget some ground could be regained. Capt. Pravin Davar suggested that in view of bad economic situation, "the rich should contribute to the poor". He said the rich should take a 1% cut in salaries and 0.5% in pensions so that government has enough money to fund the food security act and other pro-poor schemes.

Shri Chidambaram warned that recession had cast its shadow across the globe but was optimistic despite the low growth projections. "We will do better than the growth figures doing the rounds," he reportedly said, while adding it would be the last full-fledged budget of UPA-2.

There was enough concern on display over the sensitive issue of cooking gas. Shri Abdul Mannan said the government should provide subsidized LPG cylinders to religious, charitable and educational institutions that organize community kitchens. Some other leaders demanded a raise in the ceiling of subsidized cylinders that stands at nine.

Led by Shri Ajit Jogi, many Congressmen sought focus on dalits, tribals and minorities - demanding higher allocations and new schemes for social groups that are key Congress vote banks.

Shri Tarachand Bhagora demanded a scheme to unearth black money, alluding to the voluntary income disclosure scheme in the 1990s. ❖

THE BUDGET SESSION, 2013

The Budget Session, 2013 of Parliament (13th Session of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha and the 228th Session of the Rajya Sabha) will commence on Thursday, the 21st of February, 2013 and subject to exigencies of Government Business, the Session will conclude on Friday, the 10th of May, 2013. During this period, the two Houses will adjourn for recess on Friday, the 22nd of March 2013, to reassemble on Monday, the 22nd of April, 2013 to enable the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees to examine the Demands for Grants relating to various Ministries/Departments and make their reports to the Houses. The Session will provide 34 sittings – 21 sittings during first part of the Session before recess and 13 sittings during second part of the Session.

The Session will mainly be devoted to the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, Financial Business relating to Railway and General Budgets for 2013-14 and State Budget in respect of Jharkhand. However, sufficient time will also be provided for the transaction of essential Legislative and Non-Legislative business during the Session.

The President will address both Houses of Parliament assembled together at 11.00 a.m. on 21st of February, 2013. The Budget (Railways) for 2013-2014 will be presented to the Lok Sabha on Tuesday, the 26th of February, 2013 immediately after Question Hour. The Economic Survey of India will be laid in the Parliament on Wednesday, the 27th of February, 2013. The Budget (General) for 2013 – 2014 will be presented at 11.00 a.m. on Thursday, the 28th of February, 2013.

To finalise the Government Business for the Budget Session, 2013, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Urban Development Shri Kamal Nath took a meeting with Secretaries/senior officers of various Ministries/Departments on 15th of February, 2013. The Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs co-chaired the meeting. During the meeting, 71 items [55 Bills, 13 Financial items and 03 Non-legislative items] were identified for Budget Session, 2013. The Bills identified for the Session includes three Ordinances, namely: -

- (i) The Securities and Exchange of Board of India (Amendment) Ordinance, 2013 (No. 1 of 2013);
- (ii) The Readjustment of Representation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Ordinance, 2013 (No. 2 of 2013); and
- (iii) The Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance, 2013 (No. 3 of 2013)

The list of Government Business identified for being taken up in the Budget Session, 2013 is as follows:

I – Bills for Introduction

S.No. Title of Bill

- 1 The Agricultural Bio-Security Bill, 2013
- 2 The Bio Technology Regulatory Authority of India Bill, 2013
- 3 The National Institute of Design Bill, 2013
- 4 The North Eastern Council (Amendment) Bill, 2013
- 5 The Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2013
- 6 The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2013 – India-Bangladesh Land Boundary

- 7 The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Amendment) Bill, 2013
- 8 The Regional Rural Banks (Amendment) Bill, 2013
- 9 The Central Reserve Police Force Bill, 2013
- 10 The Indian Institute of Information Technology Bill, 2013
- 11 The National Institute of Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2013 – up gradation of BESU to the IEST
- 12 The Employment Exchanges (Compulsory Notification of Vacancies) Amendment Bill, 2013
- 13 The Building and Construction Workers Related Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2013
- 14 The National Waterway (Lakhipur Bhanga Stretch of River Barak) Bill, 2013
- 15 The Merchant Shipping (Amendment) Bill, 2013
- 16 The Piracy Bill, 2013

II – Bills for Introduction, Consideration and Passing

1. The Finance Bill, 2013.
2. The Securities and Exchange of Board of India (Amendment) Bill, 2013
3. The Readjustment of Representation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Bill, 2013
4. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2013

III – Bills for Consideration and Passing

1. The Constitution (One Hundred and Seventeenth Amendment) Bill, 2012 – Reservation in services to SCs/STs, as passed by Rajya Sabha
2. The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2012 as passed by Rajya Sabha
3. The Constitution (One Hundred and Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2008 as passed by Rajya Sabha
4. The Companies Bill, 2012 as passed by Lok Sabha
5. The Educational Tribunals Bill, 2010 as passed by Lok Sabha
6. The Whistle Blowers Protection Bill, 2011 as passed by Lok Sabha
7. The National Highway Authority of India (Amendment) Bill, 2012 as passed by Lok Sabha
8. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Bill, 2012.as passed by Lok Sabha
9. The Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill, 2012 as passed by Lok Sabha
10. The Forward Contracts (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2010
11. The Warehousing Corporation Amendment Bill, 2011
12. The Pension Fund Regulator and Development Authority Bill, 2011
13. The Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Technical Educational Institutions, Medical Educational Institutions and Universities Bill, 2010
14. The Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill, 2011
15. The National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill, 2010.
16. The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2012
17. The Constitution (One Hundred and Tenth Amendment) Bill, 2009 - reservation of women in Panchayats
18. The Constitution (One Hundred and Fourteenth Amendment) Bill, 2010 – increase of retirement age of Judges
19. The National Food Security Bill, 2011
20. The Right of Citizens for Time Bound Delivery of Goods and Services

RAHUL GANDHI HOLDS HIS FIRST MEET WITH AICC OFFICE-BEARERS AFTER BECOMING CONGRESS VICE-PRESIDENT



New Delhi: More than a week after being elevated as the party's Vice-President, Shri Rahul Gandhi held a meeting with the All India Congress Committee (AICC) office-bearers on 31st January, 2013.

It is his first formal interaction with the AICC officials after becoming the party's Vice President on January 19 at AICC Meeting at Jaipur. He had formally taken over his position in the AICC on January 23.

More than 50 party office bearers, including General Secretaries, Secretaries, in-charges of states and Chiefs of all Frontal wings of the party- Youth Congress, NSUI, Mahila Congress and Seva Dal- attended the meeting.

In his brief interaction with the media after joining his new office in the AICC, Gandhi had made a strong pitch for "positive politics" promising to make Congress an "instrument of change". ❖



and Redressal of their Grievances Bill, 2011.

21. The Prevention of Bribery of Foreign Public Officials and Officials of Public International Organizations Bill, 2011
22. The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Bill, 2011
23. The Pesticide Management Bill, 2008
24. The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Bill, 2011, as passed by Lok Sabha and as reported by Select Committee.
25. The Insurance Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2008
26. The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2011
27. The Border Security Force (Amendment) Bill, 2011
28. The Architects (Amendment) Bill, 2010.
29. The Tamil Nadu Legislative Council (Repeal) Bill, 2012.
30. The Communal Violence (Amendment, Control and Rehabilitation of Victims) Bill, 2005
31. The Prevention of Torture Bill, 2010 as passed by Lok Sabha and as reported by Select Committee
32. The Marriage Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2010
33. The Wakf (Amendment) Bill, 2010 as passed by Lok Sabha and as reported by Select Committee.
34. The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Bill, 2012
35. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2012

IV – Financial Business

1. General Discussion on Budget (General) for the year 2013-14.
2. Discussion and Voting on Demands for Grants on Account (General)

for the year 2013-14.

3. Discussion and Voting on third Supplementary Demands for Grants (General) for the year 2012-2013.
4. Discussion and Voting on Demands for Excess Grants (General) for the year 2010-2011.
5. Discussion and Voting on Demands for Grants (General) for the year 2013-14.
6. General discussion on the Budget (Railways) for 2013-2014.
7. Discussion and Voting on Demands for Grants on Account (Railways) for 2013-2014.
8. Discussion and Voting on Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) for 2012-2013.
9. Discussion and Voting on Excess Grants (Railways) for 2010-11.
- 10.11.12.13. Discussion and Voting on Demands for Grants (Railways) for 2013-14. General Discussion on Budget (Jharkhand), 2013-14. Discussion and Voting on Demands for Grants (Jharkhand) for 2013-14. Discussion and Voting on Supplementary Demands for Grants (Jharkhand) for 2012-13.

V - Non - Legislative Business

1. Discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address
2. Discussion on the Statutory Resolution seeking approval of the proclamation issued by the President on 18.1.2013 in respect of the State of Jharkhand.
3. Consideration of Resolution seeking approval of the recommendation contained in the Third Report of the Railway Convention Committee (2009) on "Rate of dividend for 2012-13 and other ancillary matters". ❖

A NEW PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE INITIATIVE

RASHTRIYA BAL SWAASTHYA KARYAKRAM

The newly launched Rashtriya Bal Swaasthya Karyakram of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare assures a package of health services for children up to 18 years of age. The initiative, which is part of the National Rural Health Mission, was launched on February 6, in Palghar, a tribal dominated block of Thane district in Maharashtra, by UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi, in the presence of Union Health & Family Welfare Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad and Maharashtra Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan. The programme will be extended to cover all districts of the country in a phased manner.

Early Detection; Early Intervention

Rashtriya Bal Swaasthya Karyakram, also known as Child Health Screening and Early Intervention Services aims at early detection and management of '4Ds' prevalent in children. These are Defects at birth, Diseases in children, Deficiency conditions and Developmental delays including Disabilities. The health screening of children is a known intervention under School Health Programme. It is now being expanded to cover all children from birth to 18 years of age. The services aim to cover all children of 0-6 years of age group in rural areas and urban slums, in addition to children enrolled in classes 1st to 12th in Government and Government aided schools. A set of 30 common ailments / health conditions have been identified for screening and early intervention.

Defects at Birth

Globally, about 7.9 million children are born annually with a serious birth defect of genetic or partially genetic origin which account for 6 percent of the total births. In India about 1.7 million babies are born with birth defects annually. For those who do not receive specific and timely intervention and yet survive, these disorders can cause irreversible life-long mental, physical, auditory or visual disability.

Deficiencies

Anaemia prevalence has been reported as high as 70% amongst under-five children largely due to iron deficiency. The situation has remained virtually unchanged over the past decade. Almost half of children under age five years (48%) are chronically malnourished. During pre-school years, children continue to suffer from adverse effects of anaemia, malnutrition and developmental disabilities, which ultimately also impact their performance in school.

Diseases

The prevalence of dental caries varies between 50-60 percent among Indian school children as reported in different surveys. Rheumatic heart disease is reported at 1.5 per thousand among school children in the age group of 5-9 years. The median prevalence of reactive air way disease including asthma among children is reported to be 4.75 percent.

Developmental Delays

Around 200 million children do not reach their developmental potential in the first five years because of poverty, poor health, nutrition and lack of early stimulation. The prevalence of early childhood stunting and the number of people living in absolute poverty could be used as proxy indicators of poor development in under five children. Both of these indicators are closely associated with poor cognitive and educational performance in children and failure to reach optimum developmental potential.

Defects at Birth

- Neural tube defect
- Down's Syndrome
- Cleft Lip & Palate / Cleft palate alone#
- Talipes (club foot)
- Developmental dysplasia of the hip
- Congenital cataract
- Congenital deafness
- Congenital heart diseases

- Retinopathy of Prematurity

Deficiencies

- Anemia especially Severe anemia
- Vitamin A deficiency (Bitot spot)
- Vitamin D Deficiency, (Rickets)
- Severe Acute Malnutrition
- Goitre

Child hood Diseases

- Skin conditions (Scabies, fungal infection and Eczema)
- Otitis Media
- Rheumatic heart disease
- Reactive airway disease
- Dental caries
- Convulsive disorders

Developmental delays and Disabilities

- Vision Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Neuro-motor Impairment
- Motor delay
- Cognitive delay
- Language delay
- Behaviour disorder (Autism)
- Learning disorder
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
- Congenital Hypothyroidism, Sickle cell anaemia, Beta thalassemia (Optional)

Implementation mechanism

Facility Based Newborn Screening

This includes screening of birth defects in institutional deliveries at public health facilities, especially at the designated delivery points by nurses, medical officers/ gynecologists.

Community Based Newborn Screening

Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) during home visits for newborn care will use the opportunity to screen the babies born at home and the institutions till 6 weeks of age. ASHAs will be trained with simple tools for detecting gross birth defects. For performing this task, ASHA would be provided with a tool kit consisting of a pictorial reference book with self-explanatory pictures for identification of birth defects.

Screening at Anganwadi Centres and Schools

The children in the age groups 6 weeks to 6 years of age will be examined in the Anganwadi centres by the dedicated mobile health teams. The children in the age groups 6 to 18 years will be screened in Government and Government aided schools. The screening of children in the anganwadi centres would be conducted at least twice a year and at least once a year for school children to begin with.

Block to be the Hub of Activity

The Block will be the hub of activity for the

programme. At least three dedicated mobile health teams in each Block will be engaged to conduct screening of children. Villages within the jurisdiction of the Block would be distributed amongst the 3 teams. The number of teams may vary depending on the number of anganwadi centres, schools, difficult to reach areas and enrolments of children in the schools. The mobile health team will consist of four members – two Doctors (AYUSH) one male and one female, one nurse and one pharmacist. The Block Programme Manager will chalk out a detailed screening plan for all the three teams in consultation with schools, anganwadi centres and CHC Medical Officer. A tour diary will be maintained by block health teams.

Early Intervention Centre at District Level

An Early Intervention Centre will be established at the District Hospital. The purpose of Early Intervention Centre is to provide referral support to children detected with health conditions during health screening. A team consisting of paediatrician, medical officer, staff nurses, paramedics will be engaged to provide services. This centre would have the basic facilities to conduct tests for hearing, vision, neurological tests and behavioural assessment.

Training and Management

Training of the personnel involved in Child Health Screening and Early Intervention Services would be through a cascading training approach. Standardized training modules are to be developed in partnership with technical support agencies and collaborative centres. KEM Hospital, Mumbai and Pune and Ali Yavar Jung National Institute for Hearing Handicapped, have been identified as public sector collaborative centres in Maharashtra for imparting training.

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has drawn up 'Operational Guidelines' for effective planning and systematic implementation of the programme. These guidelines explain the process of identification and management of select conditions of huge public health significance in India.

Impact of the Programme

By providing early intervention service, the new initiative is expected to bring economic benefits in the long run by directly reducing expenditure in terms of providing critical health care. "Extending preventive and promotive health care would impact the National Human Capital, reduce disease burden and also public health expenditure." says Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare Ghulam Nabi Azad. When fully implemented, the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram is expected to benefit approximately 270 million (27 crore) children across the country. ❖

THE NEW INITIATIVE - JANANI – SHISHU SURAKSHA KARYAKRAM

About 67,000 women in India die every year due to pregnancy related complications. Similarly, every year approximately 131 lakhs infants die within one year of birth. Out of the 91akh newborns who die within four weeks of birth (2/3rd of the infant deaths), about 7 lakh i.e. 75 per cent die within the first week (a majority of these in the first two days after birth). The first 28 days of infancy period are therefore very important and critical to save children. Both maternal and infant deaths could be reduced by ensuring timely access to quality services, both essential & emergency, in public health facilities without any burden of out of pocket expenses.

Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK) launched from Mewat district in Haryana on June 1, unmistakably signals a huge leap forward in the quest to make "Health for All" a reality.

It invokes a new approach to healthcare, placing, for the first time, utmost emphasis on entitlements and elimination of out-of-pocket expenses for both pregnant women and sick neonates. The initiative entitles all pregnant women delivering in public health institutions to absolutely free and no-expense delivery, including caesarean section.

It stipulates out that all expenses related to delivery in a public institution would be borne entirely by the government and no user charges would be levied. Under this initiative, a pregnant woman would be entitled to free transport from home to the government health facility, between facilities, in case she is referred on account of complications, and also drop-back home after 48 hours of delivery.

Entitlements would include free drugs and consumables, free diagnostics, free blood wherever required, and free diet for the

duration of a woman's stay in the facility, expected to be three days in case of a normal delivery and seven in case of a caesarean section.

Similar entitlements have been put in place for all sick newborns accessing public health institutions for healthcare till 30 days after birth. They would also be entitled to free treatment besides free transport, both ways and between facilities in case of a referral.

The initiative is estimated to benefit more than 1 crore pregnant women & newborns that access public health institutions every year in both urban & rural areas and also increase access to health care for the over 70 lakh women delivering at home. This initiative supplements the cash assistance given to a pregnant woman under JSY and is aimed at mitigating the burden of out of pocket expenses incurred by pregnant women and sick newborns.

Entitlements for Pregnant Women:

- Free and zero expense Delivery and Caesarean Section
- Free Drugs and Consumables
- Free Essential Diagnostics (Blood, Urine tests and Ultra-sonography etc)
- Free Diet during stay in the health Institutions (up to 3 days for normal delivery & 7 days for caesarean section)
- Free Provision of Blood
- Free Transport from Home to Health Institutions
- Free Transport between facilities in case of referral
- Drop Back from Institutions to home after 48hrs stay
- Exemption from all kinds of User Charges

- Exemption from all kinds of User Charges

Entitlements for Sick Newborn till 30 days after birth:

- Free and zero expense treatment
- Free Drugs and Consumables
- Free Diagnostics
- Free Provision of Blood
- Free Transport from Home to Health Institutions
- Free Transport between facilities in case of referral
- Drop Back from Institutions to home
- Exemption from all kinds of User Charges

Drugs and consumables

Drugs & consumables including supplements such as Iron Folic Acid are required to be given free of cost to the pregnant women during ANC, INC, PNC up to 6 weeks which includes management of normal delivery, C-section and any complications during the pregnancy and childbirth, The same is also needed when a neonate is sick and needs urgent and priority treatment.

Diagnostics

During pregnancy, childbirth and in post natal period, investigations are essential for timely diagnosis of complications and likely problems which the women can face during the process of child birth. Both essential and desirable investigations are required to be conducted free of cost for the pregnant women during ANC, INC, PNC up to 6 weeks which includes investigations required prior to both normal delivery and C-section. The same are also needed when a neonate is sick and needs urgent and priority treatment for conditions like infection, pneumonia, etc.

Diet

The first 48 hrs after delivery are vital for detecting any complications and its immediate management. Care of the mother and baby (including immunization) are essential immediately after delivery and at least up to 48 hrs. During this period, mother is guided for initiating breast feeding and advised for extra calories, fluids and adequate rest which are needed for the well being of the baby and herself. Non availability of diet at the health facilities demotivates the delivered mothers from staying at the health facilities and most of the mothers prefer returning home immediately after delivery. This hampers adequate care of the pregnant women and neonates, which is important for quality PNC services.

Blood

Blood transfusion may be required to tackle emergencies and complication of deliveries such as management of severe anaemia, PPH and C sections, etc. the provision of blood will be free of any cost and without any user charges, however, the relatives and attendants accompanying the pregnant women should be encouraged to donate blood for replacement.

Exemption from user charges

User charges are levied by many state Governments for OPD, admissions, diagnostic tests, blood etc. These add up to the out of pocket expenses. On occasion, there are situations where these pregnant women are misguided and become vulnerable for exploitation by private diagnostic centers for unnecessary investigations.

Referral transport

It is well proven that a significant number of maternal and neonatal deaths could be saved by providing timely referral transport facility to the pregnant women for normal delivery, C-section. This also needs to be provided to a neonate up to 30 days, when the baby is sick and needs urgent and priority treatment particularly for conditions like infection, pneumonia, etc. a drop back facility alleviates the pressure to leave the health facility earlier than desirable & obviates out of pocket expenses.

The free referral transport entitlements for pregnant women and sick neonates up to 30 days & therefore are as under:

1. Transport from home to the health facility
2. Referral to the higher facility in case of need
3. Drop back from the facility to home
4. Drop back from the facility to home

Implementation of the New Initiative

I. Actions at State level:

- Issue Government order on free entitlements.
- Nominate a State Nodal Officer.
- Institute a grievance redressal mechanism for ensuring that the commitments are fulfilled in letter and spirit.
- Ensure regular procurement and availability of drugs and consumables at the public health institutions.
- Take necessary steps for ensuring functional lab facilities and diagnostic services at the public health institutions.
- Establish and operationalise blood banks

at District levels and Blood Storage Centers at identified FRUs.

- Establish district wise assured referral linkages with GPS fitted vehicles and centralised control rooms.
- Provide required finances and necessary administrative steps /G.O.s for the above activities.
- Financially empower the district and facility in-charges for the above activities, particularly in emergency situations/stock outs.
- Regularly monitor and report on designated formats at specified periodicity.
- Review the implementation status during district CMOs meetings.

II. Actions at District level:

- Nominate a District Nodal Officer.
- Circulate the G.O. on free entitlements to all facility in-charges.
- Widely publicise free entitlements in public domain.
- Institute a grievance redressal mechanism for ensuring that the commitments are fulfilled in letter and spirit.
- Regularly review the stocks of drugs & consumables for ensuring availability at the public health institutions.
- Ensure lab facilities and diagnostic services are functional at all designated facilities, particularly at DH, SOH, FRU, CHC and 24x7 PHCs.
- Prepare time bound action plans for establishing and operationalising Blood Bank at District level and Blood Storage Centers at identified FRUs.
- Review referral linkages and their utilisation by beneficiaries.
- Provide required finances / empowerment for utilisation of funds to the Block MOs and facility in-charges for the above activities, particularly in emergency situations I stock outs.
- Regularly monitor & report on designated formats at specified periodicity.
- Review the implementation status during Block MOs/MOs meetings.

III. Dissemination of the entitlements in the public domain:

- Widely publicise these entitlements through print and electronic media.
- Display them prominently on adequate size hoardings & Boards, which is clearly visible from distance in all Government health facilities e.g. SCs, PHCs, CHCs,

SDHs and DHs/FRUs (main entrance, labour rooms, female and neonatal wards and outside outpatient areas) as per the enclosed format at Annexure -1.

- IEC budget sanctioned in the Project Implementation Plan (PIP) under RCH/ NRHM can be utilised for this. I V. Ensure drugs and consumables:
- Notify the essential drug list for RCH services to be notified at all the service delivery points - Annexure -II.
- Ensure regular procurement; uninterrupted supply and availability of drugs & consumables at all public health institutions.
- The daily availability of the drugs should be displayed at the health facility.
- Empower the head of the District I health facility to procure drugs & consumables to prevent stock outs.
- Ensure the quality and shelf life of drugs supplied.
- Ensure a proper inventory of drugs and consumables at each health facility for timely reporting on stock outs and expiry.
- In charge pharmacist of the facility to ensure availability of drugs at dispensing points i.e. labour room, OT, indoors, casualty, etc after the routine hours.
- Ensure that first expiry drugs and consumables are used first. "FIRST in & FIRST out" protocol.
- Ensure proper storage of drugs and consumables by keeping drug stores clean & tidy with adequate ventilation and cooling.

v. Strengthen diagnostics:

- Ensure lab and diagnostic services at DH, SOH, FRU, CHC, & 24x7PHCs
- Ensure availability of basic routine investigations like pregnancy test, Hb & routine urine at sub-centre level, particularly those designated as delivery points.
- Ensure rational posting of Lab technicians for integrated & comprehensive utilization in all the programme.
- Make emergency investigations available round-the-clock, at least at DH, SOH and FRU level.
- Ensure uninterrupted supply of reagents, consumables and other essentials required for lab investigations.
- Empower the head of the District / health facility to procure reagents, consumables and other essentials to prevent their

shortage / stock out.

- In case in-house lab & diagnostic services are not available; free investigations can be provided through PPP / outsourcing.

VI. Ensure provision of diet:

- Ensure provision of diet (cooked food) at all delivery points from District Hospital up to 24x7 PHC.
- If proper kitchen and adequate manpower is not available, then this service can be outsourced.
- Local seasonal foods, vegetables, fruits, milk and eggs can be given to her for a proper nutritious diet.
- MO in-charge should monitor the quality of food being served at the health facility.
- Diet is to be provided up to three days for normal delivery and up to seven days stay for caesarean section (C-Section).
- The health facility should receive the funds in advance for ensuring provision of free diet for the pregnant women and delivered mother.

VII. Ensure availability of blood in case of need:

- Prepare time bound action plans for establishing and operationalising Blood Bank at District level and Blood Storage Centers at identified FRUs.
- Maintain adequate stocks for each blood group.
- Ensure availability of reagents and consumables for blood grouping, cross matching and blood transfusion.
- Blood Banks to ensure mandatory screening of blood before storage, and organize periodic voluntary blood donation camps for maintaining adequate number of blood units.
- Provide adequate funds to blood banks for electric backup and POL, and alternate source of power backup for blood bag refrigerators for blood storage units.
- MO in-charge / lab technician of the blood bank to periodically visit blood storage units for monitoring and supervision.

VIII. Exemption from all kinds of User Charges:

- Issue Government Order for exemption from any user charges for pregnant women and sick newborns upto 30 days, at public health facilities.

IX. Referral Transport:

- Ensure universal reach of the referral transport (no area left uncovered), with 24x7 referral services.

- State is free to use any suitable model of transportation e.g. Government Ambulances, EMRI, referral transport PPP model etc.
- Establish call centre(s) with a single toll free number, at District or State level.
- May provide ambulances / vehicles with GPS, for effective tracking and management.
- Establish linkages for the inaccessible areas (hilly terrain, flooded or tribal areas etc) to the road head / pick up points.
- Widely publicise the free & assured referral transport through print and electronic media.
- Monitor and supervise services at all levels, including utilisation of the each vehicle and number of cases transported.

X. Grievance Redressal:

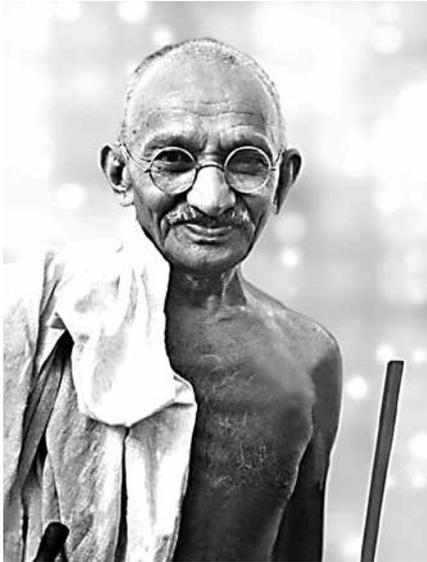
- Prominently display the names, addresses, emails, telephones, mobiles and fax numbers of grievance redressal authorities at health facility level, district level and state level} and disseminate them widely in the public domain .
- Set up help desks and suggestion / complaint boxes at government health facilities.
- Keep fixed hours (at least 1 hour) on any two working days per week, in all the healthy facilities for meeting the complainants and redressing their grievances related to free entitlements.
- Take action on the grievances within a suitable timeframe, and communicate to the complainants.
- Maintain proper records of actions taken.

XI. Funds:

- Reflect the requirement of funds in the state PIP under NRHM in addition to resources available from State budget.

XII. Monitoring and Follow Up:

- At National level, the scheme will be monitored by National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC) under guidance and support from Maternal Health Division, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, and Government of India.
- At State and District level, the State Nodal Officer and District Nodal Officers will monitor and follow up the progress in implementation of the scheme. In CMOs meeting at State level, the Mission director and during Mas meeting at district level, CMO will review the progress of the scheme. ❖



AND THEN GANDHIJI CAME

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on 2 October 1869 at Porbandar in Gujarat. He became a barrister after receiving legal education in England. In 1893, he went to South Africa to join a law firm and there he got involved in the fight against racial injustice. He took up the cause of the Indians, who were predominantly indentured labourers, and the problems of the merchants who had to pay a poll tax. The Indians did not have the right to vote and were confined to certain parts of the cities. From 1893 to 1914, he spearheaded this struggle and it was during this phase that the whole idea of satyagraha evolved. Satyagraha stands for satya and agrah i.e., struggle for truth. The emphasis was on resisting evil, not the evil-doer. The stress on non-violence by Gandhiji was not a weapon of the weak but something which could only be practised by the brave. He put many of his ideas into practice by starting a settlement or an ashram at Phoenix in South Africa where he gathered like-minded people who practiced the concept of 'bread-labour'. This meant that everyone worked in a commune like farm, sharing the work and the food. He set up a newspaper called Indian Opinion in which he expressed the grievances of the Indians and framed petitions to the government. He also set up another ashram called Tolstoy Farm which was similar to the settlement in Phoenix.

This satyagraha in South Africa was important in the evolution of Gandhiji's political approach. Here, he worked with the masses and poor people belonging to different religions. This experience helped him in organizing Indians later during the freedom struggle. He was warmly welcomed on his return to India in 1915. For one year after his return, he travelled around the country to

familiarize himself with the main problems. Soon after this, he was engaged in three formative struggles in Champaran (1917) in Bihar, Kheda and Ahmedabad (1918) in Gujarat. All three struggles were based on local issues and dealt with the economic demands of the peasants and workers. The tenants of Champaran found indigo cultivation unprofitable but were forced to take it up. Their protests were suppressed with a heavy hand by the planters, who were mostly Europeans and the government sided with the planters. When Gandhiji reached Motihari, the headquarters of the district, for investigations, he was served with an order to leave the place. But, he disobeyed and pleaded guilty. The prosecution was withdrawn and he was allowed to continue with his investigations. This led to the appointment of a commission by the government to enquire into the issue. The commission recommended abolition of indigo cultivation and gave redress to the tenants. The success in Champaran of the new method of satyagraha triggered its adoption elsewhere in the country. The weapon of satyagraha was also used to secure a waiver of land revenue in Kheda in Gujarat in years of famine or crop failure.

The Kheda Satyagraha saw the entry of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel into public life, giving up a lucrative legal practice. It also brought Gandhiji and Sardar Patel together. They educated the peasants about their right to question the government's authority to tax them. The peasants were told to defy coercion with civility. The peasants courted arrest after removing crops from land wrongfully attached. The government was forced to suspend revenue assessment in the case of poor peasants. The Kheda campaign laid the foundation of an awakening among the

peasants of Gujarat.

Gandhiji then organized the textile workers in Ahmedabad. Before he entered the scene, Anusuyaben Sarabhai, the sister of Ambalal Sarabhai, one of the leading mill owners of Ahmedabad, had been carrying on educational work in the labour areas. She sought Gandhiji's advice when a dispute arose between the weavers and the mill-owners in 1918. Gandhiji, instead of trying to force the hands of the mill-owners, persuaded them to accept the principle of arbitration. He and Sardar Patel became arbitrators on behalf of the labourers. The workers went on strike. Gandhiji advised the workers not to resume work until their demands were secured. After a few days, the workers' morale went down with the loss of wages and signs of starvation at home. Gandhiji declared he would have no food and would use no conveyance until the workers succeeded. It was literally a fast unto death. He arranged for some alternate work for the workers so that they could earn some living. The fast had its effect and soon a solution was found with Sarla devi, the wife of Ambalal Sarabhai, playing a key role in persuading the mill-owners to find a solution. This episode laid the foundation of a strong union between Congress leaders and the workmen and of a permanent organization called the Textile Labour Association.

India after the First World War

The international situation after the war gave a fillip to the growth of nationalism. The Imperial powers had promised self-determination to their colonies so as to get support from them for the war. However, these promises were conveniently forgotten when the war ended. In

reaction, nationalism took an aggressive turn when the colonial people realized that there was no prospect of self-government. The war had also helped the colonial subjects to overcome their feeling of racial inferiority vis-a-vis their rulers. The Russian revolution of 1917 inspired the people of the colonies to rise up against their masters.

In India, two major legislative changes were introduced during the immediate post-war years: the Montford Reforms and the Rowlatt Act. The former was a constitutional reform scheme and the latter intensified the repressive powers of the government. The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms scheme led to the enactment of the Government of India Act, 1919. Under this act, the provincial Legislative Councils were to be expanded and most of its members were to be elected. The provincial governments were given greater powers under the system of Dyarchy. Some subjects called reserved subjects like finance and law and order remained under the authority of the provincial Governor and others called transferred subjects like education, public health and local self-government were to be controlled by ministers responsible to legislatures. But the government retained total control over finances and it could overrule the ministers on any grounds. At the Centre, two houses of legislature were established, the lower house called the Legislative Assembly and the upper house called the Council of State. However, this legislature had no control over the Governor-General and his executive council just as the Provincial legislatures had little control over the Provincial Governor. Provincial governments were controlled totally by the Centre.

Indian nationalists remained dissatisfied with these reforms. The Congress met in a special session at Bombay in August 1918 and rejected these reforms demanding effective self-government. It repudiated the assumption in the Montagu-Chelmsford report that Indians were not fit yet for responsible government.

The second major legislation was the Rowlatt Act promulgated in March 1919. It was passed despite every Indian member of the Central Legislative Council opposing it. At the end of the war, the government decided to strengthen its capacity to repress political activity through legislation which was clearly outside the limits of the rule of law. The proposed act empowered the government to imprison any person without prior trial and conviction by a

law court on grounds of suspicion alone. There was a widespread resentment towards this act among the people who saw it as an insult since it came after the war when they were expecting progressive constitutional changes. Gandhiji called for satyagraha and formed a Satyagraha Sabha which was joined by the members of the Home Rule Leagues. A call for hartal accompanied by fasting, prayer and defiance of specific laws was given. On 6 April 1919, the start of the Satyagraha was announced. In most places, hartals were accompanied by violence and disorder.

In Punjab, two Congress leaders, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal were arrested on April 10 provoking an assault on the town hall and the post office in Amritsar. Europeans including women were attacked. This brought on martial law under which public meetings were banned. April 13 saw a massive gathering of people in Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar protesting against the martial law and the arrest of Congress leaders. Without any warning, General Dyer opened fire on the unsuspecting and unarmed people. According to government estimates, 379 people were killed. Following upon this incident, martial law was intensified in Punjab. The infamous order under which people had to crawl before Europeans was passed. Gandhiji withdrew the Rowlatt Satyagraha on 18 April 1919, dismayed by the violence.

The entire country was horrified at the violence and atrocities in Punjab. It was as if the mask of enlightenment and civilization that covered the brutality of imperialism had been shed in one day. People understood the true nature of colonial rule and the extent to which it could use force in order to maintain its foothold in India.

Khilafat and Non-Cooperation

This untold repression by the British government served to brought Hindus and Muslims close even more than before. With the Lucknow Pact, Hindus and Muslims were brought together for political work and the post-war repression united them against the British rule. Symbolizing this unity, Swami Shraddhanand, an Arya Samaj leader, was asked to preach in the Jama Masjid at Delhi, and Dr. Kitchlew was given the keys to the Golden Temple in Amritsar.

Further, after the war, Muslims in India had been concerned about the fate of the Khalifa, the religious head of Muslims in Turkey. Turkey had been dismembered in contravention of earlier promises by England and the predominantly

Turkish area of Thrace was taken away from it. Muslims felt that the religious power of the Turkish Caliphate should not be undermined in this manner. In November 1919, the All-India Khilafat Conference was held in Delhi where it was decided that a non-cooperation movement against the government would be started unless the demands of the Muslims are met. The Muslim League under nationalist leadership supported this cause, as did the Congress. Tilak and Gandhiji saw this as the best opportunity to strengthen Hindu-Muslim relations and unite them against colonial rule. Gandhiji declared that he would start a non-cooperation' movement if the Khilafat demands were ignored by the government. Dr. M.A. Ansari headed a deputation to the Viceroy in January 1920, which proved futile. This was followed by a Khilafat Conference at Bombay, as a result of which a deputation was sent to England in March 1920. The British Prime Minister Lloyd George's response to the representation made by the deputation struck at the very root of the Khilafat sentiment in India, as he turned down the demand for restoring to Turkey the lands taken away from it. Following this, 19 March 1920 was observed as a day of national mourning, marked by hartal, fasting and prayers.

In April 1920, Gandhiji took over the presidentship of the All India Home Rule League and, in a manifesto issued on the occasion, took the view that constitutional reforms should be given secondary place in any scheme of national reorganization. If national energy was devoted to activities like Swadeshi movement, Hindu-Muslim unity, acceptance of Hindustani as the lingua franca and the linguistic reorganization of the provinces, it would bring about reforms and accelerate the achievement of self-government.

The publication of the Hunter Committee Report on the Punjab incidents in May 1920 increased the unrest in the country. The Report was viewed with disappointment and disgust by the Congress. General Dyer and other officers responsible for these actions were let off with mere censure.

Dissatisfaction with the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, the government's refusal to repeal Rowlatt Act and the Khilafat issue cumulatively increased the widespread national discontent. Thus, in June 1920, an all-parties meeting was held in Allahabad and a programme for non-cooperation was drawn up which included

boycott of British courts, schools and colleges. On 1 August 1920 Gandhiji formally launched the non-cooperation movement. Khilafat Committee also organized All India Hartal the same day. The Congress met in September at Calcutta in a special session presided over by Lala Lajpat Rai and accepted Gandhiji's plan for non-cooperating with the government till the Punjab grievances were redressed, Khilafat demands fulfilled and Swaraj achieved.

The programme of non-cooperation adopted by the Congress called upon people to surrender their titles and honorary offices, resign from nominated seats in local bodies and refuse to attend government functions. It also asked them to boycott all foreign goods, withdraw their children from government schools and colleges, boycott British courts and establish private arbitration courts for settlement of private disputes. The people were also asked to refuse to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia, withdraw their candidature for election to the reformed Councils and refuse to vote for any candidate who may, despite the Congress advice, offer himself or herself for election. People were encouraged to spin and weave khadi. Later, the programme included mass civil disobedience and refusal to pay taxes.

This peaceful defiance was endorsed by the Congress session at Nagpur held in December 1920. This session was also important for the organizational changes introduced in the Congress. Provincial Congress Committees were now restructured according to linguistic areas which expanded the reach of the Congress into villages and small towns. Membership fee was reduced to a nominal 4 annas so that the poor masses could become members of the party.

These changes led to a shift in the nature of the Congress-it now became a mass party in which people from different backgrounds were united in their opposition to colonial rule and for the pursuit of Swaraj. Hindus and Muslims were acting as one in this struggle against British rule. However, not everyone was happy with this mass phase of the Congress. Many leaders, like Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Annie Besant, Bipin Chandra Pal and G.S. Khaparde, still believed in constitutional methods of agitation against colonial rule and it was during this time that they left the Congress.

During 1921 and 1922, India witnessed a great mass upsurge led and directed by the

Congress. An unprecedented number of people participated in this mass movement-students left schools and colleges in thousands and joined nationalist educational institutions like Kashi Vidyapith, Bihar Vidyapith and Jamia Millia Islamia. Eminent lawyers like Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Chittaranjan Das, Motilal Nehru, Asaf Ali, and C. -Rajagopalachari gave up their legal practice and joined Gandhiji in this movement. Funds for the movement were collected through voluntary donations given by people. Foreign cloth was burnt in huge bonfires and simple acts like spinning or weaving khadi became symbols of protest against the British rule. In July 1921, the All India Khilafat Committee gave a call to Muslims asking them not to serve in the British-Indian army. The government soon arrested the Ali brothers in September 1921 and charged them with sedition. The Congress decided to take the movement to the next level by launching civil disobedience of laws in provinces which included non-payment of taxes.

The government responded with repression. Congress and Khilafat grass root workers had been working successfully to unite Hindus and Muslims and now their activities were declared illegal. The press was gagged. By the end of 1921, most leaders were in prison as were some 3,000 non-cooperators. The Prince of Wales' visit to India in 1921 was met with large-scale demonstrations in India and in Bombay, 53 people were killed and 400 wounded when the police tried to repress demonstrators. The December 1921 session of the Congress at Ahmedabad stated that the Congress was determined to continue this movement. All followers were asked to offer themselves for arrest, refrain from violence and promote Hindu-Muslim unity.

On 1 February 1922, Gandhiji declared that if the government did not release political prisoners and lift press controls within seven days, he would call for mass civil disobedience with non-payment of taxes. However, this did not come about because on 5 February, in Chauri Chaura village of United Provinces, a procession of 3,000 peasants was fired upon by the police. In retaliation, the peasants set the police station on fire which led to the death of 22 policemen. Gandhiji realized that the country was not ready to practice non-violence yet and that such incidents could spread to other areas as well. Thus, in a Congress resolution passed at Bardoli on 12 February, he suspended the non-cooperation movement and

asked all Congressmen to dedicate themselves to constructive work like popularization of khadi and spinning, national schools, removal of untouchability and promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity.

The Bardoli resolution shocked the nation. Some leaders believed that this retreat was also a part of Gandhian struggle while others, especially the younger members of Congress like Subhas Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru, were at that time resentful about this suspension. The government arrested Gandhiji on 10 March 1922 and sentenced him to six years' imprisonment for spreading disaffection against the government. Gandhiji made a historic statement during his trial. He pleaded guilty to the charges and said that the court should give him the highest punishment for "what in law is a deliberate crime, and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen." Soon after this, the Khilafat question became irrelevant. In 1922, Turkey underwent a national revolution led by Mustafa Kamal Pasha which overthrew the rule of the Sultan. Kamal Pasha stepped up the modernization of Turkey and as part of that, he abolished the institution of the Khalifa and separated the state from religion. He nationalized education and law on European lines and also modernized agriculture and industry. All this made the Khilafat agitation eventually redundant.

Impact of Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movements

The Khilafat agitation brought urban Muslims into the nationalist movement and contributed to a sense of national unity.

Even though apparently the Khilafat and Non-cooperation movements ended without achieving their immediate objectives, they furthered the long-term objective of building the national consciousness in India. Various sections of society had been mobilized for mass action peasants, students, women, urban and rural poor, and artisans. This aspect of politicization of masses on an unprecedented scale made the Indian national movement revolutionary. Through pamphlets, speeches, dramas, prabhat pheries, songs and newspapers, the adverse effect of colonial rule on India was popularized among people. The superiority and invincibility associated with the British was successfully challenged by the Indian masses, who now gained confidence and lost their fear of the colonial masters in this process. ❖

Extracts from the book 'The Congress and the Making of Indian Nation'

A LIFE SKETCH OF PANDIT MOTILAL NEHRU



Pandit Motilal Nehru, an eminent lawyer, an eloquent speaker, a noted Parliamentarian and a prominent figure of the Indian nationalism in the Gandhian era, was born on 6 May 1861 at Agra. His forefathers hailed from Kashmir, but had settled in Delhi since the beginning of the eighteenth century. Motilal Nehru spent his childhood at Khetri in Rajasthan. Later the family moved to Allahabad. He passed the Matriculation examination from Kanpur and joined the Muir Central College at Allahabad.

After passing the Vakil's examination in 1883, Motilal Nehru began practice as a lawyer at Kanpur, but three years later shifted to Allahabad where his brother Nandlal had a lucrative practice at the High Court. Unfortunately, Nandlal died in April 1887, at the age of forty-two, leaving behind him five sons and two daughters. Young Motilal found himself, at the age of twenty-five, as the head of a large family and its sole bread-earner. The death of his brother not only increased Motilal Nehru's burden, but also gave a keener edge to his ambition. His legal practice was growing. A rise in his standard of living was paralleled by progressive westernization.

Motilal Nehru's early incursions into politics were reluctant, brief and sporadic. He attended the 1888 Allahabad Session of the Congress. In 1907, he presided over a Provincial Conference of the moderate politicians at Allahabad. His Presidential speech was a vigorous onslaught on the extremist ideology. In 1909, he was elected a member of the U.P. Council. Later, he also became a member of the Allahabad Municipal Board and of the All India Congress Committee. He was elected President of the U. P. Congress. He became President of the Allahabad branch of the Home Rule League. In August 1918, he parted company with his

moderate friends on the constitutional issue, and attended the Bombay Congress, which demanded radical changes in the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms. On 5 February 1919, Pandit Motilal Nehru launched a new daily newspaper, *The Independent*, which stood for 'Home Rule for India'. Its mission was to expose and attack corruption and ineptitude. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar in 1919 which was followed by Marshal Law, shattered his faith in the British Rule and he decided to enter into freedom struggle. He presided over the Amritsar Congress in December 1919. He was the only front rank leader to lend his support to Non-cooperation Movement at the special session of the Congress in September 1920.

On 6 December 1921, Pandit Motilal Nehru was arrested and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. When he came out of jail in the summer of 1922, he found that the civil disobedience movement had declined and felt that the time had come to revise the programme of non-cooperation. Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das founded the Swaraj Party in January 1923 and contested the elections at the end of 1923. The Swaraj Party was the largest party in the Central Legislative Assembly and in some of the Provincial Legislatures. For the next six years, Motilal Nehru served as the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly. With his commanding personality, incisive intellect, great knowledge of law, brilliant advocacy, ready wit and combative spirit, he seemed to be cut out for a parliamentary role.

Towards the end of 1927, with the appointment of the Simon Commission, there came a political revival. The exclusion of Indians from the Commission united Indian parties in opposition to the Government. An All Parties' Conference was convened by Dr.

M.A. Ansari, the Congress President, and a Committee, headed by Motilal Nehru, was appointed to determine the basic principles of a Constitution for free India. The report of the Committee—the Nehru Report as it came to be called—attempted a solution to the communal problem.

The need for an independent Secretariat for the Legislature existed right from the time when the Legislative Assembly first met in 1921. And, on 22 September 1928, Pandit Motilal Nehru moved on the Floor of the House a resolution seeking constitution of a separate Assembly Department. The resolution, moved by Pandit Motilal Nehru was adopted unanimously by the Assembly. It, in fact, became "the source of the creation and authority of the Assembly Department".

Motilal Nehru also laid a great emphasis on the communal harmony and unity. Motilal presided over the Unity Conference which, on 26 September 1924, resolved that the utmost freedom of conscience and religion was essential, and condemned any desecration of places of worship, to whatever faith they might belong, and any persecution or punishment of any person for adopting or reverting to any faith. Motilal was a radical reformer not out of any false sentiment but because of a very cool reasoning. Motilal Nehru had a deep down faith in Indian culture and its freedom of spirit, its capacity for healing the ills of men and nations. Motilal Nehru's life was marked by an essential fidelity to civilization, which meant respect for human dignity and craving for human fellowship.

The attributes and achievements of Pandit Motilal Nehru, his qualities of leadership and warm humanity, his patience and persistence,

his determination and energy, his courage and force have stamped his mark indelibly on the public life of the country. Spinning and weaving of Khaddar had become obligatory for political workers. Motilal Nehru too cast aside his foreign dress and put on Khaddar in Indian style. He even hawked Khaddar in the streets of Allahabad. He joined the Civil Disobedience Movement and suffered periods of imprisonment.

Pandit Motilal Nehru had developed certain health complications due to the rigours of jail life and the heavy burden of responsibility as a leader of the Congress. On 6 February 1931, the valiant fighter for India's freedom breathed his last in the presence of all his dear and near ones.

The entire nation, mourned the sad demise of this magnificent personality who fought for the speedy attainment of full Dominion Status for the nation.

After the funeral was over, Mahatma Gandhi addressed the audience. Recalling his services to the nation, Gandhiji said:

... Panditji was a hero and great fighter. He fought many battles of the country but he also gave a tough fight to Yamaraj, the God of Death. Panditji has in act been successful in this fight too. ... Only yesterday I told Pandit Motilal, 'If you gain health, then I will let you have Swaraj'.

Paying rich tribute to Pandit Motilal Nehru, Sir George Rainy, Leader of the House (Central Legislative Assembly), said:

"India is poorer by the removal of Pandit Motilal Nehru, who ... held a foremost place in the public life of the country. Of his policies and of his achievements ... so far he is concerned, the chapter is closed and record is sealed up, to await the judgment of the history ..."

Referring to the contributions made by Pandit Motilal Nehru to the legal profession, the then Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court, Sir Edward Grimwood Mears said:

...He had a profusion of gifts, knowledge came easily to him and as an Advocate he had the art of presenting his case in its most attractive form. Every fact fell into its proper place in his narration of the story and was emphasized in just the right degree. He had an exquisite public speaking voice and a charm of manner which made it a pleasure to listen to him...". ❖

LALA LAJPAT RAI: THE LION OF PUNJAB

Lala Lajpat Rai popularly known as 'Lion of Punjab', was one of the foremost leaders of the freedom struggle. Along with Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal, he constituted the nationalist trimuvitrate of Lal-Bal-Pal. He was President of the Special session of INC at Calcutta, 1920 which approved the launching of Gandhiji's non-cooperation movement.

Lajpat Rai was born on January 28, 1865 at Jagraon Tehsil of Ludhiana District of the Punjab. His family was far from affluent; his grandfather, Lala Rala Ram, was a shopkeeper, and his father, Lala Radha Krishan, was an Urdu teacher in a Government School. His devout Muslim Headmaster inculcated love of Islam among his pupils in order to encourage them to embrace the Islamic faith. Though Lajpat Rai's father did not formally declare himself a Muslim, his religious convictions leaned heavily towards Islam. He observed Muslim fasts and deprecated Hindu customs and rituals. He was an ardent follower of Syed Ahmed Khan and his close friends were also Muslims. On the other hand, Lajpat Rai's mother, Gulabi Devi, came from an orthodox Sikh family. In Lajpat Rai's early boyhood, his father read to him from Quran. He recited Namaz and sometimes fasted in Ramzan under his father's influence. In 1879, he joined the Mission High School in Ludhiana. From Ludhiana he went to Lahore for further studies in November 1880. He passed the entrance examination from Government College, Lahore, and in 1882 qualified for Mukhtarship (Junior Pleader).

Lajpat Rai's growing interest in political



affairs convinced him that Ludhiana was not proper place for fulfilling his ambitions and aspirations. He, therefore, shifted to Lahore in 1894.

From 1894 to 1903 Lajpat Rai, however, did not take much part in active political life. He confined himself to the writing of books, articles, pamphlets for preaching his ideas on social, educational and humanitarian works. From 1894 to 1903, except the Lahore sessions of 1900, Lajpat Rai did not attend any annual session of the Congress. His educational and social works and moderate Congress policies kept him aloof from the Congress sessions. Through the columns of The Punjabee (Lahore) and The Tribune (Lahore), he advocated bold and constructive policy for the Congress and called upon its leaders to shed off outdated ideas and undertake serious business for political work. He regarded the policy of appealing to the conscience of British rulers as of no avail.

In 1904, at the Bombay session of INC Lala Lajpat Rai and Gopal Krishna Gokhale were selected as Congress delegates to visit England for putting before the British people and political leaders the claims of India. His visit to England, in 1905, was a turning point in his political career and also in the history of the nationalist movement. On his return



Praveen Davar

to India, he was a changed man with a firm conviction that India political salvation would depend on the efforts of her own people and on their self-reliance with regard to political work. "You can at time", Lajpat Rai wrote, "successfully appeal to humanity and benevolence of individuals but to hope for justice from a nation is hoping against hope. The role of a foreign democracy is in this respect most dangerous."

At the Benaras session of INC, Dec 1905, Lajpat Rai forcefully spoke against boycott of English cloth. In 1907 he led an agrarian movement in Punjab for which he was arrested and deported to Burma along with Ajit Singh (the uncle of Bhagat Singh). The partition of Bengal in 1905 gave rise to militant nationalism which resulted in the growth of two ideologies within the Congress. The Moderates led by Gopal Krishna Gokhale and the Extremists led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Lal Lajpat Rai threw in his lot with Tilak along with Bipin Chandra Pal, a fiery leader from Bengal. The trio became famous as Lal-Bal-Pal and challenged the Moderates hold over the Congress. Tilak proposed the name of Lala Lajpat Rai for the 1907 Surat session of the Congress which was not acceptable to the Moderates. This became one of the primary reasons for the infamous Congress split at Surat – the first after its birth 22 years earlier.

Lajpat Rai went to England in 1908 for the second time, delivered lectures to Indian students and returned to India in 1909. In 1913 he visited Japan, England and the United States on a lecture tour, and returned to India in 1920. During his stay abroad he is believed to have supported the Ghadar Party's programme. He also established the Indian Home Rule League in the United States on October 15, 1916. During his long stay abroad, Lajpat Rai saw India's struggle in a wider perspective against world movements and began to realise how India could win support from other countries. It was this which inspired him to write to major works: 'Young India', 'England's Debt to India', 'The Political Future of India' and 'Unhappy India'.

He assumed his political activities on his return to India in 1920. He was elected the President of the special session of INC at Calcutta and attended Nagpur sessions of the Congress in 1920 and also presided over

the All India Student's Conference at Nagpur. In 1921 Lajpat Rai presided over the Punjab Provincial Political Conference and was arrested. After his release and the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement, Lajpat Rai joined the Swarajya Party founded by C.R.Das and Motilal Nehru. On October 30, 1928, Lajpat Rai led a procession at Lahore for the boycott of the Simon Commission and received baton blows on the head and chest from an English officer. Eighteen days after this brutal assault, he died of his injuries.

The Govt of India Act, 1919, had provided that a review of the constitutional position would be made after ten years. However, the British government, to mislead public opinion appointed a Royal commission led by Sir John Simon in 1927, two years ahead of time to into the question of constitutional reforms. The Simon Commission which arrived in India in 1928, during the Viceroy Lord Irwin did not contain any Indian members. The Indian people saw in its all-white composition an insult to the country's honour and dignity.

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru gives a vivid account of the then prevailing political situation in his Autobiography:

Meanwhile the Simon Commission had been moving about, pursued by black flags and hostile crowds shouting, "Go back." Occasionally there were minor conflicts between the police and the crowds. Lahore brought matters to a head and suddenly sent a thrill of indignation throughout the country. The anti Simon Commission demonstration there was headed by Lala Lajpat Rai, and as he stood by the road-side in front of the thousands of demonstrators he was assaulted and beaten on his chest with a baton by a young English police officer. There had been no attempt whatever on the part of the crowd, much less on the part of Lalaji, to indulge in any methods of violence. Even so, as he stood peacefully by, he and many of his companions were severely beaten by the police. Any one who takes part in street demonstrations runs the risk of a conflict with the police, and though our demonstrations were almost always perfectly peaceful. Lalaji must have known of this risk and taken it consciously. But still, the manner of assault, the needless brutality of it, came as a shock to vast

numbers of people in India. Those were the days when we were not used to lathi charges by the police; our sensitiveness had not been blunted by repeated brutality. To find that even the greatest of our leaders, the foremost and most popular man in the Punjab, could be so treated seemed little short of monstrous, and a dull anger spread all over the country, especially in north India. How helpless we were, how despicable when we could not even protect the honour of our chosen leader!

Pt. Nehru himself was grievously injured twice in police lathi charge while leading a demonstration on two consecutive days against the Simon Commission in Lucknow which was inspired by the Lala's courage and martyrdom. Describes Pt. Nehru in the Autobiography:

The assault of Lala Lajpat Rai, and his subsequent death, increased the vigour of the demonstrations against the Simon Commission in the places which it subsequently visited. It was due in Lucknow, and the local Congress Committee made extensive preparations for its 'reception'. Huge processions, meetings, and demonstrations were organised many days in advanced both as propaganda and as rehearsals for the actual show. I went to Lucknow, and was present at some of these. The success of these preliminary demonstrations, which were perfectly orderly and peaceful, evident nettled the authorities, and they began to obstruct and issue orders against the taking out of processions in certain areas. It was in this connection that I had a new experience, and my body felt the baton and lathi blows of the police.

Lala Lajpat Rai was a prolific writer and took deep interest in journalism. He founded an Urdu daily the *Bande Matram* and an English weekly, *The People*. Looking beyond Indian frontiers he recognized the right of all countries in Asia to freedom. He also raised his voice against the sufferings of Indians in S. Africa and sympathized with anti-imperialist struggles elsewhere. The Sher-i-Punjab will ever remain an inspiration for his high integrity, selfless services and fiery patriotism. ❖

(The author is Secretary, Ex-Servicemen Dept. and Editor, The Supreme Saviour)

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD: MIR-I-KARAWAN OF COMPOSITE PARADIGM OF INDEPENDENCE AND INDEPENDENT MODERN INDIA

The political behaviour of a nation is product of processes invented and practiced by leaders to strengthen the thought of nation as and when it may be challenged from within and without. India as a nation has been carved out not only by the evolutionary processes, but also by the unfailing and committed leadership which always stood rock solid for unity of nation. Maulana Abul kalam Azad was a man of vision with humanism and rationalism who largely shaped the evolving thought process and practice aiming for Independence of India as well as Independent Modern India. The vision of Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Dr. Ambedkar and Jawaharlal Nehru ensured the composite political-culture of nation, and the contributions of Babasaheb Ambedkar, Chacha Nehru and Maulana Abul kalam Azad laid the foundation of inclusive and composite Nation. Infact, Maulana Abul kalam Azad played the most important role in shaping ideas of composite culture during Independence movement and building the institutions of education in Independent India. The vision of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as institution builder becomes evident as the institutions established by him as Education Minister of india, such as Indian Council for Cultural Relations(1950), Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur (1951), Sangeet Natak Academy (1953), Sahitya Academy (1954), Lalit Kala Academy (1954), School of Planning and Architecture (1955), University Grants Commission (1956), All India Technical Council(AICTE) etc. are still the torch bearer of education in contemporary India. The award of Bharat Ratna and declaration of his birthday as National Education day by the UPA government is a tribute to the idea for which he dedicated his life.

The crux of the matter is that the vision and dedicated commitment of leaders ensured continuity in the thought which finally set the paradigm for the independence as well as Independent Modern India. The key aspect of life of Maulana Azad was that his approach was always universal, and he successfully situated inclusive and participatory space in the united trajectory of rationalism and humanism. Infact, the ideologue in Maulana could be visualised at the age of 12 year as early as 1900 A.D when he was publishing Nairang-e-Aalam, editing a weekly Al-Misbah. Over a period of time, the ideas about colonial state, exploitation by colonial state, composite culture and independence could be visualised in his weekly newspaper Al-Hilal and within two years its circulation reached to 26,000 copies per week. He effectively espoused the discourse of a composite civilisation, and in this regard, he focused to write in Urdu language to intensively mobilise, and educate masses, about political processes, who shared the Urdu language. Infact, he worked very hard to create awareness about nationalism and exposing the divisive policies of colonial state. Obviously, the colonial state reacted sharply by banning Al-Hilal in 1914, although, he continued mission by starting new journal Al-Balagh.

As the momentum against British Colonial state in India was intensifying in early twentieth century, Maulana Azad participated in the Khilafat

movement to initiate political and social reforms. Infact, he was instrumental in determining the Non-Violent nature of Khilafat movement. Further, he created new waves of socialising the youths in backdrop of Gandhian methods of political mobilisation and articulation. His understanding of education and agitation becomes very clear when he not only rejected the British goods and educational institutions, but also created a constructive alternate by becoming the founding member of education institution known as Jamia Milia Islamia.

Gradually, he became the leading personality of freedom movement, and he was made the President of Indian National Congress session of Kakinada and Delhi in 1923. He worked tirelessly in building a political culture where everybody could participate in the nation making; it had largescale impact on masses in general and Muslims in particular.

He travelled across India to spread the ideas on education, social reform and independence. Over a period of time, he became a close confidant of Mahatma Gandhi. He participated in the agitation of Dandi Salt march. Infact, he was continuously jailed from 1930 to 1934; finally, he was released with thousands of activists following Gandhi –Irwin Pact, 1934. The continuous efforts of Maulana had established him as strongest organiser in the Congress Party and he was given responsibilities of organising activities of party across India. He laboured hard as the president of Congress party from 1940 to 1946; Infact, he served as President of Congress party for seven years before Independence. He successfully rejected the divisive policies of colonial state, and motivated the youths, particularly belonging to Muslim Community, to largely participate in the freedom movement. After independence, he shaped the structures of education system in India. He became the first education minister of Independent India and his contributions in education sector are unparalleled primarily in a context where the newly independent nation had only 3 central university and 500 colleges in 1947.

“The wealth of a nation, according to Maulana Azad, was not the country’s bank but in primary schools.” He conceptualised the schools as laboratories which produce the future citizens of the state and strongly stood for common educational structure of 10+2+3. Infact, he advocated universal primary education, free and compulsory for all children upto age of 14. As an institution builder, he initiated the evolution of education by establishing University Education Commission in 1948 and Secondary Education Commission in 1952. The University Education system visited 29 universities and prepared the report on education. The report conceptualised the education



**Dr Surendra
Kumar**

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STATESWATCH

ANDHRA PRADESH

Tribute to Mahatma Gandhiji

Hyderabad: Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee observed the 64th Death Anniversary of father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi on January 30, 2013.

Hon'ble Governor of Andhra Pradesh Shri E.S.L.



Narasimhan, Shri Botcha Satyanarayana, APCC President, Shri N. Kiran Kumar Reddy, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Shri Damodar C. Rajanarasimha, Deputy Chief Minister, Ministers, MPs, MLAs, MLCs, APCC office bearers and other important leaders of the party paid rich floral tributes to Gandhiji at Bagughat, Langerhouz, Hyderabad and recalled the services of Mahatma.

Later Shri Botcha Satyanarayana, APCC President, garlanded the portrait of Mahatma

Gandhi at Gandhi Bhawan and paid rich floral tributes.

Ministers, MPs, MLAs, MLCs, APCC office bearers and other important leaders of the party also took part the in the event.

BIHAR

Rejoice on making Rahul Vice President

Aara: A meeting was held in the cognizance of Congress Seva Dal's Aara unit on 20th January. Pleasure was manifested on making Rahul Gandhi Vice President of All India Congress Committee in Jaipur 'Chintan Shivir'.

Pramod Rai, Dev Kumar Singh, Rajendra Ojha, Arun Singh, Satyanarayan Prasad Sinha, City Chairman Jalil Mohammad and others were present in the meeting.

Rahul Gandhi's Welcome

Gopalganj: Gopalganj District Congress Committee president Smt. Rajkumari Gupta has welcomed party's decision to make Shri Rahul Gandhi a Vice-President. In her statement released on 22nd January after district committee meeting Smt. Gupta said that by giving Congress party's command in the hands of young leader

PARTY DELEGATION FROM REPUBLIC OF NIGER VISITED INDIA

New Delhi: An 8 member delegation of the ruling party from Republic of Niger, West Africa - PNDS Tarayya visited New Delhi to meet the senior leaders of Indian National Congress from 22nd to 27th January, 2013. The delegation was led by the Secretary General of PNDS - Tarayya, who is also a Minister of Energy and Petroleum, Mr. Foumakoye Gado.

The other members of the delegation were Deputy Secretary General of PNDS Tarayya National Executive Bureau and Special Advisor to the President of Niger Mr. Katambe Issoufou, Minister of Agriculture Mr. Saidou Oua, Chairman of the Committee on Finance and Budget and member of the National Assembly Mr. Maizama Gaya, President of the Youth Wing of PNDS - Tarayya Mr. Maitre Djibo Ibrahim, Member of the National Assembly Ms. Mariama Mousa, General Secretary of Women Wing of PNDS Tarayya Ms. Haoua Moundjo and member of PNDS Tarayya National Executive Committee Ms. Mariama Manzo.

The party to party delegation was received by Chairman of Foreign Affairs Department Dr. Karan Singh on behalf of the Hon'ble President of Indian National Congress. The delegation also had extensive and fruitful meetings with Minister for External Affairs Sh. Salman Khurshid, Minister for Home Affairs Sh. Sushil Kumar Shinde, Minister for Coal Sh. Sriprakash Jaiswal, Minister for Human Resources Development Sh. M. Pallam Raju, Minister for Women and Child Development Smt. Krishna Tirath, Minister of State (Ind) for Power Sh. Jyotiraditya Scindia, Minister of State for Petroleum Smt. Panbaka Lakshmi, Minister of State in PMO Sh. V. Narayansami, Chief Minister, NCR Delhi Smt. Sheila Dikshit, Convener, Research and Coordination Department Sh. Suresh Pachouri and Chaima of the Computer Department Sh. Vshwajit P. Singh. AICC Secretary Sh. Pankaj Sharma coordinated the visit of the delegation.

During its weeklong visit the members of the delegation interacted with the senior leadership of Indian National Congress on organizational, ideological and other issues of mutual benefits. The leader of the

delegation Mr. Foumakoye Gaod said, "We want strong party to party relations with Indian National Congress as we share similar ideology and at the same time our government would like to have strong ties with the Government of India in the journey of development and progress of the Republic of Niger." All the senior leaders of Indian National Congress assured the delegation for all possible cooperation with PNDFS Tarayya and its government. The delegation went back with highest sense of satisfaction and appreciation. The visit has generated a strong goodwill and trust between the leaders of PNDS Tarayya and Indian National Congress.



SEMINAR ON 'ACHIEVEMENTS OF UPA GOVERNMENT' - VICHAR VIBHAG

New Delhi: On February 20, 2013, Vichar Vibhag, All India Congress Committee, organized a Seminar on the Achievements of UPA Government, which was presided over by Dr. Girija Vyas, MP, Chairperson, Vichar Vibhag, AICC. Mr. Kapil Sibal, Senior Cabinet Minister, was the main speaker and Mr. Motilal Vora, Treasurer, AICC and Mr. Oscar Fernandes, General Secretary, AICC, were the Chief Guests of the Function. Prof. K. L. Kamal, Vice Chairperson, explained the theme of the Seminar and Dr. Aditya Narain Mishra, Vice Chairperson welcomed the delegates. Chairpersons from 27 States, Deans/ Professors/ Vice Chancellors from 22 Universities and 300 Intellectuals participated and expressed their views in this daylong training camp.

The purpose of the event was to associate more intellectuals with the ideology of the Congress and to spread the achievements of the UPA Government to the common people in the forthcoming Assembly/ Parliamentary Elections. A strong and effective foundation of the intellectuals like, Professors, Advocates, Doctors, members of the Civil Society and people connected with NGOs, needs to be established. The UPA Government has executed various revolutionary policies in sectors like employment, education, health, electricity, drinking water, sanitation, urban & rural development and transparency in the past 9 years, which is clearly manifested across the India.

While inaugurating the function, Dr. Girija Vyas, in her opening address acknowledged the role of intellectuals during the freedom movement and said that development of this country is not possible without democratic values, secularism and socialist ideology. Basic structure of the Constitution can only be protected, when the intellectuals across the country come forward and ensure their positive contribution towards nation building. It is not possible to protect the democracy have inclusive growth, contribution of common man in decision making process; unless we ensure that the intellectuals contribute their best for the same. In her address, she reminded that intellectuals are like factories who work as a catalyst for the value addition in the youth, thereby they work for the welfare of the society. Hence it is important in the present context, the intellectual activism is taken forward alongwith dissemination of the ideas of Jawahar Lal Nehru and Indira Gandhi to the common masses since it is necessary for

developing a secular, socialist and democratic India.

While addressing the seminar the Minister for Telecommunication Sh. Kapil Sibal applauded the achievements of the UPA Government in depth and emphasized that the true colours of democracy can be demonstrated by the active and inclusive participation of all. The UPA government has been successful in engaging the 70 Crore people out of the 120 Crore who are still living below the poverty line and addressing the need of these people. He further emphasized the need for proper utilization of resources for inclusive democratic development. This is possible only when revolutionary changes are brought in different sectors like education, health, social welfare, industries, science & technologies and economic progress. By citing many examples he demonstrated the different dynamics of development by the UPA Government. Be it the implementation of Right to Education, planning of MGNREGA or the implementation of Rajiv Gandhi Electrification the government has presented a model of balanced growth which is an achievement of the UPA Government. Our government is building an India which can face the challenges of 21st century. On the contrary the Opposition Parties by opposing the policies of the Government are not only opposing the Government but they are opposing the future of India.

Mr. Motilal Vora, Treasure, AICC, while expressing his views, said that the Ideology of the Congress Party shall be strengthened only if the intellectuals across the country come forward and spread the history of Congress Party among the common people. He further said that it is only the Congress party which is totally committed towards the concept of nation building, whereas, other parties indulged in destructive politics.

Mr. Oscar Fernandes, General Secretary, AICC, started his address with emphasis on true implementation of the Right to Education Act. He further elaborated that this will help



us to demolish the child labour prevalent in the country. It is a revolutionary step forward, which has been enacted by the UPA Government. He mentioned that as many as 14 Laws have been passed and enacted by the HRD Ministry of the UPA Government itself and the credit goes only to Mr. Kapil Sibal. He further emphasized the need for inclusive growth to benefit 70 Crore people of the country. He cited the famous Chinese Proverb: "if one ask for food, give him the fishing rod, instead of feeding him."

In the final session of the Meeting cum Training Session, the delegates from different states expressed their views and opinion. They resolved that they would remain committed and shall spread the message of the Congress party and the achievements of the UPA Government to the masses under able guidance of Ms. Girija Vyas, Chairperson, Vichar Vibhag of AICC. ❖

like Rahul Gandhi, Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi has shown her wisdom and farsightedness. District president of Congress committee Smt. Rajkumari said that Rahul Gandhi will take the country's biggest political party to further glory. In the meeting Congress's senior leader Shri Radharaman Singh, Neyaj Ahmad, Umashankar kunwar, Prabhunath Trivedi, Ashok kumar singh, Veeresh kumar Gupta, Pramod Kumar Singh, Sudheer Kumar, Imamul Haq, Subhadra Mishra etc. were present.

Death Anniversary

Muzaffarpur: The 65th death Anniversary of father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi was observed by offering garlands to his photo at the Congress Office, Tilak Maidan.

In the programmes organized on 30th January 2013, Sevadal's district Chairman Shri Sanjay Kumar evoked workers of congress to take inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi and agitate mass movement to release people of Bihar from the grip of current corrupt government. And make people aware of central Government's scheme, so that people could be benefitted. The true tribute for him will be through public service only. Poonam Devi, Kumari Madhu, Satyanarayan saahu, Chandeshwar Prasad Saahu, Aniket Raj, Rohan Kumar, Jayant Dutt Prasad Kushwaha (advocate), Dr. Manoj kumar etc. were main in addressing the gathering/meeting.

**JAMMU & KASHMIR
Republic Day**

Jammu: On the auspicious occasion of 64th Republic Day of India, former General Secretary, Indian Youth Congress (IYC) and senior Congress leader, Mr. Vikram Malhotra unfurled the National Flag at Residency Road, Jammu, amidst chanting of national slogans and beating of drums.

On the occasion, National Anthem was sung by the present gathering in one voice to show their respects to the nation.

In his address, Mr. Malhotra, who was the Chief Guest on the occasion, threw light on the importance of the day.

"We got freedom in 1947 but it took two years to frame our Constitution and on 26th January, 1950, our own Constitution came into being," he explained.



"No doubt, India has progressed tremendously in these years but it is unfortunate that the poorest of the poor and depressed classes of the society are still struggling to come in the main stream," Mr. Malhotra said.

The Republic Day celebration programme was also organized by Shri Thomas Khokhar, president, Jammu & Kashmir Christian Congress.

On this occasion, sweets and blankets were distributed among the participants.

Prominent among those present on the occasion included Soloman Salistien, Chnstopher, Joy Khokhar, Roeky Mattoo, Satish Nahyar, Sunny Khokhar and Ajeet Hans.

**MADHYA PRADESH
Seizing land of aboriginal people**

Bhopal: Former President and former union minister Shri Kanti Lal Bhuria of Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee demanded from revenue minister that he must protect the aboriginal peoples' interests in various districts from some upper caste administrative officers. He said that evicted aboriginal families along with collector in charge have handed over a list of 33 people to him who have evicted the aboriginal families and seized government land.

Shri Bhuria said that the people who have seized the government land are said to be from Ranjhi, Gwalior and Tilwara Ghat. Collector in charge has submitted the report to the tehsildar of Panagar but he is not satisfied with it, therefore a high level enquiry has been demanded to revenue minister.

Shri Bhuria has said that in many villages many acres of land registered in the name of Madhya Pradesh government. Where dozens of aboriginal families were residing from many years and earned their living by farming. Some days back land mafia has expelled aboriginals from there and with the collusion of officers they have registered the papers of the land on their names in revenue records. Evicted aboriginal families filed their applications of protest but in vain. They have filed their applications to the collector in charge but they didn't get their land back. The suffering aboriginals said that this type of seizing of government land is continuously going on. On protesting by original possessor the land mafia threatens them to kill. The former union minister has said that instead of helping poor aboriginals the district administration itself seems helping the land mafia.

**PUNJAB
Effigy Burning**

Bhatinda: Annoyed with the filth in city, the workers of Youth Congress demonstrated against the municipal corporation. The deputy head of Bhatinda Youth Congress Aashu Thakur and all the workers of Youth Congress burnt effigy



of Municipal Corporation at Mehna Square and demanded for the removal of filth. On this occasion Aashu Thakur said that the condition of cleanliness has deteriorated in most of the wards.

The water supplied for drinking is not worth drinking, he said. He criticized the Kabaddi World Cup organized by Badal Government. He said that government has wasted crores on this Competition though this money should be better used for betterment of people.

R.K. Rahi, Harman Koat fatta, Baljeet Singh, Gurtej Singh, Jasvir Singh, Balvinder Singh, Har Sukhmandip Singh, Babla Babbu, Sandip Singh, Jaskaran Singh etc. were present at this occasion.

**UTTAR PRADESH
Welcome**

Bahedi(Bareli): Congressmen of Uttar Pradesh area gathered at block congress office and expressed their appreciation on electing Shri Rahul Gandhi as vice president of congress council. They expressed their joy by distributing sweets. Mukarram Ali Khan, Dharmendra Sharma, Ram Avatar Sharma, Tejpal Singh Rathi, Bhagwan Singh, Dr. Jalees Ahmed, Jalees Ahmed Thekedar, Sajjan Mohammed Azar Khan, Yakub Name Ali, Shahid Hasheeri, Mohammed Ahmed Abbasi, Pandit Niranjan Prasad, Riyaz Khan, Visaruddin, Mohammed Ashfaq cycle wale and other participated in the programme.

22-SWUPFP: Lucknow: The member of planning commission's Steering Committee, Maulana Fazlurrahman Mujahiddi has said that Central



government has quite increased welfare work for Minorities, especially Muslims, in the 12th Five yearly plan in comparison to the 11th five yearly plan.

Shri Mujahiddi thanked Prime minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and Chairperson of UPA's government Mrs. Sonia Gandhi for this. He said that 12th Five yearly plan is the best one from the time of independence to till date. He said that scholarship scheme for Muslim students is the only one such scheme which does not have any kind of corruption and appealed for the increasing allocated money.

On this occasion Dr. Nirmal Khatri complemented Maulana Fazlurrahman and said that this man from madarsa knocked the door of central government and planning commission for Muslim community. And that too so loudly that they not only opened the door but listened to him carefully and accepted his recommendations, through which the development of Muslim Community is certain. Dr. Khatri said that UPA government and Smt. Sonia Gandhi were already concerned with the development of Muslims and minorities, but Maulana Fazlurrahman gave a direction. Those Recommendations which have not been included in 12th Five yearly plan will be definitely considered next time, he said.

On this occasion complementing Maulana Fazlurrahman, Dr. Rita Bahuguna Joshi asked him to show the right way to the politicians, so that whole population of the country could be benefitted from it. Dr. Joshi said usually people who talk about development of community and country are given political texture, which is absolutely wrong. The allocated money for different welfare schemes by central government cannot be misused, if we remain awake. On this occasion Chief Guest Shri Prakash Jayaswal said that the Muslim Community not only has to understand the importance of education but have to propagate it too. The Central government is ready to give any kind of help for this. Hitting back at the allegations of appeasement on Congress party, he said that they must understand where and in which conditions Muslims and minorities are. He congratulated Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and Smt. Sonia Gandhi on composition of Sachar Committee for development of Muslims. He remarked that Government of India can give schemes and money but their application depends on state governments. Today, in the whole country state governments are busy in politics instead of looking at the public interest. He showed his hope that minority, especially Muslim community will take account of informations given by Maulana and will take score of each and every penny of assigned money for their welfare, under different schemes.

Consolation

Lucknow: To Console the family members of immortal soldier Hemraj of Mathura who was killed during shootout by Pakistan on Indo-Pak border defense state minister Shri Bhanwar Jeetendra Singh and leader of Congress legislative party Shri Pradeep Mathur reached his home town on 12th January at Shernagar Kherar (Mathura). They met and consoled the family members of Hemraj and expressed their condolence and paid homage to the departed soul. On this occasion the Congress leaders said that the whole nation is with them in their sorrow.

Republic Day

Lucknow: On the auspicious occasion of Independence Day state congress president Dr. Nirmal Khatri, MP, hoisted the national flag at Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee head quarter early in the morning.

Addressing the Congressmen State congress president Dr. Nirmal Khatri said that today is a great day for all citizens. On this day our constitution came into force in our country. Remembering those known and unknown soldiers of country he said that we have got our freedom by the sacrifice of our uncountable immortal soldier. In our country a constitution was made in which the arrangement was made to develop a non-discriminatory and equitable society to all the residing class, society and cast of the country.

The "PCC Delegates Conference" was held successfully under the Chairmanship of Dr. Nirmal Khatri at Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee's Headquarter. The program started with 'Guard of Honour' and Flag hoisting by Congress Sewadal's main organizer Shri Prahlaad Prasad Dwivedi. The conference's Chief Guest Shri Digvijay Singh, All India Congress Committee's General Secretary Incharge of UP Region, inaugurated the programme. Ex. MLC Shri Rajeshpati Tripathi coordinated the conference.

At the beginning State Congress President Dr. Nirmal Khatri welcomed the guests and delegates. In his welcome address he said three months have passed since the new transformation of PCC. The zonal method system was launched three months ago. These systems have been launched for activities and better harmony/ understanding in the organization, so that the forthcoming challenges can be faced. He told that Smt. Indira Gandhi was Chairman of Allahabad city Congress in 1956 and she reached heights through this path. We all should take inspiration from her.

Addressing the conference All India Congress

Committee's General Secretary, Shri Digvijay Singh congratulated Regional Chairman Dr. Khatri and leader of Legislation Group Shri Mathur on appointment to their posts and said that he was sure they will work hard to make the organization strong.

Member of All India Congress Working Committee and M.P. Smt. Mohsina Kidwai

TRIBUTES

Nation pays tribute to our freedom fighters and distinguished leaders.



(1897-1969)

Dr. Zakir Hussain
Birth Anniversary :
8th Feb



(1879-1949)

Sarojini Naidu
Birth Anniversary :
13th Feb



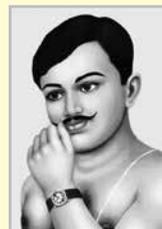
(1866-1915)

Gopal Krishan
Gokhale
Death Anniversary :
19th Feb



(1869-1944)

Kasturba Gandhi
Death Anniversary :
22nd Feb



(1906-1931)

Chandra Shekhar
Azad
Death Anniversary :
27th Feb



(1899-1936)

Kamala Nehru
Death Anniversary :
28th Feb

said Congressmen have to work together to spread Center's schemes to common people. They need to struggle to remove problems of common people.

During the conference AICC's member Shri Digvijay Singh (Baliya region) also proposed to give political pension to the Congress leaders arrested in 1978 in protest of Indira Gandhi's arrest.

Cabinet's Coal Minister Shri Shriprakash Jayswal said that we could have less M.L.A.'s in UP but our workers morale is very high.

National Secretary (incharge) Shri Parvez Hashmi and Shri Avinash Pandey, Cabinet Minister Shri R.P.N. Singh, Cabinet Minister



Shri Jitin Prasad, Schedule caste Commission's Chairman Shri P.L. Punia, Congress Legislature Group's leader Shri Pradip Mathur, Congress Legislative Council's leader Shri Nasib Pathan, M.P. Shri Jagdambika Pal, M.P. Shri Raj Babbar, M.P. Smt. Annu Tandon, Zonal Chairman Shri Rajaram Pal, Ch. Bijendra Singh, M.L.A. Shri Santosh Kumar Singh also addressed the gathering.

TAMILNADU Welcome Rahulji

Trichy: Tamilnadu Congress Trade Union & Tirchirapalli District Congress Committee celebrated the appointment of Shri Rahul Gandhi as Vice President of AICC on 22nd January, 2013 under the Presidentship of Shri Thiru B. Balasubramanian, State Secretary of the Union at Srirangam.

During the celebration crackers were burst and sweets & laddu were distributed among more than 1000 members.

The district office bearers, circle office bearers, block presidents, Youth Congress, NSUI, Mahila Congress Cadres and public participated in the

celebration.

Martyrdom day of Mahatma Gandhi

Trichy: 66th Martyrdom day of our Father of Nation Mahatma Gandhi was observed under the presidentship of Thiru. B. Balasubramanian, State Secretary, Tamilnadu Congress Trade Union, TCTU – INTUC, PCC Member of Tamilnadu Congress Committee and State General Council Member garlanded flowers urge offered on the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at Srirangam, South Gate, Main Bazaar, by Shri Balasubramanian.

The district office bearers, circle office bearers, block president, cadets and public participated in the programme. ❖



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MAHILA CONGRESS REPORT

The All India Mahila Congress deeply mourns the sad demise of respected Shri Khalil Kidwai, husband of Smt. Mohsina Kidwai, Permanent Invitee CWC & Incharge Mahila Congress.

Smt. Anita Verma, President, AIMC went to Jhaliyamali village in Kanker district of Chhattisgarh on 10th January 2013 where 11 minor tribal girls were allegedly raped in the girl's hostel of Residential School for Tribal Girls by a teacher a chaukidar and a cook who were under the employment of that school. She was accompanied by Smt. Ambika Markam, President Chhattisgarh, PMC, Smt. Ashima Mahananda, Secretary, AIMC and Ms. Ayesha Siddiqua, Secretary, AIMC.

The AIMC office bearers were deputed to distribute 500 blankets among homeless people in different areas of Delhi. Dr. Shobhna Shah, Dr. Sudha Rai, Smt. Musharrarf Chaudhary, Smt. Asha Sharma, Smt. Onika Mehrotra, and Smt. Parinita Azad were engaged to do this job.

Dr. Shobhna Shah, Vice-President, AIMC visited Nanded, Beed, Jalna and Aurangabad districts of Maharashtra from 14th to 16th January 2013 to hold organizational meetings in these districts. All the District Mahila Congress Presidents were asked to submit the list of their office bearers, Taluka and Ward Presidents and their committees alongwith their photographs and contact numbers. Smt. Anita Babbar, General Secretary, AIMC went to Ludhiana, Hoshiyarpur and Nava Shahar from 23rd to 26th January 2013. ❖

(Anita Verma)

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD: MIR-I-KARAWAN OF COMPOSITE PARADIGM OF INDEPENDENCE AND INDEPENDENT MODERN INDIA

in science, arts and professional education such as agriculture, commerce, education, engineering and technology, law, medicine and new professions. The establishment of UGC was aimed to maintain the standards of education in the universities. Infact, the backbone of science and technology development in contemporary India has largely developed on these very educational institutions which were established by Maulana Azad. Obviously, the formatting of educational development was primarily meticulously crafted by Maulana Azad and he is truly referred as the architect of Indian Education system.

The contributions of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad will always transcend any lines of demarcations in social and cultural formations, paving the way for united India. He said in Ramgarh(1940), " I am proud of being an Indian. I am part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality. I am indispensable to this noble edifice and without me this splendid structure of India is incomplete. I am an essential element which has gone to build India. I can never surrender this claim." He emerged as the role model for every Indian and outrightly said, "But if we are convinced that for us fear and doubt has no place, and that we must view the future with courage and confidence in ourselves, then our course of action becomes absolutely clear. We find ourselves in a new world, which is free from dark shadows of doubt, vacillation, inaction, and apathy, and where the light of faith and determination, and enthusiasm never fails." He determinedly played crucial role in the communal harmony, and his participation became the crucial element of inclusive nature of state where education was conceptualised a tool for eradication of illiteracy, poverty, and total transformation of nation. Therefore, he will always remain as the Mir-i-Karawan of composite paradigm of Independence and Independent India. ❖

The author is an Assistant Professor in Department of History, Rajdhani College, Delhi

AICC DIARY

BIGGER ROLE TO PLAY

Smt. Renuka Chowdhury speaking about the victim of rape said for the past few times that I have addressed the media here, I always took a suo-moto view on the sense of what was happening with that young lady. So it is really with pained sense of sadness that we say farewell to her. She has been an exemplary example of courage and faced her adversaries with such courage and strength. In her passing away she has ignited an eternal flame which will dispel this darkness of hypocrisy and double speak in our society. At the end of this year, let us all collectively pledge that none of us are going to remain silent or helpless when we see someone being abused or accosted or insulted because every silence of ours empowers a criminal. So we should go into this New Year with that courage of conviction which this young lady showed and in her pursuit of keeping the daughters of India safe as they are empowered by the Constitution, as they are entitled so the citizens of this nation, as they should be recognized and treated with the dignity that they deserve. Her parents have shown amazing race in their own conduct despite this crippling loss of theirs. There are many-many lessons to be learnt in humility that these parents despite all the odds sold whatever little they had to invest and educate a girl child. It is a larger picture there where they believed that educating a girl child would empower the society and their families. So, it should be that way. We continue to give them our unstinting support and pray that all of us who are parents of daughters will teach our children what the country aspires for them and as mothers of sons, let us go on to educate our boys

that they really have a bigger role to play in being good citizens and true partners of the women of this nation in whatever capacity. Tuesday, 1st January, 2013

APPOINTMENT OF LOKAYUKTA

While addressing press persons, Shri Rashid Alvi greeted them with New Year wishes on behalf of the Congress party and himself. He said today the Supreme Court has announced its decision on the appointment of Gujarat Lokayukta. In this regard, the Gujarat Government had moved the Supreme Court against the decision of High Court order. The appointment of Gujarat Lokayukta has been Okayed and the decision of Governor has been ratified. The Gujarat Government had been demanding recalling of the Governor on the basis of this very decision of the Governor. The Supreme Court has upheld the Governor's decision and also directed that the appointment of Lokayukta was according to the set rules and laws. After the Supreme Court decision, a big question rises on the fact that there has been a BJP government in Gujarat during the past eight years. Why the Gujarat Government was opposing the appointment of Lokayukta, what was that what the state government wanted to hide, conceal? The real face of the BJP has come before the countrymen. It is that party which takes out Rath-Yatra on the issue of corruption, raises anti-corruption slogans in Delhi, which issues several kinds of statements on the issue of appointment of Lokayukta, the same party's Government (in Gujarat) opposes appointment of Lokayukta, and when a Lokayukta is appointed, this party puts stumbling blocks in its way. This proves there is a vast difference between what it says and what it does. We are confident that now

after being ratified by the Supreme Court, the Lokayukta will take over its office in Gujarat and start functioning. And, once it starts functioning, it would come to the fore what has been happening in Gujarat, what's the status of corruption over there. What's the truth about the ministers against whom all kind of allegations have been leveled. Is it the same story what happened in Karnataka? Is there any attempt to shield someone? Let everything be clarified once and for all. But, the real face of the BJP has once again appeared before the countrymen. Wednesday, 2nd January, 2013

OUR STRENGTH IT ITS SECULARISM

While addressing media persons, Shri Rashid Alvi said that you all know that once again Pakistan has violated ceasefire. And this has not happened for the first time. During the past one month, Pakistan has made similar attempts inside the Rajauri Sector and after 2003 this is a major ceasefire violation in which our two soldiers lost lives. Even more painful is the fact that the way they treated their dead bodies, it was inhuman. We can't tolerate such ceasefire violations. Pakistan's High Commissioner in India Shri Salman was summoned by India's External Affairs Ministry and India's reservations have been conveyed. India wants friendly relations with all its neighbours, but that doesn't mean that Pakistan behaves in this manner. This incident has posed a big question, viz we want friendship with Pakistan, but does Pakistan also want friendship with India? We have been constantly trying to maintain cordial relations with Pakistan. If Indian Prime Minister goes to Lahore extending a hand of friendship, then tunnels are being dug in Kargil..... Kargil was a big incident. Nearly 200

PRESS BRIEFINGS

people had died in Mumbai serial blasts in 2008.....this was also a big incident. Prior to this, Pakistani terrorists hijacked an Indian Airlines plane (IC-814) in 1999.....this was again a big incident. Whenever we have extended a hand of friendship, Pakistan indulges in such acts which nullify our efforts. Pakistan Prime Minister had come to India, we welcomed him, we extended a warm hospitality. Pakistan cricket team came here, played cricket here, and showered praises about the respect they were accorded in India. All this was published in their newspapers and our newspapers as well. But, Pakistan reciprocates all this by killing our soldiers after entering into our territory. This is not only unfortunate, we condemn it and we want to say that Pakistan must understand that our tolerance has reached its last limit. Everything has a limitation, we don't want that Pakistan tests our patience again and again. Our opposition to this incident should be taken as the last protest. Shri Alvi said: "Wafa karoge, wafa karenge.....jafa karoge, jafa karenge..... hum aadmi hain tumhare jaise, tum jo karoge wo hum karenge." Pakistan should realise that such acts won't be tolerated again and again.

Shri Alvi said that India is a secular country. This country's strength is its secularism. I have stated earlier too, that when it came into being Pakistan had declared itself an Islamic State, and not a secular state. But, when India gained Independence, then after giving much thought to it, our leadership declared that India will be a secular country. Every person living in India, irrespective of his religion, caste or place of residence, has

equal rights. Our law of the land sees everyone with equality, and Constitution gives equal rights. But, despite this, at time people indulge in politics of hatred. Whatever has happened in Hyderabad, law will take its own course. But this country is a secular state and there will be no compromise with secularism. Whoever will indulge in politics of hatred, he will be strictly dealt with as per law of the land.

The Supreme Court has directed in one of its notices that Shiv Sena and MNS should be de-recognised. Should the same yard-stick apply on Owaisi? There is a need of electoral reforms. If need arises, every possible step will be taken in this direction. The Election Commission is empowered to take a decision after taking stock of the situation. Law is there, and Election Commission does not need to take permission to issue directions to any particular political party. Wednesday, 9th January, 2013

LINE OF CONTROL

Shri Sandeep Dikshit said the Congress party has also been saying what the government of India had been doing in the last 2/3 days over the issues concerning Pakistan and we take note of the fact that the government has put diplomatic and other pressures on the government of Pakistan and the steps military is taking to strengthen the patrolling on the line of control and the

action they have taken. We welcome that. We also urge the government of India to take all necessary diplomatic and other actions that are necessary to keep the sanctity of the line of control and the diplomatic steps necessary to continue to put pressure on Pakistan. Friday, 11th January, 2013

NEW RESOLVE

Today the Nation pays homage to the memory of Mahatma Gandhi, Father of the Nation, on his 65th death anniversary.

We, in the Congress Party, have taken a new resolve to reorganize and go ahead with the programmes which people expect. In the remaining one year period Congress Party, in its session in Jaipur, has decided to fast track the steps to be taken.

There is one year left for the elections. Already fight has started in the Opposition camps about the future Prime Minister. But we all know that there is no vacancy and there is a strong Prime Minister supported strongly by our party.

The party has several very meaningful programmes and the Government is in full swing to implement these. So the party is well prepared to go ahead to implement its promises in the next one year. At all levels of the party, the reorganization is being done so that we are ready to implement decisions taken by the Jaipur session of the AICC. Wednesday, 30th January, 2013

Tom Vadakkan,
Media Secretary, AICC

