

INDUCEMENTS ONLY DENT THE PROSPECTS OF FUTURE GROWTH

The results of the recently concluded elections have come as a mixed bag for the Congress. Congress was in power in two of the five states which went in for polls. These were Manipur and Goa and returned once again with two state governments in Manipur and Uttrakhand. However the Congress cannot rest on its laurels as the results are way below expectations. The performance in Punjab fell below expectations and the results in Uttar Pradesh too were far from satisfactory. The party however put up a strong show in the bye elections by winning three important seats. It won the Udupi – Chickmaglaur Lok Sabha seat vacated by the BJP Chief Minister. The Congress snatched the Mansa assembly seat from the BJP in Gujarat and also won a seat in the assembly at Kerala.

In its 126 years history the Congress has seen many up's and down's. The reason of its continued survival as the oldest party in India is because it has never despaired from its defeats. It is because of this confidence that people of the country choose Congress again to lead. The Congress alone has always protected the interests of the people to take the Country on the path to progress. It is therefore the bounden responsibility of all Congress men to work with utmost courage and fortitude to restore the Congress to its rightful place. The educated masses of the country, who are now coming out to vote in large numbers have to understand that inducements only dent the prospects of future growth which is so important to create the wealth of the nation and opportunities for the youth. What is important is the willingness to tighten the belts and bite the bullet in the interest of their own future. Only a well meaning and forthright leadership as displayed by Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi backed by the sincerity and leadership displayed by Rahul Gandhi can bring the growth and the much needed realistic policies that the nation so badly needs at this moment.

The General Budget for the year 2012-2013 was placed before the house on 16th March. The aspirations of the people of India need to take precedence over the aspirations of a region. This is essential to provide the necessary growth to the country because with growth comes the fulfillment of the ambitions of the millions of youth who come out in the job market each year. The Finance Minister has laid special emphasis for growth of agriculture with special emphasis on the east. The Prime Minister has said that it is a time for the next green revolution. The growth in agriculture will fulfill the requirement for food security. The budget has addressed the needs of all sections and is a well conceived and balanced budget. The budget has been appreciated by all sections of society and various business forums.

Looking down the pages of history we remember 12th March, 1930 when Gandhi ji embarked upon the historic march to Dandi .It was to wage a war against the imperial government by carrying out civil disobedience by defying the salt law. Gandhiji began his march with a modest number but the numbers kept on multiplying .The simplicity of his approach and understanding of the mood of the people started a movement which grew by swelling in the number of his followers.

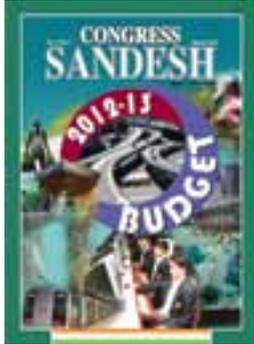
People are always impressed with the sincerity of the purpose of the leaders and till today the lesson of Gandhi has an import in the polity of life. ❖

Only a well meaning and forthright leadership as displayed by Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi backed by the sincerity and leadership displayed by Rahul Gandhi can bring the growth and the much needed realistic policies that the nation so badly needs at this moment

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The paradigm of good governance is that nation comes above everything. Opposition for the sake of opposition is not good for the future of the nation as it sometimes hits at the fundamentals of progress.

The creation of NCTC which has been opposed by several states as being against Federalism is the need of the moment. Once the Prime Minister has assured that the Government has no intention of treading on the rights of the state Governments and also assured that the interest of the states would be guaranteed through dialogue, there should have been no resistance. Terrorism is a menace which has spread its wings globally. Innocent lives are lost by ill conceived grievances of some groups of fundamentalists. There are occasions which require fast movement across state borders for the success of an intelligence operation. The facts are also privy only to those who are involved. Those states which complain that they do not get enough support from the Centre in their fight against terrorism would no longer have reasons to complain after the creation of NCTC. The fact is ,that it is in the interest of both the Centre as well as the states to be rid of terrorism. This would put an end to loss of innocent lives and property of our countrymen. The double- speak of some parties opposed to NCTC is exposed by their current demands while dealing with a recent happening. All parties should come together keeping the country in mind and support the well intentioned proposal of the Government.

Opinion

Delhi's Chief Minister Smt. Sheila Dikshit in her article says that the Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi is a charismatic women leader of India 4

Motion of Thanks on President's address

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh replies to the Lok Sabha debate on the President's address 6

General Budget 2012-13

Finance Minister, Shri Pranab Mukherjee has called for the strengthening of investment environment 10

• Economic Survey Highlights 15

Golden Jubilee of IARI

Prime Minister says in his address that Indian Agricultural Research Institute has made commendable achievements in the 12th Plan 18

Fight against Polio

Union Minister Jairam Ramesh has applauded the role of WHO in almost eradicating Polio from the face of India 21

Salt Satyagraha

Satyagraha which united the people of India in rising against the British Empire was the beginning of the Civil disobedience movement for the Independence of India 22

Environment

Shri N.R. Krishnan talks about environment concern and health hazards by copying examples from abroad 25

Women Empowerment

The article talks about the role of women in political leadership and their empowerment in Indian society 27

Assemblies Election Results

Results of the successful Congress candidates 29

Stateswatch

Dandi March 31

Sandesh Yatra 32

Membership Drive 33

Ex-Servicemen Report

AICC Diary 35

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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Social development is a true but delicate issue. The work for which, has to be done carefully and with responsibility. While doing so we should keep the interest of the people in mind of every class of people. It is important that the benefits of development should reach down to all classes of people. The social development is also known as social engineering and many people indulge in deriving personal benefit in the name of social development. Therefore, social development has to be done keeping in mind the interest of the people of all classes without bringing caste or religion in between.

*Laxmi Dass,
Delhi.*

NEGATIVE ROLE

Referring to opposition parties negative role in Parliament and continuously disturbing normal procedures in both Houses, Soniaji's remark, "logic and merit are lost in their obstructionist tactics" (CPP meeting, 21.12.11) – is not only appropriate and timely, but also significant. Because during almost every session of Parliament, these self-styled 'Vanguards of democratic values' are raising topics and arguments just to disrupt proceedings causing wastage of both time and public money. This has been experienced by Pranab Mukherjee, while delivering speech on Lokpal Bill. He rightly condemned opposition parties contradictory attitude claiming Parliament's sole authority to legislate and at the same time, supporting civil society's agitation attending Dharna Manch (Sandesh, Jan, 2012). His clarification of PM's Policy to accommodate view of larger society regarding Lokpal Bill disclosed Central government's sincere effort to strengthen democracy and to curb the menace of corruption.

*Chhanda Bagchi,
Kolkata.*

GET PROPER FEEDBACK!

Congress is doing remarkable progress for development of the nation but has failed to project their programmes properly to the general masses. They should get feedback from the masses and then work sincerely covering the lapses pointed out in the feed back.

Congress is loosing ground in states which are empowered to implement plans and programmes.

For stable position of Congress at the centre, Congress needs to be strong in states. It will help to plan and

ensure implementation. This will give true picture of the party to the masses.

Congress should be vocal and should be able to counter other parties against their concocted, false and fabricated attack on Congress.

*S. Z. Rahman (Advocate),
Dhanbad.*

STRESS FOR AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in his New Year Message rightly puts stress on a Second Agricultural Revolution (Congress Sandesh, January, 2012) and to fulfill this essential target Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee has allotted sufficient funds in Budgets for Green Revolution in Eastern part of India - of which West Bengal is considered as an important agriculture based state. But due to complete negligence of the previous state Government, not a single step has been taken in this direction. Either they failed to realise the essence and urgency of Central Governments such noble target, or ignored it intentionally to serve their narrow political interests. On the contrary the governments led by left party's used to raise hue and cry over price-rise issue. If they were serious enough price could be checked permanently through Green Revolution, because it not only 'ensures growth of rural incomes', as PM mentioned, but also sufficient supply of food commodities. It is a well known fact that supply according to demand can control prices. However it is expected that present Congress-TMC coalition Government of this state will take initiative to materialize PM's vision of Agricultural Revolution utilizing funds allotted for proposed Green Revolution, which will surely inspire other states of Eastern India, too.

*Manoj Kr. Singh, Sasaram, Bihar &
Smt. Chhanda Bagchi, Kolkata, West Bengal*

AN OUTSTANDING PUBLICATION

I had the opportunity to read the January, 2012 issue of the Congress Sandesh which I happened to get from a friend. I was very pleased to go through it. The contents were informative, particularly the states-watch which informs the reader about the party activities all over the country. The Congress Sandesh is really an outstanding publication.

*Badri Prasad Verma
Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh*

SONIA GANDHI – A RARE AND EXCEPTIONAL PERSONALITY



Sheila Dikshit
Chief Minister of Delhi



It says a lot about Sonia Gandhi's tenacity and will power that she has reached the top in world's largest democracy – India, a country that does not speak her language, does not share her culture, and has entirely different social values and work ethics. In September 2010, on being re-elected as the president in the 125-year history of the party. Her introduction is not just as a wife of late ex-prime minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi and daughter-in-law of late prime minister Smt. Indira Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi has emerged as a powerful leader both nationally and internationally.

When Shri Rajiv Gandhi died on that fateful day of 21st May, 1991 leaving her shattered, she had two kids from whom she could hardly seek solace. It was the other way round. After her husband's assassination, Sonia Gandhi stayed away from politics for seven years and devoted her time to bring up her children. That she stood the test of times and came out with flying colors is no small feat.

I recall the couple's visit to Kashmir for holidays, when Rajiv ji was not in active politics. In Kashmir they met elderly couples that were to wed their daughter and were arranging for a Kashmiri dijaru, an ear ornament, which is the sign of a married Kashmiri woman. The minute Rajiv ji and Sonia returned to Delhi, they ordered a dijaru from Jaipur and sent it to the couple. Such gesture and sensitivity has made her a hero in mind of aam janta. People started to understand, her connected with her and she became a leader of the masses.

The Congress Party, once the strongest party in India, had never recovered from Indira Gandhi's death, and by the 1990s it was in a serious decline. Although Soniji had no political experience, she threw herself into the 1998 legislative campaign. She made more than 140 stops throughout the country, delivering speeches to packed audiences. And, even though she spoke in a very soft voice in Hindi, she touched the

hearts of the people. She emerged as a savior who helped the Congress Party regain its fading glory, when it was facing turbulent times and a crisis of leadership.

Sonia Gandhi gained so much popularity that members of rival parties, especially the BJP, saw her as a big threat. In an attempt to undermine her credibility, they attacked her verbally and in the press, focusing on a single issue: Soniji had no right to be involved in politics because, having been born in Italy, she was a foreigner. It did not seem to matter that she had become an Indian citizen in 1984. Such attacks did little harm, however, since most of the voting public did not consider Soniji to be an outsider. Soniji surprised her critics by bringing Congress government back at the Centre through her soft and effective leadership skills and abilities. She flatly refused to become the Prime Minister of India when everything was easy for her. Her "inner voice" compelled her to reject this-it was a step of supreme sacrifice and gallantry.

Soniji is a strong woman with great character who means business. She has become the symbol of women leadership and a role model for Indian women. As a woman born and brought up in a foreign land, she has gracefully adopted Indian culture and is now an indisputable leader and the face of Indian politics. Despite becoming the target of constant criticism and attempts

She emerged as a savior who helped the Congress Party regain its fading glory, when it was facing turbulent times and a crisis of leadership



Soniaji surprised her critics by bringing Congress government back at the Centre through her soft and effective leadership skills and abilities.



Sonia Gandhi has overcome the chauvinism and xenophobia of Indian politics and emerged as a charismatic women leader of India.

to humiliate her, she remained calm and composed in the face of political opposition and emerged as a winner. Her personal qualities, a subtle and thinking mind, a calming patience, a self-effacing humility, and a real commitment to public service are laudable and have been the key to her success.

Sonia Gandhi is a huge admirer of Indian handlooms and handicrafts, especially Indian contemporary, classical and tribal art. She loves Indian music especially folk music. She has travelled throughout the country, delivered speeches and has won the unwavering support of the masses through her election rallies.

Sonia Gandhi understands the importance of restoration and heritage. She listens to different



opinions before coming to a decision. In the past she has demonstrated an ability to build bridges with political allies and looks to past Nehru-Gandhis to help in her decision-making. She has mastered the art of silence. Soniaji seldom makes appearances in the media and is known for a persona dignified by silence.

Today if I have to sum up Soniaji's personality in few words-I will say-Integrity, Dedication, Magnanimity, Humility, Openness and Creativity. She has played an important role in passing the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and Right to Information Act as a law, when she was the Chairperson of the National Advisory Committee. The landmark Act is aimed at ensuring transparency in the system and entitles every citizen legally to ask questions and expect answers

from the government. Soniaji has nurtured her late husband, Shri Rajiv Gandhi's legacy and vision of women's empowerment and paved way for the Women's Reservation Bill demanding greater political representation for women of India.

Sonia Gandhi has overcome the chauvinism and xenophobia of Indian politics and emerged as a charismatic women leader of India. Under the influential leadership, the Congress Party has been able to reach out to the poorest Indians and change the face of the Indian economy. Ever Smiling Soniaji works as less of a politician and more of a reformer with zeal to set out her home her country in order.

“Together we can face any challenges as deep as the ocean and as high as the sky”

-Sonia Gandhi. ❖

PRIME MINISTER'S REPLY IN THE LOK SABHA DEBATE ON MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS ON 19TH MARCH, 2012



Madam Speaker, I rise to join all Members of this august House in conveying our sincere thanks to the Honourable President for her enlightened address. The debate on the President's Address has been very wide-ranging and Shri Jaswant Singhji has made his contribution as well. I thank all the Hon. Members from all sides who have contributed to this debate.

The President's Address lays down the objectives and the roadmap that our Government is following and will pursue with greater vigour to deal with the challenges that are mentioned in the President's Address. The President's Address in paragraph 10 refers to five important challenges that our country faces today. They are :-

- 1) to strive for livelihood security for the vast majority of our population and contribute to work for removal of poverty, hunger and illiteracy from our land;
- 2) to achieve economic security through rapid and broad-based development and creation of productive jobs for our people;
- 3) to ensure energy security for our rapid growth;
- 4) to realise our developmental goals without jeopardizing our ecological and environmental security; and
- 5) to guarantee our internal and external security within the framework of a just, plural, secular and inclusive growth.

Madam, these five challenges sum up the task that lies ahead of our Government in the two-and-a-half years that remain.

As far as the economy is concerned, my colleague, the Hon. Minister of Finance has placed the Economic Survey on the Table of the House and the Economic Survey gives an exhaustive account of the state of the economy. The Finance Minister has also referred to challenges facing us, in his Budget Speech. Madam, all these issues will be thoroughly debated during the general debate on the Budget next week. Therefore, I will be brief while dealing with the economy of the country.

I am sure, Hon. Members are aware that we are charting our course through waters that are choppy for all countries today. The year 2011-12 has been a difficult year for all countries. Global growth decelerated everywhere. The Industrialised countries grew at the rate of only 1.6 per cent in 2011, which is half the rate in the previous years. The international economic environment that we face is highly uncertain.

The developments in North Africa and West Asia have led to a steep increase in the prices of hydrocarbons adversely affecting among others prices of fertilisers, food grains and have also put pressure on our balance of payment.

Madam, in this background, our own

economic performance of about seven per cent growth- though slower than what we had hoped- must be regarded as commendable. Of course, we cannot view this as acceptable. We must strive to improve upon this in the next year and return as quickly as possible to a higher growth path and we must do this while also ensuring that we will progress towards our objective of achieving inclusive growth with reasonable price stability. Madam, for all this, we need a broad-based national consensus covering all sections of political opinion represented in this august House. This is an occasion when we must rise above narrow partisan ends and stand united as a nation.

Madam, we grew at 9 per cent for five years before 2008, and I do believe that we can get back to that kind of growth rate provided we can agree on a number of difficult decisions. If we succeed in that objective, we will ensure that India continues its rise as an economic power and acquires the economic capability of reducing

persistent poverty from which we have suffered and filling the gaps, which are all too evident in critical areas such as health, education, skill-development, and provision of clean drinking water and sanitation. Shri Jaswant Singh referred to the problem of drinking water supply. I assure him that our Government attaches high priority to ensuring that all our citizens have access to clean drinking water.

Madam, several Members have referred to the problems faced by weaker sections of our society and I do agree with them that we need to focus, in particular, on the developmental gaps affecting the weaker sections of our population such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, the Other Backward Classes, the Minorities and other disadvantaged groups. I would like to assure the Hon. Members that we will rise to this important task.

Madam, the Twelfth Five-Year Plan, which will be presented to the National Development Council (NDC) sometime in the middle of the year, will lay out the credible plan of action for faster, sustainable and more inclusive growth. I do not wish to go into details, but only wish to remind the hon. Members that our path is not easy.

I am sure that the hon. Members also realize that the difficult decisions that we have to take are made more difficult by the fact that we are a coalition Government and we have to evolve policy keeping in mind the need to maintain a consensus. The challenges that this poses have been sharply brought out in the developments following the presentation of the Railway Budget. I would like to use this opportunity to inform the hon. Members of the latest development. Madam, I received late last night an e-mail message followed by a formal letter

from Shri Dinesh Trivedi tendering his resignation as the Railway Minister.

I propose to forward this letter to the President with the recommendation to accept Shri Trivedi's letter of resignation. I regret the departure of Shri Trivedi. He had presented the Railway Budget which promised to carry out the Vision 2020 that was outlined by his predecessor. A new Railway Minister will be sworn in shortly. He will have the onerous duty of carrying forward the challenging task of modernizing our railway system.

Madam Speaker, in a country as large and as complex as ours, and where the farmers of our country constitute 65 per cent of the labour force, it is inevitable that Parliament and the Government should be worried about the state of India's agriculture. I share the agony of the hon. Members, when they refer to the suicides of our farmers.

The House has my assurance that we will work with the renewed vigour to ensure that no farmer in our country is forced to go to the extreme level of committing suicide.

Our Government has attached high priority to the development of agriculture, to increase public investment in agriculture, to ensure that there is more attention, technologically, paid to the development of agriculture and as a result, the growth rate of agricultural production within the last five years has been as high as three per cent or 3.5 per cent per annum. This year we are likely to achieve a record production of food grains of 250 million tonnes.

Last year, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, the National Horticulture Mission, and the Food Security Mission have all contributed to create a more favourable environment

Five important challenges that our country faces today.

They are :-

- 1) to strive for livelihood security for the vast majority of our population and contribute to work for removal of poverty, hunger and illiteracy from our land;*
- 2) to achieve economic security through rapid and broad-based development and creation of productive jobs for our people;*
- 3) to ensure energy security for our rapid growth;*
- 4) to realise our developmental goals without jeopardizing our ecological and environmental security; and*
- 5) to guarantee our internal and external security within the framework of a just, plural, secular and inclusive growth.*

for the growth of agriculture. But I will be the last one to say that more cannot be done. We will, in the Twelfth Five-Year Plan, focus more sharply on the development of our agriculture because the interest of farmers is uppermost in the minds of our Government. That will be the priority we will follow with due diligence.

Madam, there were references to the price situation in the country. I do admit that in the last two years, the prices have become a problem. Fortunately, there are indications that prices are coming under control, but we have to be vigilant. It was in this context that the Finance Minister's effort to control the fiscal deficit is very relevant. Our fiscal deficit did increase in the year 2008-09 because of the developments in the international economic environment, and it was our hope that we will be able to get back to a more reasonable level of fiscal deficit in the year 2011-12. The Finance Minister had projected a fiscal deficit of 4.8 per cent for that year. It turns out that the fiscal deficit will be as high as 5.9 per cent. The Finance Minister has committed our Government to work towards a reduction in the fiscal deficit to 5.1 per cent in the next year. It is very important that the Finance Minister succeeds in the control of fiscal deficit, in the control over the balance of payments deficit to a more reasonable level as it is essential for us to achieve our objectives of growth with reasonable price stability.

Since these matters will be debated at length during the debate on the

our own economic performance of about seven per cent growth—though slower than what we had hoped—must be regarded as commendable.

Budget, I do not propose to spend more time in dealing with these issues. However, there are certain matters which I would like to refer to and one of these relates to the establishment of National Counter Terrorism Centre. While discussing issue relating to the National Counter

Terrorism Centre, Shri Rajnath Singh Ji questioned the sincerity of our Government while dealing with problems of the terrorism.

Madam, dealing with terrorism and dealing effectively as well as the control of left wing extremism constitute two big challenges before our country and for all the growth objectives that we have, particularly, the developments of the Central Indian regions. The States of Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand are infested with left wing extremism. Control over the left wing extremism and control over terrorism are absolute necessities if we are to achieve our growth objectives.

Madam, let me assure the House that our Government is committed to providing fully secured living conditions to its citizens and it will take every possible step to deal with the menace of terrorism. In fact, setting up the NCTC is an important step in that direction. Concern has been raised that the Central Government is trying to encroach

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upon the jurisdiction of the State Government and it has been suggested that they should be taken into confidence before the National Counter Terrorism Centre becomes operational. The question of setting up of National Counter Terrorism Centre has been discussed at various fora since the report of the Group of Ministers appointed by the previous Government and the recommendations of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission were submitted. Multi-agency Centre that was established in 2001 was a pre-cursor to the NCTC and the need for a single and effective point of consideration for coordination for counter terrorism has been discussed in meetings on internal security of Chief Ministers. As has been pointed out by some Members that a number of Chief Ministers have expressed their concern after the order was issued and I have replied to them that there will be consultations before the next steps are taken. The consultation was held on 12th March, 2012 with the Chief Secretaries and DGPs from different State Governments. The meeting of the Chief Ministers on Internal Security has been called which was originally scheduled for 15th February, 2012 but because of elections, it had to be postponed. It

is now scheduled on 16th April, 2012. Therefore, adequate and full consultations will take place before the next steps are taken.

Madam, I think that the idea of NCTC and the manner in which the NCTC will function are two separate issues. The idea

of NCTC, you have all agreed is unexceptional. And the manner in which the NCTC will function, there may be differences about tingle but I am confident that through discussions and dialogues, these differences could be narrowed down and a consensus can be arrived and that will be our sincere efforts.

we are a coalition Government and we have to evolve policy keeping in mind the need to maintain a consensus.

Madam, another issue which was raised during the debate relates to the state of Sri Lankan Tamils. Some Members have raised concern regarding the situation in Sri Lanka. The Central Government fully shares the concerns and sentiments raised by hon. Members regarding the welfare of Sri Lankan Tamils. Since the end of conflict in Sri Lanka, our focus has been on the welfare and well being of the Tamil citizens of Sri Lanka. Their resettlement and rehabilitation has been of the highest and most immediate priority for our Government. The steps taken by the Central Government in this regard has been outlined in the suo motu statement made by the External Affairs Minister on 14th March, 2012. As a result of our constructive engagement with the Government of Sri Lanka and our considerable assistance programme, the modicum of normalcy is beginning to return to the Tamil areas in Sri Lanka. There has also been progress, given the withdrawal of emergency regulations by the Government of Sri Lanka and the conduct of elections to local bodies in the Northern provinces of Sri Lanka.

Members have also raised the issue of human rights violations during the protracted conflict in Sri Lanka and on the US initiated draft resolution

on promoting reconciliation and accountability in Sri Lanka at the on-going 19th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

The Government of India has emphasised to the Government of Sri Lanka the importance of a genuine process of reconciliation to address the grievances of the Tamil community.

In this connection, we have called for implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Commission appointed by Sri Lankan Government that has been tabled before the Sri Lankan Parliament. These include various constructive measures of healing the wounds of the conflict and fostering the process of lasting peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

We have asked the Government of Sri Lanka to stand by its commitment towards pursuit of a political process through a broader dialogue with all parties including the Tamil National Alliance leading to the full implementation of the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution so as to achieve meaningful devolution of power and genuine national reconciliation. We hope that the Government of Sri Lanka recognises the critical importance of this issue, act decisively and with vision in this regard. We will remain engaged with them through this

process and encourage them to take forward the dialogue with the elected representatives of Sri Lankan Tamils.

As regards the issue of a draft resolution initiated by the United States at the on-going 19th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, we do not yet have the final text of the Resolution. However, I may assure the House that we are inclined to vote in favour of a Resolution. That, we hope, will advance our objective, namely, the achievement of the future for the Tamil community in Sri Lanka that is marked by equality, dignity, justice and self-respect.

Madam, Shri Jaswant Singhji has raised the issue of Gorkhaland Darjeeling Hill Council. I wish to assure this House that we have worked with sincerity to

Government is committed to providing fully secured living conditions to its citizens and it will take every possible step to deal with the menace of terrorism. In fact, setting up the NCTC is an important step in that direction

find an amicable solution to this difficult problem. We recognise the contribution made by the Government of West Bengal in facilitating this outcome. Whatever issues are outstanding, the House has my assurance, we will work with the same constructive spirit to find a pragmatic,

practical and viable solution.

Madam, I would not like to take more of the time of this House. I once again join all Members in thanking hon. President for her enlightened address which I hope we can adopt with acclamation.

Thank you. ❖

GENERAL BUDGET 2012-13

SUMMARY

The Union Budget 2012-13 presented by the Finance Minister Shri Pranab Mukherjee in Lok Sabha today identifies five objectives to be addressed effectively in the ensuing fiscal year. They include focus on domestic demand driven growth recovery; create conditions for rapid revival of high growth in private investment; address supply bottlenecks in agriculture, energy and transport sectors particularly in coal, power, national highways, railways and civil aviation; intervene decisively to address the problem of malnutrition especially in the 200 high-burden districts and expedite coordinated implementation of decisions being taken to improve delivery systems, governance, and transparency; and address the problem of black money and corruption in public life.

Shri Pranab Mukherjee said that India's GDP growth in 2012-13 is expected to be 7.6 per cent +/-0.25 per cent. He said that in 2011-12, India's GDP is estimated to grow at 6.9 per cent after having grown at the rate of 8.4 per cent in each of the two preceding years. He said though the global crisis had affected India, it still remains among the front runners in economic growth. Shri Mukherjee said the slowdown is primarily due to deceleration in industrial growth. Stating that the headline inflation remained high for most part of the year, the Finance Minister expressed hope that it will moderate further in the next few months and remain stable thereafter.

Shri Mukherjee laid emphasis on striking a balance between fiscal consolidation and strengthening macroeconomic fundamentals. He announced introduction of amendments to the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2003 (FRBM Act) as part of the Finance Bill 2012. He said that concept of "Effective Revenue Deficit" and "Medium Term Expenditure Framework" statement are two important features of Amendment to FRBM Act in the direction of expenditure reforms. This statement shall set forth a three year rolling targets for expenditure indicators.

The Finance Minister called for a need to have a close



look at the growth of revenue expenditure, particularly, on subsidies. He announced that from 2012-13 while subsidies related to food and for administering the Food Security Act will be fully provided for, all other subsidies would be funded to the extent that they can be borne by the economy without any adverse implications. He said that the Government will endeavor to restrict the expenditure on central subsidies under 2 per cent of GDP in 2012-13 and over the next three years, it would be further brought down to 1.75 per cent of GDP. Shri Mukherjee said that based on recommendations of the Task Force headed by Shri Nandan Nilekani, a mobile-based Fertilizer Management System has been designed to provide end-to-end information on movement of fertilizers and subsidies which will be rolled out nation-wide during 2012. He said that transfer of subsidy to the retailer and eventually to the farmers will be implemented in subsequent phases which will benefit 12 crore farmer families.

On the tax reforms, the Finance Minister said that the Direct Taxes Code (DTC) Bill will be enacted at the earliest after expeditious examination of the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee. He said drafting of model legislation for Centre and State

Goods and Services Tax (GST) in concert with States is under progress. He added that the GST network will be set up as a National Information Utility and will become operational by August 2012.

On the disinvestment policy, Shri Mukherjee said that the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) are being given a level playing field vis-à-vis private sector with regard to practices like buy-backs and listing at stock exchange. Stating that while in 2011-12, the Government will raise about Rs.14,000 crore from disinvestment as against a target of Rs.40,000 crore, the Finance Minister proposed to raise Rs.30,000 crore through disinvestment in 2012-13. He said at least 51 per cent ownership and management of CPSEs will remain with the Government.

Calling for strengthening investment environment, Shri Mukherjee said that efforts are on to arrive at a broad-based consensus in respect of decision to allow FDI in multi-brand retail up to 51 per cent. He proposed to introduce a new scheme called Rajiv Gandhi Equity Savings Scheme to allow for income tax deduction of 50 per cent to new retail investors who invest up to Rs.50,000 directly in equities and whose annual income is below Rs.10 lakh. The scheme will have a lock-in period of 3 years. Regarding capital markets, the Finance Minister proposed to allow Qualified Foreign Investors (QFIs) to access Indian Corporate Bond market. He also proposed simplifying the process of Initial Public Offer (IPO).

ShriPranab Mukherjee said that the Government is committed to protect the financial health of Public Sector Banks and Financial Institutions. He proposed to provide Rs. 15,888 crore for capitalization of Public Sector Banks, Regional Rural Banks and other financial institutions including NABARD. He added that a Central Know Your Customer (KYC) depository will be developed in 2012-13 to avoid multiplicity of registration and data upkeep.

The Finance Minister informed that out of 73,000 identified habitations that were to be covered under “Swabhimaan” campaign for providing banking facilities by March 2012, about 70,000 habitations have been covered while the rest are likely to be covered by March 31, 2012. He added that as a next step Ultra Small Branches are being set up at these habitations. In 2012-13, Swabhimaan campaign will be extended to more habitations.

Emphasizing on infrastructure and industrial development, Shri Mukherjee said that during the 12th Plan, infrastructure investment will go up to Rs.50 lakh crorewith half of this expected from private sector. Stating that in 2011-12 tax free bonds for Rs.30,000 crore were announced for financing infrastructure projects, he proposed to double it to raise Rs.60,000 crore in 2012-13. The Minister proposed to allow External Commercial Borrowings (ECB) to part finance Rupee debt of existing power projects.

The Finance Minister ShriPranab Mukherjee announced

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- Budget identifies five objectives relating to growth recovery, private investment, supply bottlenecks, malnutrition and governance matters
- GDP growth to be 7.6 per cent (+ 0.25 percent) during 2012-13
- Amendment to the FRBM Act proposed as part of Finance Bill. New concepts of “Effective Revenue Deficit” and “Medium Term Expenditure Framework” introduced
- Central subsidies to be kept under 2 per cent of GDP; to be further brought down to 1.75 per cent of GDP over the next 3 years.
- Proposed: Mobile based fertilizer management system; LPG transparency portal; scaling up and rolling out of Aadhar enabled payment for government schemes in at least 50 districts.
- ₹30,000 crore to be raised through disinvestment
- Efforts to reach broadbased consensus on FDI in multi-brand retail
- Rajiv Gandhi Equity Saving Scheme: to allow income tax deduction to retail investors on investing in equities
- ₹15,888 crore to be provided for capitalization of public sector banks and financial institutions
- A central “Know Your Customer” depository to be developed
- Swabhimaan: remaining habitations to be covered; to be extended to more habitations; ultra small branches to be set up in Swabhimaan habitations
- Investment in 12th Plan in infrastructure to go upto ₹50,00,000 crore; half of this is expected from private sector
- Tax Free Bonds of ₹60,000 crore to be allowed for financial infrastructure projects
- Allocation of Road Transport and Highways Ministry enhanced by 14 per cent to ₹25,360 crore
- Financial package of ₹3,884 crore for waiver of loans to handloom weavers and their cooperative societies;

a target of covering 8,800 km. under NHDP next year and increase in allocation of the Road Transport and Highways Ministry by 14 per cent to Rs.25,360 crore in 2012-13. He proposed to permit ECB for working capital requirements of the Airline Industry for a period of one year, subject to a total ceiling of US dollar 1 billion to address the immediate financial concerns of the Civil Aviation Sector. He added that a proposal to allow foreign airlines to participate up to 49 per cent in the equity of an air transport undertaking is under active consideration.

Expressing concern over shortage in housing sector, the Finance Minister proposed various measures to address the shortage of housing for low income groups in major cities and towns including ECB for low cost housing projects and setting up of a Credit Guarantee Trust Fund.

Regarding textile sector, the Finance Minister announced setting up of two more mega clusters, one to cover Prakasam and Guntur districts in Andhra Pradesh and other for Godda and neighboring districts in Jharkhand in addition to 4 mega handloom clusters already operationalized. He also proposed setting up of three Weavers Service Centres, one each in Mizoram, Nagaland and Jharkhand. The Minister proposed a Rs. 500 crore pilot scheme in twelfth plan for promotion and application of Geo-textiles in the North East. A powerloom Mega Cluster will be set up in Ichalkaranji in Maharashtra.

The Finance Minister proposed to set up a Rs.5000 crore India Opportunities Venture Fund with SIDBI to enhance availability of equity to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

Stating that agriculture will continue to be a priority for Government, Shri Mukherjee proposed an increase by 18 per cent to Rs. 20,208 crore in the total Plan Outlay for the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation in 2012-13. He said that the outlay for Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) is being increased to Rs. 9217 crore in 2012-13.

Underlining importance of timely access to affordable credit for farmers, the Finance Minister proposed to raise the target for agricultural credit to Rs.5,75,000 crore, which represents an increase of Rs. 1,00,000 crore over the target for the current year.. He said that a short term RRB Credit Refinance Fund is being set up to enhance the capacity of Regional Rural Banks to disburse short term crop loans to the small and marginal farmers. He added that Kisan Credit Card Scheme will be modified to make it a smart card which can be used at ATMs.

The Finance Minister said that in order to have a better out reach of the food processing sector, a new centrally sponsored scheme titled National Mission on Food Processing will be started in cooperation with the States in 2012-13.

The Finance Minister proposed an increase of 18 per

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- mega handloom clusters in Andhra, Jharkhand; weaver service centres in Mizoram, Nagaland and Jharkhand ; powerloom mega cluster in Maharashtra; ₹500 crore pilot schemes for geo-textiles in North-Eastern region*
- 14. ₹5,000 crore India Opportunities Venture Fund to help small enterprises
- 15. Allocation to agriculture enhanced; RKVY gets ₹9,217 crore; BGREI gets ₹1,000 crore; Rs.2242 crore project to improve dairy productivity; ₹500 crore for coastal aquaculture
- 16. Various other agricultural activities merged into 5 missions
- 17. Target for agricultural credit raised to ₹5,75,000 crore
- 18. Interest subvention for short-term crop loans to farmers at 7 per cent interest continues; additional 3 per cent for prompt paying farmers
- 19. ₹200 crore for awards to incentivise agricultural research
- 20. Provisions under rural housing fund increased to ₹4,000 crore from ₹3,000 crore
- 21. Interest subvention of 1 per cent on housing loans upto ₹15 lakh extended for one more year
- 22. AIBP allocation raised by 13 per cent to ₹14,242 crore
- 23. National Mission on Food Processing to be started in cooperation with State Governments
- 24. Scheduled Caste Sub Plan allocation increases by 18 per cent to ₹37,113 crore; Tribal Sub Plan by 17.6 per cent to ₹21,710 crore
- 25. Multi-sectoral programme to address maternal and child malnutrition in 200 high burden districts
- 26. 58 per cent rise in allocation to ICDS, at ₹15,850 crore
- 27. Rural drinking water and sanitation gets 27 per cent rise in allocation to ₹14,000 crore; PMGSY gets 20 per cent rise to ₹24,000 crore
- 28. Projects covering length of 8800 km to be awarded under NHDP against 7,300 km during 2011-12
- 29. RTE-SSA gets ₹25,555 crore allocation, showing an

cent to Rs.37,113 crore for Scheduled Castes Sub Plan and an increase of 17.6 per cent to Rs.21,710 crore for Tribal Sub Plan during 2012-13.

Regarding food security, Shri Mukherjee said that National Food Security Bill 2011 is before Parliamentary Standing Committee. He said a multi-sectoral programme to address maternal and child malnutrition in selected 200 high burdened districts is being rolled out during 2012-13. He further said that an allocation of Rs.15,850 crore has been made for ICDS scheme which is an increase of 58% and Rs.11,937 crore for National Programme of Mid-Day Meals in schools for the year 2012-13. He added that an allocation of Rs.750 crore is proposed for Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls, SABLA.

The allocation for rural drinking water and sanitation is proposed to be increased by over 27 per cent to Rs. 14,000 crore and for PradhanMantri Road SadakYojana by 20 per cent to Rs. 24,000 crore in 2012-13. He proposed to enhance the allocation under Rural Infrastructure Development Fund to Rs. 20,000 crore with Rs.5,000 crore exclusively earmarked for creating warehousing facilities.

The Finance Minister proposed an increase in allocation by 21.7 per cent for Right to Education – SarvaShikshaAbhiyan to Rs.25,555 crore and by 29 per cent for RashtriyaMadhyamikShikshaAbhiyan to Rs. 3,124 crore, He proposed to set up a Credit Guarantee Fund to ensure better flow of funds to students.

Regarding health sector he proposed an increase in allocation for NRHM to Rs.20,822 crore in 2012-13. He also said that National Urban Health Mission is being launched.

The Finance Minister said that Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has had a positive impact. He proposed an allocation of Rs.3915 crore for National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) which represents an increase of 34 per cent. He proposed to provide Rs.200 crore to enlarge the corpus to Rs.300 crore of the Women's SHG's Development Fund. He said the fund will also support the objectives of Aajeevika i.e. NRLM and will empower women SHGs to access bank credit. He also proposed to establish a Bharat Livelihoods Foundation of India through Aajeevika which will support and scale up civil society initiatives and interventions particularly in the tribal regions covering around 170 districts.

Allocation under National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) is proposed to be raised by 37 per cent to Rs. 8447 crore. Under the Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme and Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme for BPL beneficiaries, the monthly pension amount per person is being raised from Rs. 200 to Rs.300.

The Finance Minister announced a provision of Rs.1,93,407 crore for Defence Services including Rs.79,579 crore for capital expenditure. He said the allocation is based on present needs and any further

increase of 21 per cent; 6000 schools to be set up at block level as model schools in the 12th Plan; Credit Guarantee Fund to be set up for better flow of credit to students

30. National Urban Health Mission is being launched
31. 34 per cent increase in allocation to National Rural Livelihood Mission, to ₹3915 crore
32. ₹1000 crore allocated for National Skill Development Fund
33. Bharat Livelihood Foundation to be established to support livelihood interventions particularly in tribal areas
34. Widow pension and disability pension raised from ₹200 to ₹300 per month
35. Grant on death of primary breadwinner of a BPL family in the age group 18-64 years doubled to ₹20,000
36. Defence services get ₹193407 crore; any further requirement to be met
37. 4000 residential quarters to be constructed for Central

Armed Police Forces

38. UID-Aadhar to get adequate funds for enrolment of 40 crore persons, in addition to the 20 crore persons already enrolled
39. White Paper on Black Money to be laid in the current session of Parliament
40. Tax proposals mark progress in the direction of movement towards DTC and GST
41. Income tax exemption limit raised from Rs.1,80,000 to Rs.2,00,000; upper limit of 20 per cent tax slab raised from Rs.8 lakh to Rs.10 lakh
42. Interest from savings bank accounts deductible upto Rs.10,000; deduction of upto Rs.5,000 for preventive health check-up
43. Senior citizens without business income exempt from advance tax
44. Investment linked deduction of capital expenditure enhanced for certain businesses; new sectors eligible for investment linked deduction

requirement would be met.

Addressing Governance related issues, Shri Mukherjee said adequate funds are proposed to be allocated to complete enrolments of another 40 crore persons under UID Mission. Outlining the steps taken by the Government to address the issue of black money, the Minister proposed to lay a White Paper on Black Money in the current session of Parliament.

In the Budget Estimates for 2012-13, the Gross Tax Receipts are estimated at Rs.10, 77,612 crore which is an increase of 15.6 per cent over the Budget Estimates and 19.5 per cent over the revised estimates for 2011-12. After devolution to States, the net tax to the Centre in 2012-13 is estimated at Rs. 7,71,071 crore. The Non Tax Revenue Receipts are estimated at Rs.1,64,614 crore and Non-debt Capital Receipts at Rs.41,650 crore. The total expenditure for 2012-13 is budgeted at Rs.14,90,925 crore. Of this Rs.5,21,025 crore is the Plan Expenditure while Rs.9,69,900 crore is budgeted as Non Plan Expenditure.

The tax proposals are guided by the need to move towards the Direct Tax Code(DTC) in the case of direct taxes and Goods & Services Tax (GST) in the case of indirect taxes.

Individual income upto Rs.2 lakh will be free from income tax; income upto Rs.1.8 lakh was exempt in 2011-12. Income above Rs.5 lakh and upto Rs.10 lakh now carries tax at the rate of 20 per cent; the 20% tax slab was from Rs.5 lakh to Rs.8 lakh in 2011-12. A

deduction of upto Rs.10,000 is now available for interest from savings bank accounts. Within the existing limit for deduction allowed for health insurance, a deduction of upto Rs.5000 is being allowed for preventive health check-up. Senior citizens not having income from business will now not need to pay advance tax.

While no changes have been made in corporate taxes, the budget proposes a number of measures to promote investment in specific sectors. In order to provide low cost funds to some stressed infrastructure sectors, withholding tax on interest payments on external borrowings (ECBs) is being reduced from 20 percent to 5 per cent for 3 years. These sectors are - power, airlines, roads and bridges, ports and shipyards, affordable housing, fertilizer, and dam.

Investment linked deduction of capital expenditure in some businesses is proposed to be provided at 150 per cent as against the current rate of 100 per cent. These sectors include cold chain facility, warehouses for storing food-grains, hospitals, fertilizers and affordable housing. Bee keeping, container freight and warehousing for storage of sugar will now also be eligible for investment linked deduction.

The budget also proposes weighted deduction for R&D expenditure, agri-extension services and expenditure on skill development in the manufacturing sector.

For small and medium enterprises (SMEs) the turnover limit for compulsory tax audit of accounts as well as for presumptive taxation is proposed to be raised from

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- 45. *Turnover limit for compulsory tax audit for SMEs raised from Rs.60 lakh to Rs.1 crore*
- 46. *STT on cash delivery reduced by 25 per cent to 0.1%*
- 47. *General Anti Avoidance Rule being introduced to counter aggressive tax avoidance*
- 48. *A number of measures proposed to deter generation and use of unaccounted money*
- 49. *All services to attract service tax except those in the negative list*
- 50. *Central Excise and Service Tax being harmonized*
- 51. *Standard rate of excise duty raised from 10 per cent to 12 per cent; service tax rates raised from 10 per cent to 12 per cent; no change in peak customs duty of 10 per cent on non-agricultural goods*
- 52. *Relief in indirect taxes to sectors under stress; agriculture, infrastructure, mining, railways, roads, civil aviation, manufacturing, health and nutrition, and environment get duty relief*
- 53. *Certain cigarettes and bidis attract higher excise duty;*
- 54. *Excise imposed on unbranded jewellery also; measures to minimize impact on small artisans and goldsmiths; branded silver jewellery exempted from excise duty*
- 55. *Net gain of Rs.41,440 crore due to taxation proposals*
- 56. *Total expenditure budgeted at ₹14,90,925 crore; plan expenditure at ₹5,21,025 crore – 18 per cent higher than 2011-12 budget; non plan expenditure at ₹9,69,900 crore*
- 57. *Fiscal deficit targeted at 5.1 per cent of GDP, as against 5.9 per cent in revised estimates for 2011-12*
- 58. *Central Government debt at 45.5 per cent of GDP as compared to Thirteenth Finance Commission target of 50.5 per cent*
- 59. *Medium-term Expenditure Framework Statement to be introduced; will set forth 3-year rolling target for expenditure indicators*

Rs. 60 lakh to Rs. 1 crore. In order to augment funds for SMEs, sale of residential property will be exempt from capital gains tax, if the proceeds are used for purchase of plant and machinery, etc.

A General Anti-Avoidance Rule (GAAR) is being introduced in order to counter aggressive tax avoidance. Securities transaction tax (STT) is being reduced by 20 per cent on cash delivery transactions, from 0.125% to 0.1%. Alternative Minimum Tax is proposed to be levied from all persons, other than companies, claiming profit linked deductions.

The Finance Minister has proposed a series of measures to deter the generation and use of unaccounted money. In the case of assets held abroad, compulsory reporting is being introduced and assessment upto 16 years will now be allowed to be re-opened. Tax will be collected at source on trading in coal, lignite and iron ore; purchase of bullion or jewellery above Rs. 2 lakh in cash; and transfer of immovable property (other than agricultural land) above a specified threshold. Unexplained money, credits, investments, expenditures etc. will be taxed at the highest rate of 30 per cent irrespective of the slab of income.

The Finance Minister has made an effort to widen the service tax base, strengthen its enforcement and bring it as close as possible to the central excise. A common simplified registration form and a common return are being introduced for central excise and service tax.

All services will now attract service tax, except

those in the negative list. The negative list has 17 heads and includes specified services provided by the government or local authorities, and services in the fields of education, renting of residential dwellings, entertainment and amusement, public transportation, agriculture and animal husbandry. A number of other services including health care, and services provided by charities, independent journalist, sport persons, performing artists in folk and classical arts, etc are exempt from service tax. Film industry also gets tax exemption on copyrights relating to recording of cinematographic films.

Service tax rate is being increased from 10 per cent to 12 per cent, with consequential change in rates for services that have individual tax rates. The standard rate of excise duty for non-petroleum goods is also being raised from 10 per cent to 12 per cent. No change is proposed in peak rate of customs duty of 10 per cent on non-agricultural goods.

The Budget offers relief to different sectors of economy, especially those under stress. Import of equipment for fertilizer projects are being fully exempted from basic customs duty of 5 per cent for 3 years. Basic customs duty is also being lowered for a number of equipment used in agriculture and related areas.

In the realm of infrastructure, customs relief is being given to power, coal and railways sectors. While steam coal gets full customs duty exemption for 2 years

continued on page 17

HIGHLIGHTS OF ECONOMIC SURVEY

Following are the highlights of Economic Survey 2011-12 :

1. *Rate of growth estimated to be 6.9%. Outlook for growth and stability is promising with real GDP growth expected to pick up to 7.6% in 2012-13 and 8.6% in 2013-14.*
2. *Agriculture and Services sectors continue to perform well. 2.5 % growth in Agro sector forecast. Services sector grows by 9.4 %, its share in GDP goes up to 59%.*
3. *Industrial growth pegged at 4-5 percent, expected to improve as economic recovery resumes.*
4. *Inflation on WPI was high but showed clear slow down by the year-end; this is likely to spur investment activities leading to positive impact on growth.*
5. *WPI food inflation dropped from 20.2% in February 2010 to 1.6% in January 2012; calibrated steps initiated to rein-in inflation on top priority.*
6. *India remains among the fastest growing economies of the world. Country's sovereign credit rating rose by a substantial 2.98 percent in 2007-12.*
7. *Fiscal consolidation on track - savings & capital formation expected to rise.*
8. *Exports grew @ 40.5% in the first half of this fiscal and imports grew by 30.4%. Foreign trade performance to remain a key driver of growth. Forex reserves enhanced - covering nearly the entire external debt stock.*
9. *Central spending on social services goes up to 18.5% this fiscal from 13.4% in 2006-07.*
10. *MNREGA coverage increases to 5.49 crore households in 2010-11.*
11. *Sustainable development and climate change concerns on high priority.*

RAHUL'S VISION FOR THE CONGRESS IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY



In a democratic polity Elections are a way to measure the standing of a party in the esteem of the people. But it is also true that the electorate in India gets polarized on the basis of caste, religion or emotive issues and many times loses sight of what is the real need for the path to security and progress.

If we were to take a serious view of the elections especially in the state of Uttar Pradesh, it is not incorrect to state that Rahul Gandhi was one of the few leaders who was clear about what he was wanting to achieve. Mission 2012 is what you are saying... I am not saying it! Said Rahul ji again and again. I want to restore the pride of Uttar Pradesh, doesn't matter how long it takes. He kept on saying that UP had the potential of leading from

the front, as it used to earlier and the people of Uttar Pradesh need to understand and allow the Congress to lead it once again towards glory. There was a ring of sincerity in his desire to re-build the glory of Uttar Pradesh. But the Congress which has been a marginalized party in the state for twenty two years could not rustle together a grass root organization to make people believe that it was possible for the Congress to provide the government which could translate the vision of Rahul Gandhi into a reality. Rahul Gandhi wants to change the entire dynamics of the electoral system from the old inert type of political system which prevails in the country today. As a General Secretary of the Party he has been making every effort to democratize the party at the

level of the Youth Congress and the NSUI. It is these young leaders who are the future of the Congress and the nation. A mere glance at the leadership of the Congress today would show that nearly all of them had held important positions in the Youth Congress two or three decades ago. The vision of Rahul Gandhi is therefore not limited to what is happening today, only. He has a vision of a glorious future of the Congress party and is building the foundation for rejuvenating the party not only in some states but the entire country. Rajiv Gandhi built the blue print for India of the 21st Century. Rahul is not only fulfilling the aspirations of Rajiv ji but even going ahead.

Ever since the assumption of active role in politics, Rahul Gandhi has not only brought to life poor

friendly welfare programmes like MGNREGA which was started by the Congress led UPA government at the centre but has also made the Congress to support these programmes seriously in favor of the rural poor. These programmes have clicked rightly with the aam aadmi as these schemes have made people in rural India economically better and given them a sense of pride and social security. Rahul Gandhi realized that the most important route to economic security and the welfare of the poor was to hit at the root of corruption. His desire to give a Constitutional Status to the Lokpal arose from

glorification. He is humble in his disposition and not clamoring for a post. Who is happy to work for the people of the country without any selfish interest. Who is willing to lead from the front against all adversity, because of whatever he believes in. He is not prone to making tall promises and is bent towards being a realist. Nothing can deter him from the path of truth and his faith in the welfare of the poor. He will therefore continue to work always with the same sincerity.

He has already reiterated that he will not relent and keep on working for the welfare of the people of



wanting a strong mechanism, independent and competent to wage a war against corruption.

The Congress has evolved every time with changing circumstances. This is the secret of the longevity of the Grand Old Party. It has a process of reinventing itself. This time the Congress is evolving under the youthful leadership of Rahul Gandhi. A person whose sincerity reflects on his demeanor and who is not greedy for self acclaim or self

Uttar Pradesh and the rest of the country. Rahul Gandhi's well intentioned aspirations are the true need of the nation today. The Indian polity is also maturing rapidly. The youth have started to play a participative role in the democracy. Soon they will see in Rahul a leader who is bringing about the change in the quality of leadership required which is the need of the time to take the country ahead to its true place in the world polity. ❖

continued from page 15

GENERAL BUDGET 2012-13

(with the concessional counter-veiling duty of 1 per cent), natural gas, LNG and certain uranium fuel get full duty exemption this year. Different levels of duty concessions are being provided to help mining, railways, roads, civil aviation, manufacturing, health and nutrition and environment. So as to help modernization of the textile industry, a number of equipment are being fully exempted from basic customs duty, and lower customs duty is being proposed for some other items used by the textile industry.

Customs duty is being raised for gold bars and coins of certain categories, platinum and gold ore. Customs duty is to be imposed on coloured gem stones. Excise duty on certain categories of cigarettes and bidis, pan masala and chewing tobacco is being increased. Customs duty is being increased on completely built large cars/ SUVs/ MUVs of value exceeding \$40,000.

Silver jewellery will now be fully exempt from excise duty. Unbranded precious metal jewellery will attract excise duty on the lines of branded jewellery. Operations are being simplified and measures taken to minimize impact of this provision on small artisans and goldsmiths.

While direct tax proposals in the Budget will result in a net revenue loss of Rs.4,500crore, indirect taxes will result in a net revenue gain of Rs.45,940 crore. Thus, the tax proposals will lead to a net gain of Rs.41,440crore. ❖



FRUITFUL AGRICULTURAL GROWTH IN THE OFFING

Food production at the end of the 11th Plan will exceed 250 million tonnes, an all time record. Our pulse production, at 18 million tonnes, is well about the previous barrier of 15 million tonnes. We are producing today more milk, more fruits, more vegetables, more sugarcane, more oilseeds and more cotton than ever before. Last year production of vegetables went up by 9.57% and nearly 2 million tonnes of cold storage capacity was created.

I am delighted to participate in the Golden Jubilee convocation of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute. I congratulate all those students who are receiving their degrees today, particularly those who are being recognized for their outstanding achievements. I wish them all the very best in their future pursuits.

Our government has always recognised that a prosperous, productive and sustainable farm economy is the corner stone of equitable and inclusive growth of our country. We have therefore pursued policies to bring about a comprehensive reform and revitalisation of our agrarian economy.

We have adopted a multi-pronged strategy to improve returns to farming and step up investment in rural infrastructure. Our flagship programme Bharat Nirman has focussed on increasing investment in rural roads, rural electrification, irrigation, rural housing and rural communications. Over

the past seven years we have engineered a shift in the terms of trade in favour of agriculture by raising significantly support and procurement prices. We financed a massive debt write off for indebted farmers of our country. We launched the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme which is both a safety net for the poor and also a powerful instrument for undertaking works that will enhance land productivity. We launched the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana and the Rainfed Areas Development Programme.

These policies have begun to pay off. We have reached new plateaus in foodgrain production. Food production at the end of the 11th Plan will exceed 250 million tonnes, an all time record. Our

pulse production, at 18 million tonnes, is well about the previous barrier of 15 million tonnes. We are producing today more milk, more fruits, more vegetables, more sugarcane, more oilseeds and more cotton than ever before. Last year production of vegetables went up by 9.57% and nearly 2 million tonnes of cold storage capacity was created.

It now looks as if agricultural growth is likely to be about 3.5% per annum during the 11th Five Year Plan which is much better than in the 10th Five Year Plan. This is a commendable achievement but we must improve upon it in the Twelfth Plan to reach 4 percent growth or even higher. This will call for very determined effort on the part of both the central government and the state governments ranging over many areas including investment in irrigation, investment in watershed management, provision of credit, provision of marketing support etc. One of the key elements in that effort must be the contribution of agricultural

Looking beyond the application of known technology, our farm economy needs much greater injection of science and a knowledge-based approach to increasing incomes and productivity.

research and I would like to use this opportunity to focus on this area.

I am aware that at any given time there is a gap between the yield per hectare that is observed in the field and the yields that can be achieved under ideal farming conditions. That difference is quite substantial at present and it represents the failure of the system to exploit the yield potential which our scientists have given us. In the short run it is the job of the administration to close this gap and our agricultural strategy must give high priority to this effort. This is not the job of research scientists but it does involve close collaboration between our scientific and technical manpower and the administration on the ground. We must do better in this area than we have done thus far.

One of our major concerns has been the worry that our extension services system is no longer sufficiently robust. The First Green Revolution was carried out on the back of an effective rural extension and research infrastructure. The joining of hands between panchayats, rural agricultural staff, agricultural scientists and district level officials created the foundation of a robust extension services system. The Indian Agricultural Research Institute and state level institutions were very much a part of this system.

We need now to revitalise this infrastructure of support at the district level. The Krishi Vigyan Kendras which now cover virtually the entire length and breadth of the country and Agricultural Technology Management Agencies (ATMA) have to play a major role in this process of revitalization and transformation of extension network.

The glorious history of institutions such as the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, and the quality of the young minds being trained in it today shows that we have the intellectual and institutional capacity to overcome all challenges.

Looking beyond the application of known technology, our farm economy needs much greater injection of science and a knowledge-based approach to increasing incomes and productivity. Both land and water are limited and it is vital that we make progress in agricultural technology which raises land productivity while also allowing a significant reduction in water use per unit of agricultural output. We need to develop varieties which can ensure high yield while economising on water and are also capable of withstanding water stress. This is as true of crop production as for livestock. We need to develop improved breeds which can flourish in our agro climatic conditions and do not require high value inputs which our farmers cannot afford.

This depends critically upon the health and vitality of our agricultural research system, centring on the ICAR system and state agricultural universities. We owe a great deal to our scientists for what we have achieved in the past. It is due to the dedicated work of our agricultural scientists that we were able to overcome those constraints. I am very happy that Dr. M.S. Swaminathan the father of the Green Revolution in our country is very much present here. But we should not rest on our laurels. We have a long way to go

down this road if we want to assure our farmers of prosperity from the fruits of the land they till.

The National Agricultural Research System needs to be further strengthened to meet the challenges of the years ahead. One requirement of this is the adequacy of financial resources. Our Government is committed to raising R&D spending as a whole to at least 2% of the GDP by the end of the XII Plan from the current level of about 1%. Given the importance that agriculture has in achieving our national goals, we have to ensure that a significant proportion of increased R&D spending is directed to agriculture and related activities.

Resources are only one part of the solution. I also feel our agricultural research system needs to look inward to see whether it is keeping up with developments globally. We had established two Committees to examine the system and make recommendations on how to strengthen it. One of these Committees was headed by Dr Mashelkar and the other by Dr Swaminathan. We need to review the implementation of the recommendations of these committees to see whether all the recommendations they made have been implemented in letter and spirit.

I am particularly keen to ensure that research funding is based on clearly defined research goals which are linked to achieving productivity increases in the field. This calls for a system which focuses on basic research at one end but also encourages a spectrum of activity translating basic research to the development of varieties that meet the needs of our farmers given the circumstances in which they have to operate and their resource constraints.

While the public sector needs to take the lead we also need much greater private sector investment and involvement in agriculture, particularly in R&D. Indeed, it is unlikely that the goal of 2% of GDP in research can be achieved unless a significant part of this is financed by the private sector. Further, greater integration of the agricultural, industrial and Science and Technology sectors of our economy alone can yield large productivity gains based on new innovations and technologies.

We need to promote structured public private partnerships, to foster better synergy among institutions and disciplines. However, for this to happen on an adequate scale, we need to expand the mode of scientific research by funding not just institutions but also research platforms that cut across institutions. Individual researchers and research groups, whether in the National Agricultural Research System, universities, CSIR, scientific establishments or the private sector, should be enabled to form platforms for joint research in key priority areas. These should be funded subject to quality peer review. I am therefore happy that the Indian Council of Agricultural Research has proposed some extra mural funding along these lines in the XIIth Plan.

The institutionalization of an intellectual property rights regime is important for this to happen. Not only must our scientists be rewarded for their innovative work, but an effective IPR regime will also facilitate research partnerships on the basis of sharing of costs and benefits in the larger interest of our economy and society at large. For example, the public sector has invested in a very large collection of genetic material which is of

value to private seed producers. Commercial arrangements could be worked out for use of such knowledge, whose proceeds could be ploughed back into scientific research for public good.

In this context, we must never forget that linkage with farming communities is vital to enhance the efficiency and productivity of our agricultural research system. This would help to blend modern science with traditional knowledge and make the system more responsive to the felt needs of our farmers.

Special attention needs to be paid to the role of women in the farm sector. Women have historically been the source of much traditional knowledge. Thus special efforts have to be made to make the entire R&D chain more gender sensitive and give priority to technological options that reduce the drudgery of women working on the farm.

As we go forward, we have to keep in mind not only the increase in demand for food but the changing composition of that demand. It is estimated that we would need an addition of nearly 50 million tonnes of food grains in the next 10 years to meet domestic demand. Increased production of foodgrains is certainly an important plank of food security and our efforts to rid the country of the scourge of malnutrition.

But proper nutrition also requires a balanced diet. We would need to produce more fruits & vegetables and protein rich products such as milk, eggs, fish and meat. The demand for these products is expected to grow substantially with rising incomes and changing dietary habits and preferences. Therefore we have to pursue a multi-pronged strategy which seeks to boost productivity and

production through product-specific interventions.

I have already mentioned the need to deal with the threat of climate change. Climate change and rising demand for commercial energy are expected to have a significant impact on agriculture in India. Rise in energy demand and continued dependence on fossil-fuel based energy will lead to higher costs of cultivation and also lead to increased carbon emissions.

I am happy to learn that IARI has recently set up a new Centre for Environment Science and Climate Resilient Agriculture to address these issues.

I was a student, like many of you here, in the difficult years of the 1940s and 1950s. Times have changed and we have overcome the fears that plagued our nation at that time. But your generation faces even bigger challenges. We achieved higher agricultural productivity through means that used water very intensively and relied heavily on chemical inputs. And we did not have a looming concern on climate change. Your generation has to tackle all these tasks. Fortunately our economy is now much stronger and we are in a position to support research much more than was the case earlier. I assure you that we will do our bit. The glorious history of institutions such as the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, and the quality of the young minds being trained in it today shows that we have the intellectual and institutional capacity to overcome all challenges. I wish each one of you well in your chosen careers and I have no doubt that you will make a major contribution to creating the new green revolution in the years that lie ahead. May your path be blessed. ❖

FIGHT IT DROP BY DROP

India has just been taken off the World Health Organization (WHO) list of polio-endemic countries. And if the success of not having a single new case over the past year is sustained for another two years, India will finally emerge as a polio-free country. The nation's public health administrators and international agencies deserve praise for this achievement.

This is also perhaps just the right moment to recall the hands-on leadership role of Rajiv Gandhi in kick starting the anti-polio campaign in right earnest. A quarter of a century ago he crafted and launched the Technology Mission on Immunization. It was one of five such landmark initiatives, each of which have had their own impacts — the others being on drinking water, oilseeds, literacy and telecom. Sam Pitroda was entrusted with the overall responsibility of getting these missions going and monitoring their implementation. The then prime minister's instructions on the immunization mission were clear — while it was to cover the six vaccine-preventable childhood diseases (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, tuberculosis, polio and measles), special emphasis should be placed on polio and putting in place a system that would rid the country of this scourge at the earliest. Gandhi's instructions also stressed a focus on the four Bimaru (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and UP), states, a term which he had just about then picked up from the noted demographer Ashish Bose.

The initial months were spent on addressing some basic issues. For instance, it was discovered that polio vaccines were almost entirely imported. Thus, plans were prepared to establish manufacturing facilities within the country and upgrade the existing ones at the Pasteur

Institute at Coonoor and Haffkine Institute at Mumbai. Rajiv Gandhi spearheaded the creation of the



Jairam Ramesh



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Bharat Immunological and Biologicals Corporation Limited (BIBCOL) in Bulandshahr district of UP in 1989, a company that supplies 60% of polio vaccines used in India. It also emerged that epidemiological facilities were not as extensive as they should be and, therefore, a nation-wide network was put in place. Experts like Dr. Jacob John of the Christian Medical College, Vellore called into question the efficacy of the oral polio vaccine (OPV) strategy arguing for the use of the injectable killed polio vaccine (KPV). This debate helped improve the OPV strategy and also led to investments in the KPV area, although these investments were to prove infructuous later.

It was at Gandhi's suggestion that Pitroda also opened a close dialogue with a number of NGOs and

organizations like Rotary International. The latter has played an important role in the pulse polio campaign in the country. Gandhi himself appeared on Doordarshan to administer OPV drops to an infant, images of which began to be used across the country to create awareness and heighten public consciousness for the need to administer the polio vaccine according to the prescribed schedule.

Between September 1987 and November 1989, the prime minister would, from time to time, call in his advisor on technology missions and inquire about their progress. In these reviews he would take a special interest in the polio immunization programme. In one of these

continued on page 26

'AAJMAKE DEKHO!' –M.K.GANDHI (SALT SATYAGRAHA)



**Shobhana
Radhakrishna**

‘Suwaaraj laivene vela avojo!’ (‘come back quickly after attaining independence’) blessed the 105-year-old lady, who wanted to meet the Mahatma. When Gandhi was told about her; he immediately decided to meet her. As he bowed to touch her feet, she withdrew saying Mahatmas’ should not touch people’s feet. Gandhi said that he required her blessings. She did. It was a blessing from all of India.

The blessing echoed through Surat when he declared in a meeting, “I will die a death of a crow or a dog but I will not come back to the ashram till independence is achieved.” The Salt Satyagraha, which had a country wide effect, perhaps was of the greatest significance amongst the non-violent movements for attaining independence of the country.

The 1882 Salt Act gave the British a monopoly on the collection and manufacture of salt, limiting its handling to government salt depots and levying a salt tax. Violation of the Salt Act was a criminal offense. Even though salt was freely available to those living on the coast (by evaporation of sea water), Indians were forced to purchase it from the colonial government.

At midnight on December 31, 1929, the Indian National Congress had raised the tricolour flag of India on the banks of the Ravi at Lahore. The Indian National Congress publicly issued the Declaration of Independence, or ‘Purna Swaraj,’ on January 26, 1930. The declaration included the readiness to withhold taxes, and the statement said:

“The British government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or complete independence.”

The Congress agreed with Gandhi. The reporters questioned his method. What was his strategy? Gandhi said, “I still understand this, and as soon as God helps me comprehend, I shall make the announcement. They said Gandhi was playing a trick and wanted the government to keep guessing till the last moment and will find something at the last minute to surprise them,” and he added. “The only trick I know is that of truth.”

Setting the march in motion

On March 2, 1930 Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, offering to stop the march if he took some action to

indicate that the British intended to give independence or at least a dominion status to India. He listed 11 steps, and abolishing the salt tax was the fourth step. There were many points related to financial matters including reduction of land revenue assessments, cutting military spending, imposing a tariff on foreign cloth. His strongest appeal to Irwin was the salt tax.

“If my letter makes no appeal to your heart, on the eleventh day of this month I shall proceed with such co-workers of the Ashram as I can take, to disregard the provisions of the Salt Laws. I regard this tax to be the most iniquitous of all from the poor man’s standpoint. As the Independence movement is essentially for the poorest in the land, the beginning will be made with this evil.” The Viceroy ignored the letter and refused to meet Gandhi. Gandhi remarked, “On bended knees I asked for bread and I have received stone instead.” The march was set in motion.

Gandhi’s planned to begin civil disobedience with a nationwide Satyagraha aimed at the British salt tax. For Gandhi the salt tax was a deeply symbolic choice, since salt was used by nearly everyone in India, to replace the salt lost by sweating in India’s tropical climate. The Salt tax represented 8.2% of the British Raj tax revenue, and hurt the poorest Indians the most significantly. Explaining his choice, Gandhi said, “Next to air and water, salt is perhaps the greatest necessity of life.” Nobody knew the pulse of the country, the way Gandhiji did. He had proved his unity with the common people of this country.

The eve of the march brought thousands of Indians to the banks of Sabarmati river to hear Gandhi speak at the regular evening prayer. An American academic writing for The Nation reported that, “60,000 persons gathered on the bank of the river to hear Gandhi’s call to arms. This call to arms was perhaps the most remarkable call to war that has ever been made.”

According to the Octogenarian Shri NarayanBhai Desai, who spent 21 years in two of Gandhi’s ashram, “I saw the confluence of efficiency and sincerity in Gandhi leadership during the in Dandi march. When sincerity and efficiency move in the direction of values with each step being taken with certainty then positive strength emerges, Gandhi like strength emerges. He never lost his cool thus increasing his efficiency. As much was the determination, so much was his ability.

Though when Gandhi initially spoke about breaking the

salt tax most of the well known leaders were skeptical; according to them salt was not an issue which would bring independence; and they were demanding complete independence. One such leader wrote a six page typed letter in English to Gandhi expressing his strong reservation about this move. Gandhi simply wrote back on a post card in Hindi to this typed letter in English, 'Aajama ke dekho' (adopt and see).

Later when the whole country got awakened and people offered the greatest sacrifice by breaking the salt law, this leader wrote to the District Collector about his plan of breaking the salt law the next day at 9 am in the main town square. Before dawn, police knocked on his door with his arrest warrant.

The leader wrote on a post card to Gandhi saying, "Aajma ke dekh liya!" (Have adopted and seen!). As a result of this, there was a major change in the atmosphere of the entire country. The British establishment too was not disturbed by these plans of resistance against the salt tax. The Viceroy himself, Lord Irwin, did not take the threat of a salt protest seriously, writing to London, "At present the prospect of a salt campaign does not keep me awake at night."

With a pinch of salt Gandhi prepared the worldwide media for the march by issuing regular statements from Sabarmati, at his regular prayer meetings and through direct contact with the press.

Expectations were heightened by his repeated statements anticipating arrest, and his increasingly dramatic language as the hour approached: 'We are entering upon a life and death struggle, a holy war; we are performing an all-embracing sacrifice in which we wish to offer ourselves as oblation.' Correspondents from Indian, European and American newspapers, along with film companies, responded and began covering the event.

On 12th March 1930, Gandhi along with 79 residents the Sabarmati ashram who were trained in strict standards of discipline, left for this 240 mile (350 km) march with a firm resolve to break the Salt tax Act. The 24-day march would pass through four districts and 48 villages. Gandhi, the practical idealist chose the person who could execute it perfectly. The responsibility of the route of the march, each evening's stopping place, recruitment potential, past contacts, and timing was given to Sardar Patel.

Before the march, 'Arun Tukdi', the team of volunteers would go ahead lead by Gulam Rasool Qureshi to collect the information about the population of the village, daily and yearly consumption of salt by the men, women children including cattle. For so many people they had to

make the arrangements for toilets, venue of meetings and food and all other needs. Gandhi of course made it easier as he insisted that the marchers would eat very simple food. As they entered each village, crowds greeted the marchers, beating drums and cymbals. Gandhi gave speeches attacking the salt tax as inhuman, and the salt satyagraha as a "poor man's battle." Gandhi felt that this would bring the poor into the battle for independence, necessary for eventual victory.



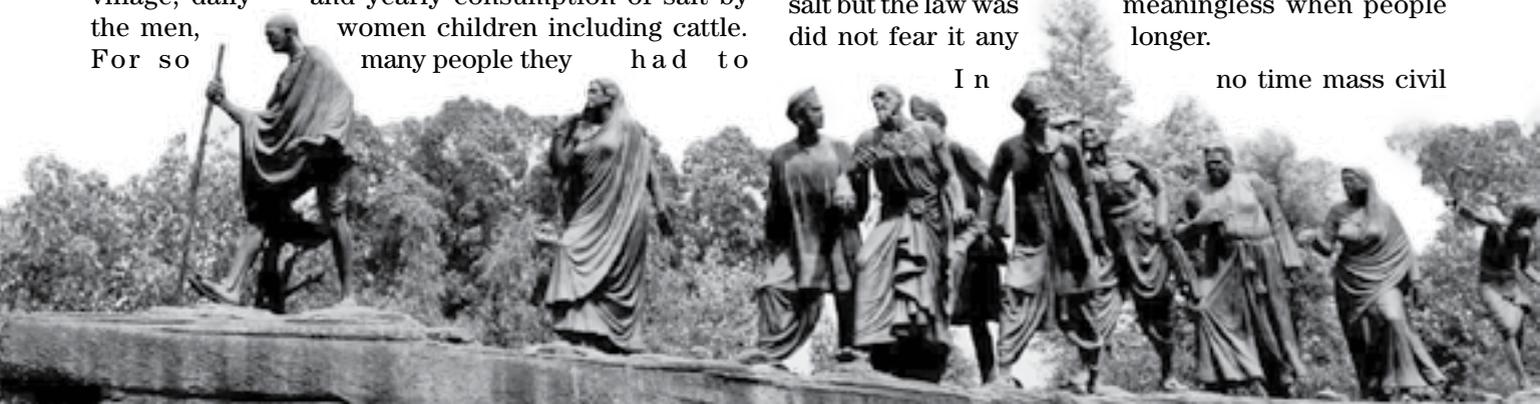
Thousands of satyagrahis and leaders like Sarojini Naidu joined him. Every day, more and more people joined the march, till the procession of marchers became at least two miles long. To keep up their spirits, the marchers used to sing the bhajan 'Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram' while walking. At Surat, they were greeted by 30,000 people. When they reached the railhead at Dandi, more than 50,000 were gathered. Gandhi gave interviews and wrote articles along the way. Foreign journalists made him a household name in Europe and America.

The New York Times wrote almost daily about the Salt March, including two front page articles on April 6 and April 7. Near the end of the march, Gandhi declared, "I want world sympathy in this battle of Right against Might."

The trek of 24 days ended on April 6, 1930 near the seashore in Dandi village; where after a dip in the Indian Ocean Gandhiji lifted a lump of salty mud along with eighty one Satyagrahis and declared, "With this, I am shaking the foundations of the British Empire. He then boiled it in sea water, producing illegal salt. Gandhiji had told the countrymen all through his march that they should begin the civil disobedience movement only after he broke the law. Hundreds of villagers had come with their shovels and bags. He implored them to collect it "wherever it is convenient" and to instruct villagers in making illegal, but necessary, salt. Now the entire country could make salt. The salt that Gandhiji had picked at Dandi was washed and cleaned; it was auctioned in Ahmedabad. Dr. Kanungo was the highest bidder at Rs 1600.

He gave the salt back to the congress committee so that it could be sold again; the same grains were sold three times. It was illegal to buy and sell contraband salt but the law was meaningless when people did not fear it any longer.

In no time mass civil



disobedience spread throughout India as wildfire; millions broke the Salt laws by making salt or buying illegal salt. There were innumerable homes where contraband salt was being made. There were reports of the civil disobedience from eight districts in Bihar by April 23. There were 550 salt making centers in Champaran district alone. The police beat Ukabhai, a volunteer from Aat village, near Dandi, as he held tight to the salt that he had collected. The enraged villagers, unable to bear the sight had jumped down to collect salt. Gandhiji was gladdened by this response. The struggle was not meant for the volunteers alone, it was for all the people.

A week after breaking the salt law, Gandhiji addressed the Gujarati Women's conference at Dandi; another conference was called in Vejalpur on 16th April. Women were entrusted with the special task of picketing liquor booths and shops selling foreign goods. They were also asked to hawk Khadi. Never before had women come out in such large numbers in India for a social cause. On the call of Gandhiji, the women of India responded through their patience, courage and sacrifice.

What had begun as a Salt Satyagraha quickly grew into a mass Satyagraha. British cloth and goods were boycotted. Unpopular forest laws were defied in the Maharashtra, Karnatic, and Central Provinces. Gujarati peasants refused to pay tax, under threat of losing their crops and land. In Midnapore, Bengalis took part by refusing to pay the chowkidar tax. The British responded with more laws, including censorship of correspondence and declaring the Congress and its associate organizations illegal. None of those measures slowed the civil disobedience movement.

The most brutal events took place in the North West frontier Province. In Peshawar, Satyagraha was led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who was deeply influenced by Gandhiji's ideals of Ahimsa and taught non-violence and started the 'Khudai Khidmatgar' movement. He cited illustrations from the Holy Koran. He taught them the value of non-violence, abandonment and sacrifice. On April 23, 1930, Badshah Khan as he was fondly called by the pure and religious minded Pakhtuns because of his pious and simple life was arrested

The British ordered troops to open fire with machine guns on the unarmed crowd, killing an estimated 200-250 Khudai Khidmatgar. The Pashtun satyagrahis acted in accordance with their training in nonviolence, willingly facing bullets on their chest as the troops fired on them. One British Indian Army regiment, troops of the renowned Royal Garhwal Rifles, refused to fire at the crowds. The entire platoon was arrested and court marshaled. Many received heavy penalties

The reports that Gandhi received from across the country made him realize that the government was unperturbed by the sacrifice of the civil resisters. He felt that the penance must become sharper. He used the word 'raid' for his intended action at Dharasana Salt Works in Gujarat,

25 miles south of Dandi. His raid was to be perfectly non-violent. He wrote to Lord Irwin, again telling him of his plans and the particular date on which they would raid the salt pans. Around midnight of May 4, Gandhi was arrested at Karadi Matwad village under Regulation 25 of 1827 calling for the jailing of people engaged in unlawful activities, and held without trial near Pune. The District Magistrate of Surat drove up with two Indian officers and 30 heavily-armed constables.

The Dharasana Satyagraha went ahead as planned under the leadership of Abbas Tyabji a seventy-six year old retired judge. He and Kasturba were arrested before reaching Dharasana and both were sentenced to three months in prison. The Satyagraha then was lead by Sarojini Naidu. She said to the Satyagrahis, "You must not use any violence under any circumstances. You will be beaten, but you must not resist: you must not even raise a hand to ward off blows." Soldiers began clubbing the Satyagrahis with steel tipped lathis in an incident that attracted international attention as Vithalbhai Patel, former Speaker of the Assembly, watched the beatings and remarked, "All hope of reconciling India with the British Empire is lost forever."

Salt Satyagraha produced scant progress toward dominion status or independence for India, and did not win any major concessions from the British. Indian, British, and world opinion increasingly began to recognize the legitimacy for independence. The Satyagraha campaign of the 1930s also forced the British to recognize that their control of India depended entirely on the consent of the Indians - Salt Satyagraha was a significant step in the British losing that consent. The pious sacrifice of Dharasana created conditions that allowed a representative of the enslaved people to negotiate with the representative of the Empire as an equal in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact.

Gandhiji and his Satyagraha managed to shake the country out of its slumber and inertia.

He awakened the conscience of India during these sixteen years between 1915-1931. Gandhi was forty five years old in 1915 and he was sixty one in 1931. Compared to South Africa, in India his sphere of work was manifold, challenges before him were grave and with this, his experience matured. Purity of conscience requires sadhana and this he had learnt during his years in South Africa. He made public admission of his mistakes and probed himself further.

In today's time it is imperative that the time tested principles of non-violence, truth and purity of means to rise against injustice is the only way out. Gandhiji's last testimony has spelt out the course of action for us; Purna swaraj, can only be realized through the non-violent, face to face society that Gandhi had talked about for restoring the dignity of the poorest of the poor millions of India through self less service. March 9, 2012 ❖

GREENS AND THE FOREIGN HAND

N. R. KRISHNAN

The PM is right; environment has emerged as a bogey to derail India's growth.

Vitas Gerulaitis once dropped his racquet in utter surprise when he heard a usually well-mannered Bjorn Borg letting out an expression of disgust. The nation feels that way at the Prime Minister's recent remarks against some sections of the civil society (read NGOs). He was feeling quite anguished over the continued agitation to stall efforts to commission the Kudankulam atomic power plant. For a gentleman like him, it must have needed great provocation to accuse foreign NGOs of funding the agitation. His exasperation is, perhaps, all the more, that the agitation is continuing despite the best efforts of the central government to convince the local people that the plant would present no health-related risks.

SAFETY ASPECTS

True, that serious accidents had occurred in nuclear power plants in the US (the Three Mile Island), in the former Soviet Russia (Chernobyl) or, in recent times, in Japan (Fukushima), but the Indian government and independent experts have assured the public repeatedly of the safety aspects of India's nuclear plants and their impeccable record. The Government's insistence on nuclear power is an integral part of its policy to add additional electricity generating capacity to feed the country's rapidly growing power needs, keeping in mind India's commitment to the global community to reduce,

progressively, the energy intensity of its GDP growth, and in turn, the carbon intensity as a part of its "common but differentiated responsibility" to combat global warming under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

India is a party to the Convention. Promoting nuclear power generation is, thus, a part of power planning, as well as of environmentally sustainable economic development. It is for this reason that more than 60 nuclear reactors are being constructed around the globe,

Copying examples from abroad without assessing their relevance to local conditions also can distort a developing country's environmental priorities.

and according to the International Atomic Energy Agency, the share of nuclear energy in electricity generation is only set to grow.

But not long ago, we witnessed an agitation against the Jaitapur atomic power plant to be set up in Maharashtra. Earlier, the Jaduguda Uranium mines in Jharkhand had been the target of local public anger and opposition smouldered on prospecting operations to assess the extent of the relatively-rich nuclear mineral deposits in Andhra Pradesh. All these instances have gone to weaken India's efforts to attain a modicum of self-sufficiency in fissile material, and embark upon additions to its electricity-

generating capacity through nuclear power. In the process, they have also gone to undermine India's strategy to reduce its carbon footprint.

If nuclear power is a valuable component of the package of clean and safe energy sources, then opposition to it by the so-called environmentalists is difficult to understand. They claim to be knowledgeable of the possible risks of the operation of a nuclear power plant but wouldn't let any contrary view, however much based on science and technology, to be expressed. Their reluctance or total negation to lend an ear to others' views passes one's comprehension. The sad part is that the lay public, fed with half truths, falls victim to the NIMBY (Not in my backyard) syndrome.

TRADE WAR

Ever since the beginning of the global environmental movement in 1972, the potential of environmental concerns being used as an economic, trade or commercial weapon has been recognised. Despite repeated assurances to the contrary, developed countries have employed such concerns in the form of trade barriers to prevent or restrict imports into their territories of goods from developing countries, in maintaining their technological superiority and global market share of their exports, by hindering transfer of technologies even of

Environmental problems that may possibly arise should be anticipated on the basis of experience with similar projects elsewhere, and suitable safeguards built into the projects from the very beginning, and monitored strictly once the projects get underway.

the green variety by invoking intellectual property rights and resorting to concerted campaigns to delay or abort developmental initiatives in the developing realm.

In the 1990s, India's shrimp exports were made to carry certificates of the catch having been landed using turtle excluding devices to save turtles from being caught in the fishing nets, a trade protection measure introduced in the garb of conservation. The recently-introduced carbon tax on aircraft emissions in the EU is an example of climate change concerns being used as a commercial weapon. More than 20 nations, including the US and India, have protested against the measure.

ENVIRONMENT CONCERNS

Copying examples from abroad without assessing their relevance to local conditions also can distort a developing country's environmental priorities. In India, DDT was used mainly in the Malaria Eradication programme with much success. It isn't denied that organochlorine compounds, a family of chemicals to which DDT belongs, are harmful to humans, birds and some other animals alike, if used indiscriminately. But discontinuance of its use in public health operations in India, without

an equally-effective and cheap substitute, has only led to the recrudescence of the disease, that lays down millions morbid and leads to the mortality of lakhs of poor, not only in India, but in many developing countries.

In India, whenever environmental concerns are piled up against any project, the "Precautionary Principle" is invoked to

err on the safe side and abandon the project. This principle, which forms part of Agenda 21 of the Rio Declaration (1992), states that, "In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by states according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, want of full scientific certainty shall not be used for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation."

The precautionary principle needs to be used judiciously, and not indiscriminately. Environmental problems that may possibly arise should be anticipated on the basis of experience with similar projects elsewhere, and suitable safeguards built into the projects from the very beginning, and monitored strictly once the projects get underway. A cost-benefit analysis of the gains of a project and the environmental losses that may result can be carried out, and wherever the gains are less or only marginally higher than the losses, it would be prudent to abandon the proposal.

Displacement of large populations, diversion of vast acres of forests or areas rich in wild life, irreversible damage to aquifers, and damage to monuments of archaeological,

historic or religious importance could be cited as examples of instances where one needs to tread with caution before embarking upon any development. Where it is difficult to put a price tag on the environmental loss, then a value judgement will have to be made to allow the project or not. But jettisoning every project on the specious ground of precautionary approach is unacceptable in a developing country. ❖

(The author is former Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India.)

continued from page 21

FIGHT IT DROP BY DROP

interactions he lamented the fact that with two-third of all cases in the world, India had the highest incidence of polio and remarked that if we could eradicate smallpox why can't we do the same in the case of polio? It is this personal commitment of his to this noble cause that motivated all those who worked in the mission during that exciting period.

However, while we celebrate the most recent accomplishment on the polio front, let us not get lulled into complacency. Immunization coverage overall remains pathetically low in large parts of the country. We remain vulnerable on this score. And many of India's public health concerns can be addressed meaningfully only when we give increased importance to public investments in drinking water supply (particularly quality) and sanitation, something we recognise in theory but have yet to make an operational reality on any significant scale.

Jairam Ramesh is Union Rural Development Minister and was associated with the Technology Missions during 1987-89. ❖

DEEPENING DEMOCRACY: ROLE OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP



Dr Ranjana Kumari

There can be no real “empowerment” if there is no access to power. And with caste, class and religion, distinctions that are inherent in Indian society, holding sway, such an empowerment may be difficult to achieve but, I may add the proviso, if women stand shoulder to shoulder in fighting for their legitimate rights. The distinctions mentioned do influence the way the people live, the opportunities open to them, their attitude towards and from others. There is one horizontal division that further determines an individual However absurd and unreal it may seem, the reality of it is that something as simple as a person's gender dictates the quality of life in India. As a saying goes:

“The emotional, sexual, and psychological stereotyping of females begins when the doctor says, ‘It's a girl’.”

India is not an exception to the rule. All over the world, women are uniting and campaigning to raise awareness and build capacities to change the male dominated societies and practices that govern every aspect of their individual life. Yet, sadly, inequalities continue to exist. Institutionally speaking, women's legal rights have been codified.

One aspect that we believe to be important is ironing out the imbalance in decision-making. When women are involved in decisions, they are involved in life. It is necessary to be able to fully influence the life that one leads, instead of passively accepting the life thrust upon one. Significant progress was made when the 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments of 1993 brought one million women into politics. The Amendments stipulate that no less than one-third of seats in all Panchayati Raj institutions, India's local governance bodies, should be reserved for and be occupied by women. Such progress is a step in the direction of change, change of norms, of perceptions, of patriarchal traditions, of women's lives. However, we cannot stop at domestic and local levels in terms of our campaign. We must aim at the uppermost tier of decision-making, that of national legislative politics.

Women's equal rights and status is enshrined in the constitution of India. Article 15 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, whilst Articles 325 states that “no person

to be ineligible for inclusion in, or to claim to be included in a special, electoral roll on grounds of religion, race, caste or sex” and article 326 asserts that “elections to the House of the People and to the Legislative Assemblies of States to be on the basis of adult suffrage” guaranteeing political equality to all Indian men and women. Yet, gender inequality remains pervasive throughout the county and women continue to face social, economic and political discrimination.

Women's political representation in India's Parliament and State assemblies is reflective of gender relations within the country. Despite making up 48% of India's population and 47.5% of the registered voting population, in 2011 only 11% of lower house seats and 10.7% of upper house seats in national parliaments were held by women. In 2009 women made up only 9.9% of Cabinet Ministers and 11.1% of Ministers of State. In the same year only 7% of the candidates contesting the Lok Sabha elections in Haryana were women.

In contrast to state and national parliaments, women's participation in local governing bodies at the Panchayat level much higher. The 73rd amendment to the Indian Constitution was passed in 1992 and reserved 33% of seats at the Panchayat level for women. In 2006-7 10 lakh women held positions in the Panchayati Raj institutions, 37% of all those elected. In some states the reservations of seats for women has been increased beyond 33% and in states such as Bihar, which has 50% reservation, women made up 54% of all elected representatives at the Panchayat level.

Participation in the Panchayati Raj has improved elected women's self confidence as well as the status of women throughout the community. 79% of elected women now experience higher self-esteem, 81% are more confident, and 74% have developed stronger decision-making abilities. Furthermore, 67% of Pradhans or Ward Members feel their new role has increased their level of respect within the family. Whilst 82% feel they are more respected within the wider community as “more attention is paid to them when they take up local issues with the concerned officials.”

At a global level, women's political participation also



"We are fulfilling the vision of Shri. Rajiv Gandhi by supporting 33 per cent of seat reservation for women"

–Smt. Sonia Gandhi,



"I am very happy. It is not me the Congress president managing it, it is the PM, my colleagues, my Congress party, of course especially the woman of our party. And it's not just women in Parliament, it's women throughout the country. And I am particularly happy because women of our country are going to get reservation in Parliament. 33 per cent, which is quite a bit."

**- Sonia Gandhi to NDTV
on Women's Reservation Bill
passed in Rajya Sabha in March 2010**

mirrors unequal gender relations. The Global Gender Gap Index 2011 shows that no country in the world has yet reached equality between women and men. More than 90 countries around the world have instituted quotas and other positive measures for inclusion of women in politics. Such affirmative action has broken barriers and encouraged a greater participation of women in the democratic functioning of their nation. However, Rwanda and Andorra are the only countries where women hold at least 50% of the seats in the lower house. Furthermore, in one third of counties across the world women still constitute less than 15% of members of parliament. Women are also largely absent from the highest levels of governance. In January 2012, women accounted for 5.3% of elected heads of state and 7.3% of elected heads of government.

Whilst India is ranked quite highly on this global scale of women's political empowerment this does not

mean that the country has, or is close to, achieving equal political participation for women. As I indicated earlier women make up approximately 11% of India's parliamentary representatives. Therefore, India's high ranking does not reflect positively on the countries achievements for women's leadership rather it highlights the poor state of women's political leadership across the world and should demonstrate a desperate need for the promotion and facilitation of women's political participation and empowerment on a global scale.

Several international conventions guarantee women's equal political rights and support the increasing of women's political participation. These include the 1952 Convention on the political rights of the women which highlights the equal rights of men and women; the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which ensures women's equal opportunity to participate in public life including the right to vote and stand for election; and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action which outlines the importance of equality in decision-making for women's empowerment. However, the implementation of these conventions is not being adequately monitored and many signatory counties, including India, are not upholding the standards outlined

within the agreements. Currently, 95 countries have constitutional, electoral or political party quotas for women.

The enhancement of the role of women in public life was first conceived by Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi, who gave 33% reservation for women in the panchayats and local and self-government. It was the first real step in women empowerment. Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi keeping in the footsteps of Rajivji and to fulfill his pledge, got the Women Reservation Bill introduced in the Rajya Sabha.

Once made a law it would be a historic change in the role of women in India, which have lived in a male dominated society from time immemorial. ❖

The author is a Member, National Mission for Empowerment of Women, Government of India

LIST OF SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

The following are the list of successful candidates of Assemblies elections 2012.

GOA

S.n.	Const. Name & No.	Candidate
1	Cumbarjua 15	Pandurang A. Madkaikar
2	Curtorim 29	Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco
3	Dabolim 26	Mauvin Heliodoro Godinho
4	Margao 31	Digambar Kamat
5	Poriem 18	Pratapsingh Raoji Rane
6	Quepem 36	Chandrakant Kavalekar
7	St. Cruz 13	Atanasio J. Monserrate
8	Taleigao 12	Jennifer A. Monserrate
9	Valpoi 19	Vishwajit Pratapsingh Rane

MANIPUR

S.n.	Const. Name & No.	Candidate
1	Bishnupur 26	Konthoujam Govindas
2	Chingai (st) 45	M.K. Preshow
3	Churachandpur (st) 58	Phungzathang Tonsing
4	Heingang 2	N. Biren
5	Heirok 33	Moirangthem Okendro
6	Henglep (st) 57	T.Manga Vaiphei
7	Jiribam 40	Thoudam Debendra Singh
8	Kakching 37	Yengkhom Surchandra Singh
9	Khangabok 35	Okram Landhoni Devi
10	Khundrakpam 1	Thokchom Lokeshwar Singh
11	Khurai 3	Dr. Ng. Bijoy Singh
12	Kshetrigao 4	Md. Amin Shah
13	Kumbi 29	Sanasam Bira Singh
14	Lamlai 8	Kshetrimayum Biren Singh
15	Lamsang 17	Wangkheimayum Brajabidhu Singh
16	Lilong 30	Md. Abdul Nasir
17	Mayang imphal 23	Khumujam Ratankumar Singh
18	Moirang 27	Mairembam Prithviraj Singh
19	Nambol 24	Nameirakpam Loken Singh
20	Naoriya pakhanglakpa 21	R.K. Anand
21	Nungba (st) 54	Gaikhangam
22	Patsoi 19	Akoijam Mirabai Devi
23	Phungyar (st) 43	Victor Keishing
24	Saikot (st) 59	T.N.Haokip
25	Saikul (st) 46	Yamthong Haokip
26	Saitu (st) 51	Ngamthang Haokip
27	Sekmai 16	Khwaitrakpam Devendro Singh
28	Singhat (st) 60	Ginsuanhau
29	Singjamei 13	Irengbam Hemochandra Singh
30	Sugnu 39	Kangujam Ranjit Singh
31	Tadubi (st) 49	Francis Ngajokpa

32	Tamei (st) 52	Z.Kikhonbou Newmai
33	Tengnoupal (st) 42	D. Korungthang
34	Thanga 28	Tongbram Mangibabu
35	Thanlon (st) 56	Vungzagin Valte
36	Thoubal 31	Okram Ibohi Singh
37	Tipaimukh (st) 55	Dr.Chaltonlien Amo
38	Uripok 10	L. Nandakumar Singh
39	Wabgai 36	Md. Fajur Rahim
40	Wangkhei 15	Yumkham Erabot Singh
41	Wangkhem 32	Keisham Meghachandra Singh
42	Yaikul 14	Elangbam Chand Singh

PUNJAB

S.n.	Const. Name & No.	Candidate
1	Abohar 81	Sunil Kumar Jakhar
2	Amloh 56	Randeep Singh
3	Amritsar Central 17	Om Parkash Soni
4	Amritsar West 16	Raj Kumar
5	Banga 46	Tarlochan Singh
6	Barnala 103	Kewal Singh Dhillon
7	Batala 7	Ashwani Sekhri
8	Bhadaur 102	Mohammed Sadique
9	Bhucho Mandi 91	Ajaib Singh Bhatti
10	Chamkaur Sahib 51	Charanjit Singh Channi
11	Dera baba nanak 10	Sukhjinder Singh
12	Dhuri 107	Arvind Khanna
13	Dina Nagar 5	Aruna Chaudhary
14	Fatehgarh Churian 9	Tripat Rajinder Singh Bajwa
15	Fatehgarh Sahib 55	Kuljit Singh Nagra
16	Firozpur City 76	Parminder Singh Pinki
17	Gidderbaha 84	Amrinder Singh Raja Warring
18	Guru har sahai 78	Gurmeet Singh Sodhi
19	Hoshiarpur 43	Sunder Sham Arora
20	Jaitu 89	Joginder Singh
21	Kapurthala 27	Rana Gurjit Singh
22	Khadoor Sahib 24	Ramanjit Singh Sikki
23	Khanna 57	Gurkirat Singh
24	Kharar 52	Jagmohan Singh
25	Lehra 99	Rajinder Kaur Bhattal
26	Ludhiana central 63	Surinder Kumar Dawar
27	Ludhiana North 65	Rakesh Panday
28	Ludhiana West 64	Bharat Bhushan Ashu
29	Mehal kalan 104	Harchand Kaur
30	Moga 73	Joginder Pal Jain
31	Muktsar 86	Karan Kaur
32	Nabha 109	Sadhu Singh
33	Nawan shahr 47	Guriqbal Kaur
34	Patiala 115	Amarinder Singh
35	Patiala Rural 110	Brahm Mohindra

36	Qadian 6	Charanjit Kaur Bajwa
37	Raikot 69	Gurcharan Singh
38	Raja sansi 12	Sukhbinder Singh Sarkaria
39	Rajpura 111	Hardyal Singh Kamboj
40	S.A.S.Nagar 53	Balbir Singh Sidhu
41	Samrala 58	Amrik Singh
42	Sanour 114	Lal Singh
43	Sardulgarh 97	Ajit Inder Singh
44	Sultanpur lodhi 28	Navtej Singh
45	Talwandi Sabo 94	Jeetmohinder Singh Sidhu
46	Urmar 41	Sangat Singh

UTTAR PRADESH

S.n.	Const. Name & No.	Candidate
1	Allahabad North 262	Anugrah Narayan Singh
2	Banda 235	Vivek Kumar Singh
3	Bilaspur 36	Sanjay Kapoor
4	Gangoh 7	Pardeep Kumar
5	Hapur 59	Gajraj Singh
6	Jagdishpur 184	Radhey Shyam
7	Jaunpur 366	Nadeem Javed
8	Kalpi 220	Umakanti
9	Khadda 329	Vijay Kumar Dubey
10	Khurja 70	Banshi Singh Pahadiya
11	Kidwai Nagar 215	Ajay Kapoor
12	Lucknow Cantt. 175	Prof. Rita Bahuguna Joshi
13	Marihan 399	Laliteshpati Tripathi
14	Mathura 84	Pradeep Mathur
15	Nanpara 283	Madhuri Verma
16	Nautanwa 316	Kaushal Kishor
17	Payagpur 287	Mukesh Srivastava Alias G.Pratap
18	Pindra 384	Ajay
19	Rampur Khas 244	Pramod Kumar
20	Rath 229	Gayadeen Anuragi
21	Rudhauri 309	Sanjay Pratap Jaiswal
22	Rudrapur 336	Akhilesh Pratap Singh
23	Shamli 10	Pankaj Kumar Malik
24	Suar 34	Nawab Kazim Ali Khan Urf Naved Mian
25	Syana 66	Dilnawaz Khan
26	Tamkuhi Raj 331	Ajay Kumar 'Laloo'
27	Tiloi 178	Dr. Mohd. Muslim
28	Tindwari 232	Daljeet Singh

UTTARAKHAND

S.N.	Const. Name & No.	Candidate
1	Almora 52	Manoj Tiwari
2	Badrinath 4	Rajendra Singh Bhandri
3	Bajpur 64	Yashpal Arya
4	Chakrata 15	Pritam Singh
5	Champawat 55	Sri Hemesh Kharkwal
6	Dharampur 18	Dinesh Agarwal
7	Dharchula 42	Harish Dhani

8	Dwarahat 48	Madan Singh Bisht
9	Gangolihat 45	Narayanram Arya
10	Gangotri 3	Vijaipal Singh Sajwan
11	Haldwani 59	Indira Hridyesh
12	Jageshwar 53	Govind Singh Kunjwal
13	Jaspur 62	Dr. Shailendra Mohan Singhal
14	Kapkote 46	Lalit Farswan
15	Karnprayag 6	Ansuya Prasad Maikhuri
16	Kedarnath 7	Shaila Rani Rawat
17	Khanpur 32	Kunwar Pranav Singh Champion
18	Kotdwar 41	Surendra Singh Negi
19	Nainital 58	Sarita Arya
20	Narendranagar 11	Subodh Uniyal
21	Pauri 37	Sunder Lal Mandrawal
22	Pirankaliyar 30	Furkan Ahmad
23	Pithoragarh 44	Mayukh Singh
24	Pratapnagar 12	Vikram Singh Negi
25	Raipur 19	Umesh Sharma (Kau)
26	Rajpur Road 20	Rajkumar
27	Ramnagar 61	Amrita Rawat
28	Roorkee 31	Pardeep Batra
29	Rudraprayag 8	Harak Singh Rawat
30	Srinagar 38	Ganesh Godiyal
31	Tharali 5	Dr Jeet Ram
32	Vikasnagar 16	Nav Prabhat

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STATESWATCH

ANDHRA PRADESH Remembering Dandi March

Hyderabad: Congressmen and the Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee Linguistic Minority Cell celebrated the 82nd anniversary of the famous 'Dandi March'.

It was Mahatma Gandhi who ventured upon the Dandi March to begin his Salt Satyagraha to start the civil disobedience movement in 1930 to achieve Purna Swaraj. The march was from Sabarmati Ashram near Ahmadabad to the sea shore near the village of Dandi. Gandhi chose the 1882 British Salt Act as the first target of satyagraha. Others who have participated in the above programme are S/S Murali Mohan Singh, Prakash Chand Srivastav, Tuljaram Chaudhary, Syed Afsar Ali, Sanjeev, etc.

Tributes to Smt Sarojini Naidu

Hyderabad: Congressmen, led by Shri Ashok Singh, Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Congress Linguistic Minority Cell paid floral tributes to Smt. Sarojini Naidu on her death anniversary. Mr. Ashok Singh described Sarojini Naidu a great patriot, politician, orator and administrator on 2nd March, 2012.



Others who paid tributes included Shri Murali Mohan Singh, Shri Vishesh Sharma, Shri Prakash Chandra Srivastav, Shri Tuljaram Chowdhary, Shri Syed Afsar Ali and G. Nandu Kumar.

Homage to Dr. Rajendra Prasad

Hyderabad: the Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee Linguistic Minority Cell under its chairman, Shri Ashok Singh paid homage to the first President of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad on his 49th death anniversary here on 28th February, 2012.



Floral tributes were paid to his photograph and Shri Ashok Singh garlanded the photo of Shri Rajendra Prasad. Late Rajendra Prasad is the only president in India to have been elected twice for the post. Others who paid homage were Shri Murali Mohan Singh, Shri Prakash Chand Srivastav, Shri Srinivas Somani, Shri Dharam Chand, Shri Shailender Singh, Shri Syed Afzar Ali, Shri Sanjeev, Shri Ashrith Jaiswal and Mateen.

BIHAR Worker's Meeting

Gopalganj: A meeting of the party workers under the presidentship of elected District Congress Committee president, Smt. Raj Kumari Gupta.

In the meeting it was decided that all party workers make a vow to take



the Congress achievements to the people and thereby making the party strong and also the hands of the party leadership.

CHHATTISHGARH 350th Operation

Raipur: The Chhattisgarh Pradesh Congress Committee Handicap Cell under the leadership of its president Mahendra Kochhar carried out a free check-up and operation camp for children with split lips here on 24th February, 2012.

The Cell has been doing such



operations and this happened to be the 350th operation by the Cell. Shri Gopal Thovait and Shri Santosh Dubey were the chief guests at this camp who also distributed free bags to the children.

MADHYA PRADESH 20 thousand congress workers arrested in Shah Nagar

Shahnagar: A huge public meeting



was organized on the occasion of Shabri Jayanti by the Congress member of District Panchayat at Shah Nagar in Panna District of Madhya Pradesh on 28th February. AICC Secretary Shri Pankaj Sharma was the chief guest. While addressing the public meeting, he said that each one

of the Congress worker will unitedly fight the election battle against BJP in 2013 and the incumbent state government will be thrown out. He told the highly charged 20 thousand plus crowd that he is touring every district of Madhya Pradesh and found a deep sense of anger against the BJP Government and people's will to bring back Congress in power. Shri Pankaj Sharma said that all the Congress workers must play their role with utmost honesty under the leadership of Smt Sonia Gandhi and Shri Rahul Gandhi. The other



speakers who addressed the gathering include PCC General Secretary and the observer for the programme Shri Rajendra Mishra, former state home minister Capt. Jaipal Singh, woman tribal leader Smt Kaushalya Gotiya, former MP Shri Chandrabhan Singh, former MLA Shri Sunil Mishra, Arun Latoria, Ghanshyam Sharma, Azad Shaheed Khan, Ms. Manju Mishra, Indu Tiwari, etc. Hundreds of workers from Gondwana Party, BJP and BSP joined the Congress on this occasion. After 7 hours long public meeting, Pankaj Sharma and Anil Tiwari with thousands of people present proceeded to put lock on District Collector's office. They all were detained after few tense moments and sent to jail. Late in the evening district administration announced that 22,382 persons have been arrested and it is not possible to provide food to all and hence release them unconditionally.

Adivasi Conference

Jabalpur: The Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee organized an Adivasi Conference under the banner of All India Adivasi Shabri Mahasangh here on 24th February, 2012 which is also the anniversary of Shabri. The



Adivasi conference also organized community wedding.

The chief guest at the conference was MPCC president, Shri Kantilal Bhuria while All India Mahila Congress president, Smt. Anita Verma presided over the function. Shri Rameshwar Nikhra, former MP, and Mahila Congress national secretary, Smt. Pushpa Chauhan were the special guests.

According to former AICC secretary, Ms. Kaushalya Gontia around 45



Adivasi couples were married off. Adivasi representatives from all over India participated in this conference.

Shri Bhuria exhorted the Adivasi community to get united and by this they would achieve their demands. Shri Bhuria also spoke about the schemes started by UPA government at the Centre and how these schemes affect the lives of Adivasis. He also spoke about the middlemen who did not allow the benefits of these schemes to reach the Adivasi community.

Smt. Anita Verma stressed for educating the girl child so that awakening comes in the life of Adivasi community and that they too enjoy the benefits of progress and overcome most of their problems.

The conference was a huge success and was attended by a large gathering.

RAJASTHAN Sandesh Yatra

Ajmer: The Youth Congress of Beawar, Ajmer took out the Sandesh Yatra on the completion of successful three years by the Congress government of Rajasthan under Chief Minister, Shri Ashok Gehlot.

The yatra, taken out to enlighten



the people about the progressive steps taken by the state government, was flagged off by Rajasthan PCC president, Shri (Dr.) Chandrabhan. When the yatra reached Bhim Vidhan Sabha constituency, it was welcomed by Union Minister, Shri Sachin Pilot and Dr. Girija Vyas, MP.

Others present in the yatra were Shri Chetan Chauhan, Shri Jagdish Prasad Sharma, Shri Narendra Sahini, Shri Naurat Gurjar, Shri Sarvesh Parikh, Shri Jetendra Rajawat, Shri Surendra Yadav, Shri Deep Singh, Shri Kathat Sohan, Shri Manish Vyas and Shri Vijay Nagora.

Meeting of office-bearers held

Jaipur: The first-ever meeting of the office-bearers of the Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee was held here on 17th February, 2012 at the residence of Chief Minister, Shri Ashok Gehlot.

Though the PCC chief Shri Chandrabhan is covering the agenda of the meeting with discussions on party's flagship programmes with senior leaders and office bearers, he claims it was a brainstorming session for the ministers.

A senior party office bearer, said like the ministers, PCC office bearers are also given responsibility of a district by the party. Moreover, all

the respective district in-charges appointed by the PCC have received a number of complaints against party ministers and bureaucrats for not paying heed to requests, he added.

Issues like electricity, health, transfers, etc were also discussed at the meeting. The party workers and local leaders are complaining over irregular electricity supply, absence of doctors in their areas, government officials and ministers snubbing their voices, the office bearer added.

The party workers at almost every meeting of the PCC are complaining that ministers are not communicating regarding their visits, he added.

In a number of instances, the party workers have said that during the time of elections, the candidates request support, but once elected they do not come back.

“Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot does not want any unwarranted situation during the visits and wants the organization and the government to work in tandem,” he added.

Meanwhile, the Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee has sent a date-wise report of party activities held during the month of February, 2012.

Prominent in the report were the details of a political meeting in Neem ka Thana and in Kheldi. It also mentioned about the meeting of the office-bearers under the presidency of PCC president, Dr. Chandrabhan.

A political meeting was also held in Kekadi which was attended by AICC General Secretary, Shri Mukul Wasnik, who is also the state incharge, Union Minister, Shri Sachin Pilot, PCC president, Dr. Chandra Bhan, Chief Minister, Shri Ashok Gehlot and Dr. Raghu, MLA also addressed the meeting.

Membership Drive

Jodhpur: Sarafa Bazar City Congress Committee Vidhan Sabha constituency president Shri Ahmad Mehar started the membership drive with the acceptance of membership form from Shir Jugal Kabra here on 22nd February, 2012.



Shri Kabra said that he was glad that he has become the part of that party which made sacrifices for the independence of our country and great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Smt. Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi had placed strong foundation for unity and integrity of the nation which is also the largest democracy in the world.

Shri Kabra said that Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Shri Ashok Gehlot has brought waves of development by implementing people's welfare programmes and thus we should join more and more people with the Congress Party in this membership drive.

UTTAR PRADESH People remember Guru Redas

Azamgarh: The people here celebrated the birthday of Sant Shiromani Guru Redas and on this occasion the former president of the Uttar Pradesh Mahila Congress, Smt. (Dr.) Lalti Devi shed light on the life of Sant Redas.

Smt. Lalti Devi said that Sant Redas was an example of love, truth and divine knowledge. Also present were former minister Shri Dalsagar Yadav, Shri Rajguru Mishr, Shri Banne Khan, Shri Laldhar Ram, Shri Dinesh Yadav



with others.

Tributes to Netaji

Firozabad: Congressmen under the leadership of City Congress Sewa Dal president, Shri Nurul Huda Lala Rhyne Gandhi celebrated the 115th birthday of Subhash Chandra Bose here on 23rd January, 2012. He urged the people to adopt the ideals of Netaji for the welfare of the country.



Congressmen paid tributes to Shri Bose by offering flowers and garlands to his photograph. Prominently present were Sunita Shukla, Ghulam Jhalani, Aarti Mishra, Osama, Bhura Farookhi, Shafat Khan Raju, Nasir Ahmed with many others.

Generous Effort

Unnao: In a recent fire around two dozen dwelling units were devastated in Khannapurva village in Sikandarpur Karn Block here on 11th March, according to organizer, Shri Vivek Shukla.

Around two dozen families were rendered homeless and without shelter. Because of the Election code of conduct being in force, no help could be provided to the affected families from the local NGO (HNDCT) run by Smt. Anu Tandon, MP.

The affected families were provided all kind of help like food, clothes, utensils, tarpoline by Smt. Tandon who personally visited the families and consoled them. Because of her generosity, the affected families are able to sleep under a shelter and not under the open sky.

The affected people were thankful to Congress MP Smt. Tandon. Chief organizer of the trust, Shri Anup Kumar Mehrotra, Shri Vivek Shukla with others were also present. ❖

EX-SERVICEMEN CAMPAIGN IN UTTAR PRADESH

During the month the AICC Ex-Servicemen Department, following a hectic campaign in Uttarakhand and Punjab concentrated its activities in central and western U.P. The Chairman, Maj Ved Prakash visited Lucknow, Kanpur and a few Districts in Western U.P. The constituency of UPCC President Smt. Rita Bahuguna Joshi, which the Party won. was one of the constituencies which was visited by both the Chairman, Major Ved Prakash and Secretary, Capt. Praveen Davar. A team of Ex-Servicemen headed by Sh. Akshywar Shukla accompanied Capt. Davar during the campaign in Lucknow.

Capt. Davar, besides Lucknow, campaigned in pre-selected constituencies of central and western U.P. having a large number of Ex-Servicemen. The constituencies were Divyapur, Auraiya, Ghaziabad, Noida, Agra, Mathura, Meerut, Moradabad and Bareilly. Copies of an appeal to Ex-Servicemen was distributed amongst Ex-Servicemen in these areas. Some of the points highlighted in the appeal were Substantial increase in pensions of Ex-Servicemen & three fold increase in salaries of serving soldiers, Extension of ECHS and Canteen facilities, Employment opportunities to the Ex-Servicemen and many other welfare measures taken for both serving soldiers and retired personnel, Massive corruption of the Mayawati Govt., crimilisation of politics during regime of BSP, Communilisation during BJP/BSP rule etc.

The appeal was signed by Air Marshal Goyal (Retd.), Maj. Ved Prakash, Capt. Praveen Davar, Secretary, Maj. General J C Pant (Retd.), Brig N B Singh (Retd.) Col. Prakash Bhatt (Retd.), Cdr. C P Sharma (Retd.), Capt. Balbir Singh Rawat (Retd.), Sh. Akshaywar Shukla, Maj K L Sharma, Sh. Avinash Chander Agnihotri, Sgt. D S Tiwari, Sh. Dharam S Tyagi.

Besides Air Marshal Ashok Goyal, Chairman, UPCC Ex-Servicemen Department others who actively participated in the campaign were Lt. Col. Naresh Yadav (Firozabad), Avinash Chander Agnihotri (Auraiya), Cdr C P Sharma (Ghaziabad), Maj. K L Sharma (Noida), Sh. Balbir Singh Sirohi (Mathura), Sh. Dharam Singh Tyagi (Meerut) and Capt. Suresh Chander Kaushik (Moradabad).

Addressing a meeting of Ex-Servicemen in Auraiya in which the Congress candidate Sh. Ram Darshan Katheria also participated, Capt. Davar exhorted the Ex-



Servicemen to vote for the Congress which is the only Party that had the will to ensure speedy development of the State and ensure welfare of the people. He said youth icon Rahul Gandhi, GS AICC, had the vision to reverse the derailed process of development of the State.

Capt. Davar launched a frontal attack on BJP leaders L K Advani and Arun Jaitely for calling Dr. Manmohan Singh a weak PM. He said that the fact of the matter was that it was Atal Behari Vajpayee who was the weakest PM since independence as he could not, despite his desire to do so, remove Narendra Modi after the state sponsored genocide in Gujarat in 2002. The former Prime Minister could not taken action against any scam tainted Minister in his government which was the most corrupt central govt. ever. Ex-Servicemen present in the above meetings resolved to throw out the corrupt Mayawati govt and vote for Congress candidates. ❖

AICC DIARY

CONGRESS TO FORM GOVT. IN MANIPUR

Shri Mohan Prakash addressing the Media said that in three states where Assembly elections have concluded like Manipur, there the Congress in going to form the government for the third time. And with the just received news from Punjab and Uttarakhand where elections are in their last phase, we have information that in both these states the Congress Party will be forming the governments and according to electorates the trend is in favour of the Congress Party. **Monday, 30 January, 2012**

TRENDS IN FAVOUR OF CONGRESS

Shri Manish Tiwari said that the elections have concluded in three states and the sight of the people of the country are on the elections in Uttar Pradesh and Goa. According to received trends and analysis of Punjab and Uttarakhand it is clear that in both these states people have made up their mind for a change. The trend of the electorates in both these states are against the ruling governments and with this the benefit is of the Congress Party in both Punjab and Uttarakhand. In Manipur also despite all sensitivities we hope that the people will put their trust on the Congress Party. **Wednesday, 01 February, 2012**

CHEAP POLITICS

Shri Abhishek Singhvi said the BJP has once again claimed champion status and clear winner status in the league of irresponsible parties. They are on the top of the list of those who put cheap politics and sensationalism above national interest and public interest. We have spoken the other day on politicizing judgments. I have already spoken to you about that. We are today talking about what happened on Saturday. The judgment of Judge Saini for almost a year over

the last year or so, day in and day out, the BJP and its allies have been shouting from the roof tops about the Home Minister and frequently about Prime Minister as well. Neither they nor Dr. Subramaniam Swamy, who I remind you again, has officially proclaimed that he is on the threshold of joining the BJP. Neither the BJP nor their allies nor Dr. Subramaniam Swamy produced one shred one piece of paper - of evidence showing intent, malafides, benefit etc. regarding the Home Minister. They produced not one piece of paper regarding the Prime Minister. Yet they launched and strongly supported criminal prosecution, criminal proceedings. Not only that, they went out and obstructed the nation, they obstructed decision making, they obstructed the policy making, they obstructed the progress itself, they obstructed India. They obstructed in parliament. They said we will not allow him to answer a question. It is a constitutional responsibility. They refused to deal with him. They tried to ostracize the Home Minister of India and at the end of the day these are the constitutional positions for India as a whole. He is not your Prime Minister or my Prime Minister. He is the Home Minister or the Prime Minister of the country and then I repeat and remind you that not one, not two but three judgments, not only Saturdays judgment, two have affirmatively, positively specifically said, declared judicially stated that the Prime Minister has nothing to do with the matter. The Saturdays judgment has clearly and categorically said that Mr. Chidambaram is not in any manner liable and after that what happens. This is the party after three judgments and they are all consistent as far as Prime Minister and Home Minister are concerned. This is the party after three judgments does not have the grace to say sorry, it does not have the grace to apologize. It does not even have the courage to accept its mistake. Instead they act with sour grapes. They are the poor losers. They attack the Judge. They have attacked the Judge repeatedly including Dr. Swamy and several BJP leaders. These are the poor losers,

non-magnanimous persons who have no grace in public life in India and this is also contumacious conduct and most important we would like to say that this is the sad day for democracy in India because the new definition of democracy by BJP is that if you don't agree with the BJP, if you don't agree with Dr. Swamy, you are deemed to be wrong and that is the saddest part of all. **6th February 2012**

BJP LOOKS FRUSTRATED

Shri Manish Tiwari said that the statements that are being made by the BJP just indicates about their frustration. And the reasons of it are quite clear. The BJP feels that Punjab and Uttarakhand where they were in power is slipping out of their hands. In Uttar Pradesh the way the Congress Party is getting the support of the people shows that BJP including SP and the BSP look worried. Gujarat, which the BJP feels is their laboratory of Hindutva, and the statement of the former Chief Minister of that state, Shri Keshavbhai Patel indicates that the people of their community feel insecure, in reality indicates the story of Gujarat. And I don't have to say much about the shameless drama that was enacted in Karnataka was quite shocking and unique. Last time in 2011 when Assembly elections were held in five states, BJP just got five seats of the total 824 seats. Now, with elections remaining in two states, there is no indication of their claim as the winners and also raise doubts of their being as the national party and their statements are becoming sour and crooked. **Monday, 13 February, 2012**

SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

Smt. Renuka Chowdhary said we are all watching the battle of baby Falak struggling for her life. This raises a social conscience for all of us both media repertoire as well as collectively as a society. It is a very serious issue that girl children disappear and numbers have dropped. Demographics are showing alarming changes that we need to take up issues. I believe that baby Falak's mother is equally a victim. Women are

victims of our society in many ways and legislations which helps up in that direction still fall short in many ways. That was my prayer for baby Falak that this child is putting up for her life. It must roll our hearts collective consciousness to ensure that these things do not happen again and again.
Wednesday, 15th February 2012

FIGHT AGAINST TERROR

Shri Manish Tewari said the BJP's doublespeak on the fight against terror exposes their opportunism, cynicism and lack of conviction on vital national issues. Yesterday the BJP had described the decision to set up the NCTC as anti-constitutional. I have heard of anti-constitutional. Anti-constitution is a new one. An attempt was made to draw an artificial distinction between the centre and the states in fight against terror. It was suggested that cross border terrorism and inter-state terrorism and national intelligence gathering was the responsibility of the centre while public order and police powers are the functions of the state. Now the very same BJP on 18th Dec 2008 while participating in the debate on National Investigating Agency had this to say – "Terrorism is not something that can only be fought through legislation. An anti-terror law is never a substitute for strong preventive intelligence and anti-terror law is never a substitute for a strong security action and a quick reaction, quick reaction commando action against terrorism itself". "What do we do to our security responses? The law is not relevant. Our quick security responses are immediate security responses really determine because if we take action after hours, then the terrorists have already gone". "An anti-terror law or a machinery to investigate terrorism whether it is a central agency or a state agency

comes into picture not as an agency or law which can prevent the act of terrorism. It is not an agency which can really start distributing intelligence all over the country". And this is the most relevant part. "It is not an agency which is supposed to have the security forces at its disposal to prevent terrorism". This is what the esteemed representative of the BJP had to say in December 2008. If this is not an avowal, if this is not a plea to have a seamless response to terror, then how else would you construe it? If this is not a plea to have NCTC how else would you read it and interestingly it does not end there. Those who accuse the Congress party of attempting to communalize the terror need to look at their own actions. The distinction which they draw between one set of terrorist and another and the distinction which they seek to draw between one act of terror and another, so while the centre works with the states to address their concern, it would be appropriate that the BJP does not resort to extreme or abject political opportunism in order to score brownie points on a vital issue, on a sensitive issue as important as fight against terror. Wednesday, 22nd February, 2012.

TREND TOWARDS CONGRESS

Shri Rashid Alvi addressing the Media said that he has just returned from his election tour of Uttar Pradesh. He said that this time in the concluding phases, around 60 percent of the votes have been cast comparative to ten to 15 percent more than before which clearly shows that the trend of the electorates of Uttar Pradesh is towards the Congress Party. Shri Alvi said that Congress is moving towards

majority and he feels that Congress Party will form the government in Uttar Pradesh after the elections.
Friday, 24 February, 2012

OBITUARY

Smt. Renuka Chowdhary said I have an announcement today and that is an obituary. We have lost Mr. George Joseph, Political Editor of IANS who died early Monday morning following a cardiac arrest. He was 57. He was rushed to Fortis Hospital in Noida early Sunday after he suffered a massive heart attack. Surgical intervention and procedure took place but his condition seemed to have worsened that night. He was a Journalist since 1980. He began his career with the National Herald and then worked with the Times of India before moving to the Indian Express where he had a long stint in Srinagar during the crucial years of the insurgency in 1990s. He was married to Asha Khosa. They have a daughter who is studying in class 9. All of us extend our condolences. CM Oommen Chandy and Finance Minister K.M. Mani and everyone extended their condolences and he had really excelled in his field and that will be benchmark for many youngsters who are learning would have to live up to Mr. George. In a way Mr. George passed away with his boots on while he was on the job and reporting as usual. He was in UP covering UP politics during the elections along with other journalists. I thought it would be appropriate if all of us observe one minute as a mark of condolence. **Monday, 27th February 2012**

Tom Vadakkan,
Media Secretary, AICC

