



# EDITORIAL

Soon after the unplanned visit of the Prime Minister to visit the Pak Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on the occasion of his birthday and the engagement of his granddaughter terrorists from Pakistan made a dastardly attack on our air base at Pathankot, with a view to cause havoc to our air equipment including our airplanes stationed at the air base. Whereas the Indian intelligence agencies were forewarned of a strong possibility of such an attack we were unable to prevent the entry of 6 terrorists laced with heavy and sophisticated equipment with loads of ammunition. Clearly it was laxity in security that caused us to lose the precious lives of 6 airmen and a commissioned officer. Our brave forces defended our important air equipment and planes but at the cost of precious lives of young and brave officers who had a life ahead of them for themselves and their families. It showed that the preparations needed to be more thorough and there is a need to introspect and fix responsibility so that such incidents can be prevented in the future. As a result the nation was up in arms questioning the bonhomie between Prime Minister Modi and Shri Nawaz Sharif and questioning the control that Prime Minister Sharif has on the intent of inimical forces in Pakistan. The various flip flops and the earlier claims of the BJP which have now proved to be only posturing have confused the nation and especially the political parties as to whether the BJP does have a planned strategy towards our neighbours. The relations with Nepal too are currently not at the best. Finally the planned talks on 15th January were put into abeyance and the nation again wondered whether the impetuous act of the PM had led actually to a step back vis a vis the relations with Pakistan. The Congress has always believed that the only way forward to sort out problems is to talk on contentious issues. But this strategy is surely going to create further insecurity on both sides and the militants in Pakistan who are not interested in good relations will succeed in their nefarious designs.

A major earthquake with a magnitude of 6.7 on the Richter scale rocked the Eastern and North Eastern parts of India early morning on 4th January 2016. At least 2 persons in Assam and 21 in Manipur died. 20 persons in Assam and 297 people in Manipur were injured besides causing loss to valuable assets and property. Both The Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi and the Vice President Rahul Gandhi condoled the loss of life and offered their prayers for those affected by this event. The Congress President asked the Chief Ministers of the region to ensure immediate relief and rescue operations. The Congress Organisation was asked to gear up to provide assistance to the affected people.

The results of the local body elections in Gujarat as well as in Manipur should come as an eye opener to the BJP. The results which are great gains for a resurgent Congress have been a blow to the performance of the Modi Government especially in the home state of both the PM and the BJP President. Elections to 323 local bodies were held. In a virtual role reversal the Congress walked away with 132 taluka panchayat bodies while the BJP was successful in 73. It bagged 21 of the 31 district panchayats. In Manipur elections were held to elect 278 councilors and 586 nagar panchayat members. Of the 278 municipal council seats in the results announced so far the Congress won 108 seats as against 62 of the BJP. The people have started seeing through the empty rhetoric of the BJP and more so of the non-performing government of Prime Minister Modi. The way people were influenced by his promises in Lok Sabha has now started showing in the frustration of the people.

The nation pays its homage to the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi on his 69th martyrdom day. The teachings of the Mahatma have become more relevant in the strife torn world where militancy is being used to convey points of view, the message of peace and harmony preached by him is more relevant and we need to follow in his footsteps to save humanity from total annihilation at the hands of misguided people.

The nation also remembers with affection on his 119th Birth Anniversary Subhash Chander Bose popularly remembered as Netaji who braved the Imperial Might and led with the army of brave freedom fighters 'The Indian National Army' in the war for the freedom of India. The Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi paying her respects said remembering the role-played by Neta ji, one of the greatest sons of India, Smt. Gandhi recalled with gratitude that the Nation as indeed the Congress Party can never forget his contribution to the national struggle for freedom for founding of an independent democratic republic of India. He will always live in the hearts of all Indians for his patriotic fervor and dedication to the Indian Republic."

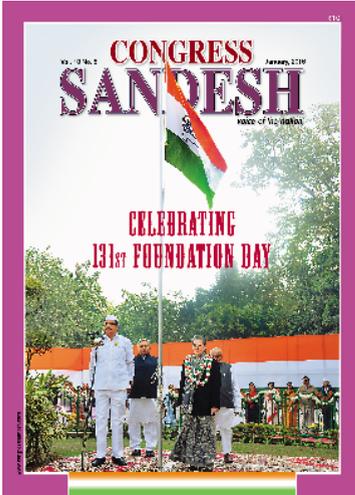
The country also pays homage to one of its great sons and former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri on his 50th death anniversary.

The nation celebrates with pride the 67th Republic Day on 26th January. We bow before those who framed with their collective wisdom this wonderful constitution, unparalleled in the World, which gives every citizen of India a right to live peacefully under the protection of laws framed in the constitution. While offering her felicitations on the occasion of the Republic Day the Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi said she 'hoped that sovereignty, democracy, equality and justice will always prevail and perpetuate.' It is unfortunate that the ruling NDA chose this occasion to hit out at the basic structure of Federalism in the country, provided in our constitution to displace a duly elected government, in a sensitive state like Arunachal Pradesh, to rule it through the back door by imposition of Presidents rule. ❖

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That the BJP and its ideologue the RSS have always been apathetic towards the Dalits is a foregone conclusion. But that they would come out so blatantly in display was totally unexpected and surprising. Especially due to the posturing that they have been adopting now, to be in power and won elections.

The death of a young PhD scholar Rohith Vemula in Hyderabad, who was driven to suicide since he felt life was not worth living in a society where there was nothing else but humiliation and taunts by the upper class ABVP union, in his university. He blamed the accident of his birth to show his disillusionment with the futility of life in the society. His brilliant career where he was studying for a Doctorate came to a sudden halt due to the illegal attitude of the VC, in support of the ABVP Union, which he favours despite his own college committee absolving the young students of any wrong doing who along with the student who committed suicide were suspended. After suspension they were evicted from the college hostel and barred from coming to college. It has now come to light that the pressure to carry out this inhuman and illegal act came specifically from a Union Cabinet Minister. This Cabinet Minister prevailed on his colleague the HRD Minister who wrote several letters to the VC, The VC became further emboldened and to please his masters carried out the act of expelling the students and ruining their budding and brilliant careers. The PM chose, as usual, to maintain a stoic silence till he was confronted by a group of slogan shouting students and thereafter all he did was share the grief with the family of the deceased student and not say anything about the action of the University itself or to denounce this atrocious act which snuffed out a young life. This however is not the first incident of ill treatment of Dalits who are subjected to constant taunts and jeers by the activists of ABVP in Hyderabad. The College authorities always gloss over such incidents since their sympathy too is with the ABVP activists.

The fact that under the BJP such occurrences are happening all across the country is no secret. Recently a senior officer from the SC/ST category tendered for VRS for being denied the post of Chief Secretary even though he was the senior most officer in queue for this post. This has happened for the first time since Independence and reflects the bias of the BJP Government in Rajasthan.

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## YESTERDAY'S CRITICS HAVE TODAY BECOME THE CLAIMANTS OF RAJIVJI'S VALUABLE LEGACY: SONIA GANDHI

CP's address at the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Technology, Pampady, Kottayam, Kerala, Wednesday, 30th December 2015



I am delighted to be launching the silver jubilee celebrations of this prestigious institution, the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Technology, in this beautiful setting. It is an important milestone that has been reached.

I congratulate Chief Minister Oomen Chandy ji for having made the setting up of the Institute possible. He had first announced its creation in his 1991 Budget Speech. Since then the RGIT has expanded significantly and it has emerged as a major centre of excellence in Kerala. I felicitate the faculty, the students and the alumni as well for their achievements.

Rajiv Gandhi brought India into the IT age. Today our country is recognized the world over as a leader in IT. The basic infrastructure for science and technology and for higher education that has made this possible was established during Jawaharlal Nehru's Prime Ministership.

When Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister, he seized the new opportunities that were opening up and the new potential that was waiting to be harnessed. It was during his tenure that India entered the computer and the telecommunications era in a major way. He was bitterly criticized as being elitist for his emphasis on these areas, but he persevered with single-minded focus. How ironic it is that yesterday's critics have today become the claimants of

his valuable legacy.

For him, technology was more than laboratories and institutes, or computers and phones and satellites. It was an instrument of social transformation and social empowerment.

That is why he launched the technology missions in areas

like drinking water, immunization, literacy, oilseeds and communications. India eradicated polio because of the immunization mission. Public call offices or PCOs as they were known then, proliferated across the country and provided wide-spread connectivity because of the communications

mission, paving the way for the mobile phone revolution. Kottayam became the first fully literate city in India in 1989 thanks to the literacy mission. Over tens of thousands of villages that did not have a source of safe drinking water in India developed one because of the drinking water mission. And it was then that the computerization of



**KERALA HAS SHOWN THE WAY TO THE REST OF THE COUNTRY IN MANY DIFFERENT AREAS AND CONTINUES TO BE A BEACON FOR COMMUNAL HARMONY, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND GENDER EQUALITY.**

railway reservations started which has since transformed the daily lives of over two crore Indians.

To Rajiv Gandhi who had studied engineering, technology was not just related to hardware. It was also closely interwoven into the software of values. Jawaharlal Nehru had repeatedly spoken of the need to propagate a scientific temper in our society. Rajiv Gandhi understood its importance. He was deeply conscious of our customs and traditions and respected them. Yet at the same time he strove to promote a more modern and progressive outlook, and the convergence of our ancient wisdom and scientific knowledge. This was one of the key anchors of the National Education Policy, which he personally gave direction to in 1986.

His steadfast belief in technology and his commitment to democratic, secular and liberal values were two sides of the same coin. He warned against those forces who proclaim their commitment to technology on the one hand, but



practice social obscurantism and intolerance on the other; forces that are rewriting our history, denying India's glorious composite heritage.

Kerala has shown the way to the rest of the country in many different areas and continues to be a beacon for communal harmony, social justice and gender equality. I am sure that the RGIT will continue to uphold these ideals even as it grows further as a national centre for engineering education. I also do hope that the Institute will play an increasingly important role in addressing the developmental challenges that Kerala faces like, for instance, in rejuvenating its traditional industries, in adding value to plantation crops and in fostering entrepreneurship, to name just three examples.

Friends, Kottayam is famous throughout the world for its rich and varied heritage. It symbolizes the mingling of different cultures that has defined our country for centuries. It is the centre for trading in spices and commercial crops. It is known as Akshara Nagari for its contributions to print media and literature. The Rubber Research Institute located here has contributed to making India a leading rubber producer in the world. Clearly, Kottayam encourages and fosters knowledge and its applications. I am confident that the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Technology too will establish itself as a landmark institution on the intellectual map of the country. The energy and enthusiasm of so many young men and women present here today will undoubtedly contribute to the realization of this objective. You too are young! You too have a dream! May your dream come through! I have great pleasure in dedicating the Institute to the nation. I wish all of you the very best for 2016. ❖

**THE RUBBER RESEARCH INSTITUTE LOCATED HERE HAS CONTRIBUTED TO MAKING INDIA A LEADING RUBBER PRODUCER IN THE WORLD. CLEARLY, KOTTAYAM ENCOURAGES AND FOSTERS KNOWLEDGE AND ITS APPLICATIONS. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE RAJIV GANDHI INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY TOO WILL ESTABLISH ITSELF AS A LANDMARK INSTITUTION ON THE INTELLECTUAL MAP OF THE COUNTRY.**



# SREE NARAYANA GURU ESTABLISHED SIVAGIRI AS A SHINING SYMBOL OF SOCIAL REFORM AND SOCIAL EQUALITY: SONIA GANDHI

CP's Address at the 83rd Annual Pilgrimage, Sivagiri  
Wednesday, 30th December, 2015,  
Sivagiri, Varkala, Kerala



I feel deeply honoured to inaugurate this historic and auspicious 83rd Sivagiri Annual Pilgrimage, a pilgrimage introduced by Sree Narayana Gurudev to spread knowledge and progressive values in society.

I was privileged to be at Kollam eleven years ago to launch “Guruvarsham” the year-long 150th birth anniversary celebrations of this remarkable human being, one of the greatest sons of India of all times, who is revered as a saint, a social reformer, a philosopher, and a visionary. Going back even earlier I recall being present at the centenary celebrations of the Aruvippuram Consecration along with my late husband in 1988. Sree Narayana Guru’s beliefs in equality, liberty, and social justice remain of vital relevance even today—in fact, I would say that they are more relevant now than ever before.

Sree Narayana Guru imbibed the positive features of all faiths, drawing from the essence of all religions. He motivated his followers to practice and live by secular values. In the religious parliament that he convened in Aluva in 1924, he emphasized the need to abstain from religious conflicts, and to promote universal peace, harmony, and prosperity. There can be no greater betrayal of Sree Narayana

Guru than the attempts being made to capture his legacy by communal ideologies and individuals whose sole motive is political power by spreading prejudice and bigotry and by dividing our diverse society.

Sree Narayana Guru established Sivagiri as a shining symbol of social reform and social equality. Its uniqueness led the Father of our Nation also to come here ninety years ago and meet the revolutionary Guru. Mahatma Gandhi’s own efforts to dismantle the hierarchy of castes culminated in the programme of the Indian National Congress to eradicate untouchability as part of the Freedom movement itself. Following on Gandhiji’s footsteps were other great admirers of Sree Narayana Guru from Rabindranath Tagore to many other social reformers of the time. Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi too were profoundly influenced by his personality, his values and his work. Indira ji also visited Shivgiri.

Sree Narayana Guru campaigned for the enlightenment of our people. To educate, organize and strengthen the weaker sections of society, he set up the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam popularly known

as the SNDP way back in 1903. The SNDP has played a tremendously important role in promoting and advancing his teachings. It has contributed to transforming Kerala. It has led to unprecedented social empowerment, an example of which was the appointment of Shri R. Sankar as Chief Minister by the Congress Party way back in 1970. Can those who have suddenly discovered the virtues of SNDP honestly say that they uphold its principles of communal harmony, social justice and social empowerment?

Under Sree Narayana Guru’s guidance, the SNDP Yogam has promoted educational, cultural, and social activities to uplift disadvantaged and deprived communities and give them dignity, pride and self-respect. The educational institutions it has established remain his proud legacy. It would be a complete negation of Sree Narayana Guru’s teachings if, in the pursuit of political gains by a few, this noble organization were to be led astray from its principal purposes.

Today the Guru has millions of followers in Kerala and elsewhere. But we have to truly consider whether we have fully achieved the radical social

transformation he championed. Our country has huge achievements to its credit. But sadly caste discrimination and oppression still exist and we have still much work to do to ensure full gender equality. Undoubtedly, Kerala stands out in our country for the progress it has made in education, health, women's rights, communal harmony and social equality. Sree Narayana Guru's influence on its leaders and on its people has contributed greatly to this progress. I am glad that the UDF government under the leadership of chief minister Oomen Chandy ji and his colleagues has taken the state even further forward in these and many other areas. Equal emphasis has been placed by the UDF on infrastructure development and social welfare.

Friends, Sree Narayana Guru was an architect of spiritual and social renaissance. To him, spirituality meant the service of the poor and the weak and the welfare of humanity. His wisdom continues to inspire millions from diverse religions and cultures. Today, lakhs of people have assembled here in Sivagiri as devotees. Over the next few days they will practice the teachings of Sree Narayana Gurudev. I am truly moved by their faith and commitment. I thank the Dharma Sangom Trust for inviting me on this auspicious occasion and extend my best wishes to the pilgrims undertaking this sacred journey.

Let us all be true to Sree Narayana Guru's teachings. Let us continue to derive inspiration from him. While doing so, let us ensure that Kerala remains an example of communal and social harmony, continues to be a place where people belonging to different faiths and cultures live and work together in a spirit of amity and brotherhood.

Nava Valsara Ashamshakal!  
Jai Hind! ❖

## A Report

# CONGRESS PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO KERALA

### Thiruvananthapuram:

Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi arrived here on a one-day visit to the state on 30th December, 2015. Home Minister, Shri Ramesh Chennithala accompanied her from New Delhi. Smt. Sonia Gandhi inaugurated this year's pilgrimage at Sivagiri in the morning. She left for Kottayam soon after the event.



In the Nattakom Guest House, she had a one-to-one meeting with UDF coalition partners. After the meeting with UDF leaders, she proceeded to Pampady in Chief Minister, Shri Oommen Chandy's Puthupally Assembly segment, to inaugurate the silver jubilee celebrations of the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Technology.

Thiruvananthapuram: Congress president Sonia Gandhi on 30th December, 2015 hit out at the communal outfits for trying to hijack Sree Narayana Guru's legacy to create social divide and capture power.

"The designs of such forces should be countered with Guru's teachings," said Smt. Sonia Gandhi while inaugurating the 83rd annual pilgrimage at Sivagiri.

In her maiden visit to Sivagiri she launched a veiled attack against the BJP and SNDP Yogam and She said "The motive of such forces is to capture political power by spreading prejudice, bigotry and splitting our diverse society. Guru respected all faiths and taught his followers to do it,"

She was targeting the alliance between the BJP and SNDP Yogam in the run-up to the state Assembly elections.

She said that Guru's teachings of equality, liberty and social justice were relevant even at this age. "At a congregation in Aluva in 1924, Guru had stressed the need to abstain from religious conflict and to promote universal peace, harmony and prosperity of all religions. Guru established the Sivagiri Mutt as a symbol of social reformation and equality," added Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi.

### 'Symbol of equality'

She said that several prominent leaders, including Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore, had admired the efforts of Sree Narayana Guru. The uniqueness of Sivagiri Mutt, which he had established as a symbol of social equality, had also led Mahatma Gandhi to meet the Guru.

Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi emphasized, the Guru's teachings of equality, liberty and social justice were "more relevant than ever before."

Sree Narayana Dharma Sangham Trust President Swami Prakashananda, General Secretary Swami Rithambaranada and other members gifted Smt. Sonia Gandhi an elephant caparison with the pictures of Guru and other reformers like Dr.

*continued on page 16*

## WHEN YOU ARE INTOLERANT, YOU CURB THE MOVEMENT OF IDEAS: RAHUL GANDHI TAKES ON RSS, BJP IN MUMBAI



**Mumbai:** Congress vice-president Shri Rahul Gandhi on 16th January, 2016 attacked the BJP and RSS for what he termed as their “rigid thinking” which hampers creativity and start-ups in the country.

Interacting with students of the prestigious Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS) in Mumbai, Shri Rahul Gandhi said the BJP-RSS have “a clear idea of what the world should be” according to their viewpoint.

Rahul Gandhi said, “When you are intolerant, you curb the movement of ideas... India needs openness, flexibility... You can't have start-ups and be intolerant at the same time,” Congress Vice President, Shri Rahul Gandhi said. Citing examples, he said the Congress party brought and encouraged a culture of tolerance in the country, people were free to discuss ideas which ultimately culminated in the freedom movement.



Shri Rahul Gandhi urged the students not to put “labels on people, industry or things, as labels are human inventions” and stifle growth. Hitting out at the ruling BJP-led NDA's policies, the Congress leader said, India is essentially an agrarian economy, but the present government was not doing enough for the farmers.

“We have been a traditional agri-economy, but we have made a smooth transition from agri to IT and knowledge economy now. A few years ago, we had launched Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), it was strongly resisted, but now it contributes in a large measure to the nine percent growth as it was injecting cash into rural economy and it built a rural infrastructure,” Shri Rahul Gandhi pointed out.

Though Indian farms are now divided and not capable of sustaining families, he said agriculture was not a problem for the farmers, but for the businessmen, industrialists, etc.

“The UPA had strategy of supporting farmers, but the present

government has a different focus which is not on farmers or agriculture... They tried to stop MNREGA and other UPA policies, but we put pressure on them,” he said.

On China, Congress Vice President Shri Rahul Gandhi said the Asian Communist giant is more powerful and economically stronger, but it grabs and pulls you as it is a centralized economy.

On the other hand, India's power is never about the military, but about ideas with which we make the other person turn around to our perspective — “India grabs you, but you never feel it.”

But, he said for all its growth, now at 11 percent, China paid a price with many people dying, but not in India with a 9 percent growth — “We are a soft power... and not a threat to the world.”

To a query on the start-up hype, Shri Rahul Gandhi said, any start-up requires a whole support system to allow an entrepreneur to grow, with access to finance, freedom from government regulations, infrastructure, etc.” That's why it's considered easier to launch start-ups in states like Maharashtra or Karnataka, but businesses face a huge problem in Uttar Pradesh or Bihar, though some of the most entrepreneurial people come from there,” Shri Rahul Gandhi said.

### Rahul Gandhi trains guns on Narendra Modi, strikes argumentative tone on GST

**Mumbai:** Congress Vice President Shri Rahul Gandhi trained his guns on Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying he is surprised to see how swiftly public anger has grown against the BJP government at the Centre and in Maharashtra. He brought the deadlock on the BJP's ambitious indirect tax reform - the GST bill, back into focus saying the Congress will not relent unless the ruling party accepts its demands for tweaks in the proposed legislation. Shri Rahul Gandhi is in Mumbai as part of a two day tour.

“Normally, whenever a government is voted to power, they remain popular for a while, their credibility remains for three



to four years. However, I am surprised as to how soon the BJP's credibility has fallen both at the Centre and in the state," Congress Vice President said.

"Modiji has spoken about a smart city, Mumbai has also been included in the smart city list. However, they allocated only Rs 100 crore for Mumbai when the budget for Mumbai is worth thousands of crores. When you speak of smart city and just give Rs 100 crore to Mumbai then your (Modi's) credibility will go down."

On GST, Shri Rahul Gandhi said the Congress has three conditions on GST: A cap on the rate of GST at less than 20%, scrapping a proposed state levy and creating an independent mechanism to resolve disputes on revenue sharing between states.

Shri Rahul Gandhi also said that the Mumbai Congress President, Shri Sanjay Nirupam would not be removed from his post following the controversy over publishing anti-Nehru articles in the party mouthpiece.

### Learn entrepreneurship from Mumbai's Dharavi: Rahul tells PM Modi

**Mumbai:** On the last day of his visit to Mumbai, Shri Rahul Gandhi embarked on a road march (padyatra) along with hundreds of Congress workers from the posh up market Bandra to the wretched slums of Dharavi. Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi targeted the BJP-led government at the Centre over the price-rise issue, raising questions over why the rates of essential commodities were skyrocketing at a time when international oil prices have hit record lows.

He said the Narendra Modi government's policies were benefiting only a few top industrialists of the country and took potshots at the NDA's 'Make in India' initiative.

"When UPA Government was in power, the petrol price (in global market) was 150 dollars a barrel. Now, this has come down to 29 dollars per barrel. I want to know where these lakhs of crores of money, which have been saved on account of lower oil prices, have gone? Why have the prices of pulses shot up to 230 rupees a kg?" he asked.

"This is happening because the Modi government's policies are benefiting only top two or three industrialists of the country. When our government was in power, we worked for the benefit of the common people," he added.

He took potshots over the Centre's 'Make in India' initiative and asked the Prime Minister to visit Dharavi, a sprawling slum locality in the heart of Mumbai, and see for himself how entrepreneurship works.

"Modiji you should first come here in Dharavi (which houses hundreds of small-scale industries) and see the kind of entrepreneurial works that take place here. First complete 'Make in Dharavi', only then will 'Make in India' bear fruit," the Congress vice-president said.

Congress Vice President, Shri Rahul Gandhi was speaking at a gathering at the end of his padyatra (foot march) from suburban Bandra to Dharavi undertaken to highlight the issue of "high" electricity tariff in the metropolis. ❖



## ANTI-DALIT MINDSET OF MODI GOVERNMENT

- Kumari Selja



☞ Facts available in public domain unequivocally establish that Union Minister, Shri Bandaru Dattatreya; BJP MLA, Ramachandra Rao and ABVP activists are squarely responsible for deliberately orchestrating circumstances leading to tragic suicide of dalit Ph.D. research scholar, Rohith Vemula at Hyderabad Central University.

This horrific incident is part of Modi government's unabated agenda to undermine the rights of deprived and underprivileged, particularly the scheduled castes and

other backward classes, which has manifested itself in last 19 months.

Suicide of the 25 year dalit boy Rohith is not an isolated incident but a sinister culmination of 'social boycott' of dalits from the University campus and passing 'derogatory remarks' against dalits by ABVP activists. This seething contempt against dalit community was done with active abetment of University authorities.

First, five dalit Ph.D. research scholars of Hyderabad

**Dalit student suicide:**

### RAHUL GANDHI SEEKS ACTION AGAINST THOSE 'RESPONSIBLE'

**New Delhi :** Congress Vice-President Shri Rahul Gandhi on 19th January, 2016 attacked on the BJP-led NDA government, accusing Union Ministers and the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hyderabad of not being fair, thus forcing Dalit research scholar Rohith Vemula to commit suicide.

Shri Rahul Gandhi, who flew down to the Begumpet airport, drove straight to the university campus, which witnessed widespread protests demanding action against the Union Ministers, the Vice-Chancellor and others allegedly responsible for the suicide of Vemula. Congress Vice-



President Shri Rahul Gandhi conversing with mother of Rohith Vemula and other suspended students at University of Hyderabad campus.

The research scholar, along with four others, was suspended from the university hostel and barred from entering the administrative building.

Addressing the students, Shri Rahul Gandhi expressed solidarity with them and called for action against those 'responsible' for Vemula's suicide, including the Vice-Chancellor and Union Ministers.

In a short speech, he said: "In this case, the V-C and the Minister in Delhi have not been fair, and the youngster was caused so much pain that he had no other option but



Central University were suspended in August, 2015. A probe by 'Proctorial Board' of University gave a clean chit to Rohith and his co-colleagues. Despite a clean chit, they were hounded, persecuted and humiliated at the instance of Union Minister, Bandaru Dattatreya, BJP MLA and ABVP activists, which finally led to them being debarred from using the campus and being evicted from hostel premises. Even the letter dated 18th December, 2015 calling upon the Vice-Chancellor and placing facts of systematic dalit persecution fell on deaf ears. Further information in public domain now shockingly suggests that even HRD Ministry wrote four letters to University demanding action against the five dalit Ph.D. research scholars.

Indian National Congress once again condemns the anti-dalit mindset of BJP-RSS and demands immediate sacking of Union Minister, Bandaru Dattatreya as also inquiry through a sitting High Court judge in the entire sordid episode examining the role of Union Minister, BJP MLA, ABVP activists, Vice-Chancellor of University as also HRD Ministry.

Modi government has become a habitual offender in

trampling upon the rights of dalits and poor. Be it the statement of RSS Sarsanghchhalak, Shri Mohan Bhagwat, calling for a review of reservation or shameless comment passed by Union Minister, Shri V.K. Singh comparing dalit children to dogs, a deep rooted prejudice is writ large.

This anti-dalit mindset of Modi government has extended to widespread cuts in welfare schemes for Scheduled Castes. In Union Budget 2015-16 alone, Modi government imposed a cut of Rs.19,734 crore in Scheduled Caste Sub Plan reducing it from Rs.50,548 crore in 2014-15 to Rs.30,850 crore in 2015-16. Even, funds in the critical 'Post Matric Scholarship Scheme' for SC/ST have been reduced by Rs.305.78 crore in 2015-16.

Indian National Congress stands committed to taking on BJP-RSS and fight their anti-dalit mindset with all its might. Congress Vice-President, Shri Rahul Gandhi, who has always championed the cause of the poor, is visited Hyderabad to express solidarity with the grieved family and extended unflinching support for the entire movement of students against caste-based discrimination." ❖

*Statement by Kumari Selja, MP & former Union Minister*



to kill himself.”

While the student had committed suicide, “the condition for his suicide was created by the V-C, the Minister and the institution.”

Congress Vice President, Shri Rahul Gandhi said students should be allowed to express their political opinions on campus. The students told him that Vemula’s death should be considered an “institutionally orchestrated murder.”

Congress Vice President also demanded adequate compensation. “Compensation means, respect, job and financial support. As the student who killed himself was his family’s hope for a better future, that future should be provided to the family in terms of compensation.” ❖



## CONGRESS PARTY'S SACRED DUTY - K Raju



**India has been blessed with leaders of outstanding moral fibre who have steadfastly safeguarded and strengthened the idea of India. It is because of their inspiration that protecting the rights of every Indian has always been an article of faith with the Congress Party.**

It is universally acknowledged that the ideals, goals and values of India's freedom struggle form the life breath of the Constitution of India, and more importantly, provide an ethical framework for India's development. However, what is not sufficiently acknowledged is that it is the Congress Party's philosophy that is the bedrock of our Constitution. In crafting the idea of India, Pandit Nehru, Babasaheb Ambedkar, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad (among numerous other stalwarts of the Constituent Assembly) ensured that the Constitution guarantees, among other things, freedoms of speech, expression, religion, and most of all, the right to live with human dignity. They firmly believed that governments must respect, protect and further the collective aspirations of every citizen in India, irrespective of their religion, caste, gender, birth or ideological inclination.

Today, these ideas, as well as the promise of India is no longer sacrosanct or accessible to all. No matter how loudly or cleverly the BJP tries to couch its actions in the paradigm of vikas, the truth is that they are tearing the fabric of India with their regressive and dastardly norms, which are deeply antithetical to our constitutional principles. Each of the above mentioned rights, that the Congress fought so hard to institutionalise and make inalienable, are under severe attack. Therefore, when they argue they want a Congress-mukt Bharat, what they really want is a Congress ideology mukt Bharat.

The Sangh Parivar has, and is consciously undermining India's constitutional values because they simply don't believe in them. To understand what the Sangh follows,

we must look to its chief ideologue MS Golwalkar, whom Prime Minister Narendra Modi idolises so much that he even penned his biography in 2010. Denigrating our Constitution (in "Bunch of Thoughts"), Golwalkar asked: "Is there a single word...in its guiding principles as to what our national mission is and what our keynote in life is?" He then went on to shockingly argue (in "Why Hindu Rashtra?"): "Unfortunately...our Constitution has... given equal rights to everybody, just as a person without understanding may give equal rights to his children and to the thieves in his house and distribute the property among all". He then argues, in what can only be characterised as fascist, that non Hindus in India can "claim nothing, deserve no privileges, far less any preferential treatment-not even citizen's rights"! This is the man PM Modi idolises and these are the ideas he truly believes in!

The Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) and Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) are the most important budgetary components for SCs and STs. However, the NDA has slashed budgetary allocation for the SC sub plan by 28.6%, while the tribal sub plan has been slashed by 25%. Similarly, allocations for Panchayati Raj have been slashed by a dramatic 98.6%, for Drinking Water and Sanitation by 59%, for the ICDS by 53%, for Women and Child Development by 51%, for the Mid Day Meal by 32.6%, for the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan by 22%, for the agricultural sector by 20%, and for Health by 15.17%! This author is wondering (like I suppose the whole nation is), what happened to sabka saath, sabka vikas? Or should we presume that everything PM Modi says are just election jumlas?

But welfare expenditure cuts are not the only problem. Since the NDA assumed office, India has also witnessed an alarming rise in attacks against dalits, minorities, farmers, students, workers and various other sections. In every one of these, the RSS has been directly involved. Consider these:

Atrocities against Dalits have risen not just in terms of numbers, but also in intensity. After May 2014, a malicious pattern has been emerging in the nature of attacks against dalits, which have registered a 19% increase (a majority after May). 2015 also saw horrific caste atrocities in Faridabad, in Ahmednagar, in Nagaur, in Moga and in every state where the BJP is in power or in alliance.

Similarly, over 600 cases of violence (406 targeting Muslims) occurred between May 2014 and May 2015. Many more have occurred since. In fact, since the NDA came to power, over 8,000 Christians have been attacked by the Sangh throughout India, registering a threefold increase since UPA left office. Christian organisations have labeled 2015 as the worst year for Christians since independence!

In the last five months, the RSS has directly or indirectly engineered lynchings throughout India for nothing more than 'offensive' comments on social media, and for transporting beef. Dadri, Udhampur, and Uchekon Moiba Thongkhong are just the tip of the iceberg.

Scholars like MM Kalburgi, Govind Pansare and Dabholkar have been murdered, as are RTI activists and whistleblowers. Similarly, NGOs are forced to close down because they raise legitimate questions.

Finally, the BJP has treated our Universities like nothing more than caste panchayats. It has constantly interfered in the autonomy of education institutions and the lives of students, claiming great concern for India's youth! If the NDA were really even slightly concerned, it would have been implemented the recommendations of Sukhdeo Thorat Committee (which was set up on the personal intervention of PM Manmohan Singh). Based on the Thorat committee's recommendations, the University Grants Commission (UGC) came out with the "UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations", which were promptly approved by the UPA Govt. As per these regulations, harassment and victimisation of SC/ST students at the hands of their teachers and peers has been clearly defined (these include caste based verbal abuse and name calling, segregation in hostel and mess, withholding fellowships, not paying attention and de-motivating them etc.) and made punishable offences. It has been mandatory

for universities to appoint an 'anti-discriminatory officer' (who has to resolve issues within 60 days) and to establish "Equal opportunity Cell".

Instead, consider how the NDA acted in the Hyderabad University episode. Instead of prodding the University to resolving the atrocious situation as per the UGC resolutions, the BJP deliberately fostered casteism and flouted each of the above mentioned UGC regulations. The NDA and the Hyderabad University pushed the students to such an extent that Rohith Vemula was forced to commit suicide. This is not an isolated incident, and the BJP is methodically destroying the education system in India. The NDA has clamped down on the Ambedkar Periyar Study Circle in IIT Madras (merely for expressing their views). Similarly, the RSS' Panchajanya attacked JNU for being an 'anti-national den', while various BJP governments have set the police loose on students from FTII, and in Delhi for raising their voices against their unjust policies. They have also attacked the minority character of institutions like AMU and Jamia Islamia.

In the past, India has been blessed with leaders of outstanding moral fibre who have steadfastly safeguarded and strengthened the idea of India. It is because of their inspiration that protecting the rights of every Indian has always been an article of faith with the Congress Party. The NDA on the other hand has diluted the laws and policies that protect and support the disempowered and disadvantaged, be it the SC/ST PoA Act, the Forest Rights Act, PESA, various environmental and labour laws, as well as a plethora of socio-economic policies designed to further the national interest.

The RSS' poison needs to be sucked out, and the Congress Party must rise to the task, as it has done in the past. It is only Congress Party which can forge on steadfastly on the frontline in this battle for India's soul. The future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving. It is the Congress' sacred duty to halt these divisive forces that threaten to tear apart the fabric of India, and to restore fullness of life to all the peoples of India.

In the end, we should pay heed to Babasaheb Ambedkar exhortation to us: "if we wish to preserve the Constitution in which we have sought to enshrine the principle of Government of the people, for the people and by the people, let us resolve not to be tardy in the recognition of the evils that lie across our path...nor to be weak in our initiative to remove them. That is the only way to serve the country". ❖

*The author is a chairman, AICC - SC Dept*

## Terrorist Attack at Pathankot Air Base

### CONGRESS PRESIDENT PAYS HOMAGE TO MARTYRS AND EXPRESSED DEEP CONCERN OVER THE TRAGIC INCIDENT

On 2 January 2016, a heavily armed group attacked the Pathankot Air Force Station, part of the Western Air Command of the Indian Air Force. Six attackers and three security forces personnel were killed in the initial battle. The gun battle and the subsequent combing operation lasted about 48 hours on 2 January. The attackers, who were wearing Indian Army fatigues, were suspected to belong to Jaish-e-Mohammed, an Islamist militant group designated a terrorist organization.

And further three soldiers who were admitted to hospital with injuries died, raising the death toll to seven soldiers. On 3 January, fresh gunshots were heard, and another security officer was killed by an IED explosion. The operation continued on 4 January, and a fifth attacker was confirmed killed. The United Jihad Council claimed responsibility for the attack on 4 January.

**In a message, Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi said,** “Saluted the valour of our security forces and paid homage to the seven martyrs, who made the supreme sacrifice while



neutralizing Pakistani terrorists in Pathankot, Punjab. She has expressed her deep concern for the safety of families as also strategic assets of Air Force in view of the fact that counter terror operations are continuing for last 48 hours. She hoped that Union Govt is seized of the serious internal security situation amidst emanating intelligence reports of more terrorist modules and is taking all necessary steps to neutralize the terror threats besides ensuring adequate security of citizens and strategic assets”.



**In another message by the Congress Vice President, Shri Rahul Gandhi** strongly condemned terrorist attack on Pathankot AirForce Base. My deepest condolences to families of the brave soldiers martyred in the attack. ❖

*continued from page 9*

#### A Report - Congress President's Visit to Kerala

Palpu, Tagore and Kumaran Asan inscribed on it.

#### 'Research centre on guru soon'

A research centre for the study of the life and teachings of Sree Narayana Guru will be started soon, Chief Minister Shri Oommen Chandy said. Speaking at the inauguration of the 83rd Sivagiri pilgrimage, he also said that the government had decided to establish a fellowship in Guru's name.

“The director of Sree Narayana Guru Study Centre has been entrusted to establish a fellowship in Guru's name,” Shri Chandy said. His life and teachings are already part of the curriculum of students from class 3 to 12.

Guru wanted that people should not be divided in the name of caste or religion, Shri Chandy said and urged that those trying to create divisions in the name of caste should learn the ethics of Guru.

Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi inaugurates the silver jubilee celebrations of the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Technology

**Kottayam:** Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi on 30th December, 2015 hailed the contributions made by her late husband and former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in bringing

India to the forefront of IT industry. While inaugurating the silver jubilee celebrations of the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Technology (RIT) at Pampady, Congress President said, “Rajiv Gandhi brought India into the IT age. Today our country is recognized the world over as a leader in IT. The basic infrastructure for science and technology and higher education that has made this possible was established during Jawaharlal Nehru's tenure as Prime Minister,” she said.

The Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Technology was presented in the budget of June 12, 1991 after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. Though the first phase of the project was completed in 2004, a formal function was held for the first time after the establishment of the college.

**Kochi:** After a day's visit to Kerala, Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi left for New Delhi in an aircraft from Nedumbassery airport. Earlier, Smt. Sonia Gandhi arrived at the airport from Kottayam in a helicopter. Chief Minister Shri Oommen Chandy and KPCC President V M Sudheeran accompanied Smt. Sonia Gandhi.

Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala, Fisheries Minister K Babu, AICC General Secretary Shri Mukul Wasnik, Prof. K V Thomas MP, Vayalar Ravi MP and MLAs Anwar Sadath, Hibi Eden, V P Sajeendran and Mayor Saumini Jain and other senior leaders of the state went to the airport to see her off. ❖

Congress Seva Dal National Executive Meet

## SEVA DAL HAS TO SPREAD THE IDEOLOGY OF THE CONGRESS: RAHUL GANDHI

The meeting of National Executive of All India Congress Seva Dal was held on 12th January 2016 at the AICC Head quarters, New Delhi.

In the meeting, Congress Vice President and Incharge of Frontal Organizations, Shri Rahul Gandhi said that when we look towards various organizations which are working or supporting Congress ideology, we find Congress Seva Dal at the centre.

On the very onset, Shri Rahul Gandhi invited the opinion and views of Congress Seva Dal Office bearers. Seva Dal office-bearers were delighted and expressed their views openly on various issues. This interaction filled the office bearers with enthusiasm and energy.

After hearing the views of Seva Dal Office-bearers, Shri Rahul Gandhi said that RSS and BJP are based on false-hood, they always spread rumours but on the other hand Congress stands with truth. Opposition leaders used to praise the policies and schemes launched by Congress Governments such as Bank Nationalization and MNREGA but cannot say that openly because of fearing expulsion. On the other hand our leader wrote, "My Experience with Truth". He wanted to know about the truth of the country, society and the people.

Leaders of BJP can talk everything and make big promises but forget these on coming to the power. They always change their stand on every matter, whether it is on Pakistan or anything else. We cannot do that to cheat the people.

Modiji on one hand praises Ambedkar Saheb but on other hand his minister abuses Dalits. BJP always works contrary to what Ambedkarji worked throughout his life. BJP talk about Vivekanand, Gandhiji, Ambedkarji, Sardar



Patel, Subhash Chandra Bose and other leaders but never followed their teachings and path which they had shown. It is Congress who follow their path and the ideals.

Shri Rahul Gandhi emphasized that Seva Dal should accept the challenge to defeat the communal & divisive forces. Seva Dal has to spread the ideology of the Congress. Seva Dal has to stand for the welfare and unity of the country. Seva Dal has to work for truth. In this effort he promised to support Seva Dal at each and every level. He also advised some measures to make the organization more efficient & effective.

In his inaugural speech, Shri Motilal Vora, the Treasurer of All India Congress Committee emphasized the need of training for effective work and to fight against the divisive and communal forces. Shri Voraji asked Seva Dal to organize maximum training camps throughout the country to spread the Congress ideology.

AICC General Secretary Shri B.K. Hariprasad, expressed that the need of the hour is that Seva Dal must work for the party in a dedicated manner. He also asked Seva Dal workers to learn about various matters which are of political importance and to expose the untruth of BJP.

## A REPORT

Shri Anand Sharma, Dy. Leader in Rajya Sabha said that Congress believes in socialist & secular Parliamentary democracy.

He reminded that during its ten year tenure UPA had done a lot for the development of country, its economy and for the downtrodden. During that period the country made big achievements in various sectors including industry, economy, education, power, international trade, agriculture and health etc.

Citing the examples he also counted the failure of BJP Government on all sectors including foreign affairs, defence, international trade, economy, industry, social welfare so on and so forth.

He expressed his concerns about the reduction done by NDA Government in budgetary allocations of various welfare schemes such as MNREGA, Education, Women & Child Welfare, Agriculture etc. He reminded that during elections Modi made big promises for farmers, students, OROP, Employment, Defence, MSP etc. but now he has forgotten all and those are now only hollow promises.

Shri Janardan Dwivedi reminded Seva Dal about its role for which it was constituted and asked to leave the formalities and to devote itself to the work. It is right to save the traditions but need of the hour is to be modern. Seva Dal has to co-ordinate between traditions and modernization. He also narrated the historical events of the Seva Dal.

He said that Seva Dal has to the present learning from the past. We cannot stick to the past but to move ahead, not in a haste but in a wise manner.



Seva Dal organization is to be constituted at all level and throughout the country.

Shri Janardan Dwivedi said that when Mahatma Gandhi launched Satyagraha Movement to counter the British Rule then the volunteers were needed to carry on the movement. That need forced to constitute Seva Dal. At that, Dr. N.S. Hardikar with the blessings of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru founded Seva Dal organization.

Today also, Seva Dal has to prepare itself to fight those forces which do not have clear & healthy vision.

The constitution of Seva Dal was prepared and written by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, a great visionary and democrat leader thus need not be changed. Seva Dal volunteers must follow that and work for the party and the country.

Talking about the ideology of RSS he said that they use religion (Dharam) for their narrow political benefits while for us politics is our sacred duty (Dharam).



Shri Mahendra Joshi described some historical events from the history and the programmes Seva Dal has performed. He assured the Congress leaders specially, Shri Rahul Gandhi that Seva Dal will do everything as per the wishes of Congress and would fight the communal & divisive forces in a befitting manner. It will also spread Congress ideology and message to the masses.

Seva Dal formulated an action plan in view of the Assembly Elections schedule to be held in some states during the year. It will organise block level meetings throughout the country to expose BJP and Modi Government. ❖

Rahul Gandhi on two-day visit to Amethi

## VENDETTA POLITICS SNATCHED PROJECTS FROM AMETHI: RAHUL GANDHI



**Amethi (Uttar Pradesh):** Congress Vice President Shri Rahul Gandhi on 23rd December, 2015 launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of “snatching” many projects from his parliamentary constituency Amethi. On a two-day visit to his parliamentary constituency Amethi on December 23 and 24.

Shri Rahul Gandhi alleged that it was at the behest of Modi that two important projects — a mega food park and a paper mill — were taken away from Amethi. Shri Rahul Gandhi said this “politics of vendetta” would not last long in the country, and assured the people that he will fight for these

issues and see that justice is done.

Taking a dig at the prime minister's election promise of bringing “acchhe din” (good days), Gandhi slammed Modi for bringing “bure din” (bad days) for the people.” Inflation is at its peak. Nothing has been done for the farmers and the youth,” he said, addressing a roadside meeting at Nigoha village.

The Congress Vice-President said that during the Lok Sabha election campaign, Modi had promised to deposit Rs 15 lakh in every person's account after bringing back the black money stashed away abroad. “Has it been deposited,” he asked on a sarcastic note.

Shri Rahul Gandhi



said his party would strongly fight the BJP and its communal and divisive policies across the country. Promising to carry on development work in his Lok Sabha constituency, Gandhi said, “We will complete the development works in Amethi. We will fight unitedly as a single person cannot struggle.”

The Congress Vice President and Amethi MP met newly-elected Gram Pradhans of his constituency on December 23 at the premises of a College in Chhatoh block of Salon assembly segment in Rae Bareilly.

He later interacted with locals and workers and district leaders of the Congress. ❖



## NORTHEAST EARTHQUAKE

**Guwahati, Assam:** At least two persons died and 20 people have been injured in Assam in the massive earthquake that hit the northeastern region in the of the 4th January, 2016 morning with scores of buildings developing cracks across the state.



A major earthquake with a magnitude of 6.7 on the Richter Scale rocked Eastern and North-Eastern parts of India early in the morning on 4th January, 2016, the Indian Meteorological Department said. The quake occurred at 4:35 am at a depth of 17 km below the ground and the epicenter is located at Tamenglong of Manipur. Atleast 2 persons in Assam and 21 in Manipur died while 20 persons in Assam and 297 in Manipur were injured.

**In a message the Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi** has expressed deep distress at the reported deaths and destruction caused by the earthquake in North Eastern States. Congress Party has asked its Chief Ministers in the region to ensure immediate relief and rescue operations besides asking the party's units & frontal organizations to aid the relief works. Smt. Gandhi hoped and prayed that casualties and destruction remain limited.

**In a separate message the Congress Vice President, Shri Rahul Gandhi said,** "My thoughts & prayers are with the people of Manipur and other North Eastern States affected by the earthquake on 4th January, 2016. I urge Congress workers, Youth Congress and NSUI volunteers to extend all possible help to people in this time of need". ❖



## BEST WISHES

**I**n a statement **C**ongress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi has extended her greetings on the joyous occasion of Makar Sankranti, Pongal, Uttarayan, Bhogali Bihu, Maghi, Shishur Saenkraat, Khichdi and Makara Sankramana. These traditional harvest festivals celebrated in different parts of country, signify a unifying renewal and provide us an occasion to acknowledge the immense contribution of our farmers to the well-being of our people, Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi said. She hoped that these festivals will usher in prosperity, happiness and joy for all.



Congress Vice President, Shri Rahul Gandhi also sent his Best wishes to all those celebrating Pongal, Bihu, Uttarayan and Bhogi across the country. May these festivals be celebrated with such joy and enthusiasm so as to unite us in a bond of togetherness. ❖

## 1971 WAR HERO JFR JACOB PASSES AWAY

**New Delhi:** One of the architects of the 1971 war which resulted in creation of Bangladesh, Lt General Jacob-Farj-Rafael or JFR Jacob, then the Chief of Staff of the Eastern Command, played a pivotal role in defining the Indian Army's strategy during the course of operations.

Recipient of several honours from the Indian and the Bangladeshi governments, the Lt General died on 13th January, 2016. He was 92.

In the 1971 war, he designed a "war of movement" plan where the Indian Army bypassed intermediary towns which had been fortified by the Pakistan Army. His goal was to neutralise Pakistan's command

and control infrastructure and use secondary routes to enter Dhaka.

Before 1971, Lt General Jacob had fought in the Second World War. His unit was deployed on the Burma front before becoming a part of the Army of independent India. He retired from the Army in 1978 after 37 years of service.

In a message, Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi has expressed her condolences on the demise of Lt. General J F R Jacob. A



**brave son of India, his role in the Bangladesh liberation war as Chief of**

**Eastern command has a special place in the history of the world. The country stands proud of his life, work and service to the nation as a soldier and patriot,** Smt. Sonia Gandhi said.



Congress Vice President, Shri Rahul Gandhi also extended his condolences and said "Sad to learn of the passing away of Lt Gen Jacob. A decorated soldier, his stellar role in Bangladesh liberation war will always be remembered". ❖

## Mufti Mohd. Syed passes away Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi visited Muftis, offered condolences



Mufti Mohd. Syed

**A** ICC President Smt. Sonia Gandhi arrived in Srinagar to offer her condolences to family of Former Chief Minister Mufti Mohd Syed, at her official residence Gupkar, Srinagar on 10th January, 2016.

Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi met PDP President Mehbooba Mufti and other family members. While offering condolences, Madam Gandhi sympathized with the bereaved family and prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul.

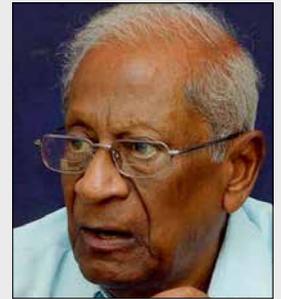
In a message to Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi said *“We deeply mourn the passing away of Mufti Mohd. Sayeed Sahib, one of the esteemed and senior political leaders of our country. Mufti Sahib cut across party boundaries. He was beyond party affiliations. He belonged to everybody. He symbolized the very best of human values, caring, calm and compassionate under the greatest of pressures, reaching out to and engaging with everybody, bringing people together. Free of prejudice, he reflected the very best of Indian values rooted in a respect for diversity and anchored in tolerance and accommodation”*.

*He was a fine administrator, committed to the welfare of the people of Jammu & Kashmir. As Chief Minister in 2002, he pledged himself to providing what he used to call “the healing touch”. He faced many challenges. But such was the force of his personality and such was the confidence that he evoked across different sections of society that he was able to confront them successfully and fulfill the promises he had made.*

*Mufti Sahib left us all too suddenly. But he will live in our individual and collective memories. He will live as an example of the finest composite traditions of Jammu and Kashmir and the country. On behalf of the Indian National Congress and on my own personal behalf I extend my heartfelt condolences to Mufti Sahib’s family, his Party, his friends and admirers.*

## VETERAN CPI LEADER A.B. BARDHAN PASSES AWAY

**New Delhi:** Senior Veteran Communist Party of India leader A.B. Bardhan, 92, passed away on 9th January 2016 evening after a long illness. Shri Bardhan, former general secretary of the CPI, was admitted to the G.B. Pant Hospital here on December 7, after he suffered a stroke. Veteran Communist Party of India (CPI)



AB Bardhan

leader A.B. Bardhan, held the post of general secretary for over a record number of years from 1996 to 2012.

Shri Bardhan took part in the freedom movement as a member of the All India Students Federation and later associated himself with the trade union movement out of Nagpur, going on to become general secretary of the All India Trade Union Congress. He won an election just once, to the Maharashtra Assembly, in 1957 as an Independent. After losing several elections, he moved to Delhi in the 1990s and got involved in national politics. When the United Front (UF) government took over in 1996 and late CPI leader Indrajit Gupta became Home Minister, he resigned as CPI general secretary and paved the way for Shri Bardhan.

**In a message the Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi** has expressed deep condolences on the passing away of veteran Communist leader Shri AB Bardhan. In his demise, not only the Communist Party of India but the entire nation has lost a leader who championed the cause of dispossessed and the marginalized throughout his life, Smt. Gandhi said.

**In another message the Congress Vice President, Shri Rahul Gandhi** was extremely sad to learn of the passing away of veteran leader Shri AB Bardhan. His loss will be deeply mourned. My condolences to his family. ❖

Congress President was accompanied by General Secretary AICC incharge J&K Ambika Soni, JKPCC President G.A. Mir, Gulam Nabi Azad Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha. After offering condolences, Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi left for Delhi.

In a message the Congress Vice-President, Shri Rahul Gandhi said, *“I am extremely saddened to learn of the passing away of Mufti Mohammad Sayeed Saab. My condolences to his family and supporters. A veteran politician, he had a long & distinguished political career. His loss will be deeply mourned in J&K and across the country”*. ❖

## None of the BJP promises has materialized

- P. Chidambaram



Let me begin by wishing all of you and your families a very happy new year.

May the new year bring to our country and to our people, and to all the people of the world, peace, social harmony, economic development and prosperity.

On behalf of the Congress party, I wish to share with you some thoughts on the state of the economy and on some other matters of concern.

### Economy stuck in a groove

First, the economy. At the beginning of 2015, the Government had confidently predicted that the economy will grow at 8.1 to 8.5 per cent in 2015-16. Many promises of the government more jobs, greater investment and quicker infrastructure development were premised on a high growth of GDP. I am afraid none of the promises has materialized. On the contrary, 2015 has ended on a somber and subdued note.

For the whole of 2015-16, GDP growth is not likely to be higher than 7 to 7.3 percent, which means that it will be the same as, or lower than, in 2014-15. The economy is stuck in a groove.

The mid-year economic analysis of the Economics Division of the Ministry of Finance has candidly admitted the private investment and exports two of the four drivers of demand are languishing. The Indian economy is like a car running on two wheels. Corporate balance sheets are stressed, net sales have fallen by 5.3 per cent, and profit after tax is flat. Non-food credit growth at 8.3 per cent is the slowest in 20 years. Growth of credit to industry is 4.6 per cent while credit to medium enterprises has actually shrunk by 9.1 per cent.

Exports have recorded twelve successive months of decline

compared to the same month of the previous year. This is unprecedented.

### Distress in Rural India

There is acute distress in rural India, especially in the farm sector. Explicit and deliberate policy decisions of the government have resulted in rural wage growth remaining muted. Minimum support prices have been kept deliberately low. Net sown area for the Rabi season is lower than for the corresponding period of last year. The mid-year Analysis

**The Congress, and other parties, are in the Opposition. The role of the Opposition in Parliamentary democracy is well articulated in the old maxim “to oppose, expose and depose.” Our opposition to the government’s wrong policies or poorly-drafted laws or ill-conceived schemes or acts of misconduct or misuse of government agencies cannot be termed obstructionism.**

has warned that there are downside risks to agricultural production this year.

Just travel through rural India and talk to people in the villages. There is deep resentment about the tardy implementation of MGNREGA, the cut in the average number of days of work and the delayed payment of wages. Crop insurance is unavailable to most farmers. The old age pension scheme has been severely pruned. Banks are reluctant to give jewel loans. Education loans have practically stopped, and the demand for security has

discouraged many students and parents from applying for loans. People are unable to point to any central government scheme that is being vigorously implemented. Panchayats are starved of funds. The anger and angst of rural India was reflected in the recent elections.

### Urban India, Jobs

Urban India is not much better. Rising prices, especially of food, transport, electricity and water; increase in crime; lack of jobs; and growing intolerance have caused much grief and fear among the people. Women, children and senior citizens have been especially affected.

There is no evidence that the promised jobs are being created. The 26th quarterly employment survey conducted between April and June 2015 showed that job creation in the manufacturing and export-oriented sectors fell by a net of 43,000 from the previous quarter. In the same period of 2014, these sectors had added 182,000 jobs.

The government does not seem confident of meeting the fiscal deficit target of 3.9 per cent for the current financial year. For 2016-17, the government seems to be toying with the idea of departing from the path of fiscal consolidation already delayed by a year. These are ominous signals, and I would like to caution the government against following an ill-advised policy.

### Political Climate

After the Bihar elections, there were initial signs that the government would reach out to the Opposition and adopt a consensual approach. That hope was short-lived. As a result, many important legislation remain stalled in Parliament. Let me take the example of the GST legislation. The Congress and some other parties had objected to some provisions of the Bill on weighty and well-reasoned grounds. The government was outright dismissive, until the Chief Economic Adviser virtually endorsed two of the three principal objections and made no recommendation on the third. Yet, the government has not been able to find a way to accommodate the views of the Opposition and pass the GST Bill. I am afraid the government has only to blame itself and its stubborn and unbending attitude.

The government has shown no willingness to engage with the Opposition on any important issue. Whether it is the conduct of foreign policy, relations with neighbouring countries, the rise of intolerance, communal violence, threats to internal security, momentous legal issues pending in Courts or charges of corruption or misconduct, the government seems to have forgotten that India is a parliamentary democracy and the government is accountable every day

to Parliament. In our view, the overbearing attitude of the government is mainly responsible for the frequent disruptions in Parliament and the absence of cooperation outside Parliament.

### Foreign Relations

I wish to make particular mention of the troubled relations with Pakistan, Nepal and the Maldives. On Pakistan, more and more people are asking if the government has a clear and consistent policy at all. In Nepal, India seems to have lost the goodwill of all concerned the Government of Nepal, the Madhesi parties and the people of Nepal who have suffered immense hardship over the last four months. Rhetoric, U-turns, and impulsive steps do not make a coherent foreign policy.

The people of India are not impressed by the numerous visits made by the Prime Minister to foreign countries. People have begun to ask hard questions on the gains made through these visits. When anything is overdone, there are not only diminishing returns, but it also invites ridicule, as you will find from a cursory survey of the social media.

### The role of the Opposition

The Congress, and other parties, are in the Opposition. The role of the Opposition in Parliamentary democracy is well articulated in the old maxim "to oppose, expose and depose." Our opposition to the government's wrong policies or poorly-drafted laws or ill-conceived schemes or acts of misconduct or misuse of government agencies cannot be termed obstructionism.

Let me remind everyone that we have cooperated with the government in passing 67 and 45 Bills in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, Respectively, during the last 19 months.

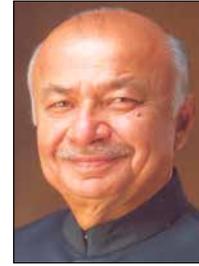
The Congress holds that peace and harmony, economic development and social welfare are paramount. As a responsible Opposition party, the Congress will support any policy or programme that will advance these goals. The onus, however, lies on the government to win the cooperation of all opposition parties and all sections of the people to take the country on the road of peace and prosperity.

Let me end this statement with the hope that the New Year will bless all of us with humility and wisdom even as we renew our pledge, as political parties, to serve the people of India to the best of our ability. ❖

*Statement by Shri P. Chidambaram, former Union Finance Minister and Senior Spokesperson, AICC, on January 1, 2016*

## Stop writing love letters to Pakistan and give Pakistan an answer in the language it understands:

- Sushil Kumar Shinde



“Shri Narendra Modi and BJP were voted to power by people of India in May, 2014 on the solemn promise of protecting ‘National Security’ and with the oft repeated slogan, ” “Bahut hua seema par vaar abki baar Modi Sarkar”. In the run-up to the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, Shri Narendra Modi bitterly criticized Congress-led UPA by mocking us to, ‘stop writing love letters to Pakistan and give Pakistan an answer in the language it understands’. In fact, Shri Narendra Modi held a press conference in Mumbai amidst 26/11 Mumbai terror attack and criticized the then Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh. One of the principal electoral rhetoric of Shri Narendra Modi always was that, ” “Bam ke dhamakoen aur golion ki awaaz mein Pakistan se baat nahi ho sakti”.

Last 19 months of Modi government has seen **900 border ceasefire violations** on Indo-Pakistan Border with 19 jawans and 34 civilians having lost their lives. Even Border Security Force (BSF) has admitted that there have been **35% hike in infiltrations** from across Pakistan Border in last one year.

**There have been three major terrorist attacks from Pakistan in last six months, two in Punjab and one in Jammu & Kashmir. First attack took place on 27th July, 2015** when three Pakistani terrorists of Lashkar-e-Taiba attacked in Dinanagar, Gurdaspur, Punjab leading to supreme sacrifice of seven people including an SP before they could be neutralized. **Second attack** came on 5th August, 2015 when two Pakistani terrorists attacked a BSF convoy in Udampur, J&K. Two brave BSF jawans lost their lives before one terrorist was neutralized and another arrested. **On the 1st day of January 2016**, six Pakistani terrorists of Jaish-e-Mohammad committed a well planned and dastardly attack by killing civilians and storming Pathankot Air Base in Punjab, which is one of our principal first lines of defense with key strategic assets. In an operation that lasted for over 100 hours from 1st to 4th January 2016, seven security personnel have laid down their lives in the counter terror operation and over two dozens have been injured seriously.

**Six days** after Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi’s sudden visit to Pakistan to greet Pakistani Prime Minister, Shri Nawaz Sharief on his birthday on December 25, 2015, a handful of Pakistani terrorists have dealt a severe blow to **India’s National Security establishment and counter terror strategy**. This is an attack on India’s sovereignty, honor and integrity and reflects

a clear-cut failure of **‘political leadership’** of PM Modi as also ‘command and control structure’ to fight terrorism. It is the unparalleled valour, resilience and sacrifice of our security forces, which neutralized this despicable terrorist attack.

As our security forces fought to foil one of the biggest terrorist attacks post 26/11 Mumbai attack between 1st and 4th January, 2016; entire Nation watched in shock, as Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi was preoccupied propagating ‘yoga’. An out-of-loop Home Minister, Shri Rajnath Singh, who was in Assam at the time of Pathankot operation, first declared the operation successful through a tweet at 7 PM on 2nd January, 2016 before deleting it thereafter. Defence Minister, Shri Manohar Parrikar was, as always, preoccupied in his home State of Goa. Only on the 5th day i.e. 5th January, 2016 yesterday; Defence Minister took time to visit Pathankot, made the most insensitive statement of six out of seven casualties having been suffered by Armed forces on account of bad luck, admitted gaps in security and issued a wishy washy statement ordering an inquiry, rather than owning up responsibility and making full disclosure to people. All that people got from Modi government in this hour of crisis was fake bravado, incompetent and immature responses, rather than a concerted anti-terror strategy to counter blow terrorism as also its perpetrators.

**There are numerous unanswered questions, which are hovering around the collective conscience of people of India that Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi must answer in the aftermath of Pathankot terror attack:-**

1. Why are BJP government and PM Modi shying away from calling Pathankot Air Base attackers as ‘Pakistani terrorists’, more so when they were loaded with fire arms, explosives, clothes, shoes and logistic support from Pakistan with ‘handlers located in Pakistan’ as reflected by telephone transcripts?

If so, why has Modi government not lodged a formal protest till date with Pakistan government, summoned their High Commissioner and taken a decision to place the matter before ‘International Fora’, so as to expose and isolate Pakistan as a State that is abetting and permitting its soil to be used for anti-India terror activities?

Why did it take Pakistani PM, Shri Nawaz Sharif five days to call Indian Prime Minister despite overwhelming evidence qua citizenship identity, origin and handling of Pathankot Air Base

attackers from Pakistan?

2. Why did Prime Minister Modi or his Home/Defence Minister not take control of the entire Pathankot operation putting a clear-cut 'command and control structure' on the ground to lead the operation? Why was Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) not called immediately by Prime Minister? Why were Home/Defence Ministers fumbling and deleting tweets qua Pathankot operation after being contradicted by the Home Secretary? Does it show a definite lack of coordination in the Union Cabinet even in tackling an issue as serious as terrorism?

3. Will PM/BJP government explain as to who is responsible for grave security lapse as terrorists managed to reach Pathankot Air Base despite advance intelligence alert and reporting of prior incident?

As per DGP Punjab, Punjab Police received information relating to SP, Sulvinder Singh's kidnapping and car snatching at 3.23 AM on the night intervening 31st December and 1st January. According to him, ADGP (Law & Order), Punjab was asked to rush to Pathankot by 7 AM on 1st January. He further states that Government of India was then informed. Despite this, terrorists breached into Pathankot Air Base on 1st January. As per Air Marshal, Shri Anil Khosla, Director-General, Air Operation; first contact with the terrorists was made on 2nd January at 3.30 AM in the morning. It is, thus, clear that a period of nearly 20-24 hours lapsed between the first incident committed by terrorists and the first contact with terrorists in the Air Base. No one has explained the reason for this fatal lapse of time in tackling terrorists.

4. **Pathankot has India's biggest Army cantonment housing two Infantry Divisions and two Armored Brigades, comprising of nearly 50000 Army troops.** Moot question is as to why were the 50,000 Army troops stationed near Pathankot Air Base not used by the government to cordon off the Air Base as there was a prior intelligence input after SP of Punjab Police was car jacked by terrorists in Army fatigue. In reply, Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar chose to shift blame by saying, "Army cannot do civil duty..... The area is so complicated and had a difficult terrain and blocking roads are not Army's responsibility". Is the Defence Minister then blaming the Union Home Minister and Punjab Police for letting the terrorists infiltrate and enter the Air Base? Net consequence of this lapse was that Defence Security Corps (DSC) jawans took most of the casualties and National Security Guard (NSG) took unacceptable losses.

5. **Why couldn't the Akali Dal-BJP led Punjab government act on intelligence and operational input that it received at 3.34 AM on the night intervening 31st December and 1st January?** One is forced to wonder whether it is drug linked terror and whether infiltrating terrorists used the same route, modus operandi and logistic support that drug traffickers use in active connivance with people in the administration of Punjab." ❖

*Statement by Shri Sushil Kumar Shinde, former Union Home Minister & Member of Congress Working Committee, on 6 January, 2016*

## Dharna in support of tea workers

**New Delhi:** WBPCCC and INTUC, West Bengal jointly staged protest in support of Tea Garden workers wherein Shri Rahul Gandhi, MP was present as Chief Guest and Presided over by Shri Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, MP.

More than 1500 tea garden workers were present. Also a memorandum was handed over to the President of India, Respected Shri Pranab Mukherjee on 15th December, 2015 at Rashtrapati Bhawan in connection with hapless condition of tea garden workers led by Shri Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, MP.



Shri Rahul Gandhi, MP in his speech clearly stated that both the Central and State Government are ignorant of the conditions and hardships of tea garden workers. He told that "Our Prime Minister loves Chai Pe Charcha, parjo unhe chai pilate hai unki charcha nahi karte". Shri Rahul Gandhi assured the workers of Congress support.



Shri Ramen Pandey, President INTUC, West Bengal in his speech told that more than 50 tea garden workers have died and many tea gardens are being closed but no one has done anything to uplift the conditions of workers and a mass movement is required to safeguard worker's interest.

Also present were Dr. C.P. Joshi, General Secretary and Shri Subhankar Sarkar, Secretary of AICC and other senior Congress and INTUC leadership. ❖

## INDIA'S PAK POLICY - ENGAGED DIPLOMACY NEEDED, NOT EPISODIC INTERVENTION



Randeep Singh Surjewala

“If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there.” Lewis Carroll's 'Alice in Wonderland' clearly was not written with Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and his Pakistan policy in mind, but it aptly captures his episodic initiatives on our western neighbour. Noted columnist, Aakar Patel counted nine flip-flops in the 19 months of Modi government. That is if you ignore his bilious anti-Pakistan rhetoric during the election campaign to demonise Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh for seeking normalcy with Pakistan.

An attempt has been made in some quarters to portray as if the Congress party is opposing peace with Pakistan. Nothing could be farther from the truth. As the natural party of governance, Congress party has handled Pakistan with the deftness and sensitivity required at any given time, whether it be by military action in the 1965 war, or the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, or the capture of Siachen glacier in 1984. Also, diplomatically, whether at Tashkent in 1966 or at Shimla in 1972 or the nuclear CBM agreement finalised by Rajiv Gandhi and implemented by PV Narasimha Rao.

But all those actions by the governments to engage Pakistan fitted into a larger strategy of securing India's national interest. The Parliament was always taken into confidence, opposition leaders briefed by the Prime Minister on all progress and media informed of the situation in a free and frank manner. Now, we have the case of a government where its own senior-most ministers are not aware of a visit by the Prime Minister to Pakistan. This is not a trivial issue. India-Pakistan relations concern the whole country and cannot be treated as the personal property of any single individual, whomsoever he may be.

What is Modi's Pakistan policy? Once where he said, 'talks and terror can't go together', to where he said, 'terrorists who wreaked havoc in Mumbai in 26/11 should be brought to justice first', to where 'the two NSAs will talk only if they have to discuss terror'. Alternatively, is it one where he exchanges sarees and shawls with Pakistani Prime Minister, and now visits Pakistan to convey birthday greetings to Nawaz Sharif. Flip-flopping between these two extremes, with no change in external environment or any assurance from Pakistan, is hard to support for any party, least of all for us who believe in the primacy of India's interests.

We now have a peculiar situation where no one knows and let's hope this excludes the Prime Minister what changed in the last couple of months for Modi to execute this sharp U-turn towards Pakistan. The people of India still don't know what the National Security Advisors discussed in their meeting in Bangkok and how the comprehensive dialogue with Pakistan will begin? Is it being done under pressure of some foreign power whom Prime Minister wants to woo or Is it due to a desire for personal glory? Is all this going to come at a cost India can ill-afford? Can India's national interests be sacrificed at the altar of personal ambition of one man? The country needs these answers.

The latest Lahore visit is nothing but another attempt to divert media attention from serious problems besieging Modi at home. Despite the advantage of historically low crude oil prices, India's economy has come to a grinding halt in the last 19 months. As highlighted by this newspaper in a series, from power to roads to loss of

*continued on page 30*

## IS THE ECONOMY SICK?



Salman Anees Soz

*The Modi government's policy is choking domestic demand at a time when global demand is also weak. This is hardly a recipe for double-digit growth.*

The title seems provocative. After all, for the last several months, we have all heard that India is now the fastest growing large economy in the world. The Finance Minister keeps assuring us that the country's economic revival is on a firm footing and that India is "witnessing significant macroeconomic stability". The Prime Minister's Make in India initiative, the JAM (Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile) trinity as well as the government's emphasis on ease of doing business are supposedly game changers. One gets the feeling that the Indian economy is turbocharged and major progress is around the corner. Yet, there are also reports of many economists and analysts indicating that economic growth doesn't "feel" that robust. So, something doesn't "feel" right and this "feeling" isn't going away. When things don't "feel" right, perhaps we are dealing with some sickness.

Before we proceed further with the diagnosis, let us understand the counterfactual. In other words, what does good economic health look like? For this, let us turn back the clock just a little bit. I reviewed data for 2005-06 to 2010-11, a six-year period when economic growth averaged almost 9 per cent per year. By drawing a contrast with economic conditions then with the current situation, we may get a

sense of what, if anything, is leading us to "feel" that everything is not well with the economy today.

### Six years of sunshine

Let's get straight to the big numbers. In that six-year period, India experienced an average GDP growth rate of about 8.8 per cent. In four out of six years, GDP growth exceeded 9 per cent. Only in 2008-09, a year associated with the global financial crisis, did growth fall below 8 per cent. These high growth years also saw high savings and investment ratios. The savings/GDP ratio averaged 34 per cent and the investment ratio (gross capital formation/GDP) averaged 36 per cent. In addition, exports grew at an annual rate of 21 per cent and imports grew at an even higher rate of 23 per cent, reflecting robust demand both in the domestic and external markets. The fiscal deficit averaged 4.5 per cent of GDP and the current account deficit was about 1.9 per cent of GDP. This is roughly the same time period in which India reduced the number of people living in extreme poverty by almost 130 million. Those six years were terrific. India was doing exceptionally well and, along with China, provided support for the global economy in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis.

Fast forward to the present. Since the government revised GDP data, there is increasing talk of India's emergence as the fastest growing economy. In a sea of global economic weakness,

India is apparently a buoyant force. But there are murmurs that the economy is not as strong as the government would have us believe. What's going on? Let's again go straight to the big numbers. While growth rate was 7.3 per cent in 2014-15, various official estimates point to a growth rate of 7-8 per cent in 2015-16. But savings and investment ratios have dropped sharply to around 30 per cent. Export growth has declined sharply. From April to November 2015, exports have dropped by over 18 per cent. If this trend continues, 2015-16 will see the worst export performance for over 15 years. Import growth has also declined by double digits indicating lack of demand (and also falling prices of crude). The average fiscal deficit for the first two years of the Modi government is likely to be around 4 per cent with the current account deficit around 1.3 per cent of GDP. Without lower crude prices, these twin deficits would be higher, as would inflation.

With numbers such as these, it is no wonder that many are expressing concerns about the state of the economy. This is not all. There are reports of widespread rural distress, mixed performance of the industrial sector, continued problems in the banking sector and low private sector investments due to market uncertainty and stressed corporate balance sheets. With all of these factors forming the foundation of the economy, it is easy to see why something doesn't "feel" right.

*continued on page 37*

## NATIONAL HERALD DEMYSTIFIED



Manish Tewari

When AJL was in financial difficulty no one came forward to help it for the simple reason that who else except the Indian National Congress would have a stake in its existence? So, who is the person who has been cheated?

Now that the initial brouhaha over the National Herald issue has slightly settled down, it is perhaps time for a dispassionate examination of the facts stripped of legalese. What exactly is the criminality in the transactions, if at all there is any? During the struggle for independence several newspapers and journals were started in furtherance of that crusade. Among them was the National Herald, launched by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1938.

The newspaper is held by a company called Associated Journals Pvt. Ltd. (AJL). Over the course of time, AJL ran into financial headwinds and was bailed out by the very party that Nehru led for decades, the Indian National Congress. The party extended unsecured loans and advances that totalled up to about Rs 90 crore over a protracted period of time.

AJL was unable to service its liabilities through an assured revenue stream. Anyone familiar with the newspaper publishing business knows that subscription revenues are only a fraction of the cost of bringing out a newspaper. Though National Herald had a good subscriber base, the major income stream of any newspaper is advertising. That is why mass circulating newspapers have four to five full pages devoted to advertisements, sometimes even ahead of the first page of the newspaper. In its editorial line the National Herald articulated the postulates of pluralism, socialism and non-alignment. These are also the core beliefs of the Indian National Congress.

Given the close affinity between the newspaper and the party, advertisers were chary of giving insertions out of fear of being victimised by other political parties when the political wheel turned. Despite these developments National Herald fought valiantly to keep itself alive, but it was a losing battle.

The possibility of Nehru's National Herald being relegated to the dregs of history appeared quite tangible. At that

stage, the leadership of the Indian National Congress with the objective of keeping the legacy of the newspaper alive formed the Young Indian private company (YI) under Section 25 of the erstwhile Companies Act. A Section 25 company is a not for profit enterprise where the promoters or even the shareholders do not get any dividends or income for their endeavours.

This company sought to take over the debt owed by AJL to the Congress Party and, in return, AJL sought to transfer 99 per cent of its shares to YI. This was done to redesign the corporate structure so that National Herald and its holding company could be provided a fresh start with the balance sheet cleaned of all liabilities.

These are the unvarnished facts. Do they smack of mens rea? Mens rea is the mental state for a crime to be intentional. It is the critical determinant of any criminal act.

The attempted revival of National Herald that could again be a direct ideological challenge to the forces of fundamentalism, obscurantism and religious revivalism was obviously a cause of concern for the guardians and champions of such interests.

A freshly minted Bharatiya Janata Party member, whose angst against the Congress is fairly well documented by his own writings, television bytes and tweets to require any reiteration, was then catechised or maybe he simply deployed himself to stall the process. This is the genesis of the private complaint filed in the court of a metropolitan magistrate in New Delhi. Now let us examine the averments made in this private complaint.

The main ingredient of any criminal complaint is that there should be a victim or an aggrieved person. In the present set of allegations this ingredient is conspicuous by its absence. Neither the shareholders of AJL nor any member of the Congress Party are aggrieved by the arrangement between YI and AJL.

However, inexplicably, the complainant who has never had anything to do with the Congress Party or AJL seems peeved. Does this not smack of an oblique agenda?

The first averment made in the complaint is of cheating under Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code. This provision requires that there be a fraudulent or dishonest inducement of a person by deceiving him to deliver property.

Surely, this “person” cannot be a figment of imagination. Who is this “person” exactly is unknown, because there exists no such person who has been deceived or cheated.

When AJL was in financial difficulty and no one came forward to help it for the simple reason that who else except the Indian National Congress would have a stake in its existence? It, therefore, begs the obvious question as to how the ingredients of the offence of cheating as defined by criminal law are made out. In other words, who is the person who has been cheated?

**WHEN AJL WAS IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY AND NO ONE CAME FORWARD TO HELP IT FOR THE SIMPLE REASON THAT WHO ELSE EXCEPT THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS WOULD HAVE A STAKE IN ITS EXISTENCE? IT, THEREFORE, BEGS THE OBVIOUS QUESTION AS TO HOW THE INGREDIENTS OF THE OFFENCE OF CHEATING AS DEFINED BY CRIMINAL LAW ARE MADE OUT. IN OTHER WORDS, WHO IS THE PERSON WHO HAS BEEN CHEATED?**

The second averment that needs to be dealt with is, can it be contended that the money advanced by the Congress Party to AJL cheated the donors of the Indian National Congress? The question really should be framed as follows: Is it illegal for a political party to support a newspaper through a Section 25 is not for profit company? The answer is no. There is nothing either in any section of the Income Tax Act or the Representation of the People Act or for that matter in any other law in force that acts as an estoppel on a political party using its income in any manner. This legal principle has been upheld by the courts in a matter pertaining to investments made by the BJP in Canstar fund (Bharatiya Janata Party vs Deputy Commissioner of Income Tax CIT, 2003).

There is no statutory bar on any political party from

investing in any commercial enterprise that can maximise the return on investment. Be that as it may, the aid provided to AJL cannot even be considered a commercial dealing by any yardstick. That is to say, the Congress Party providing an interest-free unsecured loan to AJL can only be construed as an act of bowing to the sentiments of millions of Congressmen to keep the intellectual flame of the freedom struggle blazing.

The next averment made in the complaint is of dishonest misappropriation of property under Section 403, which requires that a person dishonestly misappropriates or converts for his own use any movable property. As clarified earlier, misappropriation must be dishonest. What one needs to ponder over is, if the intent was to dishonestly misappropriate the property of AJL, what was the need to make other office bearers of the Indian National Congress shareholders in YI? The answer to this question alone is enough to demolish this contention.

The third averment is criminal breach of trust under Section 405 of the IPC, which requires that whoever is entrusted with property dishonestly misappropriates or converts to his own use, or dishonestly uses or disposes of that property in violation of the directions of law. This averment is also patently incorrect. There is not even a whisper in the complaint or for that matter in both the orders of the trial court or high court that evidences, establishes or even suggests that any property or funds of AJL have been wrongly used either by the non-profit company called YI or its individual shareholders.

All the shareholders of YI are office bearers of the Congress Party and its sympathisers. Given that the object of the exercise was to revive the publication called National Herald, it is within the realm of possibility that if different set of persons were the office bearers of the All-India Congress Committee at the relevant time, instead of the accused persons, these persons obviously would have become the shareholders of YI.

Although the charge of criminal conspiracy was made, no material has been put on record to substantiate the charge.

In conclusion, the timing of the summoning in July 2014, a month after the BJP government came to power, raises disturbing questions. It is almost déjà vu 1977, when a bunch of frivolous cases were registered against Indira Gandhi, all of whom were finally thrown out by the courts. Truth will ultimately triumph. ❖

*The writer is a lawyer and a former Union minister.*

*Courtesy: The Asian Age*

## CELEBRATING 68th ARMY DAY - JANUARY 15, 2016

The Army Day celebrated on 15th January, 2016 will be the 68th Anniversary of Indian Army. Indian Army Day marks a day to salute the valiant soldiers who sacrificed their lives to protect our country and the people living in it. On this day in 1948, Lieutenant General K.M. Cariappa became the first Indian Commander-in-Chief.

The Indian Army fights adversities on borders as well as with natural calamities. The Army works with true dedication and spirit of the motto 'fight to win.'

The Army re-dedicates itself to become a part of the 'War Winning Team' on this day. The day begins with paying homage to the martyred soldiers at the Amar Jawan Jyoti at the India Gate, New Delhi. Parades and many military shows which features the technology and achievements in Army. Unit credentials and Sena Medals were also presented for gallantry on the occasion every year.

On this occasion Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi has extended her salutations to our valiant soldiers on the occasion of Army Day. Paying tributes to those who sacrificed their lives to protect the nation and secure it's sovereignty, Smt. Gandhi said that jawans and officers of the Indian Army had established glorious traditions of valor and selflessness making the entire Nation proud.

In a separate message, Congress Vice President, Shri Rahul Gandhi said "My tribute to our soldiers, officers and ex-servicemen on Army Day. You fight for India's freedom & liberty, and lay down your lives to defend a billion hopes & dreams. You make us proud".



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### INDIA'S PAK POLICY - ENGAGED DIPLOMACY NEEDED, NOT EPISODIC INTERVENTION

jobs, Modi has presided over this crisis. Simultaneously, despite his personal campaign, he has lost electoral battle in Bihar, followed by the loss in the local elections in Gujarat and important bye-elections in Madhya Pradesh & Chattisgarh. There have been serious charges of wrong doing against two of his senior-most ministers, Sushma Swaraj and Arun Jaitley, and chief ministers of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

The Prime Minister is very fond of cameras and selfies, and likes to keep himself in the news. But India's Pakistan policy cannot be driven by optics sans any concrete deliverables, as has been the case with the government so far. Pakistan hasn't brought the perpetrators of 26/11 Mumbai attacks to justice. On the contrary, Lakhvi, the terror mastermind, was released in this government's stint which accepted it without a protest. Nor has it stopped cross-border infiltration. Infact, there has been a 35% increase this year. More than 900 ceasefire violations have

taken place along the Line of Control on International Border. For all the sarees and shawls that have been gifted by Modi, Pakistan has not even given India the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status so far.

Modi's photo-ops and secrecy around interactions will not make up for the lack of direction in his Pakistan policy. The contours of any dialogue with Pakistan have to be concrete, result oriented and in India's national interest. Every Indian is a stakeholder in that process and they are needed to be taken into confidence on policy towards Pakistan. Compromises of any kind, especially on the issue of terror or Kashmir, will not be taken well by the people of India. And the Prime Minister won't have the option of quoting from Alice in Wonderland: "Off with their heads!", however strongly he may wish to. ❖

*The Author is Media Incharge of All India Congress Committee*

*Congress Sandesh has started a new series about the achievements of the Congress Party in building the nation – From the desk of Editor.*

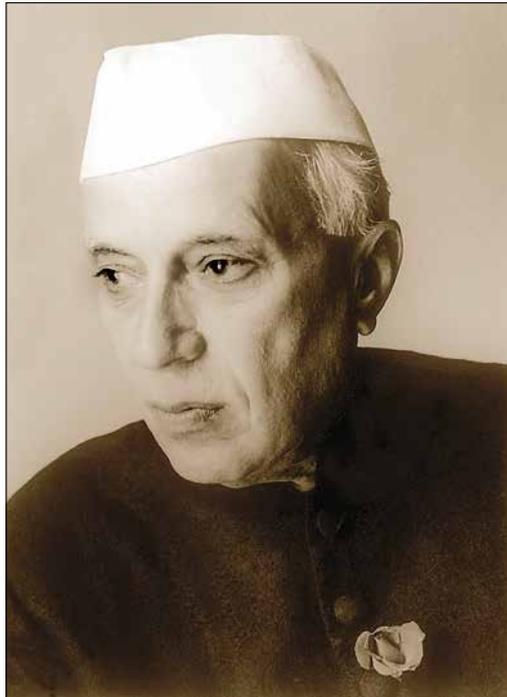
## CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CONGRESS PARTY DIFFICULT TO BE IGNORED

India got independence in 1947. The newly constituted country had many challenges before it. The Congress Party under the leadership of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and other top leaders began to shape and to give new direction to the country. The Congress leadership took the unification of the country as its first task, without which people can't be dedicated to democratic institutions and the idea of nationalism. After this, the Congress leadership unified the country socially, culturally and according to languages. People were educated with regard to unity, integrity and secularism and as a result they became responsible to Parliament and the law of the land. All these things took the shape of values before people. These things may seem very easy in the current scenario, but the path through which India treaded was not so easy. For this vision and political acumen was needed and Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and other leaders of the Congress Party successfully did all the above-mentioned tasks with great ease and efficiency.

The next task was to develop the country socially and economically and to establish India as a strong and non-aligned nation. To achieve this, the first Prime-Minister of India Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru took numerous policy-decisions. As a result, India began to march on the path of progress. In the process, the foundation for the development of the country took a solid shape upon which India of today is standing firmly. Due to these policy initiatives of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, he is aptly called the Builder of India. Pandit Nehru's tenure as the PM had been the longest and it indicates his immense popularity among countrymen.

Under the leadership of Pandit Nehru, the foundation of the country was laid and India achieved an international identity. So it is difficult to understand the blueprint of India's development without going through the relevancy of the Nehru-Age.

After independence, economic disparity among states was a serious problem. Some states were miles ahead in terms of economic development. At that time, Mumbai and West



Bengal were the two top centres of the country which owned 60% of the total industrial capital. These two centres also produced two-thirds of the total industrial production. Likewise, there was great inequality in agriculture and the eastern states were lagging behind with respect to northern and southern states.

**The Congress government led by Pandit Nehru understood the seriousness of economic disparities right from the start and the central government was of the view that the development of the country was possible only if all its parts were developed equally and in balance.**

**The tenure of the first PM of India can be observed as the process of maturing of democracy and also as**

### CONGRESS GOVERNMENT LED BY PANDIT NEHRU MADE PLANNING AS A POWERFUL INSTRUMENT TO OVERCOME REGIONAL INEQUALITIES

**social and economic achievements. Pandit Nehru adopted such policies which can lessen the gap between poor and rich states. For this purpose, the Finance Commission was constituted whose role was to distribute central taxes and other financial resources in such a way that can lessen the inter-state inequality and more financial assistance can be provided to poor states.**

In this way, the Congress government led by Pandit Nehru made planning as a powerful instrument to overcome regional inequalities. Pandit Nehru was of the opinion that the planning for the development should be to augment industrial as well as agricultural growth rate. The goals of planning were clearly observed in Second Five-Year Plan which was aimed at empowering backward regions. It was given importance in later plans also. The aims of the Third Plan were development of all

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## ACHIEVEMENT

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regions, expansion of industries and to provide financial gains to poor states. These policies clearly show that the Congress government was following that ideology of development which is called Sustainable Development in modern times and is itself a modern ideology.

**The Congress government constituted Planning Commission to fulfill these ideals. Right from the beginning, the Planning Commission has adopted the policy to provide more financial assistance to under-developed states in comparison to developed states.**

The Congress government also adopted the policy to invest heavily in steel, fertilizers, oil-refinery, petrochemicals, heavy engineering, chemicals, cement, so that regional disparity can be minimized. Besides, infrastructural development like power, irrigation, road, railway, posts and communication were given priority.

From 1957, India has been largely dependent on public investments and these investments were primarily made in less developed states. Poor states like Bihar and Madhya Pradesh got advantage of these public sector investments. States like Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Assam and Northeast states marched on the path of progress due to the construction of road network in these hilly areas.

**The Congress government decided to encourage private sector to invest in under-developed areas. For this the government provided tax-exemption and loans at low rate to private sector. From 1956 to 1991, the Congress government also used the licensing system for the establishment of private sector industries in under-developed areas.**

In 1969, banks were nationalized and it was ensured that the expansion of their branches should primarily be in under-developed areas. Guidelines were issued to banks and other public sector financial institutions for investments in these areas. Various ministries also chalked out plans for development of these areas and for creation of employment opportunities. Some programmes worth to mention here are Poverty Alleviation Programme; Grains for Work Programme and Integrated Rural Development Programme. The Congress government made poor states beneficiary through programmes related with education, health, family welfare and public distribution system.

Nehruji was of the opinion that without rural and agricultural development, the country can't march on the path of progress. Therefore in 60's, Green Revolution was initiated using new seeds and chemical fertilisers. The Central government made huge investments for the development of rural infrastructure and for adoption of new tech in agri-sector. Very encouraging results came to the fore of these initiatives which were at first started in Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh. Later on in 70's, these initiatives were extended to cover Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan

**and in 80's further extended to cover Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa and Assam. It helped immensely in reducing regional disparity.**

**Education proved to be a major thrust area in Nehru-Age. Nehruji was of the opinion that tech development in India is of utmost importance. In March, 1958, the Congress government passed many bills which were solely dedicated to policies of sci-tech. Pandit Nehru and other senior congress leaders firmly believed that only science can be the basis of economic, social and cultural development and can minimize ruining of resources.**

India got freedom in 1947 and soon Pandit Nehru and the Congress leadership understood the importance of scientific research and the role of tech for defence purposes. In line with Messelhuatt Institute of Technology, foundation of an IIT at Kharagpur was laid in 1952 and later its branches were established in Chennai, Mumbai, Kanpur and Delhi.

The expenditure on scientific research and science related activities was pegged at 1.10 crore in 1948-49 which rose to 85 crores in 1965-66. It directly impacted technicians. In 1950, there were 1,88,000 technicians which increased to 7,32,000 in 1965. The number of students in engineering and technological colleges was only 13,000 in 1950 which increased to 78,000 in 1965. Likewise there were only 2,600 students in agricultural universities which rose to 15,000 in 1965.

Pandit Nehru was a great visionary. He not only understood the importance of science and technology but also believed that atomic energy will revolutionize the social, economic and political landscape. It will also impact the security of the country. In this way, India was one of the few countries which understood the importance of atomic energy. Pandit Nehru wrote in 1948, "Future will be theirs who can generate atomic energy."

In the very next year after independence, the Congress government constituted Atomic Energy Commission under the chairmanship of great atomic scientist Homi Jehangir Bhabha. This commission came under science research department which was in direct control of Pandit Nehru. The Congress government in 1954 constituted a separate atomic department. In 1956, the first atomic reactor of India was built in Mumbai. It is interesting to note that the first atomic reactor of India was also the first in Asia. Under the ultra-modern and highly developed atomic programme of India, the primary task was to establish several atomic reactors across the country. However, under the leadership of Pandit Nehru, India was committed to peaceful use of atomic energy.

In 1962, Indian National Committee for Space Research and Rocket Launching Facility at Thumba were established. Under the leadership of Pandit Nehru, the then Defence Minister, Sri Krishna Menon took several measures to augment defence research and development. Important decisions were taken to manufacture defence equipments and ammunitions.

**PANDIT NEHRU WAS A GREAT VISIONARY. HE NOT ONLY UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORTANCE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BUT ALSO BELIEVED THAT ATOMIC ENERGY WILL REVOLUTIONIZE THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL LANDSCAPE.**

**Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was dedicated to the country's unity, integrity and sovereignty. Pandit Nehru was a strong supporter of science, technology, atomic energy and military power but at the same time he was greatly honoured as a world leader who believed in world peace and peaceful co-existence of other countries. Pandit Nehru gave the glimpse of his vision in the organization of defence forces. The size of defence forces was kept relatively small. The budgetary provision was merely two per cent of the National Income. Pandit Nehru had full faith in country's military power and that's why he didn't recommend the expansion of Indian Army despite the fact that the U.S. provided huge military assistance to Pakistan.**

This decision of Pandit Nehru indicates the depth of his thinking and the dimensions of his vision. In fact, he wanted to save country's rare resources and to avoid foreign interference in internal matters and the foreign policy since the domestic defence industry was unable to cater the requirements of the Indian Army. On the other hand in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, France, Germany and other countries had witnessed the uncontrolled army unleashing anarchy. Pandit Nehru and other top leaders of the Congress Party wanted that the army of a democratic country should be non-political. The army should accept the civil control and should not interfere in country's politics. That's why, every section of the society got ample representation in the army.

Under the leadership of Pandit Nehru and the Congress Party, the vision of the founders of the Indian Republic was not limited to political and economic issues. They were as much committed to social changes. They had firm belief in socialistic values and were of the opinion that as long as the benefit of political and economic development doesn't reach every section of the society, the dream of integrated development of the country can't be achieved. The ideology of the founders was expressed in, "socialistic pattern of society" and was officially accepted in Awadi convention of the Congress Party.

These ideals of Pandit Nehru and the Congress Party were made an integral part of the Second and Third Five-Year plans. Various important measures for social change were taken and it also started to shape the country as a welfare state. These ideals of a welfare state were also incorporated in the Second and Third Five-Year plans. Land reforms, planned economic development and rapid expansion of the public sector are

some of the measures taken in this regard. Labour laws were formulated to provide them rights equivalent to socialistic ideals. Workmen were provided employment security, health and accidental insurance benefits and also right to form labour unions and to go on strike. More equitable distributions of state's resources were ensured. The rate of income tax and excise duty were fixed. The scope of education, health and other social benefits were expanded.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the top leaders of the Congress Party wanted such social changes which can obliterate social inequality and can uplift the downtrodden. A provision for the elimination of untouchability had already been incorporated in the constitution. To make it more stringent, the Congress government in 1955 declared the practice of untouchability as cognizable offence and hence punishable. The government also implemented the provisions of reservation as enshrined in the constitution. To reserve seats for schedule castes, schedule tribes and other backward classes in educational institutions and in government jobs was ensured. Arrangements were made to provide these weaker sections the benefits of scholarships, hostels, loans, homes, health and legal aid. A commissioner of schedule castes and schedule tribes was also appointed so that these schemes can be better monitored.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the top leaders of the Congress Party were influenced by the thoughts of Charles Furish, a French philosopher who used to say that the development of a country can be assessed through women's social and political status in that society. Women organizations played an important role in freedom-struggle. Pandit Nehru was a strong supporter of women's rights. In 1951, the Congress Party proposed the Hindu Code Bill which was welcomed by prominent leaders, women M.Ps and other women activists but at the same time the bill was vehemently opposed by the Jan Sangh and other Hindu organisations. Keeping democratic values in mind, Pandit Nehru stopped this bill with immediate effect so that more support can be garnered. Pandit Nehru was committed to pass this bill. During first general elections in 1951-52, he made it an important issue.

After coming to power once again, the government passed various provisions of this bill through four different bills. These bills ensured single spouse system; provision of divorce for man and woman both; to increase the age-limit for marriage and the right to enable woman to get maintenance and a share in family property. In this way, a path-breaking step was taken in order to empower women.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was a renowned educationist also. Under his leadership, the Congress leaders understood well that education of good standard is necessary for social and economic development; equality of opportunities and to build a society based on socialistic values. The rate of literacy in 1951 was mere 16.6 per cent. The situation was more pitiable in rural India where the literacy rate was only 6 per cent. The founders of Indian republic in 1961 introduced provisions in this regard.

**ON THE WHOLE, THE AGE OF PANDIT NEHRU CAN BE TERMED AS AN AGE OF STRUGGLE AND HOPE. DURING THIS TIME, THE COUNTRY CAME OUT OF ITS DARK PHASES AND MARCHED SLOWLY AND STEADILY ON THE PATH OF PROGRESS WITH NEW VIGOUR AND ENERGY.**

The provisions were education upto the age of 14 should be free and compulsory and its expenditure should be borne out by the government.

The Congress government took many measures to develop the education system. The budgetary allocation for education in 1951-52 was around Rs 20 crores and it rose to 146.27 crores in 1964-65 a seven fold increase. During the tenure of Pandit Nehru, several steps were taken to augment education particularly girl education. Between 1951 and 1961, the number of students increased two fold whereas the number of girl students rose three fold. In the middle-school level, the no of students increased from 10 lakhs to 40 lakhs and the no of girl students rose from 2 lakh to 10 lakh during these ten years.

In order to keep pace with the increasing students, the no of schools had to be increased. Between 1951 and 1961, the number of schools increased from 7288 to 24,477. This welcome change also touched the higher education institutions. At the time of independence, there were only 18 universities in which 3 lakh students were enrolled. After 17 years, the no of universities rose to 54 and the no of colleges affiliated with these universities also increased to 2500. It is interesting to note that that the no of girl students increased six times. The aim to make all the citizens literate was very far but the Congress government succeeded in establishing education as a value in Indian society. This was a major achievement.

Pandit Nehru and senior leaders of the Congress Party well understood the fact that the dream of integrated development can't be fulfilled without the development of rural India. At the time of independence, 70 per cent of the population lived in villages and the economy was agriculture-based. In these circumstances, two important programmes Community Development Programme in 1952 and Panchayati Raj in 1959- were started. The aim of these programmes to lay the foundation of welfare state in rural India. To modernize agri-system and an overall development of rural India were its main purposes.

55 blocks were selected for the experimental start of Community Development Programme in 1952. Every block comprised 100 villages and 60 to 70 thousands of population. By the middle of 60's, the no of community blocks increased many-fold. 6000 block development officers and 6 lakh Gram Sevaks were appointed so that this programme can be better implemented.

This programme comprised almost all aspects of rural India. Emphasis was given to agriculture, communication, health, education etc.

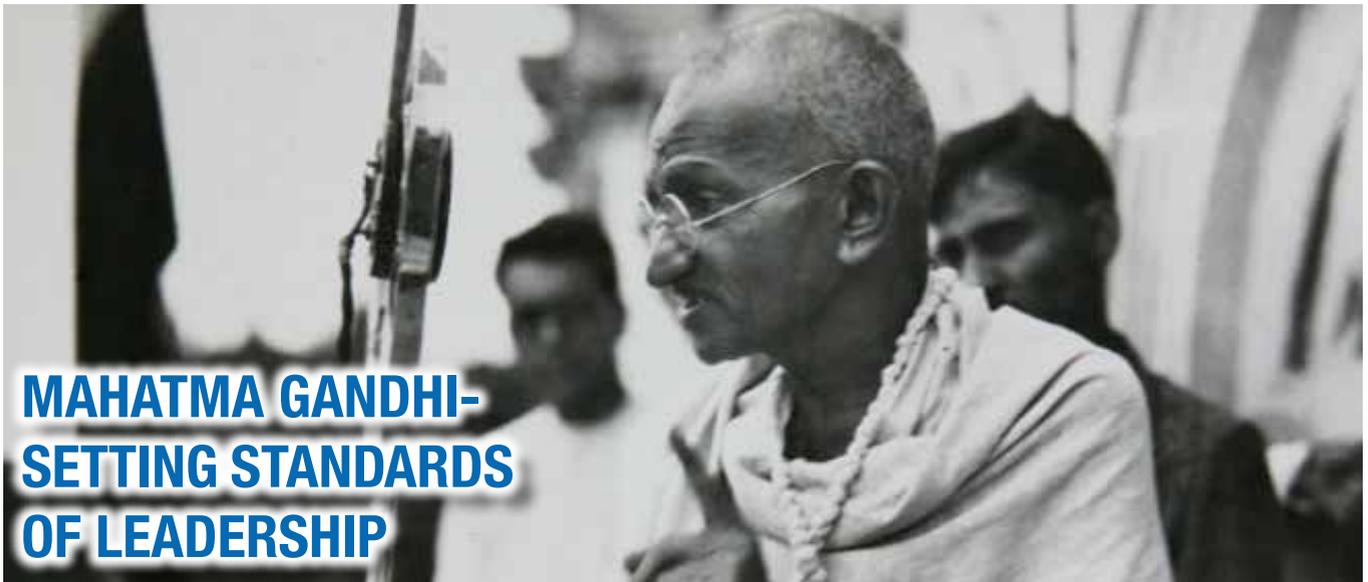
The core objective of Community Development Programme was to make people responsible and self-reliant. The programme was aimed at organizing people for their own welfare. Use of fertilisers, better seeds and adoption of scientific way of farming led to an increase in agri-production. Apart from these, roads, ponds, wells, schools, health centres were built and facility for health and education was extended.

**Pandit Nehru hugely praised Community Development Programme and often expressed it as a great revolution and as a symbol of reawakening of India. There were of course some shortcomings in this programme. To overcome this, a committee was constituted under Balwant Mehta which recommended decentralization of administration at block and district level in view of these developmental programmes. The Congress government implemented the recommendations. A self-governance system was introduced all over the country whose primary unit was village Panchayat. The new system was known as "Panchayati Raj" and various states began to implement it from 1959. District Board (ZilaParishad) was divided into three layers and its members were directly elected. Community Development Programme was integrated with Panchayati Raj system. This three layered committee was made responsible for implementation and monitoring of these development-programmes.**

In this way, the power to implement and to take decisions regarding these programmes were vested in people. People's active participation ensured that the shortcomings of these Community Development Programme will be removed. Under this the role of government officials was limited to only assist and direct. Thousands of self-help groups like cooperative banks, land mortgage banks, market committees were constituted in this connection. These all committees were self-governed because they were run by the institutions whose members were directly elected.

**The formation of these self-help groups and the Panchayati Raj system were in fact the true representatives of the revolutionary change that was undergoing in the Indian society. Rural administration was vested in people and it resulted in high growth rate in rural India. It not only provided people the much needed administrative power but it made them more self-reliant and changed their outlook also. Above all, it proved to be the beginning of the development of human as resource.**

On the whole, the age of Pandit Nehru can be termed as an age of struggle and hope. During this time, the country came out of its dark phases and marched slowly and steadily on the path of progress with new vigour and energy. Liberal outlook, unparalleled leadership and effective policies provided the country a strong base upon which India has been progressing continuously. ❖



## MAHATMA GANDHI- SETTING STANDARDS OF LEADERSHIP

If we are under the impression that the Gandhian age is over because 68 years have passed since Mahatma Gandhi's assassination, we are wrong. It is quite likely that the Gandhian era is just commencing, that what we see are the first indications of that new beginning. Tomorrow belongs to Gandhi. Wherever there is resistance against the forces of death, Gandhi is present. About this, we must firmly convince ourselves.

The question before us is what inspiration can we draw from his life? What light can his thought and wisdom shed on our problems? How does his way of life affect our course of action in private and public affairs?

The words which Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru uttered almost immediately after Gandhi's sudden exit from this world are found to prove prophetic. He said, **'The light is gone and yet it will shine for a thousand years.' He compared Mahatma Gandhi to an eternal beacon.**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., came to India as a pilgrim in 1959. After a month's sojourn in the land of Gandhi, on the eve of his departure, he was asked a cynical question at a press conference in Delhi. Where is Gandhi today? He was asked: we see him nowhere. Dr. King's reply was that Gandhi was inevitable. If humanity is to progress, Gandhi is inescapable. He lived, thought and acted, inspired by the vision of a humanity evolving towards a world of peace and harmony. We may ignore him only at our own risk.

The thoughts of people, their viewpoints, many of them could be immortal, eternal and universal while some ideas could be a result of circumstances and problems facing the country at a given moment. There are practices and certain principle. That which is not bound by space and time and geographical boundaries is the principle. Truth, Non-violence and purity of

means are Gandhi's principles. No one can say that Non-violence is required today, but it will not be required 500 years later. Whatever may be the time and space, truth and non-violence and purity of means will always be the eternal requirements. Hence, if we want to make Gandhi relevant today we will have to retain his principles and see how the practice can be made applicable to the present circumstances, and whether we have the ability to take it in that direction.



**Shobhana  
Radhakrishna**

In the words of Albert Einstein, 'I believe that Gandhi's views were the most enlightened of all the political men in our time. We should strive to do things in his spirit: not to use violence in fighting for our cause, but by non-participation in anything you believe is evil.' He also believed that the problem of bringing peace to the world on a supranational basis will be solved only by employing Gandhi's method on a large scale.

As long as we are not able to find solutions to our social, economic and ecological problems, Gandhi will be relevant and it is applicable to the whole world. In whatever corner of the world he worked for the time being, the whole of humanity and its good were always present to him.

**IF HUMANITY IS TO PROGRESS, GANDHI IS INESCAPABLE. HE LIVED, THOUGHT AND ACTED, INSPIRED BY THE VISION OF A HUMANITY EVOLVING TOWARDS A WORLD OF PEACE AND HARMONY. WE MAY IGNORE HIM ONLY AT OUR OWN RISK.**

**IF WE WANT TO MAKE GANDHI RELEVANT TODAY WE WILL HAVE TO RETAIN HIS PRINCIPLES AND SEE HOW THE PRACTICE CAN BE MADE APPLICABLE TO THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, AND WHETHER WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO TAKE IT IN THAT DIRECTION.**

R.R. Diwakar, the well-known Gandhian, politician and philosopher says that Man, in Gandhi's eyes, was the measure. Gandhi's approach to himself and to life in general, was that of a seeker of truth and of a votary of nonviolence or love. His was a scientific mind and he sought for that law of life and being which would promote the common good and help man to reach higher elevations of consciousness. He perceived that love, spelt as nonviolence in thought, word and deed, was the shortest cut to human progress and evolution, both individual and social. In his eyes, progressive nonviolence could express itself best through service, self-suffering and, if necessary, total sacrifice.

One very important aspect of his life adds measure significantly to what he thought and did. He lived day in and day out open to public view, as on a stage. Mahatma Gandhi took the people and even his opponents into confidence not only in regard to his actions but even his motivations. The result is that none in history has left behind so much of documentation and direct evidence concerning everything he thought and did. Moreover, he himself has written so much and on every conceivable subject that his writings are likely to run into fifty to sixty sumptuous volumes of five hundred pages each. All this material is proving very helpful in assessing Gandhi's relevance both for the present and for the future. It is impossible in a few brief pages to cover all the aspects of Gandhi's life and teaching which are of relevance to our own times and environment.

What was the reason for emergence of Mahatma Gandhi as a leader in the country? He had new methods to offer and the country saw the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi as a leader. His qualities also satisfied the aspirations of the people. With him to lead the Congress, the struggle for freedom had ceased to be an exclusive preserve of the elite. He had taken it to the common people. He was a common man himself. He spoke the language of the people that was culturally rooted. He had exceptional command over the English language, but insisted on using his broken Hindustani. His simple life of labor, the willingness to undergo voluntary self-suffering and his faith in the oneness of all souls was in itself an example. He awakened the power of the people by reposing faith in them.

It was a unique coming together of people and leader. His quest for perfection led him to search for the truth with the people.

He did not run away from politics, though to him it was not the primary quest. Why did the masses of India love him? Mahatma Gandhi believed that the reason was his affection and love for the poor of the country. He communicated the intricate aspects of Truth, like the sages had communicated the most incommunicable knowledge by simple formulation: 'Speak the truth', 'Follow your *dharma*'. He communicated it through his life by establishing unity between his individual life and public conduct and that is how it reached the hearts of people.

Mahatma Gandhi created standards for all of us for bringing about transformative change in any collective endeavor. According to the eminent Gandhian, Narayan Desai in his book *My Life is my Message*, Gandhi's revolution was two sided after his return to India in 1915. On the one hand he was trying to convince the country to adopt a program of non-cooperation and on the other hand; he was hoping to build the nation through simple but concrete programs. For both these, the methods were based on truth, non-violence and purity of means. His clarity on the efficacy of his methods was unusual and novel for the country at that time. The Congress, its organizations and the many associations for constructive work became his vehicle.

If Gandhi's life, thought and action are extremely relevant and useful for every human being who is self-conscious and who aspired after a higher, nobler and more exalted life than he may be living today, Gandhi's teaching as regards social life and its proper organization is equally positive, constructive and Practical. In fact, he called himself a practical idealist. He did not even for a moment forget that man is essentially a social being. Man's relationship to sentient beings and man's relationship to material things may be said to be the subjects of his incessant research during a long, eventful and multifaceted life.

Mahatma Gandhi's upmost desire was to restore the dignity of the poorest of the poor. This he understood was only possible through selfless service. He had said 'Service which is rendered without joy help neither the servant, nor the served, but all other pleasure and possessions pale into nothingness but before service which is rendered in a spirit of joy.'

He felt in communion with himself in the midst of the poor and unhappy. Their joys and sorrows became his. The ills that plagued them perturbed them deeply, while their goodness made his heart dance with joy. He felt oneness with the people and according to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru there was no one who knew the pulse of the people better than Mahatma Gandhi.

In fact, one can trace the motive for working for a cause larger than his own personal desires or needs, continuing from his

childhood, through his youthful days to the end of his life. He was involved in politics for the same reason. His life was a ceaseless quest for Truth and the incessant desire to measure him on the scales of truth. Mahatma Gandhi's definition of truth is very simple, speak as you think and act as you speak. There should be unity of thought, word and deed. He was a leader who did what he said. There was no difference between what he did and what he said. The leadership quality that one sees clearly, is that he was one leader who kept the Nation above himself and his organization.

'The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others' Mahatma Gandhi had said.

Through the leadership qualities like service, self-sacrificial love, spirituality, integrity, simplicity, emphasizing follower needs, and modeling Mahatma Gandhi cultivated public opinion that truth and non-violence were integral to the life of the country. Transparency was seen in all his actions throughout his life. There was no difference between his personal life and public conduct. He uttered what he thought and acted according to what he uttered. And how did he do this? By cultivating the courage of conviction, by being steadfast to his no-compromise zone, by insisting on purity of means of adhering to truth and non-violence in every sphere. For Mahatma Gandhi, the laudable ends could never justify means because such means contaminated even the noblest of objectives. Purity of means was what he insisted on while confronting discrimination, slavery, oppression, injustice and violence.

**'Out of my ashes, many more Gandhis will rise,' had said Mahatma Gandhi. Many leaders around the globe have been inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's methods and life and continue to do so.** They have used his principles and methods to successfully launch their struggle against injustice and tyrannical governments.

It is clear that Gandhi's life, thought, and teaching of conflict resolution through dialogue and negotiation, reconciliation, compromise, love and forgiveness are ever relevant. His principles and technique of satyagraha are highly efficacious instruments of peaceful economic, social and political change whenever and wherever it is required. In its totality, Gandhi's teaching of Ahimsa and Satyagraha remain an eternal requirement in today's context to make the world a better place. ❖

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

*continued from page 27*

## IS THE ECONOMY SICK?

In order for the economy to match its performance in the six years described earlier, a lot has to go right at a time when very few things appear to be going right.

### A bridge too far

One of the things highlighted by the government as a success is fiscal consolidation. That is a fancy term for lower fiscal deficits. The government's fiscal deficit target for 2015-16 is 3.9 percent of GDP (slightly higher than the earlier estimate of 3.6 per cent). Some economists believe that the government must continue on this fiscal consolidation path to give "confidence" to investors that macroeconomic stability is of utmost importance. This is all very well if private investors were stepping in to invest and create jobs. However, as I have mentioned earlier, they are not doing that. So, the government is trying to increase public investment as a way of boosting the economy. This is excellent but not the full picture. The government's own mid-term review concludes that "the positive contribution from greater public investment is offset by a combination of lower other expenditures and higher tax receipts". This is in the context of lower minimum support prices, lower NREGA disbursements and a host of cuts in social sector expenditures. The review suggests that fiscal policy will be contractionary in 2015-16 compared to 2014-15 and has floated the idea of relaxing the fiscal deficit target.

In effect, government policy is choking domestic demand at a time when global demand is also weak. This is hardly a recipe for growing at double digits. The only thing that will grow in double digits is the frustration for millions of young Indians who won't have the promised job opportunities. At a time when India should be aggressively going after a greater share of the global economic pie, we are seeking comfort in fiscal management. At a time when we should be promoting big investments in our food supply chain, we are choking off rural demand. At a time when we should be providing major incentives for our small and medium enterprises to modernise and compete globally and employ young people, we are adding to the tax burden of the common man who could become a source of demand for these companies. Our major corporations should be encouraged to invest at a time of global weaknesses so that when demand picks up, they are ready to take a bigger share.

But our government appears to have a vision deficit and a surplus of complacency that is bound to add to the "feeling" that things are not well. Having said this, I don't believe the economy is sick. It is in a funk. It is the government that appears sick and in need of a fiscal deficit fever reducer. ❖

*(The author is a spokesperson of the Indian National Congress and formerly with the World Bank.)*

## THE PARTY THAT WINS FREEDOM FOR INDIA SHOULD BE ALSO THE PARTY THAT WILL PUT INTO EFFECT THE ENTIRE PROGRAMME OF POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION : SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

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

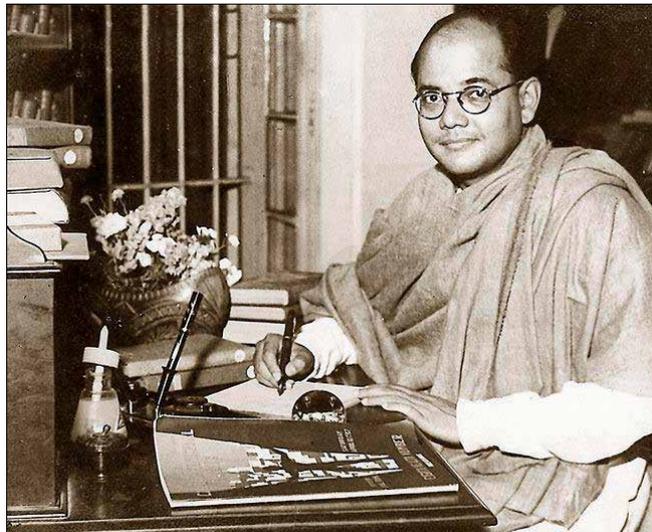
### **Subhas Chandra Bose (Haripura-1938)**

I am afraid there is a lack of clarity in the minds of many Congressmen as to the role of the Congress in the history of our national struggle. I know that there are friends who think that after freedom is won the Congress Party, having achieved its objective, should wither away. Such a conception is

entirely erroneous. The Party that wins freedom for India should be also the party that will put into effect the entire programme of post-war reconstruction. Only those who have won power can handle it properly. If other people are pitchforked into seats of power which they were not responsible for capturing, they will lack that strength, confidence and idealism which is indispensable for revolutionary reconstruction. It is this which accounts for the difference in the record of the Congress and non-Congress Ministries even in the very narrow sphere of provincial autonomy.

I do not know how or when this new order will come to India. I imagine that every country will fashion it after its own way and fit it in with its national genius. But the essential basis of that order must remain and be a link in the world order that will emerge out of the present chaos.

Socialism is thus for me not merely an economic doctrine which I favour, it is a vital creed which I hold with all my head and heart. I work for Indian independence because the nationalist in me cannot tolerate alien domination! I work for it even more because for me it is the inevitable step to social and economic changes. I should like the Congress to become a socialist organisation and to join hands with the other forces



23 January 1897 - 18 August 1945

in the world who are working for the new civilization. But I realize that the majority in the Congress, as it is constituted today, may not be prepared to go thus far. We are a nationalist organisation and we think and work on the nationalist plane. It is evident enough now that this is too narrow even for the limited objective of political independence, and so we talk of the masses and their economic needs. But still most of us hesitate, because of our nationalist backgrounds, to take a step which might frighten away some vested

interests. Most of those interests are already ranged against us and we can expect little from them except opposition even in the political struggle.

### **Congress and Socialism**

Much as I wish for the advancement of socialism in this country, I have no desire to force the issue in the Congress and thereby create difficulties in the way of our struggle for independence. I shall cooperate gladly and with all the strength in me with all those who work for independence even though they do not agree with the socialist solution. But I shall do so stating my position frankly and hoping in course of time to convert the Congress and the country to it, for only thus can I see it achieving independence. It should surely be possible for all of us who believe in independence to join our ranks together even though we might differ on the social issue. The Congress has been in the past a broad form representing various opinions joined together by the common bond. It must continue as such even though the difference of those opinions becomes more marked.

How does socialism fit in with the present ideology of the Congress? I do not think it does. I believe in the rapid industrialisation of the country and only thus I think will

**The Congress has been in the past a broad form representing various opinions joined together by the common bond. It must continue as such even though the difference of those opinions becomes more marked.**

the standards of the people rise substantially and poverty be combated. Yet I have co-operated wholeheartedly in the past with the khadi programme and I hope to do so in the future because I believe that khadi and village industries have a definite place in our present economy. They have a social, a political and an economic value which is difficult to measure but which is apparent enough to those who have studied their effects. But I look upon them as temporary expedients of a transition stage, might be a long one, and in a country like India, village industries might well play an important though subsidiary role even after the development of industrialism. But though I co-operate in the village industries programme my ideological approach to it differs considerably from that of many others in the Congress who are opposed to industrialisation and socialism.

The problem of untouchability and the Harijans again can be approached in different ways. For a socialist it presents no difficulty for under socialism there can be no such differentiation or victimization. Economically speaking, the Harijans have constituted the landless proletariat and an economic solution removes the social barriers that custom and tradition have raised.

### **Constituent Assembly**

I think that, under the circumstances, we have no choice but to contest the election to the new provincial legislatures, in the event of their taking place. We should seek election on the basis of a detailed political and economic programme, with our demand for a Constituent Assembly in the forefront. I am convinced that the only solution of our political and communal problems will come through such an Assembly, provided it is elected on an adult franchise and a mass basis. That Assembly will not come into existence till at least a semi-revolutionary situation has been created in this country and the actual relationships of power, apart from proper constitutions, are such that the people of India can make their will felt. When that will happen I cannot say, but the world is too much in grip of dynamic forces today to admit of static conditions in India or elsewhere for long. We may thus have to face this issue sooner than we might expect. But obviously, a Constituent Assembly will not come through the new Act or the new legislatures. Yet we must press this demand and keep it before our country and the world, so that when the time comes we may be ripe for it.

A Constituent Assembly is the only proper and democratic method for the framing of our constitution, and for its delegates then to negotiate a treaty with the representative of the British Government.

No, there can be no question of the Congress Party withering away after political freedom has been won. On the contrary, the party will have to take over power, assume responsibility for administration and put through its programme of reconstruction. Only then will it fulfill its role. If it were forcibly to liquidate itself, chaos would follow. Looking at post-war Europe we find that only in those countries has there been orderly and continuous progress where the party which seized power undertook the work of reconstruction.

I know that it will be argued that the continuance of it in such circumstances, standing behind the State, will convert that State into a totalitarian one; but I cannot admit the charge. The State will possibly become a totalitarian one if there be only one party in countries like Russia, Germany and Italy. But there is no reason why other parties should be banned. Moreover, the party itself will have a democratic basis and, unlike, for instance, the Nazi Party will prevent the future Indian State becoming a totalitarian one. Further, the democratic basis of the party will ensure that leaders are not thrust upon the people from above, but are elected from below.

Though it may be somewhat premature to give a detailed plan of reconstruction, we might as well consider some of the principles according to which our future social reconstruction should take place. I have no doubt in my mind that our chief national problems relating to the eradication of poverty, illiteracy and disease, and to scientific production and distribution can be effectively tackled only along socialist lines. The very first thing which our future national government will have to do would be to set up a commission for drawing up a comprehensive plan of reconstruction. This plan will have two parts—an immediate programme and long period programme. In drawing up the first part, the immediate objectives which will have to be kept in view will be three-fold: firstly, to prepare the country for self-sacrifice; secondly, to unify India; and thirdly, to give scope for local and cultural autonomy. The second and third objectives may appear to be contradictory, but they are not really so. Whatever political talent or genius we may possess as a people will have to be used in reconciling these two objectives. We shall have to unify the country so that we may be able to hold India against any foreign invasion. While unifying the country through a strong Central Government, we shall have to put all the minority communities as well as the provinces at their ease, by allowing them a large measure of autonomy in cultural as well as governmental affairs. Special efforts will be needed to keep our people together when the load of foreign domination is removed, because alien rule had demoralized and disorganized us to a degree. To promote national unity we

shall have to develop our lingua franca and a common script. Further, with the help of such modern scientific contrivances as aeroplanes, telephone, radio, films, television, etc., we shall have to bring the different parts of India closer to one another and through a common educational policy we shall have to foster a common spirit among the entire population.

With regard to the long period programme for a free India, the first problem to tackle is that of our increasing population. I do not desire to go into the theoretical question as to whether India is over-populated or not. I simply want to point out that where poverty, starvation and disease are stalking the land, we cannot afford to have our population mounting up by thirty millions during a single decade. If the population goes up by leaps and bounds, as it has done in the recent past, our plans are likely to fall through. It will, therefore, be desirable to restrict our population until we are able to feed, clothe and educate those who already exist. It is not necessary at this stage to prescribe the methods that should be adopted to prevent a further increase in population, but I would urge public attention be drawn to this question.

Regarding reconstruction, our principal problem will be how to eradicate poverty from our country. That will require radical reform of our land system, including the abolition of landlordism. Agricultural indebtedness will have to be liquidated and provision made for cheap credit for the rural population. An extension of the co-operative movement will be necessary for the benefit of both producers and consumers. Agriculture will have to be put on a scientific basis with a view to increasing the yield from the land.

To solve the economic problem, agricultural improvement will not be enough. A comprehensive scheme of industrial development under State ownership and State control will be indispensable. A new industrial system will have to be built up in place of the old one, which has collapsed as a result of mass production abroad and alien rule at home. The Planning Commission will have to consider carefully and decide which of the home industries could be revived despite the competition of modern factories, and in which sphere large-scale production should be encouraged. However much we may dislike modern industrialism and condemn the evils which follow in its trail, we cannot go back to the pre-industrial era, even if we desire to do so. It is well, therefore, that we should reconcile ourselves to industrialization and devise means to minimize its evils and at the same time explore the possibilities of reviving cottage industries where there is a possibility of their surviving the inevitable competition of factories. In a country like India, there will be plenty of room for cottage industries, especially in the case of industries including hand-spinning and hand-weaving, allied to agriculture.

Last but not the least, the State, on the advice of the Planning

**To promote national unity we shall have to develop our lingua franca and a common script. Further, with the help of such modern scientific contrivances as aeroplanes, telephone, radio, films, television, etc., we shall have to bring the different parts of India closer to one another and through a common educational policy we shall have to foster a common spirit among the entire population.**

Commission, will have to adopt a comprehensive scheme for gradually socializing our entire agricultural and industrial system in the spheres of both production and distribution. Extra capital will have to be procured for this, whether through internal or external loans or through inflation.

How can we strengthen and consolidate the Congress while our Ministers are in office? The first thing to do is to change the composition and character of the bureaucracy. If this is not done, the Congress Party may come to grief. In every country, the Ministers come and go but the steel frame of the permanent services remains. If this is not altered in composition and character, the governmental party and its Cabinet are likely to prove ineffective in putting their principles into practice.

Secondly, the Congress Ministers in the different provinces should, while they are in office, introduce schemes of reconstruction in the spheres of education, health, prohibition, prison reform, irrigation, industry, land reform, worker's welfare, etc. In this matter, attempts should be made to have as far as possible, a uniform policy for the whole of India. This uniformity could be brought about in either of two ways. The Congress Ministers in the different provinces could themselves come together, as the Labour Ministers did in October 1937 in Calcutta, and draw up a uniform programme.

At this stage I should like to say something more about the role of the Congress Working Committee. This Committee, in my judgement, is not merely the directing brain of the national army of fighters for freedom. It is also the shadow cabinet of Independent India, and it should function accordingly. This is not an invention of my own. It is the role which has been assigned to similar bodies in other countries that have fought for their national emancipation. I am one of those who think in terms of a Free India- who visualize a National Government in this country within the brief span of our own life. It is consequently natural for us to urge that the Working Committee should feel and function as the shadow cabinet of a free India. This is what President de Valera's Republican

Government did when it was fighting the British Government and was on the run. And this is what the Executive of the Wafd Party in Egypt did before it got into office. The members of the Working Committee, while carrying on their day-to-day work, should accordingly study the problems they will have to tackle in the event of their capturing political power.

This brings us to the vexed problem of the collective affiliation of workers' and peasants' organizations to the Congress. Personally I hold the view that the day will come when we shall have to grant this affiliation in order to bring all progressive and anti-imperialist organizations under the influence and control of the Congress. There will, of course, be difference of opinion as to the manner and the extent to which this affiliation should be given, and the character, and stability of such organizations will have to be examined before affiliation could be agreed to.

## VICHAR VIBHAG

### Seminar on Era of intolerance & Atrocities on Dalits

Vichar Vibhag AICC has organised a seminar on the theme "Era of intolerance & Atrocities on Dalits" on 22nd January 2016 at the AICC headquarter. This seminar was chaired by Dr. Girija Vyas, Chairperson Vichar Vibhag & Editor Congress Sandesh, and the keynote speaker was Dr K Raju, Chairman, SC Department of AICC. Dr Aditya Narayan Misra, Vice Chairman, Vichar Vibhag summed the issues discussed in the seminar.



Dr. K Raju mentioned that the current BJP government and RSS are trying to shape India as a Hindu Rashtra through centralised control of the education system. For this, the present government has snatched away the right of the universities to frame the syllabus and imposed common syllabus across the country. With growing centralisation in the higher education through MHRD diktats the agenda of egalitarian higher education is at jeopardy. Dalits and Minorities are gradually feeling more and more isolated in the system of higher learning. In last 18 months the atrocities against the Dalits has increased manifold.

In Russia, the united front of the Soviets of workers, peasants and soldiers played a dominant part in the October Revolution, but on the contrary in Great Britain we find that the British Trades Union Congress exerts a moderating influence on the National Executive of the Labour Party. In India we shall have to consider carefully, what sort of influence organizations like the Trade Union Congress and the Kisan Sabhas will exert on the Indian National Congress in the event of affiliation being granted. We should not forget that there is the possibility that the former may not have radical outlook if their immediate economic grievances are not involved. In any case, quite apart from the question of collective affiliation, there should be the close co-operation between the National Congress and the other anti-imperialist organizations, and this objective would be facilitated by the later adopting the principles and methods of the former. ❖

In her introductory remark, Prof. Vyas has termed the NDA's regime as an era of intolerance and hostilities to freedom of expression and right to equality, especially to Dalit and marginalised sections of the society. She cited the example of a senior bureaucrat being subjected to discrimination in Rajasthan. In the contemporary scenario the government is trying to promote inequality and caste-based society. At the end of the seminar, the thank note made by the Dr. Aditya Narayan Misra. He also pointed out the current government is trying to control the education with a clear design to impose RSS ideology. While the Congress idea for an egalitarian accessible quality education is under threat, Ambedkar's



exhortation for educate, agitate and organise' can give a way forward.

Large number of teachers and professors from DU, JNU and Jamia along with Jamia Teachers' Association President Prof Badshah Khan, Former Secretary of FEDCUTA Prof Tabrez Alam and Dr C.S. Rawat, DUTA Vice President and Dr Rajesh Jha DUTA Joint Secretary shared their anguish about the increasing intolerance in university campuses. Advocates, Journalists, Social activists and intellectuals from other walks of life also participated in the seminar. ❖

# STATESWATCH

## ANDHRA PRADESH

### *Birthday of Smt. Sonia Gandhi*

**Mandapeta:** All India Congress Committee, President Smt. Sonia Gandhiji's 69th birthday was grandly celebrated under the leadership of Kamana Prabhakara Rao, PCC Secretary and Mandapeta Constituency incharge in the Party office along with the party cadre and supporters. Shri Kamana cut the cake and distributed fruits and sweets to the blind school children in Mandapeta.

For the past five years, Shri Kamana is



organizing Medical camps every month on 9th with the inspiration from our leaders. On this occasion hundreds of people utilized the medical services followed by the holy prayers by all religions. Hindu, Christians and Muslim heads prayed for the happiness and strong health of our leader, Smt. Sonia Gandhi.

## BIHAR

### *Sonia Gandhi's birthday celebrated*

**Bhojpur:** The Bihar Pradesh Kisan and Khet Mazdoor Congress celebrated the birthday of the Congress president, Smt. Sonia Gandhi on 9th December, 2015 and the function was held at the old collectorate premises.

The function was presided over by former Bihar Pradesh vice-president, Shri Pramod Rai and a debate was organized which was inaugurated by Shri Babbar Pandey. Shri Ghanshyam Upadhaya, Shri

Mohan Dubey were the main speakers who spoke about the aim of Smt. Sonia Gandhi in strengthening the party, uplifting the poor and caring for the youth and farmers. Shri Jitendra Sharma gave the vote of thanks.

Others who addressed were Shri Virendra Mishra, Prof. Arun Singh, Prof. Rajendra Ojha, Shri Belal Ahmad, Shri Dev Kumar Singh, Shri Madan Mohan Tiwari, Santosh Tiwari, Rana Pratap Singh, Satyaprakash Ram, Om Prakash Chaudhary and Rajgopalan.

### *Sonia Gandhi's birthday celebrated*

**Patna:** The Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee Scheduled Caste Department, led by its chairman, Shri Umesh Kumar Ram celebrated the birthday of the Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi at the Sadaqat Ashram here on 9th December, 2015.

Shri Ram distributed sweets among people and children and later sent a message of greeting to the Congress President. Shri Ram said that Smt. Sonia Gandhi was a symbol of sacrifice and simplicity and by leading the UPA government, she gave proper direction to the development and progress of the country and the prayers of the people are with her for her long and healthy life.

Others with Umesh Ram were Anita Devi, Manoj Kumar Poddar, Rabindra Thakur, Vinod Das, Shivam Kumar, Siddharth Kumar, Sandhya Kumari, Neha Kumari, Gonar Ram, Mahaveswar Shah, Md. Javed Ahmad, Md. Feroz Ahmad, Siyaram Gupta, Santosh Kumar, Md. Anjum, Ramjanvi Thakur, Rajesh Kumar Shukla and Jagdish Ram.

### *Holiday demanded for Ravidas, Jagjivan Ram jayanti*

**Patna:** The Bihar Pradesh Congress

Committee Scheduled Caste Department, Chairman, Shri Umesh Kumar Ram thanked the State Government of Shri Nitish Kumar for declaring holidays on the birth anniversaries of Mohammad Shahib, Sant Kabir, Guru Gobind Singh and others.

Shri Umesh Kumar Ram has on 18th December, 2015 asked the Nitish Kumar Government to also declare holidays on the birth anniversary of Sant Sheromani Ravidas and former Deputy Prime Minister Babu Jagjivan Ram.

### *Foundation Day held*

**Patna:** The Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee celebrated the 131st Foundation Day of the Congress Party here on 28th December, 2015.

The function was presided over by Bihar PCC Delegate, Dr. Shashi Kumar Singh at Jain College hall where a seminar was held on the subject "Indian freedom struggle and the Indian National Congress." Large number of Congressmen, freedom fighters, intellectuals and common men participated.

Addressing the seminar, Dr. Shashi Kumar said that the history of freedom struggle and the Congress were the two sides of the same coin. It is a fact, that the freedom struggle was fought in the leadership of the Congress Party in phases which was led by Dadabhai Nauroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Surendra Nath Bannerji, lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Vipin Chandra, Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose. The result of their struggle was our independence on 15th August, 1947. Our independence was the result of the struggle of the Congress Party.

Prominent people who addressed the seminar were Ramadhar Tiwari, Dwarka Nath Pandey, Mohan Lal Arya, Chatturman Ojha, Dr. Kumar Kaushalendra, Ashok Kumar Singh, Dr. B.N. Singh, Shashi Kant Tiwari, Sunil Kumar, Ajay Kumar, Shanker Soni, Parshuram Singh 'Signiwal', Mithlesh

Kumar and Sushil Kumar Sharma.

## CHANDIGARH

### Foundation day celebrated

**Chandigarh:** Chandigarh Congress on 28th December, 2015 celebrated its 131st Foundation Day with a function held at sector 23. Pawan Kumar Bansal, former Union Minister and Pardeep Chhabra, resident Chandigarh Congress, addressed well-attended gathering.

Shri Bansal while speaking on the occasion said that the BJP Government has failed on all fronts. Bansal also criticized the statements of the PM Narendra Modi, made during his foreign visits which downgraded the image of the India.

TCC President Shri Pardeep Chhabra,



said the Congress is not the party of the missed calls but is the largest and oldest party with principles.

Shri Chhabra appealed to the people to become the members of the party.

Shri Chhabra said that the BJP Government broke records of imposing the taxes on the people of Chandigarh.

Shri Chhabra said that the BJP Government first increased the property tax and later also increased the VAT on diesel. Then the Government levied cess in the name of the Swachh Bharat, making all the services costly. Shri Chhabra said the lives of people has become miserable during the rule of the BJP. He said that BJP has no work except taking anti-people decisions like stopping the ration under PDS scheme. The function was organized by Ajay Joshi, president of District Congress Committee Urban-1.

### Hike in excise duty on petrol, diesel condemned

**Chandigarh:** Shri Pardeep Chhabra, president Chandigarh Congress, has strongly condemned the decision of the Central Government to hike the excise duty on petrol by 37 paise per litre and by Rs. 2 a litre on diesel and demanded its immediate rollback.

Shri Chhabra was addressing a well-attended public meeting at the Mauli Jangran on 3rd January, 2016.

Shri Chhabra said that by increasing the prices of the petrol, the Government has made the life more difficult for the common man who has been already reeling under the burden of the various taxes imposed by the Government after assuming the power at the centre.



He said that earlier the Government stopped the ration of the common man under PDS system.

Shri Chhabra said that at present, the international price of crude oil has come down to 2004 level of 36 Dollar per barrel. Instead of lowering the prices to give the common man the much-needed relief, the Central Government keeps increasing the prices to finance its unwanted and wasteful expenditure. Shri Chhabra said that instead of reducing the excise duty and lowering the prices, the Central Government has hiked it to earn additional revenue of Rs 4,400 crore.

Within just 18 months, the Centre has hiked the excise duty seven times. This is the seventh hike by the BJP Government at the Centre and the second increase in duties in just over two weeks.

He said that basic excise duty on unbranded or normal petrol has been increased from Rs 7.36 per litre to Rs 7.73

and the same on unbranded diesel from Rs 5.83 to Rs 7.83 per litre.

Shri Chhabra said that Government brought the worst days for the residents who were promised acche din, now the BJP leaders have also stopped talking about acche din.

## CHHATTISGARH

### PM's effigy burnt in protest

**Raipur:** The Pradesh Congress Committee President Shri Bhupesh Baghel on 19th December, 2015, burnt the effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi against the National Herald case.



Shri Baghel said that the BJP government was harassing the Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi, Shri Rahul Gandhi, Shri Motilal Vora and senior Congress leaders.

The City Congress, led by its President, Vikas Upadhyay also held a meeting at the Congress Bhawan and gave responsibility to all office-bearers of the District, Block and other frontal organizations for the protest dharna at the Town Hall in front of the statue of Mahatma Gandhiji.

### Corruption, achievement in 12 years' rule

**Raipur:** Former Chief Minister, Shri Ajit Jogi lashed out at the Raman Singh government on completion of 12 years in office and said that the state government of Chhattisgarh has made corruption as its achievement.

The Raman Singh government boasted of food security, purchase of paddy and surplus power as the big achievements of the state but it is actually enveloped in corruption in all the three sections which it is boasting about.

Shri Jogi said that Naxal attacks are on the rise, human smuggling and atrocities on women are rising day by day. Corruption is rampant in health, education, power, irrigation and road sectors and industrial investment is only on paper. The people are not getting employment and most of the people are migrating.

Shri Jogi said the industry is on the verge of closing down and administration and the police have failed in learning the local language and as such the Naxal activities have increased.

The state also boasts of five medical colleges but does not care to maintain efficiency as such the Medical Council of India has only recognized just one college in Raipur as other four are below level.

### ***Fraud played with the people***

**Raipur:** Former Chief Minister, Shri Ajit Jogi said on 24th December, 2015 that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has played a fraud with the people of India.

Shri Jogi said that before the elections, Narendra Modiji had made promise of 'Achhe Din' but even after 20 months of his government, the said promise has not been fulfilled.

He said that in this period of 20 months, Modiji has made frequent trips abroad while there is no sign of any development or progress. The people also have started feeling that they have been cheated and would teach them a lesson when the opportune time comes as the BJP are busy fulfilling the agenda of the RSS and this is evident as RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat is being shown prominently in the media.

### ***Foundation Day held***

**Raipur:** The City Congress Committee celebrated the 131st Foundation Day of the Congress Party here on 28th December, 2015.

City Congress President, Shri Vikas Upadhaya said various functions would be held till 26 January, 2016 as a mark of Foundation Day. He said new members will be made, senior members would be honoured, medical camps will be held, blood donation camp will be

held, Congressmen will do shramdaan and cultural programmes will be held including painting, sports and essay writing.

### ***Tributes paid to Pt. Ravi Shankar Shukla***

**Raipur:** The District Congress Committee paid tributes to the first chief minister of undivided Madhya Pradesh on his death anniversary on 31st December, 2015.



District Congress president, Shri Vikas Upadhaya paid tributes by garlanding the oil painted photo of Pt. Shukla.

Others who paid tributes were former MLA, Kuldeep Juneja, Inderjit Dhadiwal, Bhawani Shankar Shukla, Madan Taleda, Daulat Rohna, Radhey Shyam Vibhar, Divya Kishore Niyal, Dhanjaya Singh, Diptesh Chatterjee, Chander Behara, Dilip Chauhan, Swapinil Mishra, Ved Prakash, Dinesh Phutana, Virender Devgun, Haroon Bano, Munna Mishra, Manharan Sahu, Sunil Bhuval, Sunil Bajari, Murli Neetam, Suresh Mishra, Gajendra Pandey, Siddharth Chatterjee, Roshan Srivas and Pankaj Singh.

### ***Protest against excise duty***

**Raipur:** City Congress president, Shri Vikas Upadhaya blamed Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Raman Singh and Minister Amar Aggarwal for increasing excise duty on petrol and diesel on the very first day of the New Year.

Speaking at the Congress Bhawan have on 2nd January, 2016, Shri Upadhaya said that despite the fall in the price of petroleum products internationally, the BJP government instead of passing this benefit to the people, has increased the excise on petrol and diesel.

Shri Vikas Upadhaya led the Congress workers to the house of the minister but they were blocked by the police and the

protesting workers then sat in protest on the main road in front of the corporation. The police lathi-charged the Congress workers who forcefully tried to jump the barricades to enter the house of the minister and were arrested.

## **DELHI**

### ***Foundation Day celebrated***

**New Delhi:** Under the leadership of Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Shri Ajay Maken, DPCC on 28th December, 2015 organized an impressive function to celebrate the 131st Foundation Day of the Congress Party at the DPCC office, Rajiv Bhawan, here today. Addressing thousands of Congress workers, Shri Ajay Maken said the Congress Party was the only political party whose leaders had fought for the freedom struggle and made great sacrifices by going to jail. He said even after the country gained independence, the Congress leadership made many sacrifices, including martyrdom, for the rebuilding of the nation without forsaking the principles of the party.

Besides Shri Ajay Maken, prominent other leaders who participated in the 131st Foundation Day function of the Congress Party included ex-MPs Shri Sajjan Kumar, Shri Ramesh Kumar and Shri Mahabal Mishra, ex-Ministers of Delhi DrYoganandShastri, DrNarendraNath, Leader of the Opposition in the MCD FarhadSuri, ex-MLAs Jaikishan, Smt. Barkha Singh, Veer Singh Dhingan, Bhisham Sharma, AmrishGautam, Vipin Sharma, Kunwar Karan Singh, Asif Mohammed Khan, MalaramGangwal, district presidents MadanKhorwal, Sunil Vohra and Advocate Sunil Kumar.

Shri Ajay Maken said Congress was the biggest political party in the country, whose rank and file is spread across the



cities, villages and every nook and corner of the country, and they work for the party with vigor and enthusiasm. He said the top leadership of the party comes up with timely help, guidance and advice to energise the party cadre, even when the going gets tough, and as a result, the party has always fought back adversity to triumph.

### ***AAP Government in Auto Scam***

**New Delhi:** The AAP's hollow promises of fighting corruption have been totally exposed now. After having taken the people for a ride on the issue of corruption, they have indulged in blatant corruption which strikes at the root of the very people who supported them—the auto rickshaw drivers.

Right under the watch of CM Shri Kejriwal and his Transport Minister Shri Gopal Rai, Letter of Intents were issued to people on a pick and choose basis, clearly flouting well established government norms and procedures. Due to this, licenses of 900 auto rickshaw drivers have been scrapped due to the irregularities in the allotment. On 28th December, 2015 the auto drivers held a massive protest rally in front of the Delhi Secretariat after the said cancellation was announced. The very auto rickshaw drivers who supported Shri Kejriwal in elections are facing the brunt for the corruption in Shri Kejriwal's cabinet.

11 months have passed and a long list of scams have been unearthed, ranging from the DJB (Delhi Jal Board) scam, onion scam, sugar scam and now the Auto Rickshaw permit scam.

The Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee demands that Shri Gopal Rai steps down immediately pending an unbiased and independent probe by CBI failing which Shri Kejriwal should immediately sack Shri Gopal Rai. The AAP should apply the same standards of probity which they expect from Shri Arun Jaitley in the DDCA scam and also allow the CBI to do a thorough probe on his Principal Secretary Shri Rajendra Kumar.

### ***Tributes paid to Ram Babu Sharma***

**New Delhi:** Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Shri Ajay Maken on 3rd January, 2016 inaugurated a conference hall named after the late Shri Ram Babu Sharma, who was the former president of the DPCC and ex-MLA, at the DPCC office, Rajiv Bhawan, here today. Thousands of Congress workers from all parts of Delhi attended the function, which clearly established how popular Shri Ram Babu Sharma was among the Congress workers of Delhi. Shri Vipin Sharma, ex-MLA and son of Shri Ram Babu Sharma, along with his family members, were also present on the occasion.

Addressing thousands of Congress workers, Shri Ajay Maken said when he was given the responsibility to head Delhi Congress by Honourable Congress president Smt. Sonia Gandhi and Congress vice-president Shri Rahul Gandhi, and when he officially took charge as president of the DPCC, he could see the picture of Shri Ram Babu Sharma on every brick of the DPCC building, and wondered how he managed to raise such a magnificent building for Delhi Congress, which has become a landmark, and the pride of the Congress family of Delhi.

Shri Maken said he had then decided that one of the halls of Rajiv Bhawan would be named after Shri Ram Babu Sharma to commemorate his memory. He said Shri Ram Babu Sharma was a grass-root level leader who understood the pulse of the party workers at the lowest rung, and worked shoulder-to-shoulder with them. And no wonder he was well-known among the party workers all over Delhi, has left an indelible mark in the hearts of the Congress workers, which will stay there forever. Shri Maken said Shri Ram Babu Sharma was one of the pillars of Delhi



Congress, who had played a decisive role in strengthening the party in Delhi.

Besides Shri Ajay Maken, prominent members present at the function were ex-MLA Shri Vipin Sharma and his family members, ex-MPs Shri Ramesh Kumar and Shri Jagdish Tytler, ex-Ministers of Delhi Shri Arvinder Singh Lovely, Shri Haroon Yusuf, Dr Yoganand Shastri, Dr Narendra Nath, Shri Ramakanth Goswami, chief spokesperson Smt. Sharmistha Mukherjee, Leader of the Opposition in the MCD Mukesh Goel, Farhad Suri and Varyam Kaur, ex-MLAs and Municipal Councillors, district Congress committee presidents and thousands of Congress workers.

Shri Ajay Maken said Congress party diligently follows its charted principles and the workers are taught to always remember the contributions and sacrifices of its leaders, as the ethos of the Congress party is ingrained in the blood of every party worker. He said the Congress party has a glorious 131-year-old history which is replete with momentous contributions and sacrifices before and after Independence by its leaders, which helped to ensure that the country's unity in diversity stayed intact.

Shri Vipin Sharma thanked Shri Ajay Maken and Delhi Congress for naming a hall of Rajiv Bhawan after his father Shri Ram Babu Sharma, for which he and his family members would always be indebted to Shri Maken and Delhi Congress.

### ***Tributes to martyrs***

**New Delhi:** Indian Youth Congress activists on 4th January, 2016 held a candlelight march under the leadership of National President Shri Amarinder Singh Raja expressing solidarity with the families of the Bravehearts Martyred at Pathankot, Punjab. The March started





from IYC Headoffice to Jantar Mantar.

Recently, Shri Amrinder Raja Brar has greatly criticized the Modi Govt. on celebrating Birthday of Pak PM Nawaz Sharif and burned his effigy on that day and within few days of his Lahore courtesy visit, we had to face terrorist attack at Pathankot Airbase. He also said it is a sheer failure of Intelligence and Punjab Government which could not stop this attack as this is second terrorist attack after Gurdaspur in Punjab.

Apart from the IYC president Shri Amarinder Singh Raja, along with many national office bearers and Shri Amit Malik, Delhi State Youth Congress, President and hundreds of Youth Congress activists were also part of the protest.

### **NSUI Conference on Education**

**New Delhi:** National Students' Union of India organized a one day national conference on 17th December, 2015 in New Delhi on the theme of Preserving and Protecting Freedom, Truth and Equal Access in Higher Education. A gathering of eminent academicians, film makers, activists and political commentators namely Dr. Sam Pitroda, Prof. Aditya Mukherjee, Shri Sanjay Chhel, Prof. G. Mohangopal, Prof. B.L. Mungekar, Prof. KanchaIlaiah, Prof. Aditya Narayan Mishra, Prof. ApoorvanandJha, Shri PrabhakarTimple, Dr. ShashiTharoor, Dr. Swati Saxena, Ms. Saira Shah Halim, YashasviMisra from FTII, AkhilBharathan from AmbedkarPeriyar Study Circle-IIT Chennai and other activists came together to discuss the prevailing critical issues in higher education under today's regime.

The speakers at the conference vociferously spoke about the need to

make education free from all influences at all cost. They expressed their unequivocal fear about the way the fundamentals of education are being challenged today. It was unanimously agreed that ever since the NDA came to power, there has been



a systematic onslaught on education and educational policies be it communalizing curricula, promoting myth as history and superstition as science, questionable appointments in key academic positions, silencing dissent and difference of opinion, attack on the autonomy of higher educational institutions, imposition of common curricula on central universities et al. Speakers also highlighted the kind of absurdity (Ganeshji's plastic surgery) that was propagated at the recent Science Congress which was earlier used to showcase achievements of high critical thinking and rationalization.

During his inaugural address, Shri Roji John, National President, NSUI said, "ever since the NDA came to power, there is a deliberate attempt to communalize the education system by nominating RSS ideologues. Autonomy of institutions is under threat and students and teachers are dictated upon given line of thought. Opening up of education as a tradeable commodity through WTO and cutting of funds will make education for common people inaccessible and will perpetuate inequality in the society.

This is a matter of huge concern not just for us but the whole country as a whole. He mentioned about how it is imperative for the intelligentsia and progressive student groups to come together on a common platform. The NSUI also said this was the first of the series of conferences and discussions which will be organized throughout the country in order to create awareness among the masses.

### **Remarkable victory for NSUI in Uttar Pradesh**

**New Delhi:** The National Students' Union of India has witnessed an unprecedented support from the students of Uttar Pradesh which led to huge victories in many reputed colleges and universities in the state. The wave begun from Varanasi's Kashi Vidyapeeth wherein NSUI won 3 out of 4 seats. Ashok Yadav, Neeraj Kumar Pandey and Amit Yadav were elected Vice President, General Secretary and Library Minister respectively in the Vidyapeeth with huge margins defeating ABVP candidates. It was followed by another victory in Sampurnanand Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya where NSUI's Jitendra Dhar Tiwari won the presidential post by defeating his nearest rival by more than two hundred votes and pushed the ABVP candidate to the third position.

For the first time ever in its history in Meerut, NSUI won one of the most prestigious universities in Uttar Pradesh, namely Chaudhary Charan Singh University. Sachin Chaudhary won the presidential post by a margin of over three hundred votes which is a remarkable feat for this position. This victory resulted in a snowball effect since NSUI won all major seats in many reputed colleges including Meerut College, R.G. College, B.N. College etc.

In Agra's famous Agra University too, for the first time ever the students gave their mandate to NSUI. Krishnamani Tripathi won the post of president in the university by defeating the ABVP candidate by more than a hundred votes. In L R College, Ghaziabad, the NSUI yet again got all

the major seats. Riding high on these victories, the National President of NSUI Shri Roji John hinted about a change in the political dynamics of the state in favour of the Congress party. He also mentioned that the students are dissatisfied with the current regime and are looking towards a progressive and liberal ideology which the NSUI represents.

## HARYANA

### *Foundation Day celebrated*

**Chandigarh:** Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee celebrated 130th foundation day of Indian National Congress across all the district headquarters. HPCC President Dr. Ashok Tanwar celebrated the foundation day at Sirsa Congress Bhawan along with district workers and local leaders on 28th December, 2015.



HPCC celebrated the occasion by distributing sweets and fruits in various hospitals; Distributing warm clothes to the poor people. Local leaders along with Dr. Ashok Tanwar addressed the gathering on the occasion.

Flag hosting ceremony at PCC Office, Chandigarh was performed by Capt Ajay Singh Yadav.

### *BJP playing politics of Vendetta*

**Gurgaon:** A meeting of the Congress workers which was presided by Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee General



Secretary, Shri Khazan Singh was held here on 21st December, 2015.

Former Lok Sabha MP, Shri Brijender Singh, a senior Congress leader from Aligarh in UP was the main speaker.

Shri Brijender Singh lashed out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and accused him of misguiding the people and fooling the people of the country by making false promises.

He added that the BJP government was playing the politics of vendetta against the Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi and Congress Vice-President, Shri Rahul Gandhi by implicating them in a false case. He said that 20 months have passed but the Narendra Modi government has failed on all its promises made before the elections. He said that Narendra Modi has murdered the democracy and was acting as a dictator.

### *Effigy of PM burnt in protest*

**Rewari:** Former Minister Capt. Ajay Singh gave a call and the Congress workers, led by Pradesh Congress General Secretary, Shri Charanjeev Rao burnt the effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and shouted slogans against the National Herald case here on Saturday, 19th December, 2015.



Shri Charanjeev Rao said that the BJP government was playing the politics of political vendetta and making false charges against the Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi and Shri Rahul Gandhi. He said that the BJP government

was also misusing the CBI against the Congress leaders.

Shri Rao said that the National Herald is governed by a trust and no trustee has made any profit out of it.

Those present were Secretary Jawahar Sachdev, Amritkala Tekinia, Naresh Sharma, Dr. Kanwar Singh, Rajbala Chairman, Bharat Tongad, Ajit Tongad, Pramod Kapdiwas, Madanlal Jham, Naresh, Om Prakash, Devikinandan, Sushil Patwari, Shishram Verma, Bir Singh Prajapat Pradhan, Prithvi Dhaseda, Birender Krishan Kamal with others.

## HIMACHAL PRADESH

### *Modi's effigy burnt in protest*

**Shimla:** All the 17 Districts of Himachal Pradesh on the direction of Pradesh President, Thakur Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu held protest demonstration on 14th December, 2015 and burnt the effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The protest was massive and office-bearers of the Rural and City Congress participated. In Shimla, the protest was held near the DC's office.

Shri Sukhwinder said that the Modi government was indulging in politics of vendetta and thus filing false cases in the National Herald case against Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi and Congress Vice-President, Shri Rahul Gandhi.

Others in the protest were HPCC General Secretary, Harbhajan Singh Bhoggi, Chief Spokesperson, Naresh Chauhan, Sanjay Singh, Kuldeep Pathania, Subhash Manglet, Surendra Chauhan, Secretary, Ritesh Rapret, Anita Thakur, CPS Rohit Thakur, Rajesh Dharmani, Mansa Ram, Prakash Karad, Kewal Singh Pathania,



Dharampal Thakur, former MLA Adarsh Sood, Anurag Sharma, Kehar Singh Sachi, and Pradeep Singh with all members of frontal organization.

**Foundation Day celebrated**

**Shimla:** Himachal Pradesh Congress Committee celebrated the 131st Foundation Day of the Congress Party at the Rajiv Bhawan here on 28th December, 2015. The function was presided over by HPCC President, Thakur Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu.



Shri Sukhwinder said that the Congress was founded in 1885 by Allan Octavian Hume with 72 members and the Congress ever since has been working for the welfare of the people. The same Congress fought for India's freedom and many of its leaders laid down their lives for achieving independence.

In the past 68 years after independence, India marched on the road of progress and development under the rule of our great leaders and our country is now among the leading nations of the world.

Others who addressed the gathering were HPCC General Secretary Harbhajan Singh Bhoggi and Sewa Dal Chief Organizer Anurag Sharma. Also present were HPCC Vice-President, Geeta Negi, General Secretary Vinod Sultanpuri, Chief Spokesperson Naresh Chuahan, Sanjay Singh with workers of Mahila Congress, Sewa Dal, Youth Congress, INTUC and NSUI.

**JAMMU AND KASHMIR**

**Congress starts campaign for ULB Polls**

**Jammu:** Starting its campaign for the forthcoming elections to the Urban

Local Bodies in the state, the Congress on 13th December, 2015 organized a mammoth rally at Muthi in Raipur Domana assembly segment, part of the Jammu Municipal Corporation, to gear up the party cadres in the state.



President JKPC Shri Ghulam Ahmed Mir alongwith all senior leadership of the party besides legislators and prominent leaders addressed the huge rally, where a prominent Gujjar leader having considerable mass base in Poonch, Choudhary Abdul Gani joined the Congress party alongwith his hundreds of supporters, who had come in large number to join the party. Choudhary Gani had left National Conference (NC) on the eve of last assembly elections and contested as independent candidate from Haveli (Poonch) securing around 18000 votes. The rally was organized here today by Shri Mula Ram-former Minister and Senior Congress leader Th. Hari Singh Chib.

Shri Mir said that the Prime Minister Shri Narinder Modi spread falsehood about the Congress party and UPA but soon the people in different parts have felt that the elections slogans were coined as mere 'Jumlas' and the BJP government has failed to fulfill even a single promise. Instead of 'Achhe Din', people now want return of old days, as the prices of all essential commodities have been touching the record high rates so far and government has utterly failed to provide the ration as per old scales to each family as per 2001 censuses, while it is misleading people of the state on the claim of providing ration as per 2011 censuses.

Former MP and senior Congress leaders Shri Madan Lal Sharma while welcoming Ch. Abdul Ghani into the

party, appreciated the efforts of the PCC leadership to make the party vibrant in all parts of the State during the past few months by organizing activities in the length and breadth of the State. He also expressed satisfaction that the ongoing membership drive of the party has got tremendous response despite being in opposition. He said that people are totally disillusioned with the present PDP-BJP dispensation in the State and the Modi Govt. because of their failure to come up to the expectations of common people.

Addressing the gathering Shri Sham Lal Sharma lashed out the BJP for its total surrender on the core issues, which it used to exploit the people of Jammu region all through these years, like Article 370, citizenship to West Pakistan refugees, philosophy of Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and all other issues of people of Jammu region. He said that it has exposed BJP's double standards for power, while PDP leadership is making contradictory statements on vital issues concerning the state. He said that the two parties have completely betrayed their respective electorates and every section of the society is facing great hardships due to the wrong policies of the present dispensation.

**Protest March by Mahila Congress**

**Jammu:** Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Mahila Congress led by Ms. Indu Pawar held a protest march on 28th December, 2015 against failure of BJP Govt. on all fronts. The Modi government has not fulfilled the promises made to the voters/public of India. May it be return of Black Money and crediting of 15 lakh in everybody's Bank Account, and has forgotten agenda of development, the



slogan 'Sab Ka Saath, Sab Ka Vikas' is proving a hollow slogan. Instead, BJP government has started making false cases against leaders of opposition parties and the government has failed on price rise and prices of foodgrains and Dals is ever rising and the common man is helpless and Modi government is doing nothing for common people, despite the fall in the price of crude, the benefit is not passed to the people. Prime Minister is always busy in foreign tours and his colleagues are spoiling peaceful atmosphere by spitting venom against minorities.

## MADHYA PRADESH

### *Many go blind in MP*

**Bhopal:** Former leader of the Opposition, Shri Ajay Singh on 7th December, 2015 said that the State Health Minister, Shri Narottam Mishra should resign immediately after the blinding incident of around more than 50 people who were operated in the Badwani government hospital.

Shri Singh said that the Shivraj Singh government of Madhya Pradesh has become insensitive towards the lives of people and takes these incidents as minor issues. It has been seen that during the past six months many such incidents have happened where many people have lost their lives but the government has not cared to take proper action.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan just shed crocodile tears but no concrete action has been taken against those responsible for this incident which has left so many people blind.

### *Historic victory of Congress*

**Gwalior:** City District Congress Committee President, Dr. Darshan



Singh said on 26th December, 2015 that the results of eight local body elections in favour of the Congress in various districts has begun the decline of the BJP in Madhya Pradesh.

Dr. Singh said the historic victory of the Congress in Tikamgarh, Ratlam, Shajapur, Sidhi, Bedaghat has given hope and encouragement to the Congress and the party workers in these districts have to be complimented for this victory.

Dr. Singh said that this victory has also given a signal to the BJP that their decline has begun as the people have rejected the BJP as they have understood the falsehood of the BJP because of which they have achieved power.

### *Sewa Dal Foundation Day held*

**Gwalior:** The City Congress and the Congress Rural Sewa Dal celebrated the Foundation Day of the Sewa Dal here on 27th December, 2015.

City Congress President, Dr. Darshan Singh was the chief guest while former MLA, Shri Pardhuman Singh Tomar and Dr. Keshav Pandey were the guests of honour.



The programme was conducted by chief organizer Puran Singh Kushwaha. Addressing the gathering, Dr. Darshan Singh said that the Sewa Dal workers had given major contribution during the freedom struggle and the war of independence. He said that Jawaharlal Nehru was the first President of the Sewa Dal and Dr. Hardikar was the working president.

### *All-religion prayer meeting*

**Indore:** City Congress Sewa Dal organized on All-Religion prayer meeting here on



22nd December, 2015 for maintaining peace and harmony in the country. A seminar was also held.

The seminar was presided over by City Congress president, Shri Pramod Tandon and Shri Yogesh Yadav, Pradesh chief organizer, was the chief guest. Former MLA, Shri Ashvin Joshi was the guest of honour.

Acharya Shri Ramchandra Sharma was the Hindu religious leader while Shri Oliver Alfred was of Christian religion, Shri Rajender Singh was from Sikh community and Kazi Ishrat Ali was from the Muslim community.

They all spoke in maintaining peace and to have harmony and brotherhood among each other and said that certain divisive forces were bent upon creating communal tension in the country so that they take advantage by distorting the social fabric of the country.

### *Tributes paid to Dr. Rajendra Prasad*

**Jabalpur:** City District Congress Committee President, Shri Dinesh Yadav led Congressmen in paying tributes to the first President of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad on his birth anniversary here on 3rd December, 2015.

Tributes were paid by garlanding the statue of Dr. Rajendra Prasad and later a debate was also organized.



The Congressmen also protested against the hoarding put by the local corporation and against not keeping the place clean and gave a written report to the collector in this regard.

***Birthday celebrated with blind children***

**Jabalpur:** The District Congress Committee (Rural) celebrated the birthday of the Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi here on 9th December, 2015 with the blind children.

On the occasion, Kisan and Congress leader, Shri Durgesh Patel went to Girls Blind School at Bharwar Taal where the Congressmen distributed fruit and sweets and a cake was also cut and given to the blind children. They also prayed for the long life of Smt. Sonia Gandhi.

Pradesh Vice-President, Shri Madan Tiwari, Shri Sachin Yadav, Dr. Prashant Mishra also gave away fruit to the children.

Also present were senior Congress leader Mukesh Rathore, Satish Tiwari, Arun Singh Pawar, Laxmi Ben, Tarun Rohitas, Vivek Awasthi and Banti Thakur with Kapil Raj Rohitas.

***Tributes paid to Madan Mohan Malviya***

**Jabalpur:** City Congress Committee paid tributes to Shri Madan Mohan Malviya on his 155th birth anniversary here on 25th December, 2015.

Congressmen garlanded the statue of Malviyaji at the Malviya Chowk and thereafter a seminar was also organized.



Senior leaders like former Mayor N.P. Dubey, Kailash Tiwari, City Congress President, Dinesh Yadav, Shri Jhallelal

Jain, Pradesh Secretary Pinky Mudgal, Rekha Vinod Jain, Pradesh Mahila Vice-President, Indira Palhak Tiwari, Mukesh Rathod, Rajendra Jain, Ratan Anurag Gadawal spoke about the life-history of the great leader and freedom fighter Shri Madan Mohan Malviya.

***Foundation Day celebrated***

**Jabalpur:** City District Congress Committee celebrated the 131st Foundation Day of the Congress Party at the Civic Centre in front of the statue of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi here on 28th December, 2015.



Senior Congress leaders addressed the gathering and accounted the role played by the Congress Party in the freedom struggle and the role after Independence.

City Congress President, Shri Dinesh Yadav alleged that the BJP, to cover up its shortcomings was trying to implicate the Congress top leadership in false National Herald case.

Earlier, the party flag was unfurled by the Congress Sewadal and the statue of Indira Gandhi was garlanded.

Present on the occasion were Pradesh Congress Vice-President, Shri Lakhan Ghangaria, Madan Tiwari, former Mayor, Shri N.P. Dubey, former District President, Rupendra Patel, former Minister Ms. Kaushaliya Gontia, Smt. Geeta Sharad Tiwari, Sewadal Organizer Jhallelal Jain, Pradesh Mahila Congress Vice-President, Indira Pathak Tiwari, Mahila Congress President, Rekha Vinod Jain, Mukesh Rathod with many others.

***Tributes paid to Pt. Ravishankar Shukla***

**Jabalpur:** The City Congress Committee paid tributes to the first Chief Minister



of Madhya Pradesh, Pandit Ravishankar Shukla on his death anniversary here on 31st December, 2015.

Former City Mayor Shri N.P. Dubey, City Congress President, Shri Dinesh Yadav, Sewadal Organizer, Shri Jhallelal Jain, Surendra Patel, Anurag Gadawal, Shri Bhagatram Singh, Amrish Mishra, Ashok Burman, Shailesh Rathore, Bhola Thakur, Vinodia, Vikky Thakur paid their tributes by garlanding the statue of Pt. Ravishankar Shukla at the Civil Lines crossing.

**PUNJAB**

***Playing with people's sentiments***

**Chandigarh:** Lashing out at the BJP and Shiromani Akali Dal for disrespecting the memory of Shaheed Bhagat Singh and playing petty politics in the naming of Mohali Airport, Member of Parliament S. Ravneet Singh Bittu on 11th December, 2015 warned of severe agitations by the Congress Party in the coming days to force the Union Government, Punjab as well as Haryana Governments to rename the airport after our National martyr, Shaheed Bhagat Singh.

Ravneet said, the supreme sacrifice of Shaheed Bhagat Singh for the independence of the Nation is unparalleled. The people of the country particularly the youth consider him as their role model, but the recent action of the BJP led Haryana Government recommending the airport to be named after its Late President of Jan Sangh days and RSS Pracharak as "Dr. Mangal Sein International Airport, Chandigarh" overruling the recommendation of its previous government which proposed the airport be called "Shaheed Bhagat Singh

International Airport” has deeply hurt the sentiments of the people.

Questioning the very intentions of the BJP, Ravneet asked what was the need for the Haryana Government to send a new proposal when the name of our National hero is being considered?

### **Capt. Amarinder condemns attack**

**Chandigarh:** Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee president, Capt. Amarinder Singh on 2nd January, 2016 condemned the terrorist attack on the Airforce base in Pathankot.

He also paid glowing tributes to the Air force personnel who were martyred while fighting the terrorists.

“It is a clear attempt by rogue elements in Pakistan at subverting and sabotaging the peace process the two countries (India and Pakistan) are looking forward which must not be allowed at any cost”, he said in a statement while adding, “it is the responsibility of Pakistan government to identify such elements and deal with them with a firm hand”.

The former Chief Minister said it reminded of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s visit to Lahore, while Pakistani army was planning an attack on Kargil. “I hope it is not the repeat of what happened after Lahore bus journey”, he observed while pointing out the attack has taken place only after a few days of Prime Minister Modi’s Lahore sojourn.

He said while the peace process should continue, India at the same time must not lower its guard. “We can’t allow our people, soldiers and police personnel to be killed by the militants from across the border and Pakistan needs to own up the responsibility and deal with such elements firmly”, he asserted adding, they know where the problem lies and they must resolve it.

Capt. Amarinder while paying tributes to those martyred while dealing with the terrorists, saluted them for their bravery. “While we grieve your loss to the nation,

at the same time the entire nation is proud of you for the exemplary valour and courage you have shown today by killing the terrorists and the nation will always remember your great sacrifice”, he said.

## RAJASTHAN

### **Protest Demonstration held**

**Pali:** On the directive of the Pradesh Congress Committee, the Pali District Congress Committee held a protest demonstration at the District Collectorate here on 12th December, 2015.

The protest was against the failures of the BJP government in the past two years. The Congress delegation later handed over a memorandum addressed to the Governor to the District Collector.



Thousands of Congress workers collected at the District Congress Headquarters and from there the Congressmen took out the rally to the Collector’s office while passing through Ahimsa Dwar, Loda School and Suraj Pol and finally the rally reached the District Collectorate where they gave the memorandum.

Earlier, a meeting of Congress workers was held on 6th December, 2015 to prepare for the protest rally that was to be held on 12th December. Those present were district in-charge Shri Laxmikant Rawat with all Block presidents with district office-bearers.

Meida in-charge Ameer Ali rangrez said that the Congressmen paid tributes to Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar on his death anniversary by garlanding his photo.

## UTTAR PRADESH

### **Soniaji’s birthday celebrated**

**Lucknow:** Various programmes were held to celebrate the 69th birthday of the

Congress president, Smt. Sonia Gandhi held at Congress Headquarters here on 9th December, 2015.



The function was president over by UPCC Disciplinary Committee chairman and former minister Shri Ramkrishna Dwivedi who also spoke on the life history of Smt. Sonia Gandhi. He said that Smt. Sonia Gandhi was a symbol of sacrifice when she had declined the chair while the UPA chairperson Smt. Sonia Gandhi guided the UPA government to development and for the welfare of all the classes of people.

On the occasion present were former MLA Shri Shyam Kishore Shukla, former minister, Shri Rajbahadur, Ms. Ansuia Sharma, Shri Hanuman Tripathi, Dr Lalti Devi, former MLC, Shri Rakesh Mishra, former MLA, Shri Fazle Masood, City Congress president, Shri Badhlal Shukla, Shri Amit Srivastav Tyagi with senior leaders who spoke about Smt. Sonia Gandhi and prayed for her long life.

Sewa Dal workers cut the cake and distributed among the workers and people while the Mahila Congress organized song and music programme.

### **Awakening people through Padyatra**

**Lucknow:** The Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee celebrated the birthday of Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi by organizing Sadbhavana Padyatra in various districts and major cities of the State from 9th December to 7th January, 2016.

This Padyatra was also against the rising prices, communal tension, bad law and order situation, problems of cane growers,



various employment scams and against the Modi government for implicating Congress top leadership in the false case. The eleventh padyatra and the last phase concluded in Lucknow in which Congressmen from Lucknow, Faizabad and Devipatan districts participated.

Earlier, the padyatra was held at Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Bareilly, Muradabad, Aligarh, Agra, Varanasi, Allahabad, Kanpur and Gorakhpur. In these padyatras prominently present were AICC General Secretary Incharge of UP, Shri Madhusudan Mistry, MP, Pradesh Congress President, Dr. Nirmal Khatri, all the AICC Secretaries-Co-Incharges of UP, Shri Zuber Khan Singh, Rama Goswamy, Nasib Singh and Shri Prakash Joshi, Congress Vidhan Mandal leader, Shri Pradeep Mathur, Vidhan Parishad leader, Shri Naseeb Pathan, MP, former Union Ministers, former MLAs, former Ministers and seniors leaders.

During the final phase of padyatra in Lucknow, which was led by UPCC President, Dr. Nirmal Khatri, which assembled at Mankameshwar Mandir, Dollyganj was addressed by AICC General Secretary Incharge, Shri Madhusudan Mistry and Dr. Nirmal Khatri before the start of padyatra which reached Aishabagh Idgah after passing through Hanuman Setu, Parivartan Chowk,

Kesarbagh Crossing, Bansmandi and DAV College.

Addressing thousands of Congressmen before the start of the padyatra, Shri Madhusudan Mistry said that the Modi government in order to hide their shortcomings was encouraging communalism, because of which and on account of our principles the Congress has ventured on this padyatra to maintain sadbhavana and peace in the society.

Dr. Nirmal Khatri said that we all Congressmen are trying to awaken the centre and state government by shouting the slogan, "Sadhbhav Badhao Abhaav Mitao". The BJP government at the centre and the Akhilesh government in the state are fooling the people, thus we are trying to tell the people the reality and the Congress has to maintain its enthusiasm.

At the Mankarashwar Mandir, led by Dr. Nirmal Khatri the Congressmen shouted deafening slogans about the anti-people policies of the central and the state governments.

Addressing the concluding ceremony CWC Member of AICC, Shri Rajbabbar, MP, said the way Congressmen have come forward to expose the Central and State governments in itself was a big example. The way Congress Vice-President, Shri Rahul Gandhi has vowed to spread Sadbhav in the country, that has been accelerated by the central and state leadership and to keep it going was appreciated.

### **Protest against BJP action**

**Lucknow:** The BJP government is trying to implicate the Congress top leadership in false cases just to divert the attention of the people from its own failures and to hide their corruption practices.



The Congress Party, led by UPCC President, Dr. Nirmal Khatri demonstrated their protest padyatra from the Congress headquarter to Hazaratganj crossing here on 19th December, 2015 and later burnt the effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Dr. Khatri while addressing Congressmen said that the BJP was diverting the attention of the people from their own failures and was covering up their corruption by making false changes on the top Congress leadership through Subramaniam Swamy. He added that ever since the BJP came to power at the centre, there is an atmosphere of chaos all over the country. The people are worried by the rising prices and the Modi government has proved misfit on all fronts.

Prominently present were AICC Secretary Incharge, Shri Prakash Joshi, Shri Imran Kidwai, former Minister, Shri Ramkrishna Dwivedi, Shri Satyadev Tripathi, Shri Harish Bajpayee, Shri Gaurav Chaudhary, Shri Bodhlal Shukla, Shri Shyam Kishore Shukla, Shri Shiraz Mehandi, Ms. AICC, Ansuyia Sharma, Shri Subodh Srivastav, Shri Hanuman Tripathi, Shri Virendra Madaan, Dwijitendra Tripathi, Shri Maroof Khan, Shri Sanjeev Singh, Shri Pramod Singh, Ch. Satyavir Singh, Shri Shiv Pandey with others.

### **Tributes paid to Ashfaq Ulla Khan**

**Lucknow:** Tributes were paid to freedom fighter Sheed Ashfaq Ulla Khan here on 19th December, 2015 at the Congress headquarter at a condolence meeting presided over by UPCC President, Dr. Nirmal Khatri who garlanded the photo of Sheed Ashfaq.

Dr. Khatri said that in that phase of

freedom struggle when nobody thought that India would achieve freedom, Sheed Ashfaq Ulla Khan readily accepted death by longing for the cause of freedom. Dr. Khatri said that we should follow the path shown by him.

Others who paid tributes were AICC Secretary Incharge, Shri Prakash Joshi, former AICC Minority Department Chairman, Shri Imran Kidwai, former Minister Dr. Ammar Rizvi, former Minister, Shri Ramkrishna Dwivedi, former Minister, Shri Satyadev Tripathi, former MLC, Shri Harish Bajpayee, former MLC, Shri Shiraz Mehandi, former MLA, Shri Shyamkishore Shukla, Satish Ajrani, Rakesh Mishra, Parmatma Prasad Singh, Fazle Masood, Shri Amir Hyder, Shri Hanuman Tripathi, Shri Maroof Khan, Shri Pramod Singh, Shri Sanjeev Singh, Ch. Satyavir Singh, Shri Shiv Pandey, Shri Ramesh Srivastav, Shri Suresh Chandra Verma, City President, Shri Bodhlal Shukla, District President, Shri Gaurav Chaudhary, Shri Bipin Bihari Shukla with others.

### ***Padyatra campaign in Uttar Pradesh***

**Aligarh:** On the call given by UPCC President, Dr. Nirmal Khatri against the rising prices, communal tension, the state's law and order situation, problems of the farmers and unemployment. To expose this a padyatra programme is being organized all over the state.

In this regard a massive padyatra was taken out here on 16th December, 2015 which was led by AICC Spokesperson Shri Vivek Bansal, Aligarh City President and former MP, Ch. Brijendra Singh and UPCC President, Dr. Nirmal Khatri who was the chief guest.

Before the start of the padyatra, youth leader Kaushal Kumar Gautam with thousands of his inmates and ML Papa with his associates Jitendra Kumar Maurya, Shiv Narayan and others left the BSP and joined the Congress in the presence of Dr. Khatri.

Dr. Khatri addressed the gathering and said that the BJP government was



misusing the CBI and trying to implicate Congress leaders in false cases.

Prominently present were UP in-charge, Shri Nasib Singh, Vidhan Mandal leader Shri Pradeep Mathur, Deputy Leader Naseeb Pathan, Pradesh Mahila Congress President, Smt. Pritima Singh, UPCC Vice-President Shri Upendra Singh, Satish Sharma, Girvir Sharma, Naushad Qureshi, Sayed Wasim Ahmad with other senior Congress leaders.

### ***Congress Party is a party of the people***

**Allahabad:** District Congress Committee Celebrated the 131st foundation day of the world's grand old Political Party Indian National Congress. The main function was organised at the party office.

While speaking at the function, Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee Spokesman, Kishore Varshney said it is true that the Congress party has been a party of the people over the years. The people of India have reposed confidence in the party for its values and progressive thinking. They believed that their interest were safe in the hands of the Congress. People always had great expectations from the party which has been vindicated in a sustained manner.

He called upon the partymen to work

hard to bring back party into power.

The programme was conducted by District vice president, Gullu Gandhi which was chaired by Sr. vice president, Sant. Pd. Pandey.

VC, UPCC minority deptt. Fuzail Hashmi, spokesman Awdhesh Tripathi, Rajiya Sultan, Dr. Ramesh Jaisawal, Parvej Siddique, Shyam Mishra, Lal Babu Sahu, Ajay Mishra, Ajay Srivastava, Md. Sartaj, Anil Mishra, Arun Chaurasia, S.S Malvia and others were prominently present.

Congressmen also paid glowing tributes to former MLC and ex. president, City Congress Kedar Nath Malvia on his death anniversary.

### ***Protest Torch March***

**Firozabad:** The District Congress Sewa Dal took out a protest Torch March against the rising prices of daily-use items of the common man.

The function was presided by City



Congress President, Shri Nurulhudda Lala Rhyne Gandhi who said that prices of daily use items are shooting up ever since the BJP government came to power.

Shri Furkhan Rhyne, Farzana Begum, Aarti Mishra, Chand Qureshi, Imran Qureshi, Yashmin Begum, Vikar Ahmad, Dr. J.P. Verma, Sunita Shukla, Aamir Ali, Shubir Ali, Reena Khan, Kuddawi, Dilshad Rhyne, Jhkid, Sarita Shankwar, Imran Rhyne, Nadeem Qureshi, Bhura Farookhi and Rajendra Gupta were prominently present.

### ***Protest against hike in Railway fares***

**Lucknow:** The City Congress Committee Minority Department Chairman, Shri



Mehandi Hassan led a massive protest demonstration against the steep rise in Railway tickets here on 27th December, 2015. The BJP government has increased the price of platform tickets, Tatkal tickets, and Reservation charges. The Congressmen showed their protest by marching from Roomi Gate to Shaheed Memorial.

Shri Mehandi Hassan said that the people of the country are feeling cheated, because before the elections Shri Narendra Modi said that he would bring down the prices but instead putting more burden on the shoulders of the people.

Prominently present were Shri Subodh Srivastav, DCC president, Shri Salman Kadir, Shri Javed Ansari, Shri Anshi Raza, Shri Ali Agha, Shri Shahakar Zaidi, Shri Rais Ahmad, Md Talib, Poonam Pal, Dr. Ajil Usmani, Dr. Javed Masih with others.

**Greeting to  
Smt. Sonia Gandhi**

**Meerut:** District Congress Committee vice-president, Muhammad Imran and



Congress Sewa Dal district president, Shri Riken Ahluwalia personally wished Congress president, Smt. Sonia Gandhi on her 69th birthday on 9th December, 2015.

Both of them returned to Meerut after

greeting Smt. Sonia and took out a Sadbhavana Yatra with the Congress workers.

**Effigy of Subramaniam burnt**

**Meerut:** District Congress Committee Vice-President, Mohd. Imran, led the Congress workers to show their protest and anger by burning the effigy of the Modi government and Subramaniam Swamy here on 19th December, 2015.

Shri Imran said, the BJP government was against the Gandhi family and was thus trying to implicate them in false case of National Herald. As the politics of vindictiveness, they are after Congress Vice-President, Shri Rahul Gandhi and



his brother-in-law, Shri Robert Vadra.

Shri Imran said that the people of India will not tolerate the insult of the Gandhi family and would give a befitting reply to the BJP in the next elections.

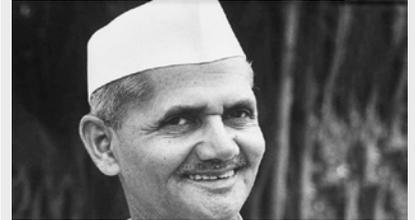
Also present at the protest were Sewadal President, Rickin Ahluwallia, Rohtash Bhaiya, Narendra Aggarwal, Md. Imran, Babita Singh, Sonam, Shilpa with others,

**WEST BENGAL  
Demonstration by West  
Bengal youth and INTUC**



**TRIBUTES**

**Nation pays tribute to our freedom fighters and distinguished leaders.**



**Lal Bahadur Shastri (1904-1966)  
Death Anniversary 11th January**



**Lala Lajpat Rai (1865-1928)  
Birth Anniversary 28th January**

**Kolkata:** West Bengal Youth INTUC under Presidentship of Priyesh Tiwari (Rahul) protested in front of BJP Head Office against 'National Herald' issue that has been made a political vendetta by Narendra Modi and Subramaniam Swamy.

Shri Tiwari said that Subramaniam Swamy at the behest of Narendra Modi has filed a baseless case against Shri Rahul Gandhi and Smt. Sonia Gandhi only to malign the image of AICC leaders. Thousands of young activists under the banner of West Bengal Youth INTUC shouted slogans, of "Subramnium Swamy you are a fool" and garlanded the image of Subramaniam Swamy with shoes that was posted at the forehead of a donkey.

Present were Shri Prasanta Dutta, Aurazeb Khan, Prabhat Tiwari, Pramod Pandey, Rahul Pandey and other district youth INTUC leaders. ❖

## MAHILA CONGRESS

The National Council Meet of Mahila Congress was held on 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015 in which all State Mahila Congress Presidents and members of the National Executive were present. The meeting was addressed by Smt. Mohsina Kidwai, Shri Randeep Singh Surjewala, Prof. B.L. Mungekar, MP and Prof. Mohan. Gopal. All the speakers threw light on the current political issues such as National Herald Case, GST Bill, etc and their deliberations gave a lot of information to our office bearers about the same.

The Birthday of Hon'ble Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi was celebrated by Mahila Congress throughout the country with much fanfare by organizing various kinds of activities like distribution of sweets, fruits in schools, orphanages and hospitals and by distributing stationary and reading material in schools.

In a show of solidarity, about 1500 women gathered in the premises of the AICC in support of Smt. Sonia Gandhi and Shri Rahul Gandhi and protested against the political vendetta of the incumbent Government vis-à-vis National Herald Case. Protest demonstrations by Mahila Congress were held throughout the country on the same issue.



On 24<sup>th</sup> December 2015, Smt. Shobha Oza, President AIMC flagged off a Padyatra in Pune, Maharashtra which was organized by Smt. Kamal Vyavhare, Corporator and former President of Maharashtra PMC.

Smt. Charulata Tokas, President, Maharashtra PMC visited Aurangabad, Thane, Raigad, Nashik, Gadchiroli, Buldhana Districts in order to rejuvenate the Mahila Congress organization in these districts of Maharashtra. Smt. Sashmita Behra, President, Odisha PMC held a demonstration to ban the sale of liquor in Odisha on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2015. A large number of women participated in the agitation. Smt. Sarita Arya, President, Utrakhand PMC held a demonstration against the rising prices of daily commodities and food items in Nainital.

Dr. Shobhna Shah, General Secretary, AIMC & Incharge UP PMC and Smt. Sunita Sehwat, Secretary, & Co-incharge visited Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar and Meerut Districts to take stock of the organization in these places.

In the recently concluded local body

elections in Gujarat the Congress Party wrested 23 out of 31 Zila Panchayats and 113 out of 193 taluka panchayats, thereby regained its' lost ground in rural and semi urban areas of Gujarat. Dr. Shobhna Shah and Smt. Sonalben Patel, President, Gujarat PMC visited Surat, Navsari, Vadodara, Bhavnagar and Rajkot Districts after the elections with a view to induct all women who contested local body elections on Congress ticket in ward committees regardless of their losing or winning the elections. They also went to meet Ms. Reshmaben, Convener Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti (PAAS) who is sitting on hunger strike for the past 18 days, demanding withdrawal of all the criminal cases against Hardik Patel and his unconditional release.

Smt. Nandini Parvekar, Secretary, AIMC and Incharge Goa PMC went to attend a meeting of Mahila Congress organization organized by Smt. Sunita V. Verenkar, President, Goa PMC.

In every State, 'Congress Shapana Diwas' was celebrated by Mahila Congress units with the PCC/DCC and BCC.

(Shobhna Shah)



# AICC DIARY



### WE STAND IN SOLIDARITY

Spokesperson: Dr. Abhishek Manu Singhvi: He said that first and foremost let me say that we stand in solidarity with the residents of Chennai and of coastal areas. Our hearts go out to the plight of this huge amount of distress caused. We stand with the Government. Each Congress worker is ready to offer his best by way of help, assistance or any other form in effort or kind. Already at the Party level, every effort for alleviation is being done and we would support anything and everything which will alleviate the suffering and the pain at this moment.

### MODI TALKS WITH PAK PM

It has been reported that, on the one hand, we have been complaining and talking before you of the confused, directionless and contradictory Pakistan policy. In the midst of this, we have now seem to have absolutely authentic reports because there is no denial of the Hon'ble PM meeting his Pakistan counterpart and having an extensive talk and most interestingly through an industrial mediator. Incidentally, there have been more than one denial every time about any such meeting earlier not with reference to the media reports generally saying that 'while the PM had bilateral meeting with all other five Heads Of Governments on the sidelines of SAARC Summit, none happened with Pakistan'. This applies to the 18th SAARC Summit also. In November where the names of all other SAARC countries were taken conspicuous exemption or exception was Mr. Nawaz Sharif. I further quote Mr. Syed Akbaruddin "it was decided earlier that there will be no structured talks as any such requests had not come. I said it before we are ready for a meaningful bilateral dialogue. When circumstances are there, we will have that dialogue, nothing else; we are ready when they are ready. Then a third time, when the retreat, they asked, have you exchanged pleasantries etc. at dinner. So, he said the relevant person of Ministry said 'when a senior Indian leader and a senior leader of Pakistan come face to face, they exchange courtesies'". Wednesday, 2nd December, 2015.

### FAITH IN THE CONSTITUTION

Spokesperson: Ms. Sushmita Dev: She said during the on-going winter session, we saw historical moment when on 26th November all Parliamentarians reiterated their faith in the Constitution - A Constitution that was written by Dr. Ambedkar for the People, of the People and by the People.

I would like to say that we had an alarming announcement, if not a policy but an intention of this Government which I will just come to which seems is going to be yet another burden on the common-man of this country. We are all aware that if we were to calculate an average rate that a common-man in India pays as Income-Tax, it would stand at, I believe, 20% or at best at 15%.

We have seen and we have heard today that Hon'ble Minister for Skill Development has expressed his views or the intention of this Government to further levy a 2% cess for the 'Skill India Mission'. I would like to raise the issue about the tax-burden of the common-man from the point of view that we recently have seen the present Government making many announcements coining many names whether it is 'Swatchh Bharat', whether it is 'Make-in-India', whether it is 'Skill India' but the question that comes to our mind, as a National Party, is what is eventually going to be burden on the common-man. Should a Government today announce ambitious plans, big schemes and then expect that a common-man should bear the burden of it. We have already seen a cess of .5% imposed on the common-man on the 'Swatchh Bharat Abhiyan', a raise in the service tax of 2.5% and now there is an impending and eminent threat but yet another 2% as a cess for the 'Skill India Mission'.

To my understanding and my information, that when the Constitutional Amendment was brought in Rajya Sabha, the norm generally is to first discuss it in the BAC meeting in an all-party meeting and then it is introduced. The way it was introduced in the Rajya Sabha, I am told, that in the BAC meeting that preceded the introduction of that Bill in the Rajya Sabha, there was no discussion which tells me and the Party believes was intentionally brought for two reasons one was to send out a message in the public domain that Congress Party is anti-growth despite the fact that GST as a concept emanated from our Party and secondly to derail the entire debate on 'Vyapam' and the 'Lalit Modi' cases. So, that was then only to change the political perception and the narrative that was outside the Parliament but it was counter-productive in the sense that amounted to bad floor management. Friday, 4th December, 2015.

### BJP DOING POLITICS

Spokesperson: Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad and Shri Anand Sharma: Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad said for what purpose is the Parliament, we are not doing politics, politics is being done by the BJP. Ever since the BJP government came to power, there are two constitution and two laws being implemented in this country. One law is for the BJP Cabinet Ministers, BJP Chief Ministers, BJP associates and for BJP workers and the other law is for the Opposition, whether it be Congress Party, or the TMC, or BSP, or Samajwadi Party or any other political party.

Some days ahead we had discussions on the Constitution, we had showed our commitment towards the Constitution of India. Even after that no change has come in the BJP government, the way this one and a half year is passing by, efforts is being made to dilute the Opposition, including the Congress Party and all other political parties and efforts is being made to wipe them out and we have expressed our protest against this dictatorship in both the Houses

of Parliament. Tuesday, 8th December, 2015.

### CRUDE OIL PRICES

Spokesperson: Dr. Abhishek Singhvi: Dr. Abhishek Singhvi said that amongst all this 'hulla-gullo', I must point out to you that the international crude oil price as reported, has come down to below US\$ 40 per Barrel.

For the first time in 11 years, we have the figures, they are striking and it is reduced by over 65 to 68% per Barrel. It was some fantastic figure of over US\$ 100, US\$ 108, 70 US\$ and then US\$ 56, now it is down to US\$ 38/US\$ 39 per Barrel.

Now, this is a remarkable reduction since 2004. No Government has enjoyed this bonanza, this jackpot. The last time it went below US\$ 40 per Barrel was in early 2004. Now, with this absorbent pad, with this huge humongous cushion, the question in public interest which we ask through the Media, which the Janta asks the Government, which each one of you and me ask the Government is, what is the passing on of even a fraction of this jackpot to the 'Aam-Aadmi'. Yes, there has been some decline in Petrol and Diesel and Kerosene and some other petro products but that has been fractional and marginal less than 14% to 16% and maximum 17%. As against 65% reduction in crude oil, if you apply that reduction, if you apply to the decrease in Diesel e.g. it should be below Rs. 30, if you apply to Petrol, it should be below Rs. 42.

In a nut shell, all he wants to say is - please do your home work and economics well. Please balance the Budget but you have to pass on at least 75% or 65% of this reduction in international crude prices to the citizens of this country or at least to the 'Aam-Aadmi'.

### ATTACKING THROUGH PROXIES

Dr. Singhvi further said that there is a deliberate campaign of misinformation and a deliberate campaign of disinformation and obviously something which every child know is being misrepresented by ignorance deliberately that we are questioning the judiciary or the Judge. I think that is ridiculous - I would not normally have said so. It is only to be stated to be rejected. What are we saying - we are saying in respect of the National Herald case that the initiation of these proceedings across the country in different fora for different person in different form National Herald is one example, there are many other examples is done directly at the behest of the Government either directly or through proxies.

Now, if and I said so, I am repeating, if I or Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad, in their personal capacity, file a case against Mr. Modi, each one of you will sing in chorus political motivation. In fact, to share with you, even if as a senior Counsel and Advocate, I was to argue a case which is of course my duty as a Counsel and nothing to do as person, even then an allegation is made, it is political vendetta. Will it not apply to Dr. Swamy Dr. Swamy is a Member of the Central Committee, he is a senior person, he is a former Cabinet Minister and has the Prime Minister disowned him. Our allegation is about the political colour and here is a person who for the last 20 years with the BJP and with other opposition at different times of his life's career has made it his life's mission to abuse everything connected with the Congress Party and to persecute and indeed persecute them. Now if this is not political vendetta, what is this? Wednesday, 9th December, 2015.

### ON SUSHMA SWARAJ'S VISIT TO PAKISTAN

Spokesperson: Shri Anand Sharma: He said that Foreign Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj gave her statement in both the Houses of Parliament on her Pakistan visit and about her talks held there and the joint declaration. The statement is with all of you. We were waiting for this statement. Earlier to this also there were talks which we have come to know, more than a week has passed. When all of a sudden both the National Security Advisors met at Bangkok and the Foreign Secretaries of both the countries were also present. Formally it was known today that this meeting was arranged during the COP21 Climate Conference in Paris. On the sidelines of that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Shri Nawaz Sharif had a meeting.

### GOVERNMENT BEREFT OF A ROAD-MAP

Shri Anand Sharma said while taking note of the Foreign Minister's visit to Pakistan to attend 'The Heart of Asia Meeting' and also talks with the Pakistani Prime Minister - our counterpart and the joint statement which has been issued the background you all are aware but the real issue remains as this Government has been bereft of a road-map and a strategy to engage with Pakistan ever since it assumed office and that has been a matter of concern for us. Almost more than 18 months are wasted and the policy and approach to engage has been one in fits-and-starts first inviting for the swearing-in and then creating a situation where abruptly the Foreign Secretary's visit was called off because of the issue of inviting the Hurriyat.

### ATTITUDE TOWARDS NON-BJP GOVERNMENTS

Shri Sharma said there is another issue which we wanted to bring to your attention or through the Media tell our people is the attitude of this Government towards the non-BJP Governments - whether it is Congress Government or even the Governments of other Regional Parties who are opposed ideologically to the BJP it has been the complaint of many CMs that after the appointment of the Governors who happen to be the RSS people in the non-BJP States without consultation with any CM, these Governors are interfering in the day-to-day administration which is in conflict with the Constitutional position which the Governors have because they have no mandate to do so. These Governors have been calling the Chief Secretaries, the Secretaries and giving instructions to them when you have duly elected Governments and there is a very clear distinction Constitution makes when it comes to the exercise of active authority both in the Centre and the States.

Shri Sharma also said that first there should not be over obsession only with the passage of one Bill called the GST. India is and Parliament functioning is more about the passage of one Bill. Please look at the number of important Legislations which is pending in the Rajya Sabha or in the Lok Sabha. They all are important. Monday, 14th December, 2015

### TOPPLING OF ARUNACHAL GOVERNMENT

Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad said my colleague of Leader of Opposition of Parliamentary Party in Lok Sabha will also speak once I am done.

Shri Azad said we had a Press Conference yesterday with my other colleagues and we had said as to how the Hon'ble Governor of

Arunachal Pradesh, on the directions of Union Government, tried to topple the duly elected Congress-led Government in Arunachal Pradesh and how the Speaker of the Assembly was removed while convening a parallel Session in some Community Hall day before yesterday and how the Chief Minister was removed by the BJP MLAs with the help of some dissident MLAs sitting in a Restaurant and it is in this backdrop, this entire week, we lodged our protest inside the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Friday, 18th December, 2015

### REASONS BEHIND NON-FUNCTIONING OF PARLIAMENT

Spokesperson: Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad: He said that there are 3-4 big reasons behind the non-functioning of the Parliament in both the Houses, there was some work done but in the Lok Sabha there was a constraint because of our members. One reason was the anti-dalit remark made by Union Minister Gen. V.K. Singh and when he came in the House the House did not function for two days, we were asking for his resignation. Thereafter, the House did not function for 3-4 days because of the three Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh who were blamed for thousand of crores because of which the last Monsoon Session could not function and we were demanding the government as to what action has been taken. The last 2-3 days the House did not work due to DDCA Scam.

We have some questions and it is our belief that BJP has failed in running the government and in running the Parliament, either they do not know the way to function or they have failed in taking along the Opposition by their attitude.

I have repeatedly said that since 1991 to 1996, the Congress did not have majority in the Lok Sabha, there were 25 people less and there was no alliance. The revolutionary resolution of this Century and the related economic policy which has brought that economic change, a revolution had come, was done by the minority government, was possible because of our Congress Party, because we took along all the political parties, opposition parties and were successful. But they after having such a big majority are not able to run the Parliament. The reason behind is that the government has pride, arrogance and vendetta, if government has to work in a democracy then the Prime Minister of the BJP government and the people of his cabinet have to leave the way of vendetta, have to leave the way of arrogance.

### ABOUT THE WASHOUT OF MONSOON SESSION

Shri Mallikarjun Kharge said while addressing the media that I would like to talk on 2-3 issues. It is being said everywhere that why the Congress Party is without any reason stopping the function

of Parliament and because of us this Session has been washed out. But it is the responsibility of the government to function the House properly, get the Bills passed. If the Bill is in favour of the people it should be properly consulted and should be properly placed in the House and get it passed. But because of the less members in the Lok Sabha, they get the Bill passed by bull-doing us, when we take up any important issue, they do not even give their reaction and ignore it. Thereafter, in the Rajya Sabha those Bills get stalled, when we raise objection, if that matter is sorted out by calling a meeting of all the parties and an agreement is reached on certain issues which is discussed and this job can be done by the Parliamentary Affairs Minister. Prime Minister too can do this. But they did not talk about it but they surely said that Khargeji is in the bathroom. That is why the GST Bill did not move ahead. If they say like this you can understand their standard of thinking, and what they want. That is why the GST Bill was not passed and discussion did not take place. Wednesday, 23rd December, 2015

### GOVERNMENT FAILED ON ALL FRONTS

Spokesperson: Shri Anand Sharma and Shri Randeep Singh Surjewala: Shri Anand Sharma said today, just last two days are left in 2015, the Indian National Congress wants to place our feelings and concern about the involvement of the Modi government, the burning issues before the country and with it our concern.

19 months ago there was a change of governments, a big wave of promises and hope on which Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister. He showed dreams to the people, all class of people and after 19 months it has become clear that this government has failed on all fronts but the working style of the Prime Minister has affected both government and governance, like the centralization of power, centralization of taking decisions, and the way he has worked like a dictator. The government is entrapped in their own net of declarations. Their tenure will pass in making big-big promises, hollow promises and of the people particularly of the common man, exploited people of the society and by ignoring the weaker section. The priorities of the government have been wrong and that social security round which the UPA government had formed and made it strong, has become weak today.

The government in this year's Budget has struck a big blow on the Social Sector by curtailing in Education, in Health, for women and this Ministry has reduced the budget allocation for children to half, big curtailment has also been made in Scheduled and Scheduled Tribe departments. Alongwith this the Irrigation department has been neglected. They have failed in getting investment in Irrigation and in encouraging Irrigation. Wednesday, 30th December, 2015

