



EDITORIAL

The Modi Government has completed two years of having been in power. Narendra Modi headed the first BJP lead government after having won an unexpected victory. After many decades there is a single party majority government that opened up a huge opportunity to carry out reforms and take the country forward during this crucial time after the country was left on the threshold of huge growth by the earlier UPA regime. But Alas all that we can see at the end of these two years is a frittered opportunity of a regime too busy in deriding the previous government and carrying out its agenda of communal hate and vendetta. The earlier regime led by an experienced and a mature leadership had set the ball in motion towards achieving several goals of growth and creating necessary infrastructure. Taking advantage of this inertia the present regime wishes to claim credit for completing the tasks set in motion by the previous regime and claim them as its own achievements. Having inherited a government at the time when the world crude prices had crashed from US \$ 130 a barrel to even less than US \$ 30 a barrel the government chose not to allow the common man to enjoy the benefit and instead chose to use this gain for showing to the world its so called capability of maintaining deficit and foreign exchange reserves. Even though there was reduction in earnings of foreign exchange as exports were substantially reduced the foreign exchange reserves were maintained due to huge savings in the outflow as a result of reduced crude prices. All the promises made by the government before coming to power were admittedly denied as having been election hyperbole. Notwithstanding that they had come to power telling and assuring people these lies. With their arrogant and non-people friendly attitude essential reforms could not take place as the opposition was treated with contempt and not given its due in addressing the peoples issues. Extraneous issues that would cause diversion from their failure were allowed to claim the national space putting aside the important matters related to governance. The opposition kept on cooperating wherever there was no conflict of interest but the Government in its arrogance refused to entertain the oppositions point of view and allowed important legislation to be relegated to background. GST Bill and Land reforms Bill are two glaring examples. For how long will the Government keep on living by making wrong promises and not fulfilling them is any ones guess. It is good to be an orator but one-sided monologue like Man ki Baat doesn't address the people's issues and doesn't answer vital doubts in minds of people.

The Government is pleased with itself for having gained a government in the northeast. A victory is a victory but in a political arena the dissemination of results is equally important. The Congress through 3 assemblies for 15 continuous years led the Assam Government and Sh. Tarun Gogoi was having the confidence of the party to lead it once again. His advice was therefore followed while the party decided to go it alone and for that it has no regret. Mistakes can only be made if you are doing work and the Congress had led a fruitful government that was imposed with the confidence of people again and again. Defeat in election is not final since elections are a continuous process and there would be many more in times to come. One need to introspect and try and suitably address the issues. From time immemorial in Kerala it is UDF and LDF, which alternate, in subsequent elections. That the Congress was very hopeful of breaking this jinx, this time, however did not happen. In Puducherry the Congress led front has formed a government and the vote percentage in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal is higher for the Congress than last time. In politics defeat and victory are not permanent and the Congress would not let up on its commitments to bring up the plight of the deprived, the backward and downtrodden despite electoral reverses. It will not compromise on its principles. The Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi has given such an assurance.

The NDA is enthused that it won an election in 2014 by telling lies about acts of omission and commission by the leadership of the Congress. These were due to following policies that the UPA felt was in the interest of commerce and enterprise as a government. Many of these policies were even inherited from the earlier NDA regime and were kept going as they were felt that they were acceptable. Once again there is an attempt to target the UPA in the matter of purchase of helicopters from Augusta Westland. Mr. A.K.Antony a leader of unblemished record headed the Defence ministry during the UPA tenure and gave a befitting reply to the government. Besides establishing that the changes in specifications which was considered to be an aberration were carried out on the recommendations of the Vajpayee's regime, he challenged the government to not just keep on making insinuation but back them up with facts and dared them to thoroughly enquire into all the allegations and come out with the truth. Not having faith in the intentions of the government the Congress demanded that a judge of the Supreme Court should monitor this enquiry so that truth actually comes out.

The Finance Minister is most perturbed by the judiciary, as it is not allowing the NDA to have its way in its various misdemeanors by striking down its illegal acts. The happenings at Uttrakhand are the most recent example. Besides reprimanding the government in the severest manner possible by the superior court it challenged the NDA contention by ordering a court monitored floor test, This is the only democratic way for deciding the majority of government in any house. The truth prevailed and the Government led by Sh. Harish Rawat was able to reestablish its rule in Uttrakhand. Instead of humility and learning its lessons the NDA responded by reprimanding the judiciary and telling them to remain in limits. One more act of its continued arrogance against norms and institutions.

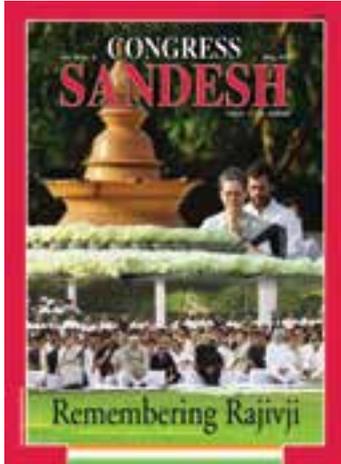
The nation remembers the First Prime Minister of Independent India Pt., Jawaharlal Nehru with affection on his 52nd death anniversary. No one can forget the foundation of rule of democracy and stable political system established by him. He was respected not only in India but also across the shores of the country everywhere and was recognized as a world leader. Many countries that were a part of the commonwealth ended up with either a dictatorship or with martial law, but India has continued to be a resilient democracy. Pandit ji's persona prevailed and the country kept up its democratic rule.

Twenty-five years ago on 21st May, we lost our beloved and youthful leader Rajiv Gandhi at the hands of an assassin, a human bomb. The void that was created, as a result can never be filled and we remember him for his commitment and contribution to the growth of the country. ❖

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In the month of May this year 25 years ago the nation lost a true son of India at the hands of terrorists. Misguided people who took Rajiv Gandhi's life didn't realize that not only were they depriving the nation of a favorite son but also a person with a vision who wanted to take India to become a world leader in the twenty first century. He was youthful and a person who came into public life after having been a working class person having been employed as a pilot in Indian Airlines. He could identify himself with the working class and the grass root realities of the nation. Even though he was born to an illustrious family he had first hand experience of the tribulations of a working-man and chose to address their problems in his regime. He had a vision of a modern India and gave to India growth in communication and Information Technology. Use of Computers was promoted during his regime .The todays ruling class was then busy telling the nation, that this was at the cost of jobs of the poor. Without having the vision that Rajiv ji had, that this would lead to suitable employment for the millions of educated Indian youth not only within the country but also in the shores of the developed world. India's so-called growth and recognition came on the strength of his vision. He was the first Prime Minister who chose to address the problems of Road Transport by creating a separate ministry. Water resources also had his special attention. In fact he had a focused approach because of which he restructured many ministries so that concentration would be given to the chosen fields.

It is his vision that inspires us to selflessly serve the nation even during adversity. The call is not to compromise on principles on the basis of sticking to power at any cost. The Congress leadership has inherited this vision from its leaders, pre and post independence who worked selflessly for the future of India. Rajiv ji had the commitment that he inherited from his ancestors and he utilized the opportunity to put it into action when he led the nation. The Congress party under the leadership of Congress President Sonia Gandhi and Vice President Rahul Gandhi is sworn to fulfill the commitments that the Congress party has made to the people of the country. No amount of adversity will stop it from fulfilling these commitments that it has with the common man of the country.

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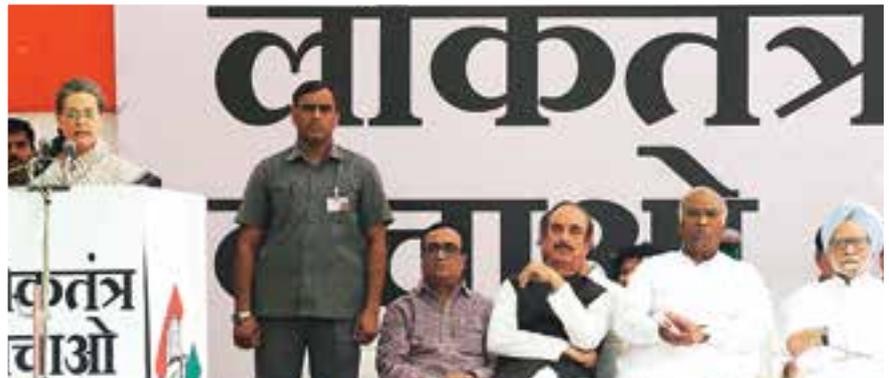


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LOKTANTRA BACHAO RALLY

- Speaking at Jantar Mantar, Congress President said that Congress Party would save Democratic Institutions and values from Vandalisation. Congressmen could not be deviated from the prime duty of safeguarding democracy because they are committed for it
- Former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh said that the Modi government has a single point agenda to wipe out the Congress Party from India. But BJP and Modiji fail to understand that Congress is the soul of India **8**
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SAVE DEMOCRACY FROM VANDALISATION

Congress President's speech in "Loktantra Bachao Rally" at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on 6th May, 2016



We all have gathered here to send a strong message. The message should be so loud and clear that the people would listen and understand it properly, whether they are sitting in Raisina Hills should or in Nagpur at whose instance the Modi government is being run.

I want to tell these people in an unambiguous term that you may try to destroy democracy as much as you want, but we will not let your dangerous intentions to be executed as long as we are alive. Let them try as much as they could to frighten us or give a bad name to us but we are not among those who bow down to these pressure tactics. Life has taught me to struggle. We all have faced every kind of challenges. If some people think that it is easy to deviate Congressmen from the prime duty of safe guarding democracy, they don't know how strongly committed these Congressmen are!

To fight against anti-national forces is not a new thing for us. The Congress knows very well how to fight against those who are trying to destroy the brotherhood and tolerance of this country. We have shed our blood, sacrificed our lives for safeguarding the fundamental principles of humanity. If it is needed, we will not backtrack from making our supreme sacrifices.

In the last 60-70 years, the Congress constituted such institutions which provide strength to democracy. Every section of the society had been empowered. Steps were taken to make a farmer's life prosperous. We struggled to bring about basic changes in a woman's life.

But within two years, the Modi government began to ruin everything. Its every step is intended to uproot democracy. Under their regime, all are in trouble-- farmers, youth and businessmen. All are in deep despair. Farmers are facing severe drought and are compelled to commit suicides. But the Modi government is ignoring and doing nothing. Price-rise has made impossible to bring up children and to run households. My sisters and the poor are affected the worst.

They have nothing to do with all these things. Their intension was to come into power through false promises. They succeeded in doing that. Their hunger for power is increasing day-by-day. They are doing everything to make the Congress governments in states to fall. They conspired to topple the popularly and elected Congress government of Arunachal and Uttarakhand by using money and muscle power. By doing so, they have not only shaken the foundation of democracy

TO FIGHT AGAINST ANTI-NATIONAL FORCES IS NOT A NEW THING FOR US. THE CONGRESS KNOWS VERY WELL HOW TO FIGHT AGAINST THOSE WHO ARE TRYING TO DESTROY THE BROTHERHOOD AND TOLERANCE OF THIS COUNTRY. WE HAVE SHED OUR BLOOD, SACRIFICED OUR LIVES FOR SAFEGUARDING THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF HUMANITY. IF IT IS NEEDED, WE WILL NOT BACKTRACK IN OFFERING OUR SUPREME SACRIFICES.

but in fact they have murdered the democracy. Today, Uttarakhand is facing the worst kind of forest-fire, but nothing is happening there in order to mitigate and douse the fire since there is no popular government in the state. Narendra Modi and his political advisers, who claim to be associated with a cultural organization are unable to understand the hardships, plight and distress of people. Whether democracy is under threat, they are least concerned about it. Their one and only aim is that everything should be under their control.

The Congress resurrected the Panchayati Raj system across the country by making a law. But they are making amendments in the law. Women, tribes, dalits and backwards are being deprived of contesting elections.

THEY HAVE FIRED ALL THE CYLINDERS AGAINST THE CONGRESS. BUT I WARN THEM THAT THEY WOULD NOT DO A MISTAKE OF UNDERSTANDING THE CONGRESS WEAK. THE CONGRESS WILL NEVER BOW DOWN BEFORE INJUSTICE. WE WILL PLAY THE ROLE OF A RESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION MORE EMPHATICALLY IN THE COMING DAYS. WE WILL FIGHT WITH ALL OUR MIGHT AGAINST INJUSTICE AND OPPRESSION AT BOTH PLACES-INSIDE PARLIAMENT AND OUTSIDE IT.

Minorities are being intimidated. The society is being divided on the basis of religion, language and culture caste.

Atrocities are being inflicted on students. They declare anyone as anti-national within seconds. Those people who dare to oppose them are bound to suffer.

But these people should understand one thing very clearly that when anything crosses its limit, Indian people rise



with might and make the oppressor bite the dust. The Modi government is deceiving people, and it seems now that his days are numbered.

The Modi government has started the game of making false allegations upon the leaders of the opposition in order to divert people's attention from its own failures. They have started their old game of character assassination of others and making the atmosphere poisonous by indulging in scare mongering with false propaganda. They have fired all the cylinders against the Congress. But I warn them that they should not do a mistake of understanding the Congress weak. The Congress will never bow down to injustice. We will play the role of a responsible opposition more emphatically in the coming days. We will fight with all our might against injustice and oppression at both places-inside the Parliament and outside it.

I appeal to all of you; each and every Congressman to go every nook and corner of the country and make people aware of the reality of the Modi government; to reveal their real intentions and give them a befitting reply through democratic means. The message of this march should be propagated in every possible manner. We will never let them ruin and destroy the democratic traditions at any cost. We will never let them do, what may come. Jai Hind. ❖

(Translated from Hindi Speech)



MODI IS A THREAT TO DEMOCRACY

The excerpts from the speech of Dr. Manmohan Singh in "Loktantra Bachao" rally in New Delhi on 6th May, 2016



My brothers and sisters; Congress workers coming from every nook and corner of the country.

When the Modi government came into power, its only aim and only slogan was to wipe out the Congress party from India. They used to talk about "Congress Mukht Bharat" on daily basis. Wherever they go, they show their true sense in this regard. But I want to say to Modiji and others of his government that the Congress is the "soul" of India. A lot of people attacked Congress since 1885, many tried to weaken it but they miserably failed. At this moment I recall a couplet of Dr. Mohammad Iqbal who mentioned that India remained treading on the path of progress despite attacks by numerous enemies.

Iqbal said-

*Unan-o-Misr-o-Ruma sab mit gaye jahan se
Ab tak magar hai baaqi naam-o-nisha hamara
Kuch baat hai ki hasti mithi-nahi hamari
sadiyon raha hai dushman daur-e-zama hamara!!*

The Congress party is like the flowing Ganga. You put a bridle on it or do whatever you want, it doesn't know to backtrack. The Congress party has always sacrificed whatever and whenever it is needed for the sake of protecting and safeguarding democracy. The Congress will remain to do so in future also.

The Congress is not in power in several states. But wherever there is Congress government in states like Arunachal and Uttarakhand, Modiji dismissed these state governments and thus dealt a severe blow to democracy. Now they have set their eyes on other Congress governments in states like Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Himachal Pradesh. Conspiracies are being hatched to make these governments

CONGRESS PRESIDENT EXPRESSED SHOCK OVER TRAGEDY IN SIMHASTHA KUMBH MELA

Ujjain (MP): Seven people were killed and around 90 injured when heavy rain accompanied by lightning and squall flattened and uprooted makeshift tents of pilgrims in and around the site of Simhastha Kumbh Mela on 5th May, 2016.

The casualties resulted due to collapse of tents and some gates erected at the Kumbh area.

Among the dead is a woman pilgrim who was killed in Undasa area when lightning struck her.



Terming the incident as painful, **Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi** expressed shock at the killer storm in Simhastha Kumbh in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh. Saddened at the tragic incident, Smt. Gandhi prayed for the departed souls and expressed the hope that the injured were being provided with adequate relief and the authorities are making all possible emergency arrangements.



In a message **Congress Vice President, Shri Rahul Gandhi** said: "Very sad to learn that several people lost their lives in an accident due to a thunderstorm at Simhastha Kumbh in Ujjain. My prayers are with the families of the victims. I hope those injured in the tragedy are provided adequate medical care at the earliest. ❖"

fall. So it is necessary that Congress workers should go to every nook and corner and make people aware that the Modi government is out to destroy democracy in this country. Whatever they are doing, we will not let them do. We will not let them go ahead. I want to make an appeal to all that they must understand the fact that how severe blows are being dealt by the Modi government to the opposition leaders; on the Congress governments in states and in universities. It is your duty to understand all these things. You must come forward to foil the Modi government's wrong objectives. In this regard, you all should work together with Sonijai, Rahulji and others Congress leaders. Jai Hind! ❖

(Translated from Hindi Speech)

REQUIEM FOR THE COUNTRY CELEBRATION FOR MODI

The excerpts from the speech of Congress Vice-President
Sh. Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi on 6th May, 2016



When the Modi government came into power, they promised achche din. Today, the whole country is reeling under drought. 40% of the whole country is under drought. Every day, 50 farmers are committing suicides Latur, Vidarbha

and Bundelkhand are worst affected but Modiji does not talk about it. Modiji promised employment to the youth and we watched the programme "Make in India" on television and internet. Big programmes were organized and the issue was discussed extensively. Last year, a big programme was organized in Mumbai. But how many youths got jobs?

Modiji promised that he will create 2 crores of jobs every year. Last year, only 1lakh and 30 thousand people got jobs. It means that only 350 people got jobs per day. This is the contribution of Modiji. But he didn't stop here. He got the Congress governments in Arunachal and Uttarakhand toppled. He tried to remove elected representatives. He broke the rules and is continuously doing it. He says that one, who has not passed the 10th standard, should not contest Panchayati elections. What is the impact? Lakhs of dalits and women are deprived of contesting local-body elections. For them, the doors of democracy are closed. But Modiji does not want to say anything on it.

Today in India, the directives of only two persons are followed, one is Mohan Bhagwatji and the other is Narendra Modiji. Whoever wants to oppose these people or wants to say something against them is levelled with false allegations. I want to say to you all; to the leaders of the Congress party; to the people of this country that this country belongs to one and all; this country belongs to democracy. This country does not belong a particular person and we will fight for democracy, for the people of this country, for the poor, for farmers and labourers and certainly we will win. Thanks. ❖

(Translated from Hindi Speech)

CONGRESS TOP RANKS AT POLICE STATION, COURTED ARREST BY DEFYING RULES FOR THEIR MARCH

The Congress leaders made fiery speeches before courting arrest at a Parliament street police station.

New Delhi: The Congress President, Vice President, former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and many senior leaders courted arrest in Delhi on morning of 6th May 2016 by defying the police as they tried to protest 'Loktantra Bachao' march towards parliament after holding a rally against the Modi government at the centre.

Before that, Congress president Smt. Sonia Gandhi hit out at the government, also making a direct attack on the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh), the ideological mentor of the ruling BJP.

Accusing them of attempting to crush democracy, Smt. Sonia Gandhi said, "I want to tell Nagpur, to those whose instructions run the Narendra Modi government - we will never let you fulfill your desire. I want to tell them that no matter what you accuse us of, however much you intimidate us, we will not bow down," adding, 'Life has taught me about struggles.'

Congress Vice President Shri Rahul Gandhi said, "Only two persons are talked about in this country, (RSS chief) Mohan Bhagwat and Narendra Modi. Those who speak up against them are victimized."

The Congress is organized a 'Loktantra Bachao' March to save the Democracy against the imposition of President's Rule in two states that it governed - Arunachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

The Congress has demanding the role of PM Modi for "masterminding a conspiracy to implicate" the party leadership.

The purpose of this Padyatra (Footmarch) what poses threat to the democracy, the way the democracy is being vandalized and assassinated, first in Arunachal Pradesh and then in Uttarakhand and lastly in Himachal Pradesh. The way universities are being attacked and the students of the premier universities be it the JNU, Allahabad, Central University, Hyderabad are being subjected to purities actions. The standing committees are being ignored the way courts are being threatened - are some of the examples which reflect the systematic attack on the democracy by the Modi government. To focus and draw popular attention on those points the rally has been organized. ❖

WILL ERADICATE DRUGS PROBLEM FROM PUNJAB: RAHUL GANDHI

Congress Vice-President Shri Rahul Gandhi asserted that his party will eradicate the drugs problem within months if came to power in Punjab.



MOHALI: Congress Vice-President Shri Rahul Gandhi on 16th April, 2016 asserted that his party will eradicate the drugs problem in months if voted to power in Punjab.

“When Congress party would form the government in state, you will see actions against the people responsible for drug abuse. We will eradicate it and you will see the difference in months,” Shri Rahul Gandhi said.

The Congress Vice President was on a day’s visit to Punjab to meet and boost the morale of party workers. He addressed a gathering of more than 2,500 party workers at the farm house of a local Congress leader in Mohali including sitting MLAs, MPs, ex-MLAs, block presidents, and other office bearers were also part of the gathering.

The Congress leader slammed the ruling Shiromani Akali Dal-Bharatiya Janata Party government, saying it does not want to focus on the problem of drug abuse in the state and is not working effectively to root out the menace.”The Akali Dal government does not want to even recognize this problem. They are not doing enough to tackle this menace,” he added.



He also said the Punjab government had mocked him in the past for raising the sensitive issue.

“Drug problem has always been a very serious issue in Punjab. I raised this issue several times earlier, but Akali Dal made fun of me. We want to give a new kind of government in Punjab, one that is sensitive to people,” he said.

“Punjab is the heart of the nation and nobody can insult it. Punjab gives life to the country. I have a special place for Punjab in my heart and all I want is to help the people of the state. (*Punjab ko koi badnaam nahi kar sakta, Punjab is desh ka dil hai. Punjab desh ko zindagi deta hai. Punjab ke liye mere dil mein jagah hai aur mai Punjab ki madad karna chahta hun*),” Congress Vice President added. ❖



BASELESS ALLEGATIONS OF BRIBERY IN CHOPPER DEAL FAILS SCRUTINY

*Short Duration Discussion on Allegation of Bribery and Corruption in
Augustawestland Chopper Deal*



AK Antony

SHRI A.K. ANTONY: Sir, Defence procurement, has all along created a lot of controversies from the beginning. But you may not agree because it is obvious that you may not appreciate the previous Government. That will create problem for you. **But I can tell you sincerely that our Government, from day one onwards, was very clear that in the area of Defence, there should not be any compromise on corruption. There should be zero corruption in Defence because our Jawans are shedding their blood to protect the borders, lands, sea and air. They are sacrificing their lives.**

You must not allow this corruption in Defence area. So, in UPA-1 onwards — I don't claim that we were hundred per cent successful — with a conscious effort we were trying to prevent and ultimately eliminate corruption from Defence procurement. So, first we started revising the Defence procurement policy. It was the first time that the Government of India during the time of UPA-1, introduced DPP (Defence Procurement Procedure) giving a lot of safeguards to prevent corruption. Afterwards, there was a second addition and we introduced a new concept of Integrity Pacts, Pre-contract Integrity Pacts in which there is a provision that any company which violates Integrity Pacts, can be debarred for five years or ten years, criminal actions, or the money can be taken back or so many repercussions. After that, by action we had shown to the country, shown to the world, mighty world, that we mean what we say. I am quoting only official records, that is, public records. I am on oath. These are public records. I know secret records, but I will not reveal because I am on oath.

This is the Report of the Press Information Bureau, Government of India, dated 11th March, 2013. It says, "The Government has blacklisted following six firms for a period of ten years by the Ministry of Defence I.D. No.310, April, 2012: Singapore Technologies, Israeli Military Industries Limited, Rheinmetall Air Defence (RAD), Zurich, M/s Corporation Defence, Russia, etc." These are all powerful multinational

companies, and these include two Indian companies as well. We didn't show mercy. When corruption was proved and the CBI recommended that we should take action and blacklist them, we blacklisted six companies. This happened for the first time that six companies, at a stretch, were blacklisted. Otherwise, some years back, one company was blacklisted. So, not sitting on procedures, we also took action and sent a message to the world, sent a message to the arms dealers, that India would not tolerate corruption. We proved that merciless strong action would be taken. That was our message at that time.

Sir, this is as far as the background is concerned. Coming to this particular thing, so many friends quoted so many things including CAG Reports and newspaper reports. In the last few weeks, many people were trying to make clouds. I would like to present a few facts after which I will also table them in the House. This is also the official release of the Press Information Bureau relating to the Ministry of Defence, titled, 'Acquisition of AW-101 Choppers for IAF: The Facts'. This is dated 14th February, 2013. Everything is stated here. I don't want to read everything, but I will place it also. I would first quote one part to reply to what has been raised here. As many of you mentioned here, this process started in 1999 when the NDA was in power. I don't want to blame anybody. I don't want to point a single finger at anybody.

The process started in 1999, and the RFP was issued in March, 2002. But the undisputed fact is, and I read: "On November 19, 2003, a meeting was taken by the Principal Secretary to the P.M. on this subject. In the meeting, the Principal Secretary observed that his main concern was that the framing of the mandatory requirements has led us effectively into a single vendor situation. It was also noted that P.M. and President have rarely made visits to places involving flying at an altitude beyond 4500 metres." So, in the meeting, the first decision was

to lower the altitude. It says, "In the meeting, it was decided to make the mandatory requirement for operational altitude 4500 metres from 6000 metres." It was a decision taken in a meeting presided over by the then Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. I don't blame him. But the decision to change the height was taken by the then PMO, the then BJP Government, from 6000 metres to 4500 metres. And, one more decision was taken at that time. "The higher flying ceiling of 6000 metres and a cabin height of 1.8 metres could be made desirable operational requirements." So, this height of 1.8 metres was also decided at that time. This is not an off-the-cuff remark. This is as per the official release of the Ministry of Defence dated 14th February, 2013. So, the height was reduced from 6000 metres to 4,500 metres and cabin height was decided at 1.8 metres.

The major decision was taken at that time in 2003 by your Government. This is not a Press statement. This is an official

BUT THE DECISION TO CHANGE THE HEIGHT WAS TAKEN BY THE THEN PMO, THE THEN BJP GOVERNMENT, FROM 6000 METRES TO 4500 METRES. AND, ONE MORE DECISION WAS TAKEN AT THAT TIME. "THE HIGHER FLYING CEILING OF 6000 METRES AND A CABINET HEIGHT OF 1.8 METRES COULD BE MADE DESIRABLE OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS." SO, THIS HEIGHT OF 1.8 METRES WAS ALSO DECIDED AT THAT TIME. THIS IS NOT AN OFF-THE-CUFF REMARK. THIS IS AS PER THE OFFICIAL RELEASE OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE DATED 14TH FEBRUARY, 2013. SO, THE HEIGHT WAS REDUCED FROM 6000 METRES TO 4,500 METRES...

... THE DECISION WAS TAKEN BY YOU. DON'T PUT THE BLAME ON US. ALSO, THE MEETING WAS FOLLOWED BY A LETTER, DATED 22ND DECEMBER, 2003, FROM THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO THE PM TO THE AIR CHIEF STATING THAT IT WAS UNFORTUNATE THAT NEITHER THE PMO NOR SPG WAS CONSULTED WHILE FRAMING THESE MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS.

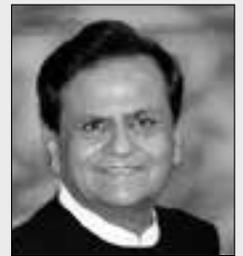
Rajya Sabha

SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE on 4th May, 2016

Short Duration Discussion Allegations of Bribery and Corruption in Agusta Westland Chopper Deal

IF CHARGES OF BRIBE AND CORRUPTION ARE PROVEN, I CAN RESIGN FROM PUBLIC LIFE : AHMED PATEL

Shri Ahmed Patel: We are discussing a very sensitive issue here as it concerns defence and national security. This whole discussion, as I understand is based on CAG report and the judgement of higher court in Italy. Baseless allegations should not be made in public life as such allegations can tarnish someone's image in public eyes and the individual may have to pay the price for it. CAG report has raised certain points about Defence which the Government must take seriously. There is mention of my name and members of my party in the judgment and order we are talking about here. If charges of bribe and corruption are proven, I can resign from public life. CBI investigation takes time, but still impartial investigation into the matter should be conducted and truth must be out. The name of the person who has given bribe should be disclosed.



release, official document of the Ministry of Defence on February 14, 2013. I am quoting a decision of 2013 of para 3. On November 19, 2003 a meeting was taken by the then Principal Secretary and in that meeting it was decided, the height of 6000 to 4500 and cabin height of 1.8 metres. It was by your Government. Don't accuse us. I don't blame you also. I am not saying that they have done this or that, but the decision was taken by you. Don't put the blame on us. Also, the meeting was followed by a letter, dated 22nd December, 2003, from the Principal Secretary to the PM to the Air Chief stating that it was unfortunate that neither the PMO nor SPG was consulted while framing these mandatory requirements. He suggested that CAS and Defence Secretary may jointly review the matter to draw up realistic mandatory requirements satisfying operational security and convenience requirements of VVIPs.

In pursuance of the above directions they changed these things. As a follow-up action of this in 2005 is, the required numbers of helicopters for the entourage of VVIPs was further deliberated between Air headquarters, MoD and

SPG. The quantity of helicopters proposed for procurement was revised from 8 to 12 by adding four helicopters in non-VIP configuration for security reasons. It is eight for VIPs and four for non-VIPs. Don't twist the facts. The Field Evaluation Trial of M/s AgustaWestland was carried out in UK and trials of M/s Sikorsky were carried out in the USA from 16th January 2008 to February 2008. Here Yadavji pointed out, 'Why outside?' This is allowed in the rule. But, it is not a normal practice. When the file came to me first, in the very CAG report it is written, 'The Defence Minister objected it first'. The same Report released and this part you conveniently ignored.

Let me say, the file is now with the present Defence Minister, not with me. Leave it to him. If I am wrong, he can produce the file here. At the first instance, I opposed it. I wrote there. I raised many objections. It is in the CAG Report also. Since you read the CAG Report, fairness demands you could have read that also. But you did not do. I did not expect it from a gentleman like you. So, then, again Air Force Chief wrote to the Defence Secretary. The file is with you. Then, I wrote to the Defence Secretary that we couldn't delay it.

Then, the whole department, from the lower level onwards, i.e., Joint Secretary, Additional Secretary, DG (Acquisitions), Defence Secretary and everybody has gone through it. They, then, finally, endorsed the view of the Air Force Chief, with reasons. Then, it came to me, second time, and I agreed. This is the fact; not the first time. First time I also put a query. Why? I did not agree. During the Field Evaluation Trials, all the security agencies were present. All of them were there — Air Force, SPG, MoD and all concerned, including the Finance Ministry. After that, Staff Evaluation Report was concluded. All agencies were present. Technical Oversight Committee concluded. All the agencies were there. But, at the Contract Negotiation Committee stage something had happened. The Air Headquarters recommended inclusion of Traffic Collusion Avoidance System and Enhanced Ground Proximity Warning System for all 12 helicopters. And, SPG recommended inclusion of Medevac System for 8 VVIP helicopters. The additional equipment was considered to be essential for safe and effective operation of helicopters. So, this also added at an additional cost.

So, the procurement case was, thus, progressed in accordance with the established procurement procedure in a transparent manner with all stage of procurement being followed meticulously. Security aspects were also considered. These are all Defence Ministry's releases after examining the file. The contract signed with M/s AgustaWestland includes specific contractual provisions against bribery and the use of undue influence. In addition to the above contractual provisions, M/s AgustaWestland has signed an Integrated Pact with the Government. The validity of this Integrated Pact is from the

WE DON'T WANT ANY COVER-UP. WE DON'T WANT TO SAVE ANYBODY. BUT DON'T TRY TO CREATE CLOUDS. YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SUCCEED. DON'T POLITICIZE THE ISSUE. YOU WILL REPENT. YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PINPOINT US. YOU COMPLETE THE CASES. FIRSTLY, YOU TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE COMPANY AND BLACKLIST THE COMPANY. REMOVE IT FROM THE 'MAKE IN INDIA' PROJECT. SPEED UP THE ARBITRATION PROCESS AND COMPLETE THE INVESTIGATION AND TAKE STRONGEST ACTION AGAINST TAKERS OF MONEY, WHOEVER IT MAY BE. DON'T TRY TO BLACKMAIL THE PEOPLE. DON'T THREATEN THE PEOPLE.

date of its signing and extends up to five years or the complete execution of the contract, whichever is later. Then, allegation started coming in. As regards allegations, unethical dealings in helicopter procurement case, including involvement of middlemen and payment of bribes, etc., were reported.

The first report in the media appeared in February, 2012. It was the first media report. Immediately, the very next day of the media report, after news appeared in the papers, DG (Acquisition), MoD, sought a factual report in the matter from our Embassy in Rome. Sir, we had acted the very next day; not after one or two years. The next day we had acted. Then, MoD was contacting through MEA, Embassy in Rome, Government of Italy, the Government of UK and, ultimately, when all attempts failed, we became a party in the case in Italy. It is unusual in the Government. This shows our willpower, determination to find out the truth. We became a party. We fought with the company. That is why this verdict. Since we have also become a party, in every hearing, we sent our team during our time. I don't know what happened after we left.

During our time, in every hearing, we sent a team consisting officials of the Ministry of Defence, officers from the CBI and that of the MEA.

So, we fought the case in Italy by engaging an Italian lawyer. Sir, right from day one, when news broke out in the media, we pursued it. And, also we got a letter received from one Mr. Edmond Allen, USA. MoD had written about the involvement of one Abhishek Verma. MoD had written on 19/4/12 to CBI

and Enforcement Directorate for the necessary action as Abhishek Verma and others were also being named in various media reports in connection with several Defence deals. That also we have written to them. In short, throughout the process of this case, MoD has been prone to taking action on newspaper reports. MoD was under us at that time. We were very prompt in taking action and in pursuing the case.

Finally, as soon as, information was available of one concrete step having been taken by the concerned foreign investigating authorities, namely, the arrest of Mr. Giuseppe Orsi, CEO, Finmeccanica on February 12, 2013, MoD handed over the case immediately, after knowing the news of arrest of the CEO of this company, to CBI for investigation and put on hold all further payments to AgustaWestland. Besides this the Indian Embassy has been requested to provide the factual position and any other relevant information. So, the moment we got information from the courts, immediately, we handed over the case to CBI. That is one part. This is all in the First Information Report. I will submit it afterwards. We are authenticating this. Then, what happened after that? I made a statement at that time. I think hon. Shri Prakash Javadekar raised the question. That day, I not only made the statement but, after that, on our own, we made a commitment that we are ready for a JPC.

Normally, JPC is always constituted after the Opposition demands for it. But, the then Government on their own said let us have a JPC. For days together, weeks together, we can discuss everything. We can call the witnesses. We can call everybody. But, the then, Leader of Opposition said, “No it is a useless thing”. So, we were willing to have a JPC. JPC can invite all the people as witnesses and summon them. But, you opposed that opportunity. Then in that statement, I said, and I can read, “The Ministry of Defence, Govt. of India joined the case as an affected civil party in the court of Milan. Representing the Ministry of Defence, CBI have been attending to it.” During the hearing, in Italian court, one unsaid paper was circulated. Prosecutor asks Mr. Haschke, “What do you mean by ‘family’?”, “He said, family means Tyagi brothers.” I have to consult you. All reports of the hearings of the court are with you. “Family means, Tyagi family. Regarding AP, I don’t know what it means.” This is what he said. Then, you are saying about blacklisting. We started the process of blacklisting. In February, 2014, we started the blacklisting process. The matter was referred to the Additional Solicitor General. He said, “It is not advisable at this stage.

If you blacklist the company now, it will affect our case for reimbursement of bank guarantee. It will affect us and it will also affect the criminal proceedings in Italy. So, you have to wait.” So, we waited. Then elections came. We lost the power. You are there. But, I am not going into the details. Now you are there. I would like to ask you only two things. Now, it

is proved beyond doubt that there is corruption in this deal. There is the Italian court judgment. All legal hurdles are over. You have to act now. Firstly, you have to speed up the arbitration proceedings. We have appointed one on our side, Justice Jeevan Reddy. They also have appointed one from their side. They have demanded heavy compensation. Conduct the case successfully and get the money for us, more money for us as compensation. It is your duty because now the corruption is proved. Since the corruption is proved, we can win the arbitration case. You can get thousands of crores of rupees as compensation. Get the money. That is one thing. Secondly, since the corruption is proved, take action against the company who gave the money. And then, take action against the takers, whoever it may be. Take action against them also. It is your duty, not my duty, not our duty. Thirdly, since all legal hurdles are over, immediately, without delay, blacklist the company for ten years. Do it immediately. This time, you have done it for six companies, so do it immediately. The next day you do it or as quickly as possible. Finally, since everything is proved, since this company is a corrupt company as it is declared by the Italian court, please do not involve them in any of the ‘Make in India’ projects? If at all they are there, remove them.

We don’t want any cover-up. We don’t want to save anybody. But don’t try to create clouds. You will not be able to succeed. Don’t politicize the issue. You will repent. You will not be able to pinpoint us. You complete the cases. Firstly, you take action against the company and blacklist the company. Remove it from the ‘Make in India’ project. Speed up the arbitration process and complete the investigation and take strongest action against takers of money, whoever it may be. Don’t try to blackmail the people. Don’t threaten the people. My dear Subramanian Swamyji, don’t threaten us. If you have all the evidence, take action and prosecute, but don’t threaten and blackmail. This is what I wanted to say. ❖

Extracts from the Speech made in the Parliament

Some Relevant Facts

(A). Concrete Action taken by UPA in Agusta Westland case

1. UPA government ensured complete transparency, accountability and integrity of the process of global tendering leading to award of contract for 12 AW-101 VVIP helicopters to Agusta Westland.

Contract with Agusta Westland categorically envisaged as follows:-

- (i) It included specific contractual provisions against ‘bribery’ and use of ‘undue influence’. Article 22 of the Contract dealt with penalty for use of ‘undue influence’. Article 23 of the Contract contained a complete prohibition on the seller regarding dealings through and agent or payment of any

agency commission to any individual or him.

(ii) In addition to the above provision, Agusta Westland had also signed '**Integrity Pact**' with the Government of India. Under the 'Integrity Pact', bidder committed itself to take all measures necessary to prevent corrupt practices, unfair means and illegal activities during any stage of the bid or during any pre or post contract stage. Any breach thereof would result in forfeiture of earnest money, performance bond, cancellation of contract etc.

2. **UPA government asked for an investigation into allegations of corruption by CBI, Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Income Tax. UPA government also made a request to Naples (Italy) Prosecutor's Office for information and documents into the allegations against officials of Agusta Westland.**

On **19.04.2012**, Ministry of Defence wrote to **CBI and Enforcement Directorate (ED)** for examining the allegations of corruption.

In **July 2012**, Enforcement Directorate (ED) informed Ministry of Defence that it was enquiring into the allegations.

In **January 2013**, Ministry of Defence also conveyed the facts of the case to the then Director, Income Tax (Investigation).

On **16.07.2012**, Indian Embassy in Italy made a formal request to **Naples (Italy) Prosecutor's Office** for information on unethical dealings in Agusta Westland sale or helicopters to Indian Air Force.

3. **UPA directed registration of CBI case.**

As news came with regard to arrest of Mr. G. Orsi, CEO of Finmeccanica/Agusta Westland; Defence Ministry asked CBI to register a case on **12.02.2013** against six companies. On **25.02.2013**, CBI registered a preliminary enquiry.

(Please refer to reply dated **06.03.2013** to **Parliament Question No. 961** as also reply dated **11.12.2013** to **Parliament Question No. 669**.)

4. **UPA government issued a Show Cause Notice dated 15.02.2013 and cancelled the contract with Agusta Westland on 01.01.2014.**

Please refer to Show Cause Notice dated **15.02.2013** and order terminating the contract dated **01.01.2014**.

In **March 2013** itself, UPA also decided that no contract negotiation was to be held with Agusta Westland in any capital procurement case.

5. **UPA government sent 'Letter Rogatory' to various countries including Mauritius, Tunisia and Italy in July, 2013 and December, 2013 after receipt of the set of papers from Italy in May, 2013.**

6. **UPA government had even proposed to set up a JPC to examine Agusta Westland case by moving a motion in Rajya Sabha on 27.02.2013. BJP refused the offer by demanding a Supreme Court monitored investigation.**

7. **UPA government encashed the two Indian bank guarantees amounting to Rs. 240 crore approximately at the time of termination of contract.**

UPA government also demanded encashment of bank guarantee from Deutsche Bank, Milan, Italy and finally won the appeal in Italian court on **23.05.2014** for encashment of bank guarantee worth Euro 2,28,00,00,00 (228 million).

UPA government, thus, recovered nearly Rs. 2,068 crore from Agusta Westland (Rs. 240 crore bank guarantee with Indian + Euro 228 million from Deutsche Bank, Milan, Italy), besides confiscating three helicopters as against a payment of Rs. 1,586.66 crore made to Agusta Westland. Hence UPA government recovered more money and not a rupee of loss was caused to public exchequer.

8. **UPA government issued the order dated 12.05.2014 banning Agusta Westland, its parent company finmeccanica and all other group companies.**

In fact, after coming to power on **26.05.2014**, BJP government desisted from issuing this banning order upto **02.07.2014** for unexplainable reasons. This order was finally issued only on **03.07.2014** by BJP government. Strangely, the order was effectively reversed within 40 day i.e. on **22.08.2014**.

(B) Did UPA government change the operational requirements (ORs) for helicopters by reducing it to 4,500 meters from the original 6,000 meters?

1. Please see para-1 (i) to (v) of Statement facts.
2. On **19.11.2003**, Principal Secretary to the then Prime Minister, Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee took a meeting. In the meeting, it was decided to **reduce the Operational Requirements (Ors) to an altitude of 4,500 metres from the original 6,000 metres**. It was also decided to keep the cabin height at **1.8 metres as desirable Operational Requirement**.

Principal Secretary to the then Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee also wrote a letter dated **22.12.2003** to the Air Chief pointing out that PMO and SPG should have been consulted while framing '**Operational Requirements**' (ORs) besides suggesting that Chief of Air Staff and Defence Secretary should review and draw up realistic mandatory requirements.

Between March, 2015 and September, 2016; 'Operational

Requirements' (Ors) for VVIP helicopters were deliberated at length between IAF, NSA, SPG, PMO and Ministry of Defence. Consequently, an operational altitude ceiling of **4,500 metres** and other configurations including cabin height of 1.8 metres were arrived at, as earlier decided.

(C) Why were 'Field Evaluation Trials' (FET) of Helicopters held abroad? Did it violate the 'Defence Procurement Procedure' (DPP)?

1. Field trials for Agusta Westland helicopters were held in UK and for Sikorsky helicopters were held in USA.
2. During last **NDA government (1999-2004)**, '**Defence Procurement Procedure 2002**' envisaged field evaluation trials '**abroad**'.

'**Defence Procurement Procedure, 2006**, applicable to Agusta Westland contract also envisaged trials to be conducted '**abroad**' in vendor's premises.

Even during the current Modi government, '**Defence Procurement Procedure, 2016**' envisages conduct of field evaluation trials '**abroad**' in vendor's premises.

It is, thus, clear that there is no bar to conduct field evaluation trials '**abroad**' either in the previous NDA government or the Congress government or the current Modi government.

How did Modi government protect Agusta Westland?

1. **Investigation by CBI/ED/Income Tax has not been concluded in two years of Modi government establishing laxity and an intent to help Agusta Westland surreptitiously.**

In fact, conclusion of CBI investigation appears to be nowhere close. This is clear from a recent **Parliament reply dated 04.03.2016** to Question No. 1359 given by Defence Minister, Shri Manohar Parrikar, wherein he has clearly admitted that, "Finalization of investigation by CBI is dependent upon execution report of the pending letter rogatory from eight different countries".

2. **Modi government undid the process of banning Agusta Westland within a short span of 48 days for completely unexplainable reasons.**

On 10.02.2014, UPA government initiated the process for banning/blacklisting Agusta Westland.

On 03.07.2014, process got completed and Modi government proceeded to ban Agusta Westland, its parent company Finmeccanica and other group companies.

Immediately thereafter, Modi government took opinion of Attorney General of India. **On 22.08.2014**, Modi government proceeded to **undo its own order** by permitting Finmeccanica/Agusta Westland and their group companies to participate in **defence contracts as (a) sub-**

contractor; and (b) supplier to the contracting party.

3. **Modi government has not blacklisted Agusta Westland or its group companies. Order dated 03.07.2014 only imposes a ban on Agusta Westland and group companies during the pendency of ongoing CBI investigation dated 25.02.2013.**

This is apparent from **Parliament reply dated 18.07.2014** to Question No. 1417 given by the then Minister for Defence, Shri Arun Jaitley.

What is important to note is that Parliament reply dated 18.07.2014 clearly establishes that neither is Agusta Westland or its group companies debarred nor have they been suspended indefinitely.

In fact, Defence Minister, Shri Manohar Parrikar admitted in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha that process of blacklisting Agusta Westland and its group companies would be now initiated by BJP government.

What the BJP government was doing for two years? Why has it not proceeded to blacklist Agusta Westland so far? These are the questions for which the BJP government does not have answers.

4. **BJP president, Shri Amit Shah described Agusta Westland a 'bogus company'. Modi government granted Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) approval on 08.10.2015 to the same company i.e Agusta Westland.**

What is the reason for granting FIPB approval for joint venture to a tainted company like Agusta Westland, which is under CBI scanner on charges of bribery? This fact has not been explained till today.

5. **Modi government has also permitted Agusta Westland to be part of 'Make in India' programme and participate in 'Aero India Exhibition'.**

Modi government needs to explain the reasons for its benevolence towards Agusta Westland and acting as its benefactor.

6. **Modi government did not cooperate and provide documents in the criminal court proceedings at Milan, Italy.**

This fact has been admitted by Defence Minister, Shri Manohar Parrikar on the floor of Rajya Sabha on 04.05.2016, when he stated that documents could not be given by Defence Ministry in the criminal court proceedings at Milan, Italy as the same were in custody of CBI and not of Ministry of Defence.

Does it mean that CBI and Ministry of Defence in Modi government were working at cross purposes or was someone in Modi government trying to protect Agusta Westland? ❖

AGUSTA WESTLAND DEAL: NO LIGHT, ONLY NOISE

On Agusta Westland, three questions for the Modi government.



Randeep Singh Surjewala

Much has been said on the subject of Agusta Westland. Unfortunately, very little has actually been heard. Armed only with loud rhetoric, the BJP government has sought to belie the nation of a crime that, at best, is one in which they are grossly complicit or at worst, has fabricated to divert attention.

But however ludicrous, it becomes imperative to place the facts before the people. Unlike the unquestioning bhakts that swell the ranks of the BJP, people must be allowed to draw

their own conclusions. To this end, we believe that three questions must be answered by the BJP government.

One, why was the work done by the UPA government in taking action against Agusta Westland disregarded? Proceedings against Agusta began in April, 2012. The UPA government turned over the investigation to the CBI (February, 2013), ED (July, 2012) and the income tax department (January, 2013) and even wrote to the prosecutor's office in Naples (July, 2012) to acquire evidence. As a result, Agusta's contract was cancelled on

January 1, 2014 by the ministry of defence. In fact, when the UPA moved for a joint parliamentary committee (of which the BJP would have been a part) to investigate the issue, the BJP opposed it, demanding instead that a Supreme Court-monitored investigation should take place.

Never mind the fact that the UPA in a move to ensure that the public exchequer was not compromised encashed the bank guarantees given by Agusta Westland and recovered Rs 2,068 crore plus three helicopters as against the original payment of Rs 1,586.66 crore, thereby eliminating any scope for financial loss to the government.

If all of the above was a meaningless or perfunctory exercise, the BJP must say as to why it undid the work done by the UPA and is now forced to clutch at straws by misquoting the judgment of an Italian court without even placing a certified copy thereof on the floor of Parliament. The BJP must also tell us why it did not supply the documents to the Italian court for nearly two years. Or will it hide behind the excuse given by Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar in the Rajya Sabha that the documents could not be supplied as they were with the

THE INITIAL EVIDENCE POINTS TO A CRIME HAVING BEEN COMMITTED. THAT IS WHY THE UPA REGISTERED A CORRUPTION CASE, ORDERED A CBI ENQUIRY, CANCELLED THE CONTRACT, BANNED THE COMPANY AND ENCASHED THE BANK GUARANTEES. HOWEVER, THE BJP IS SUGGESTING THAT THE UPA GOVERNMENT COVERED UP A CRIME TO PROTECT THE CONGRESS LEADERSHIP. THEY PROVIDE NO EVIDENCE OTHER THAN A RABID HATRED FOR THE LEADERS OF THE CONGRESS PARTY. IF THEY TRULY WISHED TO CATCH THE PERPETRATORS (AS DO WE), THEN SHOULD THEY NOT OPT FOR A TIME-BOUND CONCLUSION OF THE INVESTIGATION INSTEAD OF A TELEVISED BARRAGE OF CHARGES?

CAN THE BJP EXPLAIN WHAT APPEARS TO BE MEASURES TAKEN BY THEM TO PROTECT AGUSTA WESTLAND IN THEIR FIRST YEAR OF GOVERNANCE? THE PROCESS FOR THE BANNING OF AGUSTA WAS INITIATED BY THE UPA IN FEBRUARY, 2014 AND THE FINAL ORDER PASSED BY THEN DEFENCE MINISTER, A.K. ANTONY, ON MAY 12, 2014. STRANGELY, THE ORDER REMAINED PENDING ON FILE AND WAS BELATEDLY ISSUED ON JULY 3, 2014.

CBI and not defence ministry?

Two, can the BJP explain what appears to be measures taken by them to protect Agusta Westland in their first year of governance? The process for the banning of Agusta was initiated by the UPA in February, 2014 and the final order passed by then defence minister, A.K. Antony, on May 12, 2014. Strangely, the order remained pending on file and was belatedly issued on July 3, 2014.

Simultaneously, in July 2014 itself, the current attorney-general gave an opinion which effectively undid the banning process. Within 40 days, that is, on August 2, 2014; Agusta was allowed backdoor entry as a sub-contractor and vendor in all defence contracts despite the corruption charges and CBI enquiry. Subsequently, the Modi government allowed Agusta Westland to participate in the PM's flagship 'Make in India' programme and even granted FIPB approval to it for setting up joint venture in defence production. This hardly seems like the conduct of a government determined to bring the violators to book.

Three, do the standards put in place by the Vajpayee Government represent a dilution? In November 2003, the office of the then prime minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee proposed to limit the operational requirement of a flight

ceiling for helicopters at 4,500 metres (against a stated requirement that the ceiling should be at least 6,000 metres). The current government followed the same ceiling. The standards the UPA

WITH A PRIME MINISTER BENT ON DIMINISHING THE SACRED OFFICE HE HOLDS, IT BECOMES IMPERATIVE THAT HE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS. CLOSING IN ON THE SECOND LACKLUSTRE YEAR IN GOVERNMENT, THE BJP MUST TURN ITS GAZE TO SALVAGING ITS ABYSMAL RECORD. MODI MUST UNDERSTAND THAT ATTACKING THE PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION PARTY ON ISSUES THAT ARE EMBARRASSINGLY HOLLOW IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE. IT IS A SAD COMMENTARY THAT HE SIMPLY WON'T STOP CAMPAIGNING FOR AN ELECTION THAT CONCLUDED TWO YEARS AGO.

government followed had been put in place by a BJP government. This included the requirement of field trials being conducted abroad. When the author of both requirements is their own political predecessor, can they then rightfully suggest that a dilution has taken place? If a dilution did take place, the BJP must question its own leadership as to the grounds on which it was predicated.

The initial evidence points to a crime having been committed. That is why the UPA registered a corruption case,

ordered a CBI enquiry, cancelled the contract, banned the company and encashed the bank guarantees. However, the BJP is suggesting that the UPA government covered up a crime to protect the Congress leadership. They provide no evidence other than a rabid hatred for the leaders of the Congress party. If they truly wished to catch the perpetrators (as do we), then should they not opt for a time-bound conclusion of the investigation instead of a televised barrage of charges? The BJP has reduced Parliament to a theatre for grandstanding. There is no answer as to why the CBI and ED have not acted for two years under the current government.

With a prime minister bent on diminishing the sacred office he holds, it becomes imperative that he answer these questions. Closing in on the second lacklustre year in government, the BJP must turn its gaze to salvaging its abysmal record. Modi must understand that attacking the principal opposition party on issues that are embarrassingly hollow is no substitute for good governance. It is a sad commentary that he simply won't stop campaigning for an election that concluded two years ago. ❖

Courtesy: The Indian Express

THE NEW KG SCAM



Jairam Ramesh

To pretend to extract non-existent gas requires extraordinary skill and sleight. And to banish all of it into thin air later is even more masterful. This is what the KG scam is all about.

“Money and commerce are in my blood” was the proud proclamation made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Japanese investors during his visit to Japan in 2014. This is perhaps one of those rare occasions when he did not exaggerate or embellish. An exemplar of this unique trait of Mr. Modi’s is the “KG scam”. Gas is a vaporous substance, as we all know. To pretend to extract non-existent gas requires extraordinary skill and sleight. And to banish all of it into thin air later is even more masterful. This is what the KG scam is all about. It is a tribute to the Prime Minister’s dexterity that this Rs. 19,700 crore scam as estimated by five reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) over the past five-six years is still unknown to the nation.

Eleven years later

On June 26, 2005, Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi announced that Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation (GSPC), a State government public sector corporation, had discovered India’s biggest gas reserves in the deep waters of the Krishna Godavari (KG) river basin. He said the discovery was 20 trillion cubic feet worth Rs. 2,20,000 crore. It caught the entire nation by surprise. Officials in the Ministry of Petroleum were flummoxed by this bold claim. Mr. Modi further, in his characteristic flamboyance, promised the nation that GSPC would start production in December 2007 and make our nation energy independent. It is 2016 now, nearly 11 years since that grandiose announcement by Mr. Modi. There has been zero gas recovered yet from the KG basin. Yes, zero. Why? Because there is no gas there. GSPC spent Rs. 19,700 crore during

this period, ostensibly looking for the missing gas.

Of course, the exploration of natural resources such as oil and gas is always fraught with discovery uncertainties. Even the best global companies have gone searching for such resources and returned empty-handed. So, what is the purported fraud here? Yes, oil exploration is always an expensive and risky proposition. Yet, it is also the norm that when one realises that there is no or minimum oil or gas to be found, one either stops exploration immediately or reduces costs appropriately. But that is not what GSPC did, as the below sequence of events show.

For such an important and sophisticated exploration activity, GSPC’s technical partner was a two-person company called GeoGlobal Resources incorporated in Barbados, the land that is known more for Gary Sobers and now Carlos Brathwaite. Geo Global, in turn, entered into a partnership with Roy Group in Mauritius, the land that is more famous as a tax haven than as an oil exploration haven. This entire quest for gas in the KG river basin by GSPC smelt fishy from the beginning. Recall Mr. Modi’s tall promise in 2005 of gas being extracted and produced in 2007? Not in 2007, but in June 2009, this fishy joint venture entity did produce something a field development plan report for recovering gas from KG basin! So, a full four years after the announcement and two years after the expected production year, GSPC produced a report of few hundred pages that supposedly articulated how it planned to extract gas from the KG basin. But between the announcements of the discovery of the gas in 2005 to producing a plan document on how to extract that gas, GSPC had borrowed Rs. 4800 crore in loans from public sector banks and other financial institutions. Surely, it didn’t cost Rs. 4,800 crore to produce a report, so why was so much money borrowed even before a plan was finalised

to extract the supposed gas from the KG river basin?

The development plan in 2009 acknowledged that Mr. Modi's claims were lofty and cut its expectations of gas reserves by 90 per cent. More importantly, the development plan also admitted that this entire gas exploration operation is futile and should not be undertaken if the gas that is recovered cannot be sold above \$5.7mmbtu. At that time, the approved selling price of gas was only \$4.2mmbtu. Hence, this whole operation was unviable and a waste to begin with. This should have been abandoned right then. Yet, the-then Modi government in Gujarat, as explained below, constructed an elaborate plan to borrow money to be handed out as contracts to various dubious entities under the auspices of GSPC.

Non-existent gas

This joint venture entity decided to procure platform rigs to fish for non-existent gas in the KG basin. It awarded this critical contract for platform rigs to a company called Tuff Drilling that had zero experience in providing drilling rigs. In fact, Tuff Drilling was set up only in 2007, much after that bombastic claim of India's largest gas discovery by Mr. Modi. Up to March 2015, more than Rs. 5,000 crore had been spent in expenses to Tuff Drilling and other such entities. A total of Rs. 19,700 crore has been spent by GSPC on KG basin gas exploration activity over the past decade and no gas has been found. What's worse is even if gas had been found, it would have incurred huge losses to the company since its selling price was lower than its costs. Surely, the self-proclaimed messiah with an astute sense of commerce knew that it made no business sense to carry out an operation where the selling price is lower than cost price? Now, where did GSPC get all its money from?

GSPC, which was incorporated in 1979, did not have any loans on its books as on March 31, 2007. Between 2008 and 2015, it had borrowed a staggering Rs. 19,720 crore in loans from 13 public sector banks together. This money was evidently used to farm out contracts to dubious entities whose motives are entirely questionable. It is then a little 'rich' for the Prime Minister now to wax eloquent about bad loans and industrialists who milk nationalised banks. It is no surprise that our PSU banks are facing the loans crisis that they are now, with borrowers such as GSPC that borrowed money for no apparent business purposes.

The KG scam is a depressing story of how a State PSU

was used to whip up fake claims of gas discovery and then be used as a platform not to extract gas but money, by handing out contracts to related entities in the garb of gas exploration. In the 2015 audit report of GSPC, the CAG lambasts the company for indulging in futile and unviable business activities with reckless borrowing. This and other misdemeanours of GSPC have been repeatedly highlighted by CAG reports over the past several years. Not a word has been heard in the media about the shady functioning of the GSPC over the years. This is not some politically motivated charge. Every piece of information in this article has been pieced together through careful analysis of various publicly available documents such as the GSPC's Initial Public Offering prospectus filed with Securities and Exchange Board of India in 2010, various CAG reports of course, filings of GeoGlobal Resources with the Securities and Exchange Commission in the United States, records of Ministry of Corporate Affairs, and so on.

This scam, and there is no other word to describe it, is a matter fit for an inquiry by a sitting Supreme Court judge.

Part II

In 2005, two different business groups forayed into new ventures. One into commercial aviation, the other into gas exploration. Both announced their entry in a grandiose

THE KG SCAM IS A DEPRESSING STORY OF HOW A STATE PSU WAS USED TO WHIP UP FAKE CLAIMS OF GAS DISCOVERY AND THEN BE USED AS A PLATFORM NOT TO EXTRACT GAS BUT MONEY, BY HANDING OUT CONTRACTS TO RELATED ENTITIES IN THE GARB OF GAS EXPLORATION. IN THE 2015 AUDIT REPORT OF GSPC, THE CAG LAMBASTS THE COMPANY FOR INDULGING IN FUTILE AND UNVAILABLE BUSINESS ACTIVITIES WITH RECKLESS BORROWING

manner – one with India's largest order of Airbus fleet, the other with India's largest discovery of gas reserves. They had both borrowed Rs.6,300 crore each in five years since their launch. Both business bets went awry. The airline shut down after raking up dues of over Rs.9,000 crore to banks. The energy business is still functioning, with dues of Rs.19,700 crore. The airline is Kingfisher Airlines and the energy business is Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation (GSPC) and its foray into the Krishna-Godavari (KG) basin. Kingfisher Airlines and its promoter Vijay Mallya

are rightfully scorned at, deservedly stripped of their assets and reputation and justifiably vilified. Shouldn't GSPC be subject to similar scrutiny?

I had outlined the contours of a massive fraud in the disguise of a business bet. Let's be clear businesses can take risks and can fail. Certainly, public sector businesses fail more often. But the GSPC saga is not a mere case of a business bet turning sour. To recap, in June 2005, then Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi made a grandiose more grandiose even by his standards of bombast statement of India's largest gas discovery in the KG basin made by

have been coming down sharply, how was GSPC allowed to borrow so much money every single year? Where did this money come from? And what was it used for?

A bewildering balance sheet

A consortium of nearly 15 PSU banks lent about Rs.20,000 crore to GSPC over the past 15 years. These banks include the State Bank of India, Vijaya Bank, Union Bank of India, Bank of India and so on. According to the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report of 2015, the interest costs on these loans alone are Rs.1,800 crore per year. However, GSPC's net income before interest in 2015 was only Rs.80

crore. Which means it does not have enough money to pay the interest on its borrowings. So, technically, isn't GSPC insolvent? Should it not be declared as a defaulter by these banks? A current Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) served as a director on the board of GSPC between 2006 and 2013 and even chaired its audit committee which typically approves such borrowings. Perhaps the RBI can ask these banks what the status of these loans to GSPC are, similar to how it has questioned other loans to other companies.

If there was no gas to be found, then what was all this borrowed money used for? Typically when businesses borrow for new projects or expansion, they tend to hire more workers, build more factories etc. However, GSPC's

wage bill was constant in this time period, indicating that the company did not hire more employees. However, a category called "Other expenses" saw a jump from Rs.16 crore in 2006 to Rs.500 crore in 2013. What these "other expenses" entailed is perhaps best left to one's imagination.

GSPC's loans and advances to its subsidiary companies ballooned from Rs.18 crore in 2005 to Rs.2,000 crore in 2015. It has various subsidiaries including joint ventures with the Adani Group. It also spent nearly Rs.2,000 crores in buying equipments and fixed assets such as oil rigs. One such vendor that was contracted to supply oil rigs to GSPC was a company, called Tuff Drilling. Drilling in the KG basin has proved extraordinarily tough but this delightfully named company has sailed easily. Tuff Drilling was only incorporated in 2006 after Mr. Modi's boast. By all accounts, its promoter had an apparel business. It received an order in 2010 from GSPC worth several hundred crores of rupees to supply sophisticated deep water platform rigs

A CONSORTIUM OF NEARLY 15 PSU BANKS LENT ABOUT RS.20,000 CRORE TO GSPC OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS. THESE BANKS INCLUDE THE STATE BANK OF INDIA, VIJAYA BANK, UNION BANK OF INDIA, BANK OF INDIA AND SO ON. ACCORDING TO THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL (CAG) REPORT OF 2015, THE INTEREST COSTS ON THESE LOANS ALONE ARE RS.1,800 CRORE PER YEAR. HOWEVER, GSPC'S NET INCOME BEFORE INTEREST IN 2015 WAS ONLY RS.80 CRORE. WHICH MEANS IT DOES NOT HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO PAY THE INTEREST ON ITS BORROWINGS. SO, TECHNICALLY, ISN'T GSPC INSOLVENT? SHOULD IT NOT BE DECLARED AS A DEFAULTER BY THESE BANKS?

GSPC. By 2010, GSPC admitted that there was no or very little gas in the KG basin. It would have been prudent then for any business, even a public sector undertaking (PSU), to cut down on its investments and recoup any losses. Instead, GSPC went on a massive borrowing spree, despite its admission that there was no gas to be found in the KG basin.

The bars in the chart show annual gas reserves of GSPC from 2005 to 2015, as estimated by the globally renowned reservoir appraiser, Gaffney, Cline & Associates, and disclosed in GSPC's annual reports. Notice how since 2005, the estimated reserves have been decreasing rapidly every year. The dotted line on the same chart shows GSPC's loans from banks and financial institutions, for its gas exploration activities. See how that line has increased from zero to nearly Rs.20,000 crore in this time period. When the company's own estimates of its gas reserves in KG basin

GSPC'S LOANS AND ADVANCES TO ITS SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES BALLOONED FROM RS.18 CRORE IN 2005 TO RS.2,000 CRORE IN 2015. IT HAS VARIOUS SUBSIDIARIES INCLUDING JOINT VENTURES WITH THE ADANI GROUP. IT ALSO SPENT NEARLY RS.2,000 CRORES IN BUYING EQUIPMENTS AND FIXED ASSETS SUCH AS OIL RIGS. ONE SUCH VENDOR THAT WAS CONTRACTED TO SUPPLY OIL RIGS TO GSPC WAS A COMPANY, CALLED TUFF DRILLING

for gas extraction in the KG basin. Recall, this was after the realisation that there was no or very little gas to explore in the KG basin. Tuff Drilling's promoter is also alleged to have been an active supporter of the Vibrant Gujarat investment summits. Suffice to say that Tuff Drilling could not handle the transition from garments to gas and is now bankrupt.

All of this information has been put together through forensic analysis from various sources of financial reports of the company, CAG and documents filed with various regulators in India and abroad. It is abundantly evident that the squandering of Rs.20,000 crore of loans from banks is not a simple case of a business bet going awry. Neither is this political vendetta.

Apologists for GSPC can couch this misadventure in technical terms of the complexity of the exploration business or cite examples of other PSUs or private companies that have similarly failed in these energy quests. That is not the point here. That there is a damning CAG report of GSPC malfunctioning is a fact. That GSPC borrowed recklessly from PSU banks is indisputable. That the KG basin gas exploration mission was a mere alibi for such borrowing is blatantly obvious from this analysis. That there are big names involved is well known. Key officials have got lucrative post-GSPC posts. Then isn't the right next step a deeper, independent judicial inquiry into the sordid politically-masterminded GSPC KG basin saga? ❖

The author is a Rajya Sabha MP & Member-Editorial Board

Courtesy : The Hindu

NIRANKARI HEAD BABA HARDEV SINGH KILLED IN CAR ACCIDENT IN CANADA

New Delhi : Baba Hardev Singh, spiritual head of Sant Nirankari Mission, died in a road accident in Montreal, in Canada on 13th May, 2016. He was 62. Baba Hardev Singh, son of assassinated Nirankari head Gurbachan Singh was in Canada to attend spiritual meetings.



Hardev Singh was born to Nirankari Head Gurbachan Singh and Kulwant Kaur on February 23, 1954 in Delhi. After his early schooling at Rosary Public School, Sant Nirankari Colony, Delhi, he joined Yadavindra Public School, Patiala, a boarding school, in 1963. On completion of his schooling, he studied in Delhi University. In 1971, he joined the Nirankari Sewa Dal as its primary member.

After the assassination of his father Gurbachan Singh, who was then head of the Sant Nirankari Mission in 1980, Hardev Singh succeeded as the 'Satguru' of the organisation.



In a message by the **Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi** expressed shock and grief over the passing away of Baba Nirankari Hardev Singh Ji, the Head of Nirankari Samaj in a road accident. Extending her condolences to all his followers, Smt. Gandhi said that the spiritual values of equality and simplicity perpetuated by him and the Nirankari Samaj will forever remain relevant.



In a separate message **Congress Vice President Shri Rahul Gandhi** said: "Sad to learn of the untimely demise of Nirankari Baba Hardev Singhji. My heartfelt condolences to the Nirankari mission and all his followers". ❖

Courtesy to Lokmat

The Congress Sandesh April, 2016 issue carried out photos of Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi and Congress Vice-President, Shri Rahul Gandhi on their visit to Nagpur. Inadvertently, the courtesy line to 'Lokmat' was forgotten. We deeply regret this error as photos were made available by 'Lokmat'.

Editor

GSHEC BILL 2016: A DISASTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION



Dr Aditya Narain Misra

In case of Gujarat, there is a huge mismatch between social and economic indicators of development. This becomes clear with analyzing the dismal performance in educational sector in the state, which emanates from regimental approach of RSS towards teaching-learning. Gujarat did not figure in top six states in terms of number of colleges as per MHRD's All India Survey on Higher Education (2013). The same survey shows that Gujarat's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and Gender Parity Index in Higher Education are lower than the national average. This picture will become gloomier with Gujarat State Higher Education Council (GSHEC) Bill 2016, which is staple recipe for the government's total control over state universities and gradual privatization making accessibility to quality education difficult. It is an attempt by the BJP government to 'snatch' autonomy of universities and give 'absolute power' to the state. Our founding fathers were quite aware of the inherent danger of the government's control of the universities for the students as well as the society and such moves witnessed stiff resistance from the days of Lord Curzon. When GSHEC bill like proposal was moved by

THE UNIVERSITIES BILL IF ENACTED WILL HAVE THE EFFECT OF RESTRUCTURING THE AREA OF EDUCATION AND COMPLETELY DESTROYING THE AUTONOMY OF THE UNIVERSITIES UPON WHICH LARGELY DEPEND THEIR EFFICIENCY AND USEFULNESS FOR TURNING THEM PRACTICALLY INTO DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT

Lord Curzon, Gokhale and Malviya were the moving spirit behind this Congress resolution (1903): "The Universities Bill if enacted will have the effect of restructuring the area of education and **completely destroying the independence of the Universities upon which largely depend on their efficiency and usefulness and turning them practically into department of government.**"

This bill was passed on the last day of the budget session of the state legislature without any proper debate and discussion in the absence of the main opposition Congress party. A letter of appeal for turning down this bill was submitted to the Governor Sh O P Kohli citing the precedence of Sh Nawal Kishore Sharma the then governor turning down a similar ordinance brought in 2004 by the Modi government. It was pointed out that overcentralisation through the bill

would adversely affect the quality of education as it gives sweeping powers to the government over all affairs of the state universities.

The bill has mainly the following provisions:

- a) The Gujarat Chief Minister would be the ex-officio president of the council, while the cabinet minister for education would be appointed as the vice-president, and the minister of state for education as the co-vice president
- b) In total, there will be 15 ex-officio members in the Council, including the CM and the two ministers. Other members include secretaries of Education, Finance, Industries and Labour department, among others. With representation of five VCs only, academician will have very miniscule say in decision-making.

THE BILL DEMOLISHES THE VERY IDEA FOR WHICH SUCH UNIVERSITIES STAND FOR. THE BILL IS A BIG BLOW ON THE AUTONOMY OF THE UNIVERSITIES IN THE GUJARAT STATE SO THAT THE PARTY AGENDA OF SAFFRONISATION CAN BE ACHIEVED EASILY. THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT ONLY TRYING TO CONTROL THE STRUCTURE, BUT THE CONTENT TOO.

c) One of the key functions of the council would be “to carry out effective monitoring of academic/administrative/financial performance of Universities and affiliated colleges and to recommend remedial measures for better performance”

d) The council will also have some sweeping powers to regulate higher education in the state. As per section 15 of the bill, the government can ask the universities to implement reforms suggested by the council

e) Further, “it shall be obligatory on the part of the university to implement the directions given by the state government and report the action taken to state government and the Council accordingly”

f) The council would also act as a watch dog to monitor illegal and unauthorised education institutes imparting fake degrees. It will also make recommendations with regard to funding to universities, scholarship criteria, development of curriculum and courses, etc.

g) The Bill also empowers the Council “to suggest criteria, rules regarding various promotions, for college teachers, principals, university teachers in accordance with the regulations and guidelines of the UGC, or the state government policy;”

The bill demolishes the very idea for which such universities stand for. The

bill is a big blow on the autonomy of the universities in the Gujarat state so that the party agenda of saffronisation can be achieved easily. The government is not only trying to control the structure, but the content too. The state government has recently sent a circular to the state universities directing to

THIS CONTROL-FREAK ATMOSPHERICS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IS VERY MUCH ANTI-THESIS TO THE VISION OF OUR FOUNDING FATHERS ABOUT THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION PRODUCING CRITICAL INTELLECTUAL MASS IN THE SOCIETY WITHOUT BEING DICTATED BY ANY IDEOLOGICAL STRAND.

conduct Ph D studies on 82 topics listed therein. They are also trying to doctor the text-books of different subjects. In Gujarat, a school text book on economic thinkers, Gandhiji was included with disclaimer, while Deen Dayal Upadhyay was found inspirational for economic thoughts. Rajasthan Government went a step ahead and erased the name of Nehru as first Prime Minister in the History text book of class VIII. In the same book, there is no mention of murder of Gandhi by Godse. Beside poor readings, the accessibility to schools has become tough as thousands of the government schools were closed

down after the Rajasthan government introduced PPP model. The control syndrome seems to be running from top to bottom in BJP and Smriti Irani-led MHRD has been showing over enthusiasm in imposing ‘Gujarat model’ all over the country. A letter from MHRD dated 3rd March 2016 tries to reduce the status of statutory bodies like Academic Council (AC) and Executive Council (EC) to a rubber stamp. The letter directs the central universities to submit the agenda of EC to the ministry at least two weeks before the meeting. It also provides for participation of UGC officers in meetings of the statutory bodies. The membership of the statutory bodies is the matter

of the concerned university acts and statutes. After taking away the right to frame the syllabuses from AC & EC under CBCS, there is now attempt to regulate the proceedings of the statutory bodies from above. **This control-freak atmospherics of higher education is very much anti-thesis to the vision of our founding fathers about the institutions of higher education producing critical intellectual mass in the society without being dictated by any ideological strand.** ❖

(The writer is former President of DUTA & FEDCUTA.)

PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU DEMOCRAT PAR EXCELLENCE

“A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance.”

Jawaharlal Nehru



M Veerappa Moily

The edifice of the modern India stands on the foundations laid by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Jawaharlal Nehru was known as second-in-command in the country’s freedom struggle and the architect of post-independence India. His contributions during the freedom struggle and as the first Prime Minister of India are manifold and worth recalling. It was Pandit ji who put India’s freedom struggle in the international context. Nehru was responsible for the socialistic concept in our Constitution.

Nehru’s nationalism was not one of the mindless patriotism. He was able to reach a common ground between an erudite internationalism and a very keen understanding of the Indian environment. Nehru’s nationalism was marked by a fiery pride in the heritage of the country. But he was also willing to temper this pride with his readings and rationalist views that he received from his education abroad.

“It is science alone that can solve the problems of hunger and poverty, of insanitation and illiteracy, of superstitions and deadening custom and tradition, of vast resources running to waste, or a rich country inhabited by starving people... Who indeed could afford to ignore science today? At every turn, we have to seek its aid... The future belongs to science and those who make friends with science.”

~ Jawaharlal Nehru

It was Nehru who started various institutes of science and technology in India. Nehru was the product of modern India, which was a creation of Indian renaissance following the religious reformist movements of the 1920s like Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj and Theosophical society. It was Nehru who evolved free India’s foreign policy. Nehru

was an icon of peace and had the confidence in the U.N.O. That is why he took the issue of Kashmir before the U.N.O. It was his vision and forethought that ushered in the Green Revolution. Irrigation projects and power projects like Bhakra Nangal, Damodar Valley, Nagarjunasagar and Srisailem were taken up and completed, the target, food for all, were achieved.

Democracy and civil liberties were absolute values, ends in themselves, and not merely a means for bringing about economic and social development was in Nehru’s views. There was in him what his biographer S. Gopal has called “a granite core of intellectual and moral commitment to democratic values”. “I would not,” Nehru said, “give up the democratic system for anything.”

In Nehru’s understanding, democracy was necessary for keeping India united as a nation. Given its diversity, and differences, it could only be held together by a non-violent, democratic way of life, and not by force or coercion. Only a democratic structure which gave space to various cultural, political, and socio-economic trends to express themselves could hold India together. “This is too large a country with too many legitimate diversities to permit any so-called ‘strong man’ to trample over people and their ideas.”

Pandit Nehru treated Parliament with great respect and he was often seen sitting patiently throughout long debates. Nehru set an example to his colleagues and young parliamentarians through his regular participation in the parliamentary process. He spoke frequently in Parliament, and used it as a forum to reach his ideas and views to the people of the country. Despite the majority enjoyed by the Congress party, Nehru ensured that Parliament reflected the will of the entire people.

Nehru was a firm believer in freedom of thought and expression, and particularly freedom of the press. He believed that even the demands of public safety should not normally encroach on these freedoms. During the days of the freedom struggle, he had founded the Civil Liberties Union. It was he who took up and popularised the demand for a Constituent Assembly to draft India's Constitution since 1935-36.

The concept of Planning that Nehru envisaged as early as the 1930s, found concrete shape in the setting up of the Planning Commission in March, 1950. In economic planning, Nehru was the architect of modern India. Nehru's economic planning was based on the idea of Democratic Socialism., in his own words- "I must frankly confess that I am a socialist and a Republican". He combined socialist philosophy with democratic value. Removal of poverty; reduction of inequalities of income and wealth; provision of equal opportunities to all; social gain in place of private properties etc. were some of the features of socialistic pattern of society which Nehru wanted to implement in his planning. He envisaged was a welfare state based on people's consent, bereft of dogma and violence, and strongly grounded in ethical values. Nehru believed that democracy and socialism are one and indivisible, there cannot be a true democracy without a true socialism, and there cannot be a true socialism without a true democracy. The two come together in equality, social justice, fair share for all and an irreversible shift in the balance of wealth and power to workers and their families.

His thoughts on planning, community development, decentralisation, employment, public health, family planning, secularism, and equal opportunities collectively bring out the "egalitarian India". He wanted to eradicate poverty and industrialize the country to improve the living conditions of the people in India. Nehru wanted to raise the standard of the people. He also wanted to see the growth of national income. He 'also aimed at the growth of science and technology which will modernize India.

He launched a policy of planned economic development with emphasis on heavy industries and multi-purpose projects. His tenure saw the establishment of a string of major industries, dams and steel plants in the country. He secured funds from both the West and the Soviet Union in his efforts at industrialisation. India's transition to a modern industrial country was based on the foundations that Nehru built and which he called 'the temples of modern India'. Nehru is also seen as the father of public sector in India. Some of these came to be known as the prestigious 'navratna' companies. He viewed

believed that it was the public sector which would help for capitalist development of the country. His aim of increasing national income was fulfilled due through his planning process.

Nehru emphasized on free and fair elections where the suffrage for the citizens is a must His ideology throws light on the institutional reforms that should be put forward for realizing this ideology. This meant converting the capitalistic mode of production into a better order by replacing it through a series of legislations.

Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated within six months of independence in the cruel hands of an assassin who did not want a secular democratic India. Sardar Patel, who had stood firmly by Nehru's side in steering the republican Constitution to its agenda of many winding paths, and had unhesitatingly tracked down on the forces responsible for the Mahatma's assassination banning the RSS and sending 25,000 RSS workers were sent to jail.

Pandit Nehru was a true fighter against communalism. He diagnosed the real implications of the communal problem at an early stage and wrote about it in vivid words in his famous works, Glimpses of World History, An Autobiography, and Discovery of India, and also sent a strong voice against communalism through his speeches. He wrote that fundamentally and inevitably the British policy since the Rising of 1857 has been one of preventing the Hindus and Muslims from acting together. He argued that one of the important reasons for communal tension between the two communities was economic disparity. He asserted that the communal organisations exploited the name of religion, that while bravely talking of culture, they did nothing for culture, and that though claiming to be non-political, they functioned politically. He emphasised that the communal leaders knew little about economic issues facing the masses and, avoiding the real issues which may affect their own interests, they diverted people's attention to unreal and trivial matters. They thus, he added, strengthened the forces of reaction and of British imperialism.

Eminent historian Irfan Habit once quoted "people whose ideological ancestors had no role in the national movement are trying to negate the role and contribution of the first Prime Minister of India".

"Today national movement is not only forgotten, but violently misrepresented... particularly the legacy of Nehru... by those people whose ideological ancestors go back to persons... having no role in national movement," the 84- year-old scholar said in his keynote address at a national conference here ahead of the 125th birth anniversary of Nehru. ❖

THE LEGACY OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU WILL ENDURE THE RAVAGES OF TIME FOREVER



Dr Richa Raj

In the backdrop of reports streaming in of how the name of the architect of Modern India and her first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, has been missing from the chapter on the country's freedom struggle in the new class VIII social science textbook of the Rajasthan government prepared under the aegis of Prof. K S Gupta, the 'chief patron' of the Chittor wing of the Akhil Bharatiya Itihas Sankalan Yojana, an RSS project on history¹, it becomes pertinent to question the attempts made by communal forces to sideline the legacy of Nehru by making him a social and political outcast. The reasons why that would prove lethal in the complex socio-political fabric of a pluralistic country like India are plenty and can be unearthed by revisiting Nehru's idealistic vision of what constituted India.

Occupying a unique position in the history of India as a freedom fighter, writer, thinker and statesman of eminence, Nehru virtually built the foundation of Modern India. As the first Prime Minister of India, he laid down the basic features of Indian society and polity. According to Sudarshan Agarwal, Secretary-General, Rajya Sabha, 1981-93, in *Jawaharlal Nehru and the Rajya Sabha*, 'A democrat by temperament and training, Nehru endeavoured to nurture parliamentary institutions in this country. He wanted that people must have their full say in the governance of the country. He wished to involve them in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes aimed at alleviating poverty and ensuring social and economic justice to all irrespective of caste, creed, colour, sex or status. He held Parliament in high esteem because in his view it was through Parliament "alone that people's will could be truly reflected. Not only that; he tried to build a system whose four main pillars were Socialism, Secularism, Democracy

and Panchayati Raj - a system capable of ensuring justice and equality to all and carrying the message of democracy to grass-root levels.'²

In a lecture delivered at the University of London on 12 November 1970, Vengalil K. Krishna Menon recalled how Nehru tried to mould the national movement of India into a socialist instrument. The attempt was worthwhile because there is no future for India except in a society which is socially developed, because you cannot have millions and millions of people without the means of survival, without opportunity.³ Beating poverty, for Nehru, was possible only when there was the implementation of distributive justice. That is why, asserted V.K. Menon, we find Nehru not in 1947 or 1949, but in much earlier years, seeking a method for the development of the national movement where the base of it was the people and the people were mobilised to support it.

By people, Nehru meant individuals regardless of their religion, caste and gender. It is through this concept of people comprising a nation that we find Nehru's ideas of nationalism constantly challenging the ideas put forth by the communal forces in both pre and post-independence, that of India being



BY PEOPLE, NEHRU MEANT INDIVIDUALS REGARDLESS OF THEIR RELIGION, CASTE AND GENDER. IT IS THROUGH THIS CONCEPT OF PEOPLE COMPRISING A NATION THAT WE FIND NEHRU'S IDEAS OF NATIONALISM CONSTANTLY CHALLENGING THE IDEAS PUT FORTH BY THE COMMUNAL FORCES IN BOTH PRE AND POST-INDEPENDENCE, THAT OF INDIA BEING A NATION BASED ON RELIGION, THAT INDIAN CULTURE DOMINATED BY HINDU RELIGION CIRCUMSCRIBED A NATION AND THEREFORE DEFINED INDIAN NATIONALISM.

a nation based on religion, that Indian culture dominated by Hindu religion circumscribed a nation and therefore defined Indian Nationalism.

This aspect of Nehru's thought acquires prominent significance in the current political scenario where attempts have been made increasingly to undermine the pluralistic character of the nation. Secularism, defined by Mahatma Gandhi's insistence that the multiple faiths of India can and must co-exist peaceably in a free nation, a belief shared by his most prominent follower, Nehru, underlay the very foundations of free India. The Indian national movement refused to define itself in religious terms. Nehru defined a 'secular state' thus:

'In a country like India, which has many faiths and religions, no real nationalism can be built up except on the basis of secularity. Any narrower approach must exclude a section of the population and then nationalism itself will have a much more restricted meaning than it should possess ... We have not only to live upto the ideals proclaimed in our Constitution, but make them a part of our thinking and living and thus build up a really integrated nation. That ... does not mean absence of religion, but putting religion on a different plane from that of normal political and social life. Any other approach in India would mean the breaking up of India.'⁴

Jawaharlal Nehru saw communalism of all hues as a divisive force that posed a great danger to the unity of independent India and a betrayal to the cause of India's freedom. In his introduction to *The Discovery of India*, Sunil Khilnani observes, 'Nehru resisted the argument in which nationalist intellectuals in India and elsewhere commonly indulged: the rebuttal of colonial views through evocations of mystical commonalities among Indians, and assertions of age-old ties to land and place. Nehru never proposed anything like, say, V.D. Savarkar's views of a Hindu race joined by blood kinship.' He told the All India Congress Committee in July 1951, 'Let us be clear about it without a shadow of doubt in any Congressman's mind, we stand till death for a secular state.'⁵

Nehru carried forward the secular ethos by rejecting an exclusivist approach and to safeguard this he was willing to dismantle the idea of a single national identity through a minoritarian perspective. In one of his letters, he warned against an insidious form of nationalism that makes the majority think of itself as the entire nation and in its attempt to absorb the minority actually separates them. He highlighted the need for the psychological integration of our people and said it was the obligation of the majority to safeguard the interests of minorities.⁶

During the late 1930s and 1940s, Nehru had begun to discern the close resemblance of communalism to contemporary fascism particularly in the application of same methods and

FROM 1947 ON, NEHRU BEGAN TO DESCRIBE THE RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH WITH ITS HINDU MAJORITARIAN EXCLUSIVIST APPROACH AS A FASCIST ORGANIZATION. EMINENT HISTORIAN ADITYA MUKHERJEE EXPLAINS, 'IT WAS A THREAT TO THE VERY 'IDEA OF INDIA' AS A SECULAR COUNTRY AND NEHRU WAS NOT ABOUT TO LET IT SUCCEED. WITH THE FULL SUPPORT OF HIS HOME MINISTER AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER SARDAR PATEL, HE BANNED THE RSS AND PUT 25,000 OF ITS ACTIVISTS IN JAIL

techniques of hatred and violence through the use of blatant lies and similar organisational structure and style of leadership. He said in 1939, 'Definitely fascist ideas are spreading not only in the Muslim League but also in the Hindu Mahasabha'. Referring to the Muslim League and Jinnah, he wrote in October 1940 that theirs was 'a negative programme of hatred and violence reminiscent of Nazi methods'. For Nehru, Muslim communalism was in its nature as bad as Hindu communalism, 'But Muslim communalism cannot dominate Indian society and introduce fascism. That only Hindu communalism can.'⁷ This old warning of Nehru's sounds particularly appropriate today when attempts are being made to convert India into a Hindu Rashtra. His insistence on secularism presented serious challenges to the competing claims to nationalism made by communal forces which further renders an explanation to the deliberate attempts to derecognize him by certain sections of the society today.

From 1947 on, Nehru began to describe the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh with its Hindu majoritarian exclusivist approach as a fascist organization. Eminent historian Aditya Mukherjee explains, 'It was a threat to the very 'idea of India' as a secular country and Nehru was not about to let it succeed. With the full support of his Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Patel, he banned the RSS and put 25,000 of its activists in jail. Even when the ban on the RSS was removed in July 1949, after it gave written assurances that henceforth it would function only as a cultural organisation and have nothing to do with politics, he warned the Chief Ministers of the fascist nature of the RSS and the threat of their renewing their activities.'⁸ (Jawaharlal Nehru: Letters to Chief Ministers, July 20, 1949 and August 1, 1949, vol. 1, pp. 412-13, 428)

Jawaharlal Nehru was a statesman of the tallest order and this is evident from his thoughts on international relations. V.K. Menon recalled how Nehru envisioned a world order based on

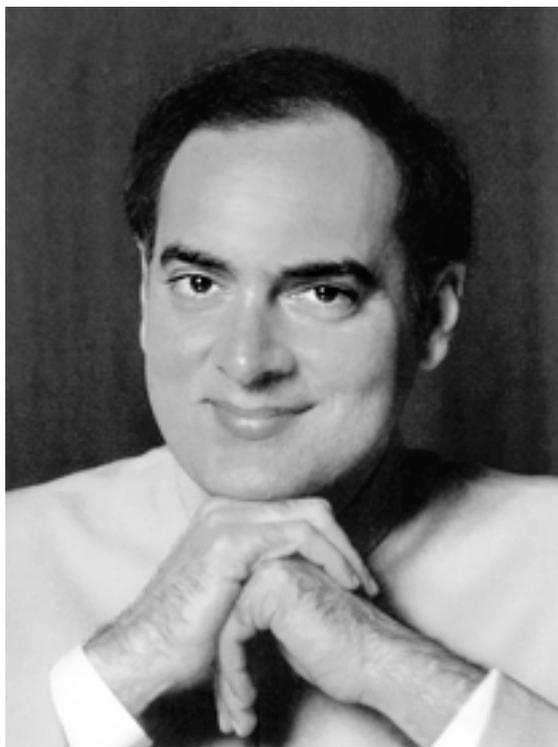
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RAJIV GANDHI: THE BUILDER OF THE 21ST CENTURY INDIA



Dr Priyam Barooah

India is an old country, but a young nation; and like the young everywhere we are impatient. I am young, and I too have a dream. I dream of an India strong, independent and self-reliant and in the front rank of the nations of the world in the service of mankind.' True, he had a dream and he worked hard to live upto his dream. Rajiv Gandhi, India's youngest Prime Minister, till date (1984-1991) in a short span of seven years, left an indelible mark of achievement, development and a constructive roadmap for an emerging nation to deliver in the 21st Century, with a strong foundational plinth. **Inarguably, 'the Rajiv era' can be regarded as the most distinguished period of initiating sets of break through reforms involving, India's modernization, economic liberalization, inclusive growth, democratic decentralization, co-operative federalism, technological advancement, resource-based agricultural growth; economic reform and the concept of India as an emerging and independently great power.** The young PM built institutions with utmost care and extreme sagacity.



He conceived India as a global power, an experience we are witnessed to in the 21st century world. Shri Gandhi initiated substantial changes in the economic policy framework. The first step towards liberalization of the economy in India, was taken up by Rajiv Gandhi and balanced the fast change with unparalleled stability. After he became the Prime Minister, a number of restrictions on various sectors were eased, control on pricing was removed, and stress was given on increased growth rate and so on. The new reforms led to easier international trade and investment, privatization, deregulation, inflation-controlling measures and tax reforms. Liberalization has been

the same irrespective of which party headed the government. Beginning in the 80s, the government led by Rajiv Gandhi started well-calculated light reforms. These reforms were to set the firm foundations for future economic reforms. The government slightly reduced Licence Raj and also promoted the growth of the telecommunications and software industries. His policies of de-licensing and reform of major industries resulted in better capacity utilization, capital cost cutting, maximum of capital utilization. He was apt in calculating dividends in pushing the Indian economy on a higher growth path. The early 1990s would prove his foresight to be true.

Rajiv Gandhi, a visionary of modern India, had no patience for empty and populist rhetoric. He was committed to infuse efficiency and competitiveness in the stagnating public sector. reversing the trend of expanding public sector could have won him ownership and state intervention in economic activity and strongly supported the expanding role of private business including its takeover of non-performing public sector enterprises.

Rajiv Gandhi saw rapid economic growth as a principal instrument of ensuring dignified place for india as a Global power. Still his concept of growth was not bereft of distributive justice. He aimed and worked to make fruits of high growth rate as inclusive as possible. He saw clearly that rapid economic growth that generated much needed employment was the only real means to uplift the people while at the same time keeping intact their self-dignity and building the economy's productive capacity.

Gandhi travelled the length and breadth of the land, learnt and



matured from the crucible, that is, India. He had the remarkable faculty to go from local realities back to his larger framework and ideals and back again. He was open and took along individuals with contrarian ideas. During his tenure as Prime Minister of India, he infused a dynamism and new spirit into the premiership.

He is credited with promoting the introduction of computers in India. He had the vision and foresight to see that information technology will play a key role in the 21 century and worked actively to develop India's capacity in this realm. In his words 'India having missed industrial revolution cannot afford to miss the 'Computer revolution'. Undoubtedly, the seeds of revolution in Information technology were sown during his tenure. Today we are reaping the fruits of this revolution in the form of economic growth, rising international profile, improved governance, efficient delivery of public services and many more.

Rajiv Gandhi's scientific temper is attested to by the fact that there was increased governmental support for science and technology and associated industries, and reduced import quotas, taxes and tariffs on technology- based industries, especially computers, airlines, defence and telecommunications. In his scientific temper he stands as a true carrier of Nehruvian legacy.

In 1986, Rajiv Gandhi announced a national education policy to modernize and expand higher education programs across India. A right value system must be built into our education system.

He had a vision to see the developments in larger perspective while not being oblivious of the locally - felt needs, aspirations and the realities. For this he wanted plans to be flexible and attuned to the time, context and requirements.

As an astute administrator, he sought to address modern 'divides'. The divides such as rural- urban, digital divide, regional disparities that tends to obfuscate the growth with distributive

Fully dedicated to strengthening this secular tradition of India Rajiv Gandhi strongly suggested that we must be very clear that religion and politics are separated and there must be a very clear definition of the difference between spirituality of the religion and its rituals and dogmas. Further, there should be a clear understanding of secularism that it is not anti- religion or non- religion; it is just the separation of government from religion.

justice.

For him the most important ingredient of a nation- building process is rural development. This entails eradication of poverty among the farmers. According to him, as long as farmers remain poor, the nation cannot grow and be self-reliant. Rural poverty- alleviation was not just his administrative priority but a personal dream. If farmers become weak the country loses self-reliance but if they are strong, freedom also becomes strong. If we do not maintain our progress in agriculture, poverty cannot be eliminated from India. So the main thrust of Rajiv Gandhi's alleviation programmes was on the uplift of the farmers.

India is a democracy where people are the masters. Rajiv Gandhi could foresee the perilous effect of any concentration of power and decision-making at one centre. For him solution lies with the decentralization as an important instrument of ensuring democracy at grassroot level. It was Rajiv Gandhi's views regarding decentralization that became guiding spirit behind the enactment of 73rd constitutional amendment act in 1991 and according of constitutional status to the PRIs. Steps taken by him made Panchayati Raj system in India, functional in true sense. As a visionary he could see that the process of development and nation- building could fructify only through ensuring 'power to people' and deepening of Indian Democracy thereby. For him, along with legislation from the top what is essential is mobilization from the below. As an acute observer of Indian socio- political realities he could foresee that fortune lies at the bottom and not the top of pyramid.

According to him, for development to become a reality the development administration needs to be overhauled both in form and orientation. In a short span he could gain considerable experience insight and understanding of Indian politico -administrative culture and the malaise that corrodes governance. Once he himself said that out of a rupee spent by the government on various schemes only 15 paise reached to the poor and needy. So for him the solution lies with a

people- friendly and responsive administration. He worked towards reducing the red tape in the governance and freeing administration from bureaucratic tangles. He made a valuable contribution in the modernization of Indian administration. He said, that the world is changing much too fast for us to have a moribund system which is not flexible, which cannot evolve and develop with changes in our society, in our country, as they come about in the world.

Growth trajectory of Indian secularism has an organic linkage with our ancient past. Plurality and sense of accommodation of diversities is something well ingrained in Indian culture. Fully dedicated to strengthen this secular tradition of India Rajiv Gandhi strongly suggested that we must be very clear that religion and politics must be separated and there must be a very clear definition of the difference between spirituality of the religion and its rituals and dogmas. Further, there should be a clear understanding on secularism that it is not anti- religion or non- religion; it is just the separation of government from religion. For him, thus the religion has a great role to play in the development process of our nation and we should do nothing to undermine it.

What distinguish us from others is our tolerance. Tolerance has been one such important socio-cultural heritage we have inherited from the past and has been largely preserved during India's struggle for independence under the leadership of Indian National Congress. He called for a united front against communal forces must be fought unitedly. In his words only 'We are the heirs to Gandhiji's heritage of communal harmony; to Panditji's scientific outlook; and to Indiraji's struggle against the forces of destabilization terrorists, separatists, and communalists. We cannot fail them. Communalism must not be used as a political tool.'

No less significant is his understanding of various social malaises that afflict Indian society. One such malaise is Casteism and caste-based discrimination. He visualized a casteless society. He sought to carry forward the message and efforts of Mahatma Gandhi for upliftment of poor and weaker sections of society.

A statesman, an internationalist, a people's leader, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, can truly be regarded in the most sincerest of the term, as the builder of the 21st century India. An India of his dream, where development, prosperity, fraternity, secularism, inclusive growth, social justice parity reign supreme. This, true son of Mother India embraced martyrhood in his mission of spreading 'sadbhavna' among his fellow Indians on the 21st May, 1991 in Tamil Nadu. Now, it's on the posterity to advance the milestone set up by Shri Rajiv Gandhi to fruition. ❖

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The legacy of Jawaharlal Nehru will Endure the ravages of time forever

the doctrine of coexistence. For Nehru, 'However long it takes, if the world is to survive, then they have got to learn to live together'. Yet, for Menon, Nehru did not take a romantic view: 'If you are a Good Samaritan you should also have the base of self-interest'. Mutuality of interest was another basis of international co-operation. But in all this, in the twentieth century world, he was dominated by the conception that without world peace it was not possible to accomplish anything, and peace to him, as to Mahatma Gandhi also, was not the peace of the grave nor the absence of war, but the establishment of equilibrium inside communities and between communities.⁹

Nehru was a prolific writer. The long periods of imprisonment to which he was subjected by the British colonial government, monumental works like the *Glimpses of World History*, *Autobiography* and *The Discovery of India* were accomplished. Apart from these, he wrote several letters to his fellow nationalists and contemporary functionaries of the Indian state throwing light on his ideas of India. To read these is to know Nehru and to know Nehru is to be educated on what real India or Bharat should be all about. ❖

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(Footnotes)

¹ Mahim Pratap Singh, "Rajasthan Minister says textbook has Jawaharlal Nehru; yes, as 'presenter', inaugurator", *The Indian Express*, 9 May 2016.

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² Sudarshan Agarwal, *Jawaharlal Nehru and Rajya Sabha*, Prentice-Hall of India Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 1989, p. ix

³ Vengalil K. Krishna Menon, 'Personal Memories of Jawaharlal Nehru', University of London, 12 November 1970

⁴ Jawaharlal Nehru's Foreword to *Dharam Nirpeksh Raj* by Raghunath Singh, 1961 in Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: An Anthology*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp. 330-331

⁵ Quoted in Bipan Chandra, *Communalism: A Primer*, Anamika Publishers and Distributors (P) Ltd, New Delhi, 2004

⁶ Letter by Jawaharlal Nehru dated 20 September 1953. *Letters to Chief Ministers*, vol. 2, pp. 375-80

⁷ Quoted by Sumit Sarkar in 'The Fascism of the Sangh Parivar' written in the early 1993, in the aftermath of the Demolition of Babri Masjid at Ayodhya on December 6, 1992, *Frontline*, 1 January 1993).

⁸ Aditya Mukherjee's paper at the International Conference on 'Nehru

's Worldview and his Legacy: Democracy, Inclusion and Empowerment', 17-18 November 2014, New Delhi. Cited in Sumit Chakravartty, 'Nehru's Struggle for Secularism', *Mainstream*, vol. LIII No 23, 30 May 2015

⁹ Vengalil K. Krishna Menon, 'Personal Memories of Jawaharlal Nehru', University of London, 12 November 1970

TWO YEARS OF RUSE, HOAX AND FAKES OF NDA GOVERNMENT

SP Singh

Modi Government since last General Elections of Lok Sabha in May, 2014, created a great hope in the minds of the people of the country after they believed the tall promises made by BJP Prime Ministerial Candidate Mr. Narendra Modi. The Modi Government came to power with comfortable majority in Lok Sabha. Mr. Modi entering the Parliament first time, bowed his head and took over the reins of new government with the promise of “Acchhey Din” for the toiling masses of the country. But what happened thereafter is now known to everyone. Even the promise made by PM during Lok Sabha elections campaign that all the black money will be unearthed in 100 days and all of us were promised that RS.15 Lakh will come into our accounts. People curiously checked their accounts but were shocked to note that not even single rupee came to their accounts in past two years. Instead, Baba Ramdev acquired industrial wealth to the tune of Rs.10,000/- Crores across the country in past two years. The Ambanis and Adanis are flattening. Their ‘Wealth’ under pro-rich policies of Modi- Govt. The gap between rich and poor is widening day by day.

The Union Govt. Budget- 2016 allots Rs.6.11 Lakh crores as corporate subsidies and Rs.4 Lakh crores for the agrarian sector. What does it show? It shows that **Modi Govt. is supporting the Corporates more than the farmers and low income groups in the country. Thus Modi and his government is indulging only in ‘lip-service’ by launching schemes like Digital India, Skill India, Start-up India and so on and so forth. The corporate sector is enjoying all the benefits but Country’s economy and agricultural and industrial sectors are facing crisis.**

The RSS is openly supporting and influencing the BJP government at the centre and its mask of being social and cultural organization has come-off. The known RSS-Cadre have taken up the reins of BJP Government and it is

complete exposure of RSS functioning. The RSS ‘solemn-undertaking’ given before the then Union Home Minister Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel that they would function as a cultural organization only and would never indulge in “politics” stand flouted. RSS is openly dictating its policies and influencing the democratically elected government under the Constitution of India. I distinctly remember

THE SLOGAN OF ‘SWACHH- BHARAT’ IS PROVING HOLLOW ON SEEING THE GROUND REALITIES PREVAILING IN THE SLUMS OF URBAN LIFE IN THE COUNTRY. THE RURAL LIFE IN THE COUNTRY IS ALSO ‘NO-BETTER’. THE CHILDREN AND WOMEN FOLK SUFFER THE MOST.

Mr. Narendra Modi publicly took the oath of office of Prime Minister to uphold the Constitution and not the RSS Policies.

The Constitution of India in its preamble declares “WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, HAVING SOLEMNLY RESOLVED TO CONSTITUTE INDIA INTO A SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC” and to secure to all its citizens.

“JUSTICE - social, economic and political’

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity and to promote among them all;

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and

the unity and integrity of the Nation;”

Our Constitution, a unique document, is not a mere pedantic legal text; it embodies human values, cherished principles, and spiritual norms and further it upholds the dignity of man. No authority created under the constitution is supreme; it is the Constitution which is supreme.

But now we are witnessing that this Modi Government openly espouse through its ministers and MPs the policies of RSS by advocating the concept of ‘Hindu-Rastra’, curtailment of “Liberty” of thought, expression, belief,

THE POPULARITY OF MODI- GOVERNMENT IS FADING AWAY BECAUSE THE PEOPLE ARE STILL SUFFERING ALL THE PROBLEMS RELATING TO FOOD, DRINKING WATER, MALNUTRITION, UNEMPLOYMENT, PRICE RISE, POLLUTED ATMOSPHERE ETC. ETC. THE SOCIAL FABRIC IS BEING THREATENED TO BE TORN APART AND THE COMMUNAL TENSION IS BEING WHIPPED UP IN THE COUNTRY BY THE RSS BACKED ELEMENTS.

faith and worship. They raise the slogans of “Bharat Mata Ki Jai”, “Gau Hamari Mata Hai” etc. etc. under the agenda of RSS brand of nationalism. One of the Union Minister recently espoused to bring a law to make it culpable and punishable who do not say “Bharat Mata Ki- Jai”. They create the sense of terror into the minds of the people of this country. They don’t hesitate to debunk the people as anti-national who do not toe their political line. The politicizing of ‘universities’ is now open campaign of this Modi Government. The incidents at Hyderabad, Allahabad and Jawahar Lal University, New Delhi are nothing but trying to tame the students who do not adhere to their political philosophy of ‘RSS- Brand of Nationalism’. The suicide of Rohit Vemula, the arrests of Hardik Patel and Kanhaya under sedition charges are in sequel to RSS political thoughts. The pro-RSS elements are disturbing the peace and tranquility of the people for-getting that the ‘student power’ should not be challenged as it is like a game of ‘playing with fire’. They are trying to take away the peoples’ rights of “liberty” of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship by their overt or covert acts. The Union Ministers have taken the oath under the Third Schedule of the Constitution that they will bear true faith and allegiance

to the Constitution of India as by law established and they will uphold the Sovereignty and integrity of India and they will faithfully and conscientiously discharge their duties as Ministers and will do right to all manner of people in accordance with the Constitution and the law, without fear or favour, affection or ill-will.” Now it is already two years passed since this Government took oath and came to power. The people of the country are closely watching the functioning of this government, by noticing that Union Ministers are flouting their solemn oaths by their actions.

The people of the country are suffering from mal-nutrition, drinking water scarcity, polluted- air, diseases and health problems. The capital is one of the most polluted cities of the world. In Delhi and other cities, people are living in slum-areas where they are confronting all sorts of problems of civic-amenities, water scarcity, unhygienic living, poor health and low standard of education of children. The slogan of ‘Swachh- Bharat’ is proving hollow on seeing the ground realities prevailing in the slums of urban life in the country. The rural life in the country is also ‘no-better’. The children and women folk suffer the most. There is scarcity of drinking water, in rural areas. The natural calamities like ‘droughts’ and ‘floods’ further multiply the sufferings of toiling masses. Farmers are committing ‘suicides’ due to defective economic policies of the government. The loans, subsidies and grants to the agricultural sector are to be made more responsive to the calls of ‘farmers’ of the country. The Railways need overhauling and more trains more tracks and more facilities, but instead they are being offered ‘bullet-trains’ by Modiji.

The popularity of Modi- Government is fading away because the people are still suffering all the problems relating to food, drinking water, malnutrition, unemployment, price rise, polluted atmosphere etc. etc. The social fabric is being threatened to be torn and communal tension is created in the country by the RSS backed elements. Unless curtailed, communal harmony is bound to be disturbed. We hope good sense will prevail upon the NDA government led by Mr. Narendra Modi who was rightly told by Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the then P.M., after Gujrat riots by saying “Raj Dharam Nahi Nibhaya”.

Let us now see whether Modi would follow advice of “Raj Dharam” in his rest of tenure or not. ❖

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BJP GOVERNMENT IS MYOPIC AND POSES A SERIOUS THREAT TO DEMOCRATIC VALUES

The BJP-led NDA government completed two years in office in May, 2016. The PM, ecstatic and resting on laurels of having registered the 'so-called' mammoth achievements, called in the parliamentary Party meeting in Delhi and nearly admonished the Party MPs for their utter failure to create awareness among the masses about the stories of success, this government claims to have achieved. The party workers are agog with anxiety thinking with what face they should go to the people. There is a simmering discontent against Modi government all around the country. It was corroborated by a member of surveys that the party has so far done pretty little to boast of.

The globally hyped-popularity of PM Narendra Modi is plummeting uninterrupted. The Modi wave is on wane. Have Modiji, his party and ministers done any good thing for the country except selling the dream. The survey of Modi's government's two-year term will expose this brutal reality.

It's a part of the democratic process for any party to win election and come to power or lose the mandate and sit in the opposition. The parties, which believe in democracy, give

momentum to the economic growth by safeguarding the interests of the common people, provide fillip to federal set-up of the democracy and that of the unity of the country, when they come to power. If the elections are lost, a party must act like standing

**THE INDIAN LEADERSHIP
IS IN ALL PRACTICAL
PURPOSES LIKE PUPPETS
WITH STRINGS PULLED BY
RINGMASTERS SITTING
IN NAGPUR.**

guard at the gate protecting interests of the common masses.

The history of the Congress Party is the story of adherence to the high moral and ethical pedestal in public life. The BJP is fundamentally different in character. The reason is quite simple; it is born with dictatorial inheritance which is bound to come out in the open once the power is grabbed. But the BJP guys too sometimes deserve pity as their real ring masters sit around 1500 kms far off Delhi, yet they can't dare dance to the music of their own liking. What a magical connection is this, by the way, that the tune is set in Nagpur and the dance floor erupts in

instant frenzy in Delhi. Thanks to the vice-like grip of the Sangh Parivar that the culture of political puppetry is still alive in India

The Indian leadership is in all practical purposes like puppets with strings pulled by ringmasters sitting in Nagpur.

They do not have any belief in democratic institutions and values. A master dream seller that our PM Narendra Modi is virtually known for now was handed over the command of electioneering, coming to a pension who is master in marketing dream, who is expert in driving people into utopia through linguistic jargon and cajoling 'Mann ki Baat' camouflaging his real side of nurturing dictatorial thinking. That person is Narendra Modi.

Modiji took of the BJP's elections committee in 2014 and started spreading the trap through public rallies holding out tall promises and sale of dreams. Unfortunately, poor men fell prey to his ruse. The Modi government and its failures the BJP-led NDA government and that of Modiji's are two sides of the coin. Modiji coined various populist slogan and started using them to woo the voters during the elections campaigns, '*Achhe Din Aayenge*' (Good days will come),

Black Money waapas *aayega aur har Hindustani ke khate me 15 lakh jama kiye jayenge* (The black money will be brought back and 15 lakhs will be deposited in the bank account of every Indian), *Do Karor Ladkon ko har saal Rojgaar milega* (that two-crore youths will get employments every year) and that farmers will get 50% benefits in addition to the support price of their products etc... were slogans shouted by the BJP during election campaigning to win over the gullible common masses. People believed in him and Modiji became the PM of India.

THE VYAPAM SCANDAL IN MADHYA PRADESH HAS BEEN ONE OF THE WORST SCAMS INDIA HAS EVER SEEN WHERE LAKHS OF CRORE CHANGED HANDS AND DOZENS OF THOSE ASSOCIATED IN IT WERE MYSTERIOUSLY KILLED BUT NO TRACE OF KILLERS COULD HAVE BEEN SPOTTED SO FAR.

But only after a few months had elapsed when Modi government started showing its true colours. Not a single penny came to India. Instead of it, around Seven thousand crores of black money was siphoned off from India in connivance with the public sector banks. Shockingly, when the issue was raised BJP Chief Amit Shah did not feel any qualm in declining that the issue of bringing black money back was an just an 'election plan.'

The biggest promise made by Modiji of granting employment to about two crore of youths every year that virtually tilted the electoral results in the BJP favour has proved to be a farce. It came to light when this government issued figures on its own showing that only a handful of youth could get employment. The same result is to be found on the corruption front. Despite the stiff resistance of the opposition about the corruption ruling the roost in the BJP- ruled states like MP, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, Modiji did nothing except maintaining a stoic

silence. House is being looted and its *mukhya* is snoring

The Vyapam scandal in Madhya Pradesh has been one of the worst scams India has ever seen where lakhs of crore changed hands and dozens of those associated in it were mysteriously killed but no trace of killers could have been spotted so far. Vyapam mega scandal grabs a position of pride among the biggest scandals of free Indian history. About 50 people were killed and thousands of talented youths were deprived of their bright future. The scandal

grabbed international attention and everywhere the demand to oust Shivraj Singh Chauhan was raised but Modi government continued to cover it up same is the case with Raman Singh's government which has been involved in a number so scandals like paddy scandals, allotment of mining fields as well as the PDS scam. Apart as well as it came in far severe charge of bungling in programmes launched for the welfare of downtrodden and Adivasis, similarly serious allegation of scandal in allotments of mines was leveled against Vasundhara Raje government in Rajasthan on the basis of ample evidence. Vasundhara Raje government distributed mines worth of 45,000 corers among its favourites setting aside all the mandatory process of bidding.

When all these reports of scandal were coming to the fare, right that moment, a report of close proximity between absconding former IPL commissioner Lalit Modi and Vasundhara Raje as well as Sushma Swaraj surfaced.

All opposition parties including the Congress pressed the government for prompt actions in the Parliament demanded vociferously a reply from the government on the issue but Modiji maintained took refuse in '*Mannvrata*' (complete silence). Modiji's silence is the admission of the fact that planks bandied around during elections had no real value and were meant for only belying the people. His much-hyped style statement of sloganeering that "*Na khaunga, Na Khane Dunga* (Neither will I will eat or nor will I let anyone to eat public money!)" The smokescreen has vanished into a thin, thin air.

Modiji had promised to bring about 'good days (Achhe Din)'. For common masses, the good days are when the darkness and inflation are under total control. But the reality is that the *daal* (pulse) has disappeared without trace from their *thalis* (plates). Things are changing for the worst with ferocious speed. It is the achievement of the Modi government.

A nefarious network of brokers, stockiest and black marketers became active and created a cosmetic paucity of things used in everyday life. But Modiji continued to watch the show silently and remained busy in touring foreign countries. In the meantime, the cost of oil seeds continued downslide in the international market and touched the minimum mark but Modiji did not allow the common people to walk away with the benefits accrued due to decreased oil price. It was like, rubbing salt to their wounds. Due to this reason, while the common men of the country comes not be entities from petrol and diesel prices, the freight charges were increased which further increase the worth of inessential commodities.

Having faith to provide relief to the people of the country. Modi government through its two budgets expanded the country of taxes and

imposed fresh ones on the people. Price rise and imposition of fresh taxes only drain the poor out and make life misery for the middle class.

The fact is life has been made pitiable for the common people. Just recently, Modi government tried to introduce precarious conditions for the withdrawal of hard-earned money deposited in the EPF by the working class people. This government not only divided to charge tax on the major part of the provident fund but also tried to slice the rank of interest on that. But in the face of stiff resistance from the opposition parties led by the Congress and the growing discontent among the working class people, the government had to take its step back on this issue.

It defies common sense as to why, under whose duress, this government is hell bent upon squeezing the countrymen out of its wealth. The naked fact is this government has been totally incapable of balahandling the economy of this country. The revenue deficit is refusing to stop, the speed of industrial development has come to a standstill. There has been considerable downfall in export, the condition of agriculture sector is also pitiable in such a circumstance, government is finding the only way out of stemming the deficit though extorting from common people.

The economic survey released by the government of India provides the true picture of the economic system. The BJP government decided to have achieved the target of bringing the national deficit down to 3.9%. Now the question arises that if the deficit has been curtailed to the achieved goal, it is the result of the positive moves of the government. The fact is if Rs. 2,20,000 crores has been deposited to the exchequer, is because of the considerable downfall in the raw oil prices in the international market. Do the common men of the country not

THERE HAS BEEN A DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO STIFLE THE DISSENTING VOICE, WHICH IS IN TOTAL CONTRAST TO THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSTITUTION. A WELL THOUGHT OUT CONSPIRACY WAS LAUNCHED TO CHANGE THE CHARACTER OF THE IMPORTANT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, WHICH ENJOY GLOBAL RECOGNITION AND STATURE AS TEMPLE OF LEARNING.

know about this, from whom was this money recovered!

The economic survey makes it explicit that the Direct Taxes have risen to 34.8%. It is the result of the government of India's hiking the excise duty due to which the price of the raw oil in May 2014 plumped down from 120 dollar/barrel to 30 dollar/barrel. The direct taxes take the heaviest toll on the common masses.

The worst affect of the spineless policies of Modi's government is to be found on the poor and the farmers. Instead of giving impetus and a new direction to the economy, Modi government standard slicing away the budgetary allocation for poor and downtrodden like the MNREGA launched by the UPA government. NREGA which remains the country's most ambitious scheme of providing guaranteed employment to the starving poors of the rural areas, continues to evoke step-motherly treatment from the Modi government. Similarly, there was huge cut in the budget for the Food Securities Act, framed for the poor men of the country as well as the PDS. The country is facing drought for last two years. The people engaged in farming or those who used to get employment are finding themselves in a deep sea. The country is reeling in the grip of murderous draught.

Hordes of people from the rural parts of Maharashtra and Bundelkhand are migrating every day. The attempt of the Modi government to put talks on welfare schemes reflects how insensitive the Modi government is towards fellow

countrymen. Pathetically, Modi is yet to be satisfied. The government wants to impose fresh taxes on farmers who are already languishing under the back breaking burden of taxes. It seems Modi government wants to avenge its failure to usurp farmers' land through the Land Acquisition Bills by imposing these taxes.

The Congress Party worked for decades to foster social tranquility, brotherhood by uniting people in tried to make people submit to the nation. The top leadership of the party has been trying to provide opportunities to people of all hues, communities and beliefs without any discrimination. It worked tirelessly to instill the democratic values among its workers while striving hard to strengthen the secular and democratic values in **society** in the country. The history provides proof that the Congress Party made all out efforts to percolate the sense of responsibility, significance of the unity, sacredness of democratic values and its institutions as well as the sanctity of the constitution down to the grassroots level. The democracy in this country grew stronger by days due to the untiring efforts of the Congress Party. And today if the Indian democracy is looked up to for emulation, the credit goes to the Congress.

Some developments appear flummoxing. It is intriguing to decode in which direction, the Modi government wants to take the country along? It has been utter failure on the economic fronts, made the hash

of the economy Unable to control this economic system in the country, Modi government is hell-bent on ruining democratic values an Indian democracy. The BJP made tall promises during the election campaigns and now finding it difficult to fulfill those problems this government has move the strategy of why not to divert the public attention from its failures. To achieve this goal Narendra Modi is encouraging activities alongwith the BJP and the RSS which is threatening to push this country's social structure and solidarity into danger.

The BJP and the RSS men have never been known for having faith in democratic process, institutions and values, nor do they have in spurious believe in the Indian Constitution as well. What is most disturbing is the fact that their political thoughts itself draw sustenance from communal conscience. They are the people whose thoughts are medieval they are division forces which back to divide people through polarization based on caste, creed, religion and ideology. They have started working at different levels. First of all they started saffronisation of educational institutions and cultural heritage through the Human Resource Development and the Culture & Tourist Ministry.

There has been deliberate attempt to stifle the dissenting voice, which is in total contrast of the character to the constitution. A well thought out conspiracy was launched to change the character of the important educational institutions, which enjoy global recognition and stature as temple of learning. But it did not go down well with the scheme of the saffron ideology and the result was a well-orchestrated crackdown stated at the behest of the PM and spearheaded by his HRD minister Smriti Irani.

Modi government in a very shrewd and subtle manner began appointing

its men on the top slots of the country's premier institutions with a long term objective of pushing through its saffron agenda. Puna-based IIFT topped the list. A small time small screen actor with a few minor roles in Bollywood under his belt was selected to grace the chair of the IIFT's chairman-Gajendra Chouhan. It raised many an eye brows and it is now common place that the I&B Minister Shri Arun Jaitley is believed to have opposed the move considering the reputation of the institutrion and the mismatched stature of Chauhan for that role.

Students unfurled the banner of revolt, boycotted the class and the impasse continues to exist, but Modi government would not budge. Reason: Backtracking even though taking anti-student move- would be tantamount to compromising. And a tough ruler must never take the step back. The future of thousands of students hang in balance with no solution in sight.

Such an intractable attitude in a democratic set up is symptom of despotism and decay started been famed for upholding the democratic values and independent thoughts with a design to bring the world famous institutions under its control to propagate its saffron agenda, The standards of young generation are one biggest assets but Modiji is trying to play with their future as well.

First of all, due to his proximity with the Sangh, Gajendra Chauhan was appointed as chairperson of the country's premier institution FTII, which was vehemently resisted by students. Major opposition parties are opposed it but Modiji did not budge. Similarly, a dalit student, Rohith Vemula, was tortured by cruelly under false charges that he not drives to commit suicide in Hyderabad Central University. The whole country witnessed demonstrations serious charges were were leveled against two

senior central ministers, Dattatreya and Smriti Irani; but all the roars fell on the deaf ears of Modiji. Similarly, the incidents at the JNU exposed this government's anti-students policies and its determination to crush the voice of dissent. The ultra of the Modi government and that of the Sangh Parivar wants to crush the freedom of expression and opinions of the students class.

Narendra Modiji and his government do not understand the meaning of political participation of the student community. This was perhaps the reason why during his Chief Ministerial tenure of Gujarat, he never allowed the students politics to grow in the state. It is clear that Modi led BJP government does not recognize the democratic rights of the students, and want to only use this class as voter bank.

The way Modi government is destroying the Indian Constitution and democratic values are condemnable. It came to the fore when the central government started taking proactive action directed towards toppling the popularly elected governments of Arunachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The government the BJP and its ideological percent, the RSS raise the slogans of nationalism, but the government does pretty little in the national interest. Modiji talks high of safeguarding the borders, but forgets how significant is the this state's of Arunachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand being the Border states for the security of the country.

Modiji is compromising national security while indulging diplomacy. Modiji seemed euphoric after sipping tea with American President Barack Obama and behaved exuberantly as if in the blaze of glory; but he forgot that diplomacy has no place for emotion. He tried to be friend Nawaj-Shrief forcibly and result was Pakistan terrorists attacking our airbase in Pathankot.

Despite strong registrant from main opposition parties, Modi government allowed Pakistan investigators to enter the hyper sensitive area of Pathankot airbase from the security point of view. But the conference was that Pakistan refused to talk and imputed blame on India instead. Modi fiasco in diplomacy was highlighted by his failure to impress on China and at a time when the entire world is getting united on the upon of terrorism, China refused to treat Azhar Masood as a terrorist, who has been a master conspirator against India. China is banning India's access to it in all forms within it containing China, despite the latter making deeply hurting Indian trade and escalating fire power across the Indian coastal borders, India has been sitting idle.

Narendra Modi after sipping tea with Obama forgot the basic tenets that diplomatic gestures does not yield favourable results in diplomatic bargaining. Obama was swept over by the charm of American President and seemed to have developed the false impression that he would be able to enlist Obama's support in nailing Pakistan. But the result turned out to be just opposite. Despite the warmth and bonhomie between the two, Obama felt no qualms in declaring America continuing its all out military and economic assistance to Pakistan.

Despite the fact the Russia has been India's well-wisher for decades, Modi government is making mistake in not retaining the warmth and bonhomie of diplomatic ties. India and Nepal have been friends for countries. It's crucially significant to have Nepal as a closest partner, but Modi government has failed on this count as well. Nepal President, Manorma Devi Bhandari cancelled her proposed Indian tour and even called back its ambassador from India.

UPA government had strengthened

national commerce through free-trade. Economic survey proved that trade and commerce never got the kind of momentum, than it had got under the UPA government after its agreement with FTA countries. But Modi government did not participate in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and Trans-Atlantic Trade and investment. TPP owns 40% of world's GDP and 33% of the world trade participation. The export of small country like Bangladesh and Vietnam is growing while that of India is decreasing. In December, 2014 the total export of India was works 239 million dollar, which decreased by 18% and in 2015, it was passed at 198 million dollar. During the last financial year, from April to October, the export in for engineering sector came down by 11%. Similarly, the export of goods and Jewerries, which claimed 13% of the total export, has touched a new low of 7%.

It has become crystal clear from the above facts and figures that Modi government has failed to understand the diplomacy and international trade. Not only is our economic system is at stakes, but our security is also at risk the top leaders of the congress party have made untold sacrifices and have been trying hard for decades to propagate a sense of brotherhood and communal solidarity. The Congress Party has been untiringly trying to fulfill the vision of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar and to bring the press Dalits of the country into the mainstream of national life. But Modiji has been trying to scuttle our efforts.

The country is witnessing spurt in intolerance. The scholars and writers of this country are suffocating and in an attempt to ventilate it decided to return the rewards they had earned at different time periods in a way to express anguish at the increasing incidents of intolerance in the country. But they began to be tortured and their confidence is breaking down. The scholars are returning their awards in

protest against intolerance but Modi government is refusing to understand the meaning of symbolic resistance, because its thinking is medieval and it has been trying to promote, patronize and pamper such thinking one can get to know the standard of thoughts of Modi government.

Modiji declared Ambedkar to be his ideal on the occasion of Ambedkar Jayanti, but the works being done by Modi government are in sharp contrast to Ambedkarji's. Modi government conspires to topple the democratically elected BJP governments. Ambedkar had strong belief in economic planning and public life. Modi government wants to usurp this heritage but it abolished the planning commission and is ruining the public sector.

Ambedkar was fully committed to the democracy in which right to contest elections formed the core. But what Modi government did. It remained busy in framing rules which prevented 80% women of the scheduled castes, tribes and OBCs from contesting local bodies elections in the states ruled by the BJP like Haryana and Rajasthan, On the one hand Modi government claims from the top of its voice that it is committed to fulfilling the dream of Ambedkar, as the other, it is cutting the budgetary allocation for SC Special Component Plan, Tribal Sub-Plan, Mid-Day Meals and Anganwadi. The ideological guardians of the BJP government are vehemently opposed to the reservation policy and dictating terms while sitting over in Nagpur. It reflects the fact that the BJP government showing lachrymose concern for the poor, exploited, downtrodden and dalit underdogs with purely materialistic intentions.

It is clear from the above facts that BJP government is myopic and poses a serious threat for democratic values as it has failed on all fronts social, economic, democratic and diplomatic. ❖

Congress Sandesh has started a new series on the achievements of the Congress Party in building the nation from the desk of Editor.

Contributions of the Congress Party difficult to be ignored

COMMITMENT FOR UPLIFTMENT OF POOR, UNPRIVILEGED, DOWNTRODDEN IS IN THE DNA OF THE CONGRESS

While defining History the celebrated historian, E H Carr, divides facts occurring in the past into two categories – facts of history and the historical facts. Needless to point out that unaccountable facts go down the drain while historical facts find place of pride to be chronicled in the text for the progeny to know the crux of the past in order to usher in a bright era of present and shape up the future on that basis. The programmes, policies, actions, commitments and concerns are best reflected through the policy formulations. Historical facts get etched in the memory of the masses and leave indelible imprint on the psyche of the countrymen.

What the Congress government has done for the poor, landless, untouchables and tribal's to name some, goes down in the history of India as historical facts which will continue to defy erosion, erosion or public amnesia. If India has emerged as a power to be reckoned with internationally, and a villager can be spotted talking on mobile or the flickering shades of light are emanating from jhuggis in which colour TV sets are roaring, all credit goes to the long, determined and sagacious pragmatic policies of the successive Congress governments at the centre.

Thanks to the opening up of the Indian economy. The tremendous impetus injected by the Man Mohan government changed the dormant economy into a young and vibrant one. India does not remain the same. The gulf between the two worlds-rural and city life is fast disappearing. Standard of living has surely increased in the rural parts, scientific temper has swept over the young generation, plight of public health has improved and most importantly, the self-confidence among those hitherto languishing at the bottom of socio-economic labyrinth seems to have received a new lease of life. While the growth is now stagnant due to Narendra Modi's blind pursuit of populism and political vendetta

but the momentum set by the Congress rule is hard to be impeded so soon.

Love it, hate it but even a cynic would vouch for the revolutionary transformation brought about by the sagacious policies, programmes and the welfare schemes launched, carried and implemented assiduously by the Congress government.

Naturally then, the visions, concern and compassion for the children of lesser gods, as the poor and downtrodden people of the country are often derisively addressed to, have been finding expressions from time to time through innumerable welfare schemes, poverty eradications programmes, National Rural Healthcare Mission, Minimum rural employment guaranteed programme, social upliftment, educational and developmental programmes etc..Etc...

There is no denying the fact that the nature and scale of poverty has not been the same as compared to where it stood a few decades back. That there has been a qualitative difference in poverty. It is not that poor class has emerged from nowhere today, but the per capita income and standard of living have made a discernible difference from the past it all most because of the Congress party's dogged pursuit of lifting the poor, the downtrodden and the labour class through proactive involvement in formulating policies and overseeing their implementation so that the benefits reach where it was intended to.

No one can erase it from the memory of any Indian that it was none other than late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who was the first to recognize the political might wielded by the poor yet languishing at the bottom of so literally moved by the prevalence of poverty in this country that she decided to showcase poverty as the most lethal political weapon during the 1971 General Election while giving the clarion call of

'Garibi Mitao. And the poor were turned into a smith carrying the key to power. The result is known to the whole country. Congress with unflinching support of the poor of India routed the rivals without trace. Indira came out victorious in flying colours.

But her slogan of Garibi Mitao touched millions of people from all classes, poor, middle class and intelligentsia. Most significantly, it went on to make a deep dent in the bastion of the leftists as well as deflated the remnants of so-called socialist. Since then, inclusion of poor became the guiding deity to be installed in the middle by every political party in each as the most essential ritual in every political discourse particularly when elections came into sight. It has been the most outstanding political achievement of the Congress for having established a revolutionary trend in this country. There has incessant the poor every political party has been vociferously As a sequel, political bosses vouch for hot cake eradicate the poverty poor as the most desired prized in the mainstream of electoral middle of eradication under the guaranteed employment programme for the unskilled labourers schemes of society who have been languishing on the skid rowed

In the last 15 years, India has seen the adoption of an "alphabet soup" of ambitious national anti-poverty programmes: a rural connectivity scheme (PMGSY), a universal primary schooling initiative (SSA), a rural health initiative (NRHM), a rural electrification scheme (RGGVY), a rural employment guarantee (NREGA), a food subsidy (Food Security Act), and a new digital infrastructure for transferring benefits directly to the poor (UID). The experience of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) suggests that effective anti-poverty programmes play an increasingly pivotal role in Indian elections and therefore no government could ever muster courage to flirt with it in any form or substance. NREGA is invincible. It is here to stay- stay for a good time lag.

Programmes like NREGA represent a quiet revolution in India's poverty alleviation strategy. India has for decades challenged the belief of political scientists that in democracies politicians cater to the voters who are most numerous: despite democratic institutions, and a predominantly poor electorate, effective public policies that benefit the poor have never been a priority for India's ruling political elite.

The landslide re-election of the Congress-led UPA in

IN A PATH BREAKING MOVE, THE CONGRESS-LED UPA GOVERNMENT LAUNCHED A REVOLUTIONARY MISSION OF GUARANTEEING EMPLOYMENT TO THE POOR YOUTHS IN THE RURAL PARTS FOR A FIXED PERIOD, DURING WHICH MOSTLY THE LANDLESS LABOURERS SIT IDLE. THE IDEA WAS TO GAINFULLY ENGAGE AN ARMY OF WORKLESS YOUTHS DURING LEAN PERIOD SO THAT THEY EARN SOME MONEY AND FEND FOR THEMSELVES NREGA HAS BEEN RELATIVELY SUCCESSFUL IN REACHING THE RURAL POOR.

2009 was, at the time, widely attributed to the adoption of NREGA. In light of the Congress party's recent defeats in state assembly elections, some question whether anti-poverty programmes have really benefited the Congress party in elections. However, my own research, based on a comparison of Congress's election performance across state assembly constituencies during the early stages of the programme's implementation (when some districts had received the programme while others had not), suggests that NREGA did cause a large increase in Congress's vote share in state elections. This increase, by as much as 4 percentage points, makes a big difference in India's closely fought elections.

One of the interesting results of the research conducted by prestigious institution like the Centre for Advanced Studies, Pennsylvania on NREGA is that during periods of economic hardship, such as droughts, non-Congress state-level ruling parties were also able to benefit in elections from NREGA. This suggests that there is room for opposing parties to compete over credit for the same anti-poverty programmes.

The fact that Congress politicians routinely advertise NREGA in campaign speeches suggests that they recognize the electoral benefits as well. If the UPA loses in the upcoming elections, it will be because it has alienated voters on so many other issues. People had serious reservations as to the fate of such a revolutionary scheme that virtually altered the complexion of rural living in a tangible way. Talks were quite rife before the country went on the eve of the General Elections in 2014. A large chunk of concerned Indians were agog with speculation as to what would happen to the NREGA if the BJP-led NDA, came to power.

But there is something which has far reaching positive consequences involving the future of the real India that resides in the country that no government no matter how powerful, mighty or in absolute majority it might be, could ever attempt that as a cynical political ploys. The best

example of it can be adduced from the record that some of the states, which have implemented NREGA with full honesty are those ruled by the BJP like Chhattisgarh. This has happened despite the fact that the BJP goes berserk in criticizing NREGA by dubbing it as political largesse, doled out with a purpose to extract political benefits and that it has been out of the public eye. But truths can't be belief by rhetoric and the BJP politicians have come to realize the substance in this dictum. These governments recognised that it is better to earn credit in the eyes of poor voters for implementing anti-poverty programmes well than to be perceived as obstructionists. In power nationally, the BJP is unlikely to roll back NREGA, at least openly.

Similarly, issuing Below Poverty Line Card scheme was a landmark policy decision taken by the Congress government started with a sacred intention of ridding corruption from the Public Distribution System while at the same time ensuring that all benefits granted by the government is safely availed by the people reeling under abject poverty. Below Poverty Line card, traditionally the main point of access to government welfare schemes. It has been a sordid saga of self-serving unscrupulous elements of the society who, who mushroomed and looted the benefits even before they could reach the poor men mostly because of the utter insensitiveness of non-Congress governments ruling the states under whose jurisdiction this sector fell.

According to multiple surveys, as many as half of India's poor households failed to even get the BPL card. This is unsurprising; village studies show that the allocation of BPL cards by panchayats is highly discretionary, as much a tool for corruption and political influence as poverty alleviation. Compare this to NREGA, the most important of the new flagship schemes. Unlike the means-tested BPL card, NREGA is universalistic by design, promising up to one hundred days of employment to any rural household that requests it.

NREGA revolution

In a path breaking move, the Congress-led UPA government launched a revolutionary mission of guaranteeing employment to the poor youths in the rural parts for a fixed period, during which mostly the landless labourers sit idle. The idea was to gainfully engage an army of workless youths during lean period so that they earn some money and fend for themselves NREGA has been relatively successful in reaching the rural poor. Why is India seeing relatively effective, well-funded, universalistic anti-poverty programmes like NREGA now after so many decades of narrow programmes with little political backbone? Some attribute the shift to the pressure of newly mobilised political outsiders, including an activist judiciary and civil society groups. This is half of the

story. It does not explain the other half, the extraordinary receptiveness of ruling parties to these new programmes.

After all, where have the good intentions been for so long? But by the fact that political parties are learning that effective anti-poverty programmes can help to win elections. It is also sometimes forgotten that the BJP has adopted large-scale national anti-poverty programmes itself when it was in power: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the universal primary schooling initiative, and Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), a rural connectivity scheme. Both were taken fully on board by the UPA when it came into power.

Same has been the case with the Food Security Act. In November 2013, in campaign rallies in the state of Chhattisgarh, Congress leader Sonia Gandhi claimed credit for the national enactment of the Food Security Act, while BJP prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi claimed credit on behalf of his party for originating the idea of food security with a state-level law in Chhattisgarh that preceded the national law. Indian politics appears to be entering a phase in which rival parties compete over who has done more for the poor with government programmes.

India is not alone in experiencing a transition toward large, universalistic anti-poverty programmes. A similar transition took place about a decade earlier in Latin American countries such as Mexico and Brazil. One of the striking features of these cases is that when a BJP comes into power, it does not roll back existing anti-poverty programmes. Instead, it seeks to claim credit for existing programmes and propose its own variants

Where have these programs come from? And with elections on the way, where are they headed? The experience of the Congress government's most important flagship scheme, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), launched with missionary zeal during the UPA 1 government, suggests that effective anti-poverty programs play an increasingly important role in India, the importance of which no Congress government could afford to ignore or down play. That is the reason why despite initial spluttering Modi government could not gather courage to even tamper with it, let alone trying to snap it even partially like it did with the Planning commission. And it is corroborated by the fact MNREGA is still there in the main shape where it is therefore to stay forever.

Most importantly, NREGA has been widely successful in reaching the rural poor. Several independent program evaluation studies find that NREGA has increased earnings and wages of poor rural workers, one of the reasons that agricultural employers have lobbied to curtail the program. Why is India seeing relatively effective, well-funded, universalistic anti-poverty programs like NREGA now after

so many decades of narrow programs with little political backbone? Some attribute the shift to the pressure of newly mobilized political outsiders, including an activist judiciary and civil society groups. This is half of the story. It does not explain the other half, the extraordinary receptiveness of ruling parties to these new programs, embodied in the Congress party's decision to create the National Advisory Council, a political advisory body composed of civil society activists, which played an important role in the passage of NREGA in 2005.

Take the infamous Below Poverty Line card, traditionally the main point of access to government welfare schemes. According to multiple surveys, as many as half of India's poor households do not even possess a BPL card. This is unsurprising; village studies show that the allocation of BPL cards by panchayats is highly discretionary, as much a tool for corruption and political influence as poverty alleviation. But it is the state governments that failed miserably and let the voracious brokers have a field day and stash away money meant for the poor in lieu of procuring them the BPL card. It was state government's responsibility to ensure honesty after all it was a service to humanity, feeding those who sleep empty abdomen. But no one can stop people suffering from inborn lust for cruel dishonesty. incurable

The shift is best explained not by the good intentions of politicians – after all, where had the good intentions been for so long? – But by the fact that political parties are learning that effective anti-poverty programs can help to win elections. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance's disastrous “India Shining” campaign in 2004 illustrated the political hazards of appearing to be unresponsive to rural poverty, a lesson Congress leaders seemed to take on board when they swiftly pursued their campaign promise of a rural employment guarantee upon taking power. The landslide reelection of the Congress-led UPA in 2009 was, at the time, widely attributed to the adoption of NREGA.

In light of the Congress party's recent defeats in state assembly elections, some question whether anti-poverty programs have really benefited the Congress party in elections.

However, as per a research based on a comparison of Congress's election performance across state assembly constituencies during the early stages of the program's implementation (when some districts had received the program while others had not), suggests that NREGA did cause a large increase in Congress's vote share in state elections. This increase, by as much as 4 percentage points,

THE LEGACY OF THE CONGRESS IN ARENA OF ITS MISSIONARY ZEAL IN SERVICE OF POOR DOWNTRODDEN, AND THOSE LIVING SEQUESTERED LIFE OR THE UNTOUCHABLES MANAGING TO KEEP BOTH ENDS MEET LIVING ON THE SKID ROW OF VILLAGES, WILL REMAIN ENTRENCHED DEEP IN THE PSYCHE OF INDIANS FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

makes a big difference in India's closely fought elections.

The fact that Congress politicians routinely advertise NREGA in campaign speeches suggests that they recognize the electoral benefits as well, though arguably they have made a strategic mistake in not being aggressive enough about claiming credit. If the UPA loses in upcoming elections, it will be because it has alienated voters on so many other issues.

These governments recognized that it is better to earn credit in the eyes of poor voters for implementing anti-poverty programs well than to be perceived as obstructionists. In power nationally, the BJP is unlikely to roll back NREGA, at least openly. It is also sometimes forgotten that the BJP has adopted large-scale national anti-poverty programs itself when it was in power: Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA), the universal primary schooling initiative, and Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), a rural connectivity scheme. Both were taken fully on board by the UPA when it came into power.

Fortunately, one of the most distinguished features of the Indian political class has been that no matter which party comes to power, it does not try to roll back any widely popular existing anti-poverty programme. Instead, under the influence of instinctive proclivity it seeks to stake claim for credit for existing programs and even may go for proposing its own variants because this is what sells in multi-party elections in developing countries with predominantly poor voter bases. Call it populism or call it democratic responsiveness, but thanks to electoral incentives, the trend of ambitious national anti-poverty programs like NREGA is, in the long run, here to stay in India, regardless of who rules next.

The legacy of the Congress in arena of its missionary zeal in service of poor downtrodden, and those living sequestered life or the untouchables managing to keep both ends meet living on the skid row of villages, will remain entrenched deep in the psyche of Indians for generations to come. Jai Hind. ❖

STATESWATCH

ANDHRA PRADESH

Tributes paid to Babuji

Mandapeta: Rich tributes were paid to former deputy Prime Minister Babu Jagjivan Ram on the occasion of his 109th birth anniversary in Mandapeta Congress Party Office by APCC official spokes person and Mandapeta Congress Party In-Charge Mr. Kamana Prabhakara Rao on 5th April, 2016.



Recalling Mr. Jagjivan Ram's invaluable contributions for the uplift of the weaker sections and nation-building, he said the ideals and accomplishments of the legendary leader will continue to inspire generations to come.

BIHAR

Tributes paid to Baba Saheb

Patna: Tributes were paid to Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar on his 125th birth anniversary here on 14th April, 2016.

The conclusion function was held at the Congress headquarters at Sadaqat Ashram. The function was presided over by Dr. Ashok Chaudhary, Minister in the Bihar government and Pradesh Congress President. He said that the Congress Party follows the ideals of Dr. Ambedkar.



CHANDIGARH

Tributes paid to Dr. Ambedkar

Chandigarh: Congress celebrated the 125th birth anniversary of Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar at Dhanas here on 14th April, 2016.

A huge function was held here and former Union Minister, Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal while paying tributes to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar said that Ambedkar Saheb was a great person and his greatness can be gauged by the fact that the world has accepted his greatness and will celebrate his birth anniversary as 'Vishwa Gyan Diwas' (World Wisdom Day).



Shri Bansal said that Baba Saheb had strong relations with the Congress Party. The Congress party had always honoured his capability and thus gave him a big responsibility but the BJP is trying to adopt his name, though he was against the ideology of the BJP.

Chandigarh Congress president, Pardeep Chhabra said that the RSS was trying to change history and added that Dr. Ambedkar's thoughts were never accepted by the BJP. Dr Ambedkar



wanted equality for all in the society.

Chadha, 500 supporters join INTUC

Chandigarh: Kishan Kumar Chadha, President Akhil Bhartiya Safai Majdoor Congress along with more than 500 supporters joined Congress employee trade union wing INTUC in a function held at sector 52 to celebrate 125th birth anniversary of Baba Saheb Dr. BR Ambedkar here on 23rd April, 2016.

Pawan Kumar Bansal, former union Minister, Pardeep Chhabra President Chandigarh Congress, Harphool Chand Kalyan, Bhupinder Badheri, Sheela Devi, Mohinder Choudhry, Chitrnanjan Chanchal, Ajay Joshi, Sandeep Bhardwaj, Subash Gehlot, Om Parkash Saini, Shashi Shanker Tiwari, Kesho Ram Parcha, Om pal Chavar, Maha Singh Atwal, Sunil Sood, Vasu, Usha Rana Phool Begum, Yadvinder Mehta, Rajiv Moudgil, Vinod Sharma, Meenakshi Choudhry, Jarnail Singh, Sonia, Advocate Surinder, Surjit Dhillon, Ravinder Billa, and many other leaders were present on the occasion.



Bansal while speaking on the occasion attacked the BJP Government for its false promises made to the people before the election and said that the Government has failed on every front.

Chhabra has strongly condemned the Government for its failure to control the prices which has broken all records. He said that the prices of everything is soaring due the ineffectiveness of the Government. Chhabra said that by increasing the prices of petrol and diesel 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. Chhabra said that Government brought the worst days for the residents who were promised acche din. The Government stopped the ration of the common men under PDS system.

CHHATTISGARH BJP, RSS spreading intolerance

Raipur: Former chief minister, Shri Ajit Jogi said on 23rd April, 2016 that the BJP government at the centre which is run remotely by the RSS has spread violence and intolerance around the country by making ugly comments by the leaders of the RSS, BJP and other allied organizations.

Shri Jogi said that these harsh and unwelcome comments are becoming danger to the unity and the integrity of the nation. He said that all efforts by the BJP and the RSS will not be able to spoil the unity of India.

Effigy of Raman Singh burnt

Raipur: The City Congress and NSUI staged a protest demonstration and burnt the effigy of State Chief Minister Raman Singh here on 27th April, 2016.



It has been found in the report of the Chhattisgarh CAG that there was a big bungling in the purchase of Helicopter for use of the Raman Singh government.

The Congressmen, on the directive of the Pradesh Congress President, Bhupesh Baghel, have demanded for the resignation of the Chief Minister.

DELHI

Rahul Gandhi always speaks up for the Dalits and Backwards

New Delhi: Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Shri Ajay Maken said Congress was the only political party which follows the ideals and principles of Dr. Baba Saheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar in letter and spirit for the development of Dalits, SC/STs and other backward communities as the architect of the Indian constitution had given the country such a comprehensive constitution that protects the rights and interests of all and is able to bind the country together for so many years after Independence. Shri Maken said this while addressing a large gathering to observe the 125th Ambedkar Jayanti at the DPCC lawns, Rajiv Bhawan, here on 14th April, 2016.



Thousands of Congress workers and leaders offered floral tributes at the portrait of Dr Baba Saheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar at the impressive function, which was organized by the SC/ST wing of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee.

Besides Shri Ajay Maken, others prominent persons present at the function were All India Congress Committee SC/ST Department chairman Shri K. Raju, former Delhi Minister Dr. Kiran Walia, AICC secretary Shri Naseeb Singh, leader of the Opposition in the East Delhi MC Smt. Varyam Kaur, Veer Singh Dhingan, Malaram Gangwal, Balram Tanwar, Vijay Singh Lochav, Baljore Singh, Municipal Councillors Rinku and Preeti, Bhrum Yadav, Dineshwar



Tyagi, Harnam Singh, R.N. Chandel, Panna Lal Khorwal, Rajender Mewati, Amarpal Joshi, S.P. Singh and Mahmood Zia. The programme was organized by DPCC SC/ST department chairman Shri Shivram Singh.

Shri Maken said the Congress party and Shri Rahul Gandhi have always fought to protect the rights and interests of the Dalits, whether it was sitting under a blazing sun to show solidarity with the striking sanitation workers of Delhi, whether it was to protest against the atrocity on a Dalit woman in Barmer in Rajasthan or the Rohit Vamula issue in the Hyderabad University. He said Shri Rahul Gandhi had always raised the voice of the suppressed to bring their plight before the people of the country and to fight against the atrocities on Dalits.

Shri Maken said there were two ideologies existing in the country in the present scenario—one that of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the RSS which are being governed from Nagpur. Whenever Modi speaks, he speaks in the voice of Adani and Ambani whereas the other ideology is that of Congress and Rahul Ji. Shri Maken said whenever Shri Rahul Gandhi speaks, he speaks for the Dalits and the backwards.

Addressing the gathering, Shri K. Raju said that the country should follow the path shown by Dr Ambedkar and should be committed to accomplish his mission--the mission through which Dr Ambedkar wanted to give freedom, equality and brotherhood to all where everybody could get economic, social and political justice. He said the Congress party has always followed the path shown

by Dr Ambedkar and is also committed to uphold his ideals and principles.

SAD (Longowal) merges with Congress

New Delhi/Chandigarh: The Shiromani Akali Dal Longowal on 17th April, 2016 merged with the Congress. The merger was announced jointly at a press conference by the leaders of the two parties in presence of hundreds of party workers who had converged from different parts of Punjab, here today.

The SAD-L workers led by the president Ms. Surjit Kaur Barnala, Secretary General Baldev Singh Mann, Gagganjit Singh Barnala and Simranjit Singh Barnala were present on the occasion.

The Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee president Capt. Amarinder Singh, AICC general secretary Dr. Shakeel Ahmad and Campaign Committee Chairperson Ms. Ambika Soni, who were also present on the occasion, welcomed the merger, saying it will further strengthen the party in Punjab which is already at a firm footing in the state.

Talking to the reporters Ms. Barnala and Shri Baldev Mann said that the Congress under the leadership of Capt Amarinder Singh was the only hope for Punjab. They said, Capt. Amarinder had proven credentials of not only providing a brilliant administration, but also putting his personal and political career at stake when it comes to watching and safeguarding the interests of Punjab. They said, there was no other or better leader than Capt. Amarinder who can lead Punjab from darkness to light and to a bright future.

Welcoming the SAD-L into Congress, the PCC president said, he had a long association with the Barnala family as he had served as a minister in Shri Surjit Singh Barnala's government. He said, today everybody was concerned about securing and safeguarding the future of the state and it was natural for the right thinking people to come together and



join hands.

The former Chief Minister said, merging of the SAD-L into the Congress and earlier that of the People's Party of Punjab was reflective of a positive trend towards Congress. He said, people of Punjab were fed up with the nine years of mis-governance by the Badals and they wanted the Congress to form government in the state.

Akali Dal will completely disintegrate by 2017: Capt Amarinder

New Delhi/Chandigarh: Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee president Capt Amarinder Singh today said that the ruling Shiromani Akali Dal-Badal will completely disintegrate before the 2017 assembly elections in Punjab. "There is a subtle and simmering discontent prevailing within the Akali Dal and I guarantee you, it will explode at the right time ahead of the elections", he said.

The PCC president disclosed that several senior leaders and prominent workers of the party were waiting for the Election Code of Conduct to come into force before they resign from the Akali Dal and join the Congress. "They are very much in touch with us", he said, in reply to a question during a press conference organized here today on the occasion of the merger of the Shiromani Akali Dal-Longowal into the Congress.

"Right now they (the Akali leaders and workers) are lying low as they do not want to be implicated in false cases, Sukhbir is capable of slapping on them", he said, while adding, "the moment the Akalis lose control over the

administration after the announcement of code of conduct they will resign and join us (the Congress)".

Capt. Amarinder also warned against serious law and order problem in the state as the farmers may not receive the money for their produce since the state government was unlikely to get the credit limit due to Rs 12000 crore wheat scam, unearthed recently.

Replying to a question on the issue he said, the onus was completely on the Badals as they were masters in embezzling and swindling money. He said, he had been continuously warning against the misappropriation of money by the Badals and he had been proved right.

He expressed concern over the impact the wheat scam will have on farmers. He said, the immediate fallout of the scam will be non availability of credit limit to the state government which will mean no payment to farmers. He said, the grain markets were already full and the farmers were not getting their payments.

GUJARAT

Gujarat State Pani Yatra

Water crisis in Saurashtra and North Gujarat looks worsening and more than 1000 villages are facing draught like situation these days. During such critical time state government is acting blind towards various burning issues like drinking water, irrigation, fodder and many more. Government is not supplying adequate water and as an act of protest against the state government for its negligent behavior, Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee organized a rally "PANI YATRA" starting from 26th April, 2016 across the state. Gujarat Pradesh Mahila Congress played a vital role in "PANI YATRA" by joining the same in large number. On 28th April,



2016, "PANI YATRA" concluded with a huge rally by breaking of earthen pots by Gujarat Pradesh Mahila Congress activists.

HARYANA

Concluding Program of year long celebrations of 125th Birth Anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Haryana: the yearlong celebrations of 125th Birth Anniversary of Dr. BR Ambedkar concluded on 1st May, 2016 in Karnal. On this occasion Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee organized a rally.



The yearlong celebrations of 125th Birth Anniversary of Dr. BR Ambedkar began with the inaugural function in Panchkula in July 2015. All around the year, many programs were organised by Haryana congress committee.

All senior leaders and office bearers of Haryana Congress were present on the occasion including Dr. Shakeel Ahmad, General Secretary AICC, Incharge of Haryana, Smt. Asha Kumari, Secretary Incharge of Haryana, former Chief Minister Shri Bhupinder Singh Hooda, former Union Minister Kumari Selja, MP, Smt. Kiran Chaudhary, CLP Leader, Dr. Raj Kumar Verka, Vice-Chairman, National Commission for Schedule Caste, MLAs & Ex MLAs & all the members of the Celebration Committee.

During the Rally, Speeches of Hon'ble Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi, Hon'ble VP Sh. Rahul Gandhi and messages from many senior leaders were shown on a huge LED screen. The Rally concluded with the release of a "Smarika"

highlighting the life and achievements of Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

The day long rally was attended by Approx 8,000 to 9,000 people.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

HPCC celebrates 125th birth anniversary of Dr B.R. Ambedkar

Shimla: Himachal Pradesh Congress Committee organized a function on 14th April, 2016 to mark 125th birth anniversary of Dr B R Ambedkar under the chairmanship of PCC President Th. Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu. All the party workers and party office bearers paid floral tributes to Babasaheb Ambedkar.



Addressing workers, Th. Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said that Dr B R Ambedkar has given a new direction to the country and worked for social justice that stands for the self-respect and happiness to the majority of people especially to the deprived section of the society.

Th. Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said that Dr. Amedbkar united the country through Indian Constitution in which he had inculcated laws for equal treatment of all sections of the society and he not only belongs to Dalit community but to all sections of the society. "Dr. Babasaheb



Ambedkar life is characterized by unmatched determination and a firm commitment towards social justice," he said, adding that Dr Ambedkar served the nation and the people tirelessly and selflessly.

State Congress President said that Dr Ambedkar had always encouraged the democratic values in every field, be it social, economic and political and he advocated the equal status and respect for all. He appealed to the people to follow the path shown by Dr Ambedkar and shun the parochial considerations of religion, caste, colour and creed to create a harmonious and egalitarian society.

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Pending cases piling up in courts: Soz

Srinagar: Prof. Saifuddin Soz, Former Union Minister and Senior Congress Leader, has issued the following statement to the press, on 25th April, 2016.

"Chief Justice of India, Justice T.S. Thakur has represented aspirations of a vast majority of the people of India who have been suffering indignity, deprivation and corruption due to delay and denial of justice caused by piling up of cases in the Apex Court and the High Courts in India!

There is no doubt that adequate number of judges are not available to speed-up the disposal of cases.

Justice Thakur has rightly and openly lamented the neglect of Judiciary by India's Executive.

Earlier, Chief Justice H.L. Dattu had cautioned the nation on 6th December, 2014 that over three crore cases were pending in the courts across the country. That number of pending cases continues to be a world record!

I must heartily congratulate Justice T.S. Thakur for his sincerest yearning to provide timely justice to the millions of seekers of Justice from the Apex and other courts in India.

Another lamentable aspect of the ailment of the judicial system is that the State Governments in India avoid and considerably delay the implementation of judgments by the courts. In my opinion, J&K State is a classic example of successive governments not implementing or grudgingly implementing the court orders.”

Mahila Convention Held

Jammu: Smt. Indu Pawar, President, Pradesh Mahila Congress organized a one-day mahila Congress Convention “UDAAN” at Sunny Farm, Kalu Chak, Jammu on 10th April, 2016. Smt. Ambika Soni Ji, General Secretary, In-charge J&K was the Chief Guest and meeting was presided by Sh. G.A Mir, President, JKPC.



Smt. Indu Pawar said that Mahila Congress is active in all the three regions of State.

She said that Mahila Congress is very active and has responded to all public issues which were misrepresented by BJP-PDP & NDA led Governments at State and Centre respectively. May it be Price Rise, Sanctioning of AIIMS in Jammu, Destabilization of Congress led Governments in State, Mahila Congress is forced to protest against the anti people policies of BJP led Government. She said women of state are now coming out of their homes and joining with Congress Party who is always fighting for rights of the poor and downtrodden of the state.

Addressing the gathering, Smt. Ambika Soni said that BJP led NDA Govt. is most un-principled and instead of making any positive job or development they are destabilizing elected Congress Governments. She said that by adopting



un-democratic measures, BJP Govt. is exposed. She also questioned BJP & PDP what new they are doing for J&K.

Smt. Ambika Soni supported a judicial inquiry for solving problems of NIT, Srinagar.

She said the Congress has always supported empowerment of women in all sphere of life and women of today should be self dependant. She said that Congress Party has ensured that Mahila get their share in Local Bodies and Panchayats.

Sh. G.A Mir questioned any good work done by BJP led Govt. whether at Centre or State. He said the Congress stands for empowerment of all, especially women and the weaker sections of our society.

Sh. G.A Mir has always supported moves. She said that Mahila Congress is always first to address the problem of masses and is standing with the sufferers.

Ms. Pawar thanked Smt. Ambika Soni Ji for addressing the Meeting.

MADHYA PRADESH *Bungling in Public Service* *Commission*

Bhopal: The leader of the opposition, Shri Ajay Singh has alleged on 18th April, 2016 that there was bungling in the appointments made by the state Public Service Commission and which could be much bigger than Vyapam.

He said that these appointments should be stopped immediately and the process be made more transparent. He alleged that after the examinations, there was bungling in interviews for the selection of senior officers in various departments.

He said that during the interview, it is

necessary that with the chairman, one PCC member should be there but it has been observed that the chairman is not present most of the time and the interviews are held by just one PCC member.

Protest demonstration against dry taps

Gwalior: City Congress Committee, led by its president, Dr. Darshan Singh, held protest demonstration in front of the Zonal Municipal Office at Bolarapur against non-availability of drinking water here on 21st April, 2016.



Dr. Singh said the city taps were dry and the people were running here and there for want of water and there was no cleaning in the city as the waste was piling upon the roads. The drains were choking as they are not being cleaned and thus have become a health hazard for the people.

Dr. Singh said that all the waste of the city was being dumped in Kishanbagh and the awful smell emanating from it has become a nuisance for the public and it should be immediately be cleaned by the Municipal authorities.

Tributes paid to Babuji

Jabalpur: Congressmen paid tributes to former Deputy Prime Minister Babu Jagjivan Ram on his birth anniversary here on 5th April, 2016. The function was organized by Congress Committee



SC Department.

Shri Rajendra Chaudhary, convenor, Pradesh Congress SC Department garlanded the photo of Babu Jagjivan Ram and paid tributes and said that Babuji played an important role in the upliftment of the poor and the downtrodden.

Pradesh organizer, Tarun Rohitas while paying tributes said that Babuji was a good politician and an able administrator.

Others who paid tributes were Shri Rooplal Chaudhary, Rajesh Chaudhary, Vijay Kanda, Rakesh Chaudhary, Pinky Thakur, Shubham Chaudhary, Ranjit Chaudhary, Srilal Chaudhary, Rakku Ben, Ekram Chaudhary with others.

Tributes paid to Dr. Ambedkar

Jabalpur: Tributes were paid to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on his 125th birth anniversary here at the Ambedkar Chowk on 14th April, 2016 at Purani Basti, Bilpura Vehicle Factory.

The function was organized by District Congress President Rajesh Chaudhary who garlanded the statue of Dr. Ambedkar.



Prominently present were former Minister Kaushaliya Gontia, Rajesh Chaudhary, Rajendra Chaudhary, Tarun Rohitas, Laxmi Ben, Shyam Narayan Birha, Kanak Raj, Shanker Singh, Rajesh Diwan, Lakhani Ahirwar, Sunil Masih, Kapil Raj Rohitas, Vishnu Vinodia, Nanda Gwalvansh, Netra Kumar Chaudhary, Sanjay Ahirwar, Raju Koni and others.

MAHARASHTRA Workers Convention

Organized by INTUC

Nagpur: The case of regularization of unorganized workers shall be taken up in the Parliament if the decision of Supreme Court in favour of workers is not implemented by the employer, said Shri Ashok Chavhan, MP/President – Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee. He was addressing a large gathering of organized and unorganized workers under banner of INTUC in a programme hosted by Rashtriya Koyla Khadan Mazdoor Sangh here on 1st April, 2016. He also assured workers that Congress Party will pressurize the Government with regards to minimum wages of unorganized workers.

Shri S.Q. Zama, Working President, Maharashtra INTUC while welcoming



the guests put up the matter of unorganized workers of Life Insurance Corporation wherein the corporation is not implementing the decision of Supreme Court of India. A grand Vidharbha-level convention of organized and unorganized workers which was arranged at Indian Water Works Hall, Shankar Nagar, Nagpur and was presided over by Ex-MLC and President of Maharashtra INTUC, Shri Jaiprakash Chhajer. Around 500 workers and their representatives from Railways, Coal India, LIC, Mathadi, Maid Servants, Textile, Defence and other industries attended the Convention.

PUNJAB

People have lost faith in ruling government

Chandigarh: Dilber Mohd. Khan (Chairman of minority Department

Punjab Pradesh congress committee) while interacting with the press said that the present ruling government has ill-treated the minorities and have always kept their interest aside and never given the benefits which they always deserved. He said Congress Party in the upcoming elections will fight with the one and only agenda of region's development and shall move ahead keeping all the groups together.

He also said that ruling govt. has clearly ignored the minorities such as Muslims, Jains and Buddhists and its consequence will be borne by the present govt. in the upcoming elections. He promised that



Congress would support minorities and will look forward to approve all the necessary requirements of the minorities and will keep it as of highest priority.

He also added that jatt sikhs are also less in number and because of ill practices of govt. they are facing lots of troubles. Talking about minorities, he added in the last 9 years, the funds of Punjab Wakf Board has diminished an all-time low.

And lastly, he added that majority of the population have lost their faith in the ruling govt. and are dissatisfied with the policies that have been introduced and after winning the elections Congress Party will execute all their promises and will promote equality and brotherhood among all the groups of the Punjab region.

Protest demonstration

Chandigarh: Chandigarh Youth Congress demonstrated in front of the City Corporation office here on 30th March, 2016.

Youth Congress vice-president, Harmel Kesari demanded the resignation of the BJP Mayor Arun Sood for having a counsellor with a blot in his counsel and for giving him protection. He also



demanding that the photos of Sangh leaders be removed from the Mayor's office.

Shri Harmel said their demonstration will continue as long as the photos are not removed from the Mayor's office.

Appointing a battery of Chief Parliamentary secretaries unconstitutional: Channi

Chandigarh: The appointment of seven more chief Parliamentary secretaries by the Shiromani Akali Dal government is just a joke with the democratic system. Reacting sharply to this move, S Charanjit Singh Channi, leader of opposition, said that the total tally goes up to 25 CPS, which is totally unconstitutional. Moreover the government is financially bankrupt, under these circumstances appointing more CPS shows the real face of the chief minister S Parkash Singh Badal and the Deputy Chief Minister S. Sukhbir Singh Badal, that how much they are actually concerned with the pain of Punjab.

Channi further said that the Vidhan Sabha elections are around the corner, the Badals have smelled a big revolt in the party and just to minimize it and avoid the harassment, the CM and Deputy CM have gone for this exercise of expansion and are just trying desperately to keep their flock together.

Channi said that the army of 25 CPS actually sits idle and they don't contribute

anything for the betterment of the state. No official work or file is ever sent to these CPS, that's why it is purely unconstitutional and the government should revert it back.

RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan Pradesh Vichar Vibhag Inaugurated

Jaipur: PCC President Shri Sachin Pilot inaugurated the meeting of newly constituted body of Rajasthan Pradesh Vichar Vibhag to focus on the role of Social Media in spreading the Congress ideology and the removal of the name of Pt. Nehru from the textbooks by the present BJP Govt. on 10th May, 2016 in the presence of Dr. Girija Vyas, National Chairperson, as a Chief Guest at the meeting.

Shri Pilot said about the positive ideology of the Congress and how it spread the feeling of security by safeguarding the democracy.



He further said that BJP followed a negative ideology-intolerance as seen in Uttarakhand, redefinition of nationalism by adopting the anti-nationalistic approach and ignoring of Pt. Nehru's contribution.

Dr. Girija Vyas emphasized on the importance of Congress ideology and said it always saved the freedom of the citizens. She also criticized the politicization of education by the BJP led government.

Pradesh Vichar Vibhag' Chairperson Prof. Naresh Dadhichi highlighted the role of social media in spreading the Congress ideology.

Government ignoring farmers' problem

Jaipur: Addressing the Kisan Convention organized by the District Congress Committee in Banswara on 22nd April, 2016, Pradesh President, Shri Sachin Pilot said that the BJP was boasting of its vast majority and was making policies that were anti-farmer and anti-people.

Shri Pilot said that they have weakened the MGNREGA scheme started by the UPA government and thus the Apex court had to direct the BJP government to allot



money for MGNREGA.

He said that during this scorching heat it becomes the duty of the government to provide more jobs in the villages through MGNREGA as the farmers in the past two years had faced severe natural disasters, but the farmers have not received compensation for their crops destroyed and many have committed suicides.

Shri Pilot said that the government was ignoring the problems in the agri-sector which is at its peak and no remedial steps are being taken by the state government and the farmers have been left in the lurch to fend for themselves.

Public hearing of problems

Bikaner: City District Mahila Congress is carrying out a ward-level campaign to highlight the problems of the people here on 2nd April, 2016.

City Mahila Congress President, Sunita Gaud highlighted the problems of Ward 40 and 43 to the knowledge of the civic authorities.

Similarly, the problems were placed Ward-wise before the people also so



that it may be resolved soon by the authorities.

Those present in the public hearing were Shri B.D. Cohari, Ramesh, Kuldeep Gujjar who demanded for immediate action.

Cardiology unit Take over

Bikaner: The City Congress Committee has approached the State Health Minister to have its control over Haldiram Moolchand Cardiologist unit for giving cheap and better services to the poor heart patients.

City Congress president, Shri Yashpal Gehlot wrote a letter to the health minister in this regard on 8th April, 2016



for the benefit of the poor patients. He said that this unit be handed over to the trust and a committee should be formed to look after it.

Centre and BJP-led State governments failed on every front

Salasar: On the occasion of the foundation day of Panchayati Raj on 24th April, 2016 Rajya Sabha member Shri Narendra Budaniya said that the BJP led governments at the centre and in the state have failed.

The governments are unable to perform anything. BJP delivered only false



promises. They have just renamed the schemes started by the UPA Government and they are taking credits of it.

On this occasion Congress District President Bhanwarlal Pujari, Sarpanch Chama Devi Pujari, Surja Ram Dhaka, Bajrang Prajapat, Bhagirath Dhukiya, Ankit Pujari, Kishan Pujari, Bheekhamchand Pujari, Pathiram Prajapat, Iswarram Prajapat, Blachand Prajapat, Mohan Meghwal, Shukarlal Prajapat, Sohanlal and other Congress Party workers welcomed him.

UTTAR PRADESH Tributes paid to Dr Ambedkar

Lucknow: The UPCC paid tributes to the maker of Indian Constitution, Bharat Ratna Bhimrao Ambedkar at the Congress headquarters here on 14th April, 2016 and the function was presided by UPCC president, Dr. Nirmal Khatri who garlanded the photo of Dr. Ambedkar. A seminar was also held.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Khatri said that some political parties are confusing the people by showing that they are the followers of Dr. Ambedkar. He said the Congress Party was celebrating the 125th birth anniversary of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar and the conclusion of the year long celebrations was held on 17th April, 2016 in which AICC general secretary incharge of UP, Shri Madhusudan



Mistri, former Union minister, Shri Sushil Kumar Shinde, Scheduled caste Deptt. Chairman, Shri K. Raju and SC commission chairman, Shri P.L. Punia were present.

Shri Rajbahadur, former minister, said that only Congress Party follows the ideals of Dr. Ambedkar. UPCC general secretary, Shri K.K. Anand also addressed the gathering.

Others present were former UPCC president, Dr. Rita Bahuguna Joshi, former MP, Smt. Annu Tandon, Shri Ramkrishna Dwivedi, Satyadev Tripathi, former MLC, Haji Shiraz Mehandi, Rakesh Mishra, Ms. Ansuya Sharma, Chhatelal Chaurasia, former MLA, Shyam Kishore Shukla, Shri Hanuman Tripathi, Shri Vivendra Madan, Shri Sanjiv Kumar Singh.

Meeting of frontal organization concludes

Lucknow: The two day meeting of UPCC frontal organization and SC/ST Deptt concluded in two phases here on 21st April, 2016.

In the first phase, the meeting of Pradesh presidents, Pradesh office bearers of the UP Youth Congress of all four Zones was held with the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha constituencies presidents of UP and the office bearers of the All India Youth Congress in which AICC general secretary and incharge of UP, Shri Madhusudan Mistri, MP, UPCC president, Dr Nirmal Khatri, Shri Prashant Kishore, National secretary Shri Zuber Khan, Shri Prakash Joshi, Congress Vidhan Mandal leader, Shri Pradip Mathur, Vidhan Parishad leader, Shri Naseeb Pathan, former minister, Shri Satyadev Tripathi, former MLC,





Shri Harish Bajpayee, former MLC, Shri Rajeshpathi Tripathi, Youth Congress National general secretary and incharge of UP, Shri Sreeniwas BV and National office bearers of the Youth Congress.

The purpose of the meeting was to get individual suggestions of making the organization strong, looking at the forthcoming Assembly elections in 2017.

Shri Mistri said that our purpose should not only be to increase the seats but to increase our self confidence in forming the Congress government in the state.

In the second phase, the meeting of the office bearers of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled tribe Deptt was held with state office bearers, district, City presidents and with their committees, Block presidents and with the leaders of the reserved seats. SC/ST leaders from districts placed their suggestions for the forthcoming elections before Shri Prashantji.

The meeting was attended by Shri Madhusudan Mistri, Dr Nirmal Khatri, Shri Prashant Kishore, SC/ST Deptt. Chairman, Shri Bhagwati Prasad Chaudhary, Deptt incharge, Smt. Annu Tandon, AICC coordinator, Shri Shashank Shukla, Shri Banshi Pahadia, MLA, former minister, Shri Rajbahadur, Dr Om Prakash, Shri K.K. Anand, Smt. Sushila Sonekar, Shri Gyanendra Pratap Singh and Shri Harshvardhan Singh Shyam.

Suggestions asked from Frontal Organizations

Lucknow: Looking at the forthcoming elections, the UPCC held separate meetings with the frontal organizations-Minority Department, Mahila Congress and NSUI here on 22nd April, 2016.

The meeting was held with the Pradesh office-bearers and district and city presidents of the state who placed their suggestions for the 2017 elections. Present in the meetings were UPCC President, Dr. Nirmal Khatri, Shri Prashant Kishore, National Secretaries Shri Zubeer Khan and Shri Prakash Joshi and Shri Harish Bajpayee.

The first meeting was held with the Minority Department zonal chairman Shri Haji Siraz Mehandi with zonal office-bearers of district/city presidents



with Department incharge Smt. Annu Tandon.

The second meeting was held with Mahila Congress Pradesh President, Smt. Pritama Singh, national vice-president Smt. Shobhna Shah and Smt. Sunita Shrawat.

The third meeting was with the presidents of all four zones of the NSUI with the general secretary incharge Shri B.P. Singh and national secretary Abhinav Tiwari, Karishma Thakur, Dipak Negi, Hasiba Amin, Surbhi Dwivedi, Amit Singh, Umesh Tanwar and central zone president Kanishk Pandey, Vikas Singh of East zone, and Avinash Kajla of West zone.

The fourth meeting was held with the Sewa Dal and the Sewa Dal incharge Smt. Annu Tandon had meeting with zonal chief organizer Dr. Pramod Kumar Pandey, National Sangathan Mantri Shri Rajnarayan Yadav, Shri Pratap Narayan Mishra, Shri Dinesh Kaushik, Pradesh office-bearers, district and city Congress presidents.

Bhim Jyoti Yatra Welcomed

Aligarh: On the 125th birth anniversary

of Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the Bhim Jyoti Yatra was welcomed here on its arrival on 6th April, 2016.

Former Union Minister Satish Sharma, AICC Secretary Naseeb Singh welcomed the yatra by garlanding the photo of Dr.



Ambedkar. Others present were UP Congress General Secretary Bijendra Singh Yadav, AICC Spokesperson Vivek Bansal were there to welcome the Bhim Jyoti Yatra. The Yatra was organized and led by UP Congress SC/ST Department Chairman Shri Bhagwati Prasad.

Shri Prasad while addressing a large gathering said that Dr. Ambedkar gave the rights to the dalits, backward and the women through the power of the Constitution.

The Yatra was conducted by District SC/ST Department Chairman Raju Paswan.

Seminar on Ambedkar's Jyanti

Aligarh: Giving tributes to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on his 125th birth anniversary, the City Congress Committee organized a seminar here on 7th April, 2016. The seminar was organized by City Congress president Shri Vivek Bansal.

Tributes were paid by AICC SC/ST Department chairman Shri K. Raju who was the chief guest and who garlanded the photo of Dr. Ambedkar. He also spoke



about the life history of Dr. Ambedkar. The seminar was conducted by Dr. Muhammad Mustajab Siddiqi.

Protest demonstration

Lucknow: City Congress Minority Deptt, led by its president Mehandi Hassan Babloo, staged a massive protest demonstration at the Jhariyan Ka Talab on 16th April, 2016.



The protest was held against the poor condition of roads and poor lighting system in some areas. The matter was repeatedly brought to the notice of the local corporate but no action was taken.

Shri Hassan said that there were big pot-holes in the roads because of which all kind of accidents were taking place. The street lights were dim and poor and there were power cuts in this hot weather and the people were just fed-up. He said that if these problems are not rectified at the earliest, the Congress would hold a bigger demonstration.

Tributes paid to Dr. Ambedkar

Meerut: District Congress Committee Vice-President, Mohd. Imran led the Congress in paying tributes to Dr. Ambedkar on his 125th birth anniversary on 14th April, 2016.

Addressing the gathering, Shri Imran said that some political parties are now adopting the name of Dr. Ambedkar though they never participated in the



freedom struggle. He said Congress Party follows the ideals of Baba Saheb and fights for the rights of the Dalits, poor and the downtrodden.

Effigies burnt

Meerut: The District Congress Committee, led by its vice-president Mohd. Imran, burnt the effigies of BJP president Amit Shah and Subramanyam Swamy here on 28th April, 2016.



The effigies were burnt for dragging the names of Congress president Smt. Sonia Gandhi and other senior Congress leaders in the Augusta Westland Helicopter deal.

Relief given to calamity hit people

Unnao: Former MP, Smt. Annu Tandon on getting the information of the destruction of Vibhaura village due to fire, gave moral support to the people of the village by providing them daily use items like utensils, clothes, tarpoline and food grains here on 23 April, 2016.

Smt. Tandon while distributing the relief material said that looking at the incident it pains to see that the life time earnings is lost in seconds in such natural disaster. I also ask flourishing people of the society and public representatives to come forward and help these people who are in distress. She said that the state government should give immediate help to these affected people.

Those involved in relief work were Pradesh

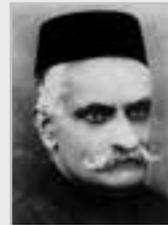


TRIBUTES

Nation pays tribute to our freedom fighters and distinguished leaders.



Dr. Zakir Husain
Death Anniversary
3rd May
(1897-1969)



Motilal Nehru
Birth Anniversary
6th May
(1861-1931)



Gopal Krishna Gokhale
Birth Anniversary
9th May
(1866-1915)



Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed
Birth Anniversary
13th May
1905-1977



Sukhdev
Birth Anniversary
15th May
(1907-1931)

Congress general secretary Virpratap Singh, Pradesh Youth Congress president Ankit Parihar, Sanjay Nigam, Anup Mehrotra, Vivek Shukla, Anuj Shukla, Vivek Singh, Bhadonia, Umashanker Yadav, Ganga Fulam, Harnam Singh, Manu Pandey OP Srivastav, Dharmendra Sharma, Vipin Pandey, Bharat Shukla with others. ❖

We have started publishing, since July, 2014 issue, a series of special interviews of the long term grass roots workers of the Congress Party attached to the party for decades.

- Editor

INTERVIEW OF A DEDICATED CONGRESSMAN

Shri Shubhas Chandra Mukherjee was born in September 1949 at village Dhachakiya in Bokaro. His grandfather was a Congressman, and the whole family remained in the Congress. He is a well known social worker and Congressman of the area.

- Interviewed by Dr. Jaya Shukla

Q. How did you get influenced by the Gandhian and Congress principles?

A. My whole family since my grandfather's time was dedicated towards the Congress. I learned the same principles during my upbringing. My father was very active in social work. He was repeatedly elected Thana Pradhan, and I helped him in his social work. He wanted our region to become well educated, and built two schools on his own lands, without taking any financial help from the government. The area was very backward in education, but because of his interest in education, I developed a strong interest in reading good books. I did graduation in honours course in first division and started learning law. Due to family responsibilities I had to also start business. At a young age I had read Shri Nehru's "Discovery of India". I realized that the Indian history, culture and soul are best understood by Congress leaders.



Q. When did you become an active Congress member?

A. During 1975, the atmosphere was full of confusions and questions regarding the Congress. But my mind was dedicated to the Congress tenets. I became member of the Congress in Giridih upon the advice of Shri Bindeshwari Dubey and started actively propagating Congress principles. I also used to go and stay at the Sadaqat Ashram. I worked under the guidance of, and with, Shri Bindeshwari Dubey. Till date I am dedicated to the Congress and an active in social work.

Q. Who was your ideal person?

A. Smt. Indira Gandhi. One seldom sees capabilities like her. She was unparalleled in her deep farsightedness, visionary thought, thoughtfulness, and courageous action plans. Her loyalty to the motherland was absolute. I got arrested in Giridih with my friends, protesting against her arrest.

Q. What differences do you find in the Congress now, since then?

A. The activists then were very truthful and true. They

were fully dedicated towards the principles. The activists still believe in the principles, but feelings of mutual competition cause them to hinder and cut short their co-workers' work. Earlier, the competition was in trying to do better work than their colleagues. This hindering each other frustrates and inactivates dedicated activists, as well as hurting internal unity. This short coming has caused the Congress to see such bad days in the recent

past. Even today, no other party has the experience that the Congress has, nor its vision, nor its competence and capabilities. If we become united and fully active, no other party can stand taller.

Q. How to re-strengthen the Congress to the earlier level?

A. The Congress is re-emerging. In the villages people now are remembering the Congress work. This is the time when if every activist becomes fully and sincerely active, and remains united, Congress can become as strong as when UPA-1 came. People are gradually recognizing the false propaganda of the BJP. It is necessary that we strongly propagate facts about our achievements and lies and confusions spread by our opponents. Every type of media, meetings, functions and NGO's should be used. Social media is very important because the youth is more influenced by this. The youth has not seen the recent history and believes even the lies sent out through the social media. It is also important to create awareness amongst the women. Women are more influenced by emotional issues, and the BJP uses it in their favour by reaching half truths to them in an emotional manner. There is less awareness amongst the women of eastern UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, etc. in the villages, due to lack of education. Wrongs done by non-Congress governments in particular regions need to be attacked loudly.

Q. What were your other interests?

A. Reading and Football. I used to organize yearly games.

MAHILA CONGRESS

AIMC organized a Protest Demonstration at BJP Headquarters on 5th March 2016 against enforcement of tax on EPF in General Budget which was adversely effecting crores of service class people across the country. Effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was also burnt. Finally the Government had to roll back the recommendation.

On 11th March 2016, AIMC held a protest against insensitive attitude of HRD Minister Smt. Smriti Irani wherein a doctor was crushed to death under a car of her cavalcade. Effigies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Smt. Smriti Irani were burnt in front of her house.

On 29th April 2016, AIMC held a demonstration opposite BJP National Headquarters against the false allegations of the BJP Government in the case of Augusta Westland deal in which the Government is trying to implicate Congress leadership. The three-in-one effigy of Narendra Modi, Amit Shah and Subramaniam Swamy was set ablaze by the protesters.

The "International Women's Day" was celebrated across the country by Mahila Congress units by organizing various kinds of programs with the theme 'UDAAN'. Some of the programs were attended by AIMC President such as in Kerala, Delhi, Punjab, Maharashtra, Odisha and Karnataka. All AIMC Incharges also attended the celebrations in the States under their charge.

AIMC President went to Assam from 5th April to 9th April 2016 for election campaign where she addressed huge election rallies in a number of constituencies. She went to Nagpur to attend the 125th Birth Anniversary Celebration of Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar organized by Shri K. Raju, Chairman, SC Department, AICC.

Under the leadership of AIMC President,

Madhya Pradesh Mahila Congress presented 3,00,000 (3 Lakh) bangles to the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shri Shivraj Singh Chauhan after holding a huge demonstration against the rising crime against women in Madhya Pradesh which is on the number one position in the country for increasing rate of crime against women for the past five years consecutively. Approximately 5000 Mahila Congress functionaries joined the protest.

AIMC President led a human chain formed by Chhattisgarh PMC in protest against the consumption of excessive alcohol by men in the State on 19th April 2016.

On 9th & 10th March, organizational Meetings of Uttar Pradesh Mahila Congress were convened by President UP PMC in Lucknow which were addressed by AIMC Incharges.

The All India Mahila Congress directed all State Mahila Congress units to hold protests throughout the Country against the Undemocratic & Vindictive Actions of BJP Government in the centre on 4th April. All State units organized this program in a big way at State and District levels.

Mahila Congress Conventions were held in Delhi on 4th & 24th April; Saraikelan and Singhbhum Districts, Jharkhand on 9th & 11th April; Jammu on 10th April; Fatehgarh Sahib, Jalandhar, and Amritsar Districts, Punjab on 18th, 19th & 20th April respectively. All the conventions were attended by the AIMC Incharges of the concerned States.

Odisha PMC organized marches towards collector office in each district of Odisha against potable water scarcity in the State on 11th April 2016. Goa PMC held a demonstration against the misrule of BJP led Central and State Government.

125th Birth Anniversary of Dr. Bhim



Rao Ambedkar was celebrated by Mahila Congress in every district across the country on 14th April 2016. Various kinds of programs were organized on this occasion.

On 21st April, Uttar Pradesh Mahila Congress held a meeting of Mahila Incharges of 18 Divisions to take a stock of the organizational activities in districts under their charge. On 22nd April Shri Prashant Kishore, election strategist, appointed by the AICC for Uttar Pradesh Assembly Elections, convened a meeting of entire Mahila Congress organization of Uttar Pradesh to invite suggestions regarding success of the Party in forthcoming Assembly Elections early next year.

In order to create awareness on severe water crises in Gujarat, Mahila Congress is participating in Pani Yatras held in 14 different locations across the State. Though the program is organized by and held under the umbrella of Gujarat PCC, Mahila Congress registered its presence with great enthusiasm.

Odisha PMC held a protest rally against chit fund scam in the State in which hundreds of people were cheated and consequently lost their money. Chandigarh Mahila Congress held protest against BJP for the shortage of Water in the city. ❖

(Dr. Shobhna Shah)

AICC DIARY



UNILATERAL BLOCKADE

Spokesperson: Dr. Abhishek Manu Singhvi: He said that Unilateral blockade imposed by China in United Nations thereby negating India's attempt to put dreaded terrorist and Jaish-e-Muhammad Chief, Maulana Masood in Al Qaeda sanctions committee of UN at the instance of Pakistani establishment has again brought out the failed policy of Modi Government vis-à-vis tackling terror and ensuring International sanction against anti-India terrorist outfits/organizations as also individuals.

The entire Indian security establishment is stunned by this huge setback to fight the ilk of terrorist organizations and individuals like Maulana Masood Azhar.

The Congress believes and the Nation sees this as proof of a failed government policy on this issue, of clumsy flip flops of the government and the ruling party and as a negation of all the incremental accretions achieved by previous governments.

These humongous failures on diverse and multiple fronts underline the PM's and BJP's complete incapacity and ineptitude in handling such delicate matters. They deserve urgent and elaborate explanatory responses from the PM and immediate remedial actions by his Govt. Friday, 1st April, 2016.

ADDICTED TO MAKING FALSE CLAIMS

Spokesperson Shri Anand Sharma and Shri Randeep Singh Surjewala: Shri Anand Sharma said that we have given as to how public money was squandered, the tall claims which were made beginning June 2005 and trillions of cubic feet of Gas worth about Rs. 2,20,000 Crore which was never produced and never found. As Chief Minister, he had made publicly that the discovery has been made. He had made tall claims that he and his State will be able to save Rs. 84,000 Crore on the Oil Import Bill of the country. He had also said that Gujarat will be the Petroleum Capital of the country and the Government of India, the then Government, should hand over this responsibility to him and to 5 Crore Gujaratis. He has also made the Public Sector Corporation and the Consortium which was created for which two private entities were involved to invest in 64 other Blocks. We are giving a Press Release and the Media will find that how many of these Blocks have already been surrendered and the CAG Report has also given a detailed account.

This shows that Prime Minister is habitual of making false claims, boastful claims, and grand announcements and finally, feels that he is unaccountable.

We hope that the Prime Minister and his Government will listen as to

what they have said while upholding every single report of the CAG when it pertained to the period of UPA Government or even now of the various States particularly his recent speech in Assam and we shall persist with this demand. Tuesday, 5th April, 2016.

REVEALING FACTS

Spokesperson: Dr. Abhishek Manu Singhvi: Dr. Singhvi said that the country has been reeling under complete drought situation for last two years. The country is in the State, that is unfortunate pitiable and shocking. The Supreme Court repeatedly asked the pointed question as to why the Central government is not declaring drought as the national calamity under the Disaster Management Act.

At last, two issues so far as water is concerned, the budgetary allocation for rural water, when we left the office in 2013-14 was Rs. 9700 crore. It has come down to 5000 crore in 2016-17. It is 50% down you see we talked about Latur, about India and about drought. The best way to measure the rural agony and anguish is to be found out from the demand and sale of motorbikes in the countryside. It is for the first time after 2007-08 that such a huge damage has been recorded.

In short, I will like to tell that this government is neither attentive to water crisis nor the galloping draught that has hit around 13 states of the country hard. Same is the case with unemployment. The common masses continue to face the pangs of drought. Sadly, the quantity of relief materials being sent for draught hit areas fall hugely short of requirements and the relief materials being ferried by buses and trains need to be increased ten-fold immediately. Wednesday, 13th April, 2016.

AGREEMENTS REACHED

Spokesperson Shri Anand Sharma: He said that on the 12th of this month, day before yesterday, Defence Minister Shri Manohar Parrikar and US Defence Secretary Mr. Ashton Carter had a bilateral meeting and thereafter an announcement was made that India and the United States of America have reached an in principle understanding to negotiate and sign an agreement - Logistics Support Agreement to provide logistical support, fuel supplies to each others' military from the respective bases in India and the United States. Though, America is India's strategic partner and there is an on-going Defence Co-operation but we have strong reservations and concerns over this development.

The LSA - Logistic Support Agreement - was earlier proposed by the US in the year 2004. For over one decade the two countries have been in talks but India had resisted it throughout the 10 years of UPA

Government, we did not agree because we see this as intrusive and also which will be construed or misconstrued by India's other strategic partners as India being drawn into a Military Alliance.

This LMOU - the Agreement I referred to is one of the three Agreements The Foundational Agreements as they are called the second one is CISMOA i.e. The Communication and Information Security MOA and the third is BECA - Basic Exchange and Co-operation Agreement.

We have strong reservations and concerns on both the Logistic Support Agreement - LSA as well as CISMOA. The CISMOA would take into its embrace the complete communication network of the Indian Armed Forces, its Radar, its Signals including that of the Air Force and the Indian Navy which can jeopardize our operational preparedness and strategies. The Government has said that they want to have this Logistic Support Agreement on a case-to-case basis, on a specific case-to-case basis and formal arrangements already exist between India-USA, India-Russia and our other partners when there is a specific requirement. Therefore, the question arises and the fundamental one why there is a need of a formal agreement.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and his Government do not have a National mandate to push India into a situation in closer, deeper Military Alliance and become part of the larger operational designs and requirements of the US in Asia, in Pacific and South China Sea. It would be detrimental to India's strategic interests, our security interest and also undermine or rather underrate the critical geo-strategic balance and also the balance for forces in India's extended neighbourhood in the Region. When you have such an agreement put in place, it will also require, though the Government may deny, the presence of support personnel for maintenance and repair in your Military Bases i.e. in India's Military Bases and that will further be taking a step towards a formal Military Alliance. We have also concerns that it will be, in fact, inviting opposition and serious concerns of India's strategic partners i.e. Russia and even China.

We had, in fact, in the year 2005 entered into the Defence Framework Agreement even with America, and 2006 we had signed a Maritime Security Agreement, it is not that we are opposed to Defence Co-operation with a strategic partner but we are totally opposed to be drawn into a Military Alliance and to be perceived as moving into a closer and deeper Military Block situation vis-à-vis the operation which has in it the entire Asian Region and I referred to earlier Pacific and South China Sea.

We hope that the Government listens to these words of wisdom and also respects the fact that for ten years India was resisting it. Thursday, 14th April, 2016.

PATIDAR AGITATION

Spokesperson: Dr. Shakeel Ahmad: The country is in the grip of anarchy. A pitiable condition is pervading in Gujarat all across from one corner to another. Pattidar movement is in full swing and more than half of Gujarat is reeling under its impact. There is bandh; interruptions of internet, breakdown of mobile network and snapping of digital services are being capped by violent outbursts bringing the state to a virtual standstill. We have come to know that a person was even killed. It's unfortunate to know that when CM Anandi Ben Patel was asked about it, her reply was disgusting that such movement often

taken place. The Chief Minister is the administrative head of the State, she should sit down and discuss what needs to be done in order to bring normalcy. She should have expressed her deep anguish and sentiments and try to talk the matter out. It is absolutely unfortunate. Monday, 18th April, 2016.

WATER CRISIS

Spokesperson: Randeep Singh Surjewala: He said that a grave agrarian and drinking water crisis plagues nearly 40% of India's population today. Over 33 crore people in 2,55,000 villages in 10 states of India are really under a severe drought. If you add the states of Bihar, Uttarakhand and Gujarat which are also having drought like conditions. Then, the total population of India affected by agrarian crisis and drought is nearly 48.27 crore in 300,000 villages in nearly 300 districts which is to give you the magnitude that nearly 50% of India's 6,38,000 or nearly 50% of India's 688 districts.

The fact is that around 300 districts, 3 lakhs villages of 13 states comprising 40% of Indians are ruling under severe drinking water scarcity, and Modi government is gloating over it. As a result, hordes of people are fleeing from villages to cities, farmers are committing suicide and those still living in countryside are faced with monstrous food crisis. As per two private surveys conducted in Bundelkhand, people are compelled to eat rotis of grass in an extreme attempt of keeping the body and soul together. The Supreme Court had to come down heavily and admonish it for maintaining its Raj Dharam.

All the state governments should be allocated money from the National Disaster Funds. The PM must call in meeting of officials and Chief Ministers of all drought hit states within few hours and it is ensured that they get all necessary help during a few days. Wednesday, 20th April, 2016.

SECOND PHASE OF BUDGET SESSION

Spokesperson: Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad: He said that the second phase of the budget session is starting, in the meantime, various things started and there are many issues, which have been worrisome. The Congress party and the other oppositions need to raise them on the floor of the House.

There are two issues which we should raise and try to draw attention of the government. There is an issue for which the congress has already given notice. The way drought is engulfing the country it has led to a serious crisis of drinking water, especially in Maharashtra, Marathawada, Vidharva, Karnataka, Gujarat and other parts of the country. We will like to raise the issue and demand reply from the government.

The second major issue concerns the killing of democracy by the BJP government. The BJP never had belief in the democratic institutions and values. It became evident after the Modi government started toppling the popularly elected governments first in Arunachal government in March. The MLAs with the proactive support of the BJP's central government conspired the dismissal of the speaker in a bar, and in another instance another government was toppled in a coup hatched in a restaurant. By this way the government which enjoyed 2/3rds majority was razed to the ground and an attempt was made to install its own government.

Similarly for last 2-3 months a political melodrama is being enacted

in Uttarakhand where the Harish Rawatji's majority government was put in suspended animation twice by invoking the President's Rule. An attempt to install the BJP government was unsuccessfully made. They are still trying to get it done. We have to express our angst and anguish in the parliament and we have full hope of getting the support of the house in our efforts to save the democracy from being vandalized at the hands of the BJP. Monday, 25th April, 2016.

VIJAYA MALLYA IS ABSCONDER

Spokesperson: Shri Jairam Ramesh: He said Mr. Vijay Mallya borrowed Rs. 9,000 Crores from the Banks and he has been declared a defaulter - rightly so his passport has been revoked - rightly so because of the pressure of the Opposition, because of the Media pressure and because of the Supreme Court, Government was forced to act on Mr. Vijay Mallya. Mr. Vijay Mallya like Mr. Lalit Modi is an absconder and he should be brought back to India.

At the same time, there is a Company in Gujarat Gujarat Government owned Company called GSPC Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation - which has borrowed Rs. 19,700 Crores from 15 Banks. It has to repay the Banks annually Rs. 1,800 Crores in terms of interest alone and its income before interest every year is hardly Rs. 80 Crores. These are all numbers given in the CAG Report. This is a Scam of unprecedented proportion Rs. 19,700 Crores was borrowed from 15 Nationalized Banks, no Gas was discovered 11 years have gone by Prime Minister who was then the Chief Minister said that this will be India's richest Gas find.

Our contention is that this scam could not have taken place without the full knowledge or involvement of the Gujarat Chief Minister. Action should be taken, there should be an enquiry, where has the money gone, how Rs. 19,700 Crores have been used and why after 11 years, the KG Basin of GSPC remains a dud investment after Rs. 19,700 Crore were the borrowings.

The second issue was on Uttarakhand - Today the Rajya Sabha did not run because we raised the issue of the murder of democracy in Arunachal Pradesh and in Uttarakhand but we gave notice for a discussion on Drought which the Chairman has agreed on Wednesday. We will have a discussion on the Drought situation but the issue of Uttarakhand, murder of democracy remains on our agenda and there are no prospects of the Parliament functioning formally till this issue is settled.

This is a deliberate attempt on the part of the Government that before Parliament meets; they do some 'Hungama' or the other in order to ensure that Parliament does not function and does not run. Uttarakhand is an example of this. Monday, 25th, April, 2016.

NEGLIGENCE IN PURSUING CBI ENQUIRY

Spokesperson: Shri A.K. Antony, Shri Randeep Singh Surjewala and Shri P.L. Punia: Shri Antony said, to cover up their criminal nexus and negligence in pursuing the CBI enquiry initiated by the UPA Government to find out names of culprits and details of corruption and to punish them. NDA Government was sleeping for the last two years without doing anything. Instead, they were trying to find solutions to bring back again this corrupt company to the Defence deals with Indian Government and private partners. The Government under a contract with the Agusta Westland, UK to procure 12 Helicopters for the use of VVIPs as per the urgent requirements of the Indian Air Force, there was a Clause of Integrity Pact that at any stage of the contract, any illegal activity i.e. corruption, engagement of middlemen and any other kind of corruption on the part of the Company is proved Government of India reserves the right to cancel the contract and take all legal actions against the Company.

That is why, the moment, we received from Italy that there is a possibility of involvement of middlemen in this contract, day one onwards the entire Government of India under UPA went on action. First, it tried through our Embassy in Rome to find out the details of the case and since the contract was with Agusta Westland UK, we pursued with the UK Government with the help of Ministry of External Affairs, but we were not able to get tangible evidence at that time but we did not leave it there, we pursued it.

For the first time in the history of GOI, we decided to fight the case in Italy, we became a party in Italian Court in Naples to get the records. Then, we got the records. At every sitting of the Naples Court, we sent Government of India representatives to watch the case. One officer from the Defence Ministry, one Officer of the CBI and occasionally one officer from MEA was attending every hearing of the case. Besides, we decided to cancel the contract and also the Government ordered a CBI enquiry to find out the truth. When it was proved that there was a middle man, we not only took the action to get the back the advance but also the Bank Guarantee of the Company. The Company refused but we tried through the Bank of Italy to get back the money, when they refused. Then, we took up the case in Milan Court, engaged the Lawyer there. He fought the case, we won the case. We got entire Bank Guarantee - as a result, we not only got the advance amount we paid to them, we got more money, we got more money from them, Advance paid plus Bank Guarantee, besides, we cancelled the contract as well.

But before we banned all the purchases with this Company including all its subsidiaries. Wednesday, 27th April, 2016.



REMEMBERING RAJIVJI

“Hum mein hain Rajiv”



Indian Youth Congress organized a National Program “हम में है राजीव” (Hum mein hain Rajiv) to mark 25th Death Anniversary of Late Rajiv Gandhi at Indira Gandhi Stadium on 21st May, 2016. The Program started with an Introductory speech by IYC President Amarinder Singh Raja Brar. He said “Rajiv Gandhi was not a person but an Idea, that is still alive within us. Each and Every Youth of the Country has Rajiv in them as he bought the revolution in Science and Technology in building the Nation.

Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi said “Rajiv ji had introduced computers in the country, allowed people to vote at the age of 18 to strengthen our democracy. Forces like Terrorism and intolerance took away Rajiv from us but

cannot take his ideology. No one can achieve success for long time if he works against ideology.

Many Senior Congress Leaders made their presence and inspired youth with their speech

on the life, work and Nation building activities of Late Rajiv Gandhi. Prominent Leaders present among were AICC General Secretary Digvijay Singh, Sheila Dixit, Shri R.P.N Singh, Ghulam Nabi Azad, C.P. Joshi, Oscar Fernandes,



Raj Babbar, Ashok Tanwar, Kumari Shailaja, Ajit Jogi, Shakil Ahmed, Shri Janardhan Dwivedi and Jitu Patwari. IYC Incharge Suraj Hegde and all the Youth Congress National Office Bearers and State president were also present. ❖