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SANDESH

voice of the nation

Congress Reaffirms Faith in Sonia Gandhi



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Photo Courtesy: PTI

PARTY FORMS GOVERNMENT IN GOA

Congress President's Election at a Glance



Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, the proposer, and other senior leaders during the filing of nomination of Smt. Sonia Gandhi



Shri Oscar Fernandes, Chairman CEC completing the formalities of election process of Congress President at the AICC headquarters



Huge gathering of Senior Congress leaders witness the occasion



Congress workers in jubilant mood outside the AICC headquarters

Photo Courtesy: PTI

**ONLY ONE SUN IN THE ORBIT
ONLY ONE LEADER FOR THE CONGRESS**

H. Vasanthakumar, M.A.,
Member, AICC; General Secretary, TNCC;
Chairman, Traders' Cell - TNCC
Editor & Publisher, Intraya Indian

**OUR PRIDE IS MOTHER INDIA
OUR GUIDE IS MOTHER SONIA**

Advt

Congress President with Foreign Visitors



Congress President and UPA Chairperson, Smt. Sonia Gandhi, with former President of the United States, Mr. Bill Clinton, during their meeting in New Delhi on 26th May 2005.



Congress President and UPA Chairperson, Smt. Sonia Gandhi calls on Sri Lanka President, Smt. Chandrika Kumaratunge, in New Delhi on 3rd June 2005

Photo Courtesy: PTI

1st Anniversary of UPA Government



UPA Chairperson, Smt Sonia Gandhi and Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh releasing a report titled 'A Caring Government: One Year Completion of UPA Government', in New Delhi on 22nd May 2005.



Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, addressing a meeting on the completion of one year of UPA Government in New Delhi on 22nd May, 2005. Also seen are UPA Chairperson, Smt Sonia Gandhi and other alliance partners of the UPA.



Dear friends

I would like to begin by thanking our party members who reposed faith in me and re-elected me to the high office of Congress Party President. It is indeed an honour and a responsibility to head India's oldest party. A party that gave India its independence, ensured democracy and laid the foundation for its economic growth. With the support of our party members we must lead the Party on to becoming a true representative of the spirit of India and our great democracy. This means following the lesson of peace and non-violence that Gandhiji taught us, the scientific spirit and respect for the Constitution, especially for secularism that we learnt from Nehruji, the concern for the poor that Indiraji gave us, and of course, Rajivji's commitment to democracy by advocating effective panchayati raj institutions and for ushering in the technological revolution in our country.



This has been a memorable year for the Party. After a gap of eight years, we have come back to power by winning the people's popular mandate. With our allies, and with Dr. Manmohan Singh as Prime Minister, we have in the past year provided a good and effective government. The UPA's report card is an impressive one. Yet we must not sit on our laurels. Coming to power is not a goal in itself. Instead, we must, as dedicated party members, ask ourselves how we can further consolidate and live up to the people's mandate. We must work together to ensure that the promises we made to the people are kept. The Party must also endeavour to respect and listen to the views of our ordinary grass-root workers. It is ultimately, their enthusiasm, hard work and loyalty that has kept the Party alive all these years. They are the cogs that ensure the smooth working of this great machine and their needs and opinions must be respected.

At the organizational level, we must strengthen our village and grassroot organizations. Party elections are currently being held across the country. We must ensure that inner party democracy is maintained and where possible we must work towards a consensus. Factionalism within our Party has cost a lot in the past. Every party member must understand that Party interest comes before individual and sectarian interest. The Congress, unlike other parties, is not a cadre-based party nor do we impose unilateral and ideological imperatives on our members. Instead, we always seek to incorporate and work with different opinions and ideas. It is the broad based and consensus making approach of the Congress that has not only helped maintain India's pluralistic democracy, it has also ensured that the Congress works as an umbrella organization for the country. The Congress is like a large tree under whose shade many can shelter.

Today, our task lies in maintaining both the spirit of democracy and taking the lead in formulating policies that will lead our country forward towards taking its place as a modern, secular, plural and just nation in the world. We as Indians, and Congress party members have a lot to be proud of. Let us ensure that we do nothing that will impede the progress of our nation and of our Party. We must once again reiterate our commitment to secularism and democracy and to ensuring that our charter of reforms with a human face continue.

Once again, I want to thank you all for your trust and faith in me. I hope with your help and cooperation to continue with our commitment towards the nation and its people.



Welcome Election

The election of Smt. Sonia Gandhi as the president of the All India Congress Committee for the third time has brought happiness to Congress workers all over the country. In her leadership since 1998, the Congress has become stronger and the United Progressive Alliance has been able to form government at the Centre. She has set a unique example in the world by refusing to take prime minister's post. I am confident that under her leadership the Congress party will become more powerful.

- *Md. Jamil Lohar,
Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan*

Right to Information

With the passing of the 'Right to Information Bill' in Parliament there was a feeling of happiness in the people of India. This will go a long way in making our democracy strong and would help the Central and state governments to maintain transparency in the programmes evolved for the upliftment of the masses and to an extent will help in restricting corruption. I would like to thank all the MPs and the Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi for passing such a Bill in Parliament and also to our alliance partners.

- *Vijay Kumar Gupta,
Hajipur, Bihar*

The Three Crucial States

The Congress party should seriously be concerned about its prospects in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand. These three states account for a large number of MPs which prove decisive in the formation of a government at the Centre. It is my earnest request to the Congress president, Smt. Sonia Gandhi to entrust these states only truly committed and dedicated leaders who care more for party's welfare and not for themselves. If something is not done today, tomorrow can be too late!

- *Kamlakar Girdhar
Shipra, Sun City, UP*

Good Article on Left

The Congress Sandesh magazine has made a unique place in the

hearts of the Congress workers. I was thrilled to read the May issue of the publication which boldly spoke about the hypocrisy of the CPM in an article by Shri Ramesh Chennithala. If such analytical articles are published Congress Sandesh will become popular to even general public.

- *Ashok Kumar,
Mahavir Enclave, Delhi*

Highly condemnable

The car blast in Pulwama, Kashmir, which claimed 15 lives, including those of two school students, is highly condemnable. It is a barbaric, inhuman, uncivilised act. The army has claimed that it has identified the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen as responsible for the blast by intercepting

the outfit's communication. Could the army not have done so before it was too late?

- *A. Jainulabdeen,
Chennai.*

Communal at Last

No one in the Sangh Parivar, it seems, was in a mood to forgive Shri Advani. The BJP's one-page compromise resolution holding Jinnah solely responsible for Partition drastically undermined his standing in the party. What course the Advani issue will take in the long run is unknown but one thing is clear: BJP or the RSS is in no mood to rise above communal policies.

- *Sarfaraz Khalid,
Aligarh, U.P.*

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- *Kamlakar Girdhar
Shipra, Sun City, UP*



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The Congress party has a tradition of rich values and principles. These are nurtured by the democratic process it follows strictly in electing its representatives in organizational elections. This was very much visible during the recent election of the Congress president. That Smt. Sonia Gandhi was elected unopposed for the third successive term shows the love and regards the Congressmen have for her. Congressmen, who filed around 100 nominations on her behalf indicates the extent to which the partymen repose faith in her leadership. They are aware that only Smt. Sonia Gandhi is capable of steering the party to safe harbour in this choppy sea of cut-throat politics this will not only benefit the party but the nation too. When the entire organizational election process is completed the party should emerge stronger and more dynamic with younger generation coming to the fore ready to take on the challenges of nation-building. It has also been amply proved that Smt. Gandhi is the cohesive power in keeping the alliance partners together and maintaining harmony in the United Progressive Alliance. As she enters the third term she faces several challenges at different level. The foremost is the need to implement the Common Minimum Programme and reigning in forces which take extreme position unmindful of realities. This is no easy job, but she can do this successfully with a united, strong Congress Party behind her.

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To Our Readers / Subscribers

In view of the increased cost of paper and printing we are compelled to raise the per copy price of **Congress Sandesh** to Rs. 10/- w.e.f. June 2002. Subscription charges for fresh subscribers: for One Year Rs. 100/-, Two Years Rs. 175/-, Three Years Rs. 250/ Outstation cheques should include Rs. 20 towards realization charges. Cheques may be sent in favour of 'Sandesh Trust'

Editor



Congress India's Destiny

The re-election of Smt. Sonia Gandhi as Congress President for third time is an assurance that the nation is in safe hands. Her unanimous election assures that the entire rank and file of the premier political party of India is behind her and with her. It is once again a pointer that the Congress party looks to her for guidance and depends on her to lead it through thick and thin. The reason is Smt. Gandhi has come to reflect and represent the principles, policies and values that the Congress Party nourished since its inception over 100 years ago. These precious legacies, not by coincidence but by concurrence, are shared and cherished by the entire nation. In good or bad times, in power or out of power, Congress means India and India means Congress. The very survival of India, its unity in diversity, is irrevocably linked to the survival of the Congress Party. And the political stability of India is very closely dependent on the fortunes of the Congress Party as the recent history shows. Any weakening of Congress means weakening of the political system and emergence of forces inimical to the ethos and progress of India. It is this irrevocable relationship that makes Congress the destiny of India. No other political party can claim this unique privilege that involves onerous responsibilities. The Congress Party sets standards, rules of political culture, policies that govern the people and programmes that take the nation forward. It is not surprising that every political party is a replica of Congress one way or the other. And every reform worth its name in every sphere of life have been thought of and initiated by Congress. Political parties which had once opposed tooth and nail economic reforms, panchayati raj system, etc. have come around to adopt them when they discovered that these reforms were indeed what the people want. Congress alone can feel the pulse of the people and care for them the way they need. This

does not mean Congress has no follies. It has. And probably it will always have. Like India, Congress too suffers from several ills. Nevertheless, it remains the lifestream of India.

Changing times, expanding educational opportunities bringing into political sphere new forces with new aspirations, manifest on political parties. Since Congress is the premier political party the affect of this new tide on it is more glaring. Congress tries to absorb and adjust itself to new realities without loosing its moorings. Yet, sometimes, it receives setbacks, which ofcourse are temporary. But Congress alone has the capacity to bring about order in the political scene of the country. Ever since she took over the reigns of the Party, Smt. Sonia Gandhi has been making relentless efforts in this direction. The formation of the UPA is one major step in this direction. The Congress Party strongly believes that unless like-minded political forces unite genuinely, the political scene in the country will continue to be in a flux leading to anarchy and retarding progress. All this also calls for proper and periodical introspection within the Congress Party. Congress governments in States should stand out for exemplary governance, integrity and commitment. Central leadership must review

dispassionately the performance of these governments and guide them to keep on right track. New policies and programmes of Congress governments must be examined ruthlessly and a close watch must be kept on their implementation. Similarly, within the party organization too constant review is necessary to keep it fit and dynamic. The party has chosen Smt. Gandhi for the third time for the presidentship. Its real duty begins now – extending her constructive support in her endeavour to make Congress once again a vibrant force and to set India's political house in order. ♦



Sonia Gandhi Galvanized Secular Forces

Congress Working Committee

*The Congress Working Committee met on
16th May, 2005 in Parliament Annexe, New Delhi
and passed the following resolution:*

On the eve of the first anniversary of the Congress-led UPA government the Congress Working Committee recalls with pride the role played by the Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi in galvanizing all democratic and secular forces against the BJP-led coalition which led to the formation of the UPA government. Smt. Sonia Gandhi's unique act of self-abnegation of power will remain a source of inspiration for political workers across the country.

Having recalled this, the Congress Working Committee congratulates the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh and the Chairperson of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Smt. Sonia Gandhi for a successful completion of one year of the government. The CWC also places on record, its appreciation and acknowledges, the quiet dignity and qualities of head and heart which the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh brings to bear on his august office.

Under his leadership, the last 12 months have seen a large number of policies and programmes implemented. Special focus has been given to the welfare of kisans and khet mazdoors and to the well-being of the weaker sections, the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, Minorities, Weavers, Women and others. There have been unprecedented increases in Central government's investments on elementary education, rural health, nutrition, women and child development and rural infrastructure. Bank credits have been provided to 50 lakh additional farmers. Backward states and districts have received more funds from the Central government. A Food for Work Programme has been launched in 150 most backward districts to eventually become a national rural employment guarantee programme. In spite of astronomical increase in international oil prices, kerosene prices for the common man have not been increased. Historic initiatives have been taken to restore peace in Jammu & Kashmir and in the North East. The last year has seen, after a long time, substantial expenditure on the modernization of the armed forces and a special department has been set up to address the concerns of ex-servicemen and their families. New measures to improve transparency and accountability in administration have been taken. Major advances in our nuclear and space technology

programmes have taken place. Economic growth has maintained its momentum and business confidence is high. India has acquired new global prestige.

In the last year the secular credentials of the Indian state have been reaffirmed and reinforced. The CWC welcomes the insulation of our governing and educational institutions from communal ideology and the reintroduction of professional excellence. It reiterates that the UPA has to remain constantly vigilant against those forces and groups which are inimical to the ideology of a secular state.

The CWC is proud of the initiatives taken by the Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi in mobilizing the Congress Party for relief and rehabilitation of the tsunami victims. The CWC also lauds the magnificent manner in which the Prime Minister and his government responded to the tsunami tragedy which evoked international praise.

The CWC congratulates the Congress President and chairperson of the UPA and the Prime Minister for their untiring efforts to ensure the cohesive functioning of the alliance. On this occasion, the CWC also congratulates the UPA partners and the Left Parties, and appreciates their contribution and cooperation. The CWC urges the Prime Minister to consolidate the achievements made so far and to continue his relentless pursuit for the implementation of the National Common Minimum Programme to fulfill the expectations of the people.

The CWC regrets that the BJP and its allies have yet to come to terms with their rejection by the people in last year's General Election. The corruption, communalization and social conflict agenda of the NDA has inflicted deep wounds on our polity which will require careful correction. The total lack of issues and real concern for the people, that has resulted in their disrupting and boycotting Parliament thereby seeking to weaken our democratic institutions.

The CWC considers the first anniversary of the Congress-led UPA government to be an occasion for collective reflection and review. While the accomplishments of the past year give satisfaction, a vast political, economic and social agenda still awaits. It is to that agenda, reflected in a very substantial measure in the National Common Minimum programme to which the CWC rededicates itself. ❖



Ministers Should Meet Party Workers

Sonia Gandhi

NEW DELHI: A week ahead of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government's first anniversary, the Congress Working Committee (CWC) on 16th May saw the approaching milestone as an "occasion for collective reflection and review." It expressed satisfaction over the accomplishments while conceding that "a vast political, economic and social agenda still awaits."

The CWC in its two-page resolution applauded Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi for "galvanizing all democratic and secular forces against the BJP-led coalition which led to the formation of the UPA Government." It appreciated Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh for the "quiet dignity and qualities of head and heart" that he brought to the office.

Besides detailing the various initiatives taken by the UPA

Government under Dr. Singh's leadership — points echoed by the Prime Minister in his report to the CWC — the resolution noted with satisfaction that "the secular credentials of the Indian State" were reaffirmed and reinforced in the past one year. It reiterated the need to be eternally vigilant against "forces and groups which are inimical to the ideology of a secular state."

The UPA Government being the first-ever Congress-led coalition at the Centre, the arrangement was acknowledged in the resolution in which Smt. Gandhi and Dr. Singh were congratulated on "their untiring efforts to ensure the cohesive functioning of the alliance."

Congratulating the UPA partners and Left parties and appreciating their "contribution and cooperation", the resolution sought to factor in their concerns by urging the Prime Minister to "continue his relentless pursuit of the implementation of the National Common Minimum Programme to fulfil the expectations of the people."

Also, the CWC noted with regret that the Bharatiya Janata Party and its allies had not come to terms with their defeat in the last general election, and their frequent disruption of Parliament. "The corruption, communalization and social conflict agenda of the NDA has inflicted

deep wounds on our polity which will require careful correction." Smt. Gandhi, in her opening remarks, commented on these ills plaguing India as a legacy of the NDA rule while underlining the fact that Dr. Singh had ably steered the country through the mire despite the limitations of coalition politics.

Smt. Gandhi stressed the need for ministers to meet workers as it is they who interacted with the masses and were in a position to spread the "good word" about the Congress-led Government.



Briefing mediapersons, All India Congress Committee general secretary, Smt. Ambika Soni said Smt. Gandhi also urged the Ministers to keep in mind the aspirations of the workers so that they did not feel alienated.

In his report, the Prime Minister informed the CWC that the Government had set aside an initial corpus of Rs. 5,000 crores for a Backward Regions Grant Fund. Further, he said the Government planned to set up a dedicated high-speed rail freight corridor connecting Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata with Japanese help.

Besides the Prime Minister and Smt. Gandhi, 25 members spoke at the meeting. Most of the members highlighted areas of governance, which ought to be addressed. ♦

Kalita Stays PCC Chief

GUWAHATI: Shri Bhubaneswar Kalita has taken over as the president of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) for the second consecutive term on May 22, 2005.

It may be mentioned here that Kalita was the only candidate to file nomination paper for the post of Assam PCC president and he was formally declared elected. The general body of the APCC, in a meeting authorized Shri Subhash Chopra, Kalita and CM Tarun Gogoi to nominate the other office-bearers of the APCC and AICC members from the State.



Representing the True Spirit of the Congress Party

Dr. Ravni Thakur

Smt. Sonia Gandhi as Congress President

I came into politics with a purpose, to contribute all that I could to the welfare of our people, to the strengthening of our Party and to preserving the secular heritage and traditions of land

— Sonia Gandhi

While we celebrate our return to power after eight years in opposition, it is important to remember the role played by Smt. Gandhi in bringing the party back to power. On its comeback trail under the Presidentship of Smt. Sonia Gandhi, it first went onto win power in fifteen states. It also put together a programme that understood and was prepared to make alliances and accept the reality of coalition politics in India. It was under her personal initiative and lead that the Party was able to make the correct political alliances. This was coupled with the hard and sincere election campaign that she carried out by walking miles every day. Meeting people at the grassroots, talking to them, learning about their problems and ensuring that these were represented in the Congress charter. The BJP of course, showed their true colours by carrying out a disgusting, no holds barred campaign. Attacking Smt Gandhi in the most foul language, they proved their own lack of dignity. Smt. Gandhi preserved, almost single-handedly, even the Press admitted, and ensured that the Congress, not the BJP came back to power. The Congress is, justifiably, proud and honoured, to have her back as President again.

Smt. Sonia Gandhi has shown her commitment to Party rather than to power by choosing through consensus and discussion with other Party colleagues, Dr. Manmohan Singh, one of the world's ablest administrators and economists, as the Prime Minister. This has gone down as a historic example of what true loyalty and dedication to a nation and to the Party means. Smt. Gandhi has never sought power or desired it. It has, literally been thrust upon her and she has emerged as a fine statesman through the personal sorrow and loss that she has suffered. The graceful manner in which she unhesitatingly relinquished power despite all party workers and senior leaders asking her to accept

the post of Prime Minister, is a reflection of her selfless dedication to the Party.

At another level, this separation of the executive from the political has set a new method of governance within the country. It has led to a degree of decentralization of power and cut through the levels of coterie

culture that can hamper good governance, especially within a coalition government. This act of Smt. Gandhi's, will lead, not just to the rejuvenation of the Party but also provide excellent governance and management of India's executive. We have already seen this in action by the excellent performance of the UPA government over the last year.

However, it is the new face, vision and organizational structure that she has given to the Party that I would like to highlight in this article in our Party journal meant for our Congress workers throughout India.

A Vision For The Party

From the very beginning Smt. Sonia Gandhi has never pretended to be anything other than some one who can help the Party remain true to the principles given to us by Mahatma Gandhi and Nehruji. This was something continued by Smt Indira Gandhi and Shri Rajiv Gandhi. It is these principles that have kept the Congress Party alive all these years and still finds resonance in the success of India's secular and democratic traditions.

Smt. Gandhi comes from a family that has contributed not only their own wealth but also their lives to the nation. Nehruji gave away his youth in prisons and Anand Bhawan to the nation and Smt Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, their lives. She, herself, after having suffered the tragic loss of her husband, still came forward to help the party once again achieve unity and a vision. Throughout her tenure as Congress Party President, Smt. Gandhi has firmly endorsed two basic principles. The first, is the commitment of the Party to the principles of secularism. And here we must once again return to the understanding of secularism that Nehruji and our constitution stress: Secularism





is not against religion, it only speaks of the separation of the state from religion. There can be no pseudo secularism as the BJP and its cohorts like to cry out, because it is a constitutional and legal position, not an ideological one. This is an important component of all modern states and the Congress Party has always stood for a modern and forward-looking India. An India, where we are proud to be secular, because we respect the right of all our citizens to practice their beliefs. In contrast, the fundamentalism represented by the BJP, despite Advani's praise for Jinnah during his recent visit to Pakistan, has always shown scant respect for our minorities. Their cadres, the state orchestrated riots in Gujarat under Modi, all testify to their utter contempt for India's pluralist and secular cultural fabric.

It is here that the Congress stands out in direct contrast. The Congress stands for allowing space for all religions within the framework of the Indian constitution. In other words, we believe in the freedom of religion, not its suppression like the Communist Parties of the erstwhile Soviet empire, nor its fanaticism like that of the BJP or Wahabi terrorists. Smt. Gandhi has emphasized this spirit of acceptance and pluralism in all her speeches and made this an important agenda in the Congress's charter and future programmes. The celebration of Gandhiji's Dandi March was once again meant to tell our people that the principles of peace, non-violence and respect for each others cultural and religious differences is what makes India the democracy it can justifiably be proud of.

Strengthening The Organization Through Equality

The other major principle that Smt. Gandhi has held up throughout her Presidentship is the need to strengthen the organization. She has done this by holding Party elections at all levels and ensured that these were carried out in a democratic fashion. The Congress, is perhaps, the most democratic Party in India. It gives its cadres a chance to voice their grievances and deal with the leadership at the Centre. We have even learnt to live with dissidence and worked always at achieving a consensus. We do not enforce orders in the manner of cadre-based parties, instead we try to balance the demands of different groups and regions to achieve a harmonious party. Perhaps sometimes, the wrong leader can get inflicted on people due to the earlier coterie culture, but by and large, it is impossible for.

Here Smt. Gandhi has taken the lead in constantly reminding organization leaders and Ministers that the interests of our grass root workers needs to be respected and that the Party is there for the workers, not the workers for the Party. She has also decentralized

power and made her general secretaries and secretaries responsible for day to day decision making and through them tried to create a democratic structure right down the party.

She has further enforced the principles of equality of bringing forward the issue of gender and caste discrimination. She has been at the forefront of asking the thirty-three percent reservation for women both in Parliament and within the Party. Unlike other parties, which have only one or no women in leadership positions, within the Congress, women have always played a leading role.

Alongwith equality within the Party for Dalits and women, Smt. Gandhi has consistently championed their rights in national politics. She has been at the forefront of the fight against the saffronisation of education and the targeting of minorities and dalits in caste and communal riots. She has ensured that large scale programmes that empower women and dalits are implemented in Congress-ruled states.

Smt. Gandhi has also championed the role of women and other deprived sections within Panchayati Raj institutions. She has seen Panchayati Raj institutions as an important part of the deepening of democracy. This as we know was a project close to Shri Rajiv Gandhi's heart and Smt Gandhi has carried out his goal to empower our villages and all those within them. Her commitment to the common man led to a change in the Congress Party's Constitution whereby thirty-three percent seats have been reserved for women and twenty percent for other deprived sections. Our victory in the recent elections have proved that the Congress, under Smt. Gandhi is on the right track.

Congress Ka Haath, Aam Admi Ke Saath

Another major thrust of the Congress, and again a continuation of Nehruvian principles, has been its attempts to balance economic growth with that of the eradication of poverty. Smt. Gandhi has consistently championed the cause of the underprivileged by pushing forward schemes such as universal education, the employment guarantee scheme and a larger budget for public health. Here the Congress has once again differed from both the left, and from the BJP. It has chosen to continue with economic reform, while putting in place policies and programmes that will allow the common man the benefit of economic reform and help create employment. At the same time, the government is also keen to implement economic reforms that will allow India to take advantage of the new openings being provided by the market. This means streamlining our policies so that India reaps the greatest advantage for a wide section of its growing trade and international economic strength. The Congress believes that while we cannot turn our backs on economic reform, these reforms must lead to greater empowerment for all our people.



The poor cannot become the victims of reform, instead they should become partners in reform. Just like increasing subsidies cannot become an excuse for non-implementation and corruption.

Our commitment to reforms with a human face is also visible in our manifesto that placed the common man at the Center of all our policy planning. This was done under Smt. Gandhi's leadership not under the pressure of any allies and proves once again, her own personal interest in the welfare of the people. She has ensured that this programme is carried out and implemented in all Congress-ruled states.

Role In A Coalition Government

It was during Smt. Gandhi's last presidency that the Shimla Sankalp took place and the Congress Party decided to come together on a broad secular platform to oppose the BJP. They also accepted that despite economic reform, issues of poverty, caste and gender discrimination and the stagnation of our rural areas needed quick and immediate remedial action. Smt. Gandhi personally saw to it that the wishes and demands of the coalition partners were met when the CMP was written. She has, since the government of Dr. Manmohan Singh was formed, also ensured that the coalition continues to work and coordinate together. Often, she has reigned in the attempt by the Congress to play a lone field and personally intervened as Party President to assuage her allies. Again, she has given full support to all initiatives moved by Dr. Manmohan Singh to ensure that he has the freedom to deal with the Opposition as he so wishes. She has played a leading role in Parliament as well, exhorting her own party MPs to attend regularly and play the role of a responsible government and a responsible Party in power.

The Congress coalition is different from the coalition provided by the BJP's NDA. The NDA's allies were there only on a joint communal programme. No matter how Chandrababa Naidu and George Fernandes may deny it, their support for Narendra Modi speaks for itself. The Congress coalition has come together on a principle for upholding our constitution and the fundamental principle of secularism. We may differ on economic policy but not on legal remedies for India's problems. We are also committed to providing the widest possible distribution of the fruits of economic growth. That is why this coalition will last its term. And here, Smt. Gandhi's role as President of the largest Party will be crucial. She has already shown her ability in this sphere and our victory in Haryana and now more recently, in Goa, proves that under

her leadership our mantra of coalition politics, based as it is on principle, is working and working successfully.

Looking Towards The Future

Smt. Gandhi has taken charge of the Congress in a systematic and professional fashion. She has pointed out how the youth of the country and its younger leaders must now play a greater role in building the country to play its rightful role as a leading economy and a pluralistic democracy. As Shri Rajiv Gandhi pointed out:

I dream of an India – strong, independent, self-reliant and in the front rank of nations of the world in the service of mankind.

It is this dream that motivates Smt. Gandhi's own commitment to the Party and to strengthening the next generation. She has shown that she can lead not just the masses of Congress workers, she can also work with disparate interest groups, different parties. She has exhibited her statesmanlike demeanour in international forums as well. She was there at the launch of the Srinagar – Muzaffarabad Bus Service, providing her belief in a harmonious and friendly relationship with Pakistan and her special feeling for Kashmir.

Today, it is up to Congress leaders and its cadres to address themselves sincerely to the issues of principle that Smt. Gandhi has raised. We must all try and make the Congress once again the leading and committed Party that it was during the freedom movement. When sectarian interests were put aside for the greater good of the nation. This contested space of nationhood must once again yield to the pluralistic and secular ethos that is best represented by the Congress, a Congress under Smt. Sonia Gandhi. ❖

Bihar Assembly Dissolved

NEW DELHI: President, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam signed a Proclamation to dissolve the Bihar Legislative Assembly on the advice of the Union Cabinet late on 22nd May night. The Union Cabinet decided on dissolution after considering the report of the Bihar Governor, Shri Buta Singh. Although the Bihar Assembly was already under suspended animation, the Proclamation of dissolution will require approval by both Houses of Parliament. The Government received the approval from the President, away in Moscow on an official visit, in the early hours of 23rd May after Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh spoke to him, explaining the reasons for the Cabinet decision. ❖



Sonia Gandhi Changed Course of History

Sarveet Singh

The last seven seasons have shown the country and the party what an understanding leader like Smt. Sonia Gandhi can do to change the course of history. She has been the proverbial friend, philosopher and guide, and more than anything else a factor that has kept both the Congress and the United Progressive Alliance together.

Between 1997 and 2004, Smt. Sonia Gandhi has grown in stature. Having taken the Congress on the path of progress in terms of number of States. The party now has a Government at the Centre where it has regained power through the coalition route.

Her supreme act of sacrifice and renunciation has no parallel in contemporary world history. So much so that she has now been voted as one of the most powerful women in the world even though she does not hold a political office except that of Chairperson of the UPA.

For the first time, the political and executive management of a vast country like India has been worked out and divided in a practical and pragmatic fashion. The Congress president and UPA Chairperson has reserved the tough task of political management for herself and left the arduous task of governing the country in the dexterous hands of Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh. And the last one year has shown how the two leaders have a wonderful understanding of the country and took measures complimenting each other's task. The harmonious relation between the two has created a perfect symphony.

CIRCA 1997

Seven winters ago the chill in Delhi climate was visible and palpable both in politics and weather. For the Congress party, going into general elections for the 12th Lok Sabha the situation was as murky as the weather.

Public perception of a drift in the affairs of India's oldest political party was in the air and on the ground it manifested in the deserted look the All India Congress Committee headquarters wore in the run-up to the polls. One could not imagine that this was the scene at the AICC with general elections round the corner. There were no takers for a Congress ticket.

Pollsters did not give the Congress a chance to stay together as senior leaders began deserting the grand old ship that was virtually sinking under its own weight. Desperate attempts by its

leadership to somehow keep it afloat and not run aground made little difference.

Senior Congress members from various parts of the country were quick to jump and seek refuge in the Bharatiya Janata Party camp. The rate of desertion from the Congress was creating a 'Mahol' (atmosphere)

that no political party was capable of checking the BJP from coming to power with an absolute majority. Excitement was rife in the camp of Congress political rivals. For a diehard Congress member, it was one of the worst phases in politics. Whatever we did it seemed we never got it right. So much so that media projected the Congress to be a party with a "faded and jaded" leadership.

It was around the time that Smt. Sonia Gandhi decided to take charge of the situation. She took the first step by taking membership of the Congress party, founded to fight the British and nurtured by Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi as a vibrant organization that moved ahead of time and set the pace by their vision.

The announcement had an electrifying effect. The honour to enroll Smt. Gandhi as its active member was given to the then Delhi Pradesh Congress Chief, Shri Prem Singh and the "breaking news" virtually took the wind out of the BJP's sail. The Congress party headquarters suddenly came alive and as expectations rose, the crowds returned.

The general elections were held in early 1998 and Smt. Sonia Gandhi toured the country extensively campaigning for the party candidates across the length and breadth seeking votes for the Congress even though she herself was not in the contest. The response of the crowds was unbelievable and at most places political workers did not have to make an effort to organize crowds, they just came in droves to hear what the 'Bahu' (daughter-in-law) of Indira Gandhi and widow of their beloved Rajiv Gandhi had to say.

For a party that was written off what with political pundits preparing epitaphs, the Congress was back in the reckoning and the BJP that was riding high on an imaginary wave began an





exercise in cutting losses instead.

CIRCA 2004

Seven winters later, political situation had changed. The BJP had three-terms in office – two of them short-lived and a third cut short by its own political managers. Once again prospects for the Congress appeared gloomy. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance was riding the crest and to showcase it launching the now infamous “India Shining” campaign. The results of the December, 2003 general elections to the States of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh had dealt a body blow to the Congress. Yet, that did not deter Smt. Sonia Gandhi from applying herself to the daunting task. She began by meticulously sewing up alliances of parties with shared ideology and understanding with the Left parties that were ready to join the fight against communal forces while maintaining a distance. Her act of walking down Janpath and calling on the Lok Janshakti Party chief, Shri Ram Vilas Paswan, demonstrated both her leadership and humility. For the cause of taking on the communal forces she was willing to walk the distance, not just next door but through the “Jan Sampark Abhiyan” that altered the manner in which political leaders communicated with the people.

YEAR 2005

The Congress-led UPA Government has completed one year in office and despite doubting Thomas's, the alliance has worked wonders for the country. The economy is growing, the stock-market is looking up, inflation is contained to single below 6 digit, rural India has started getting a better deal and India's stature in international sphere is up. Relations with its neighbours, especially Pakistan, has progressed on the path of peace.

Smt. Sonia Gandhi has been unanimously re-elected president of the party proving the vibrancy of a mass-based organization like Congress. Bihar reversal, notwithstanding, the UPA has emerged stronger. It has been baptism by fire for Smt. Sonia Gandhi who has emerged as the shining jewel in the national political crown. She is a jewel that emits radiance, spreads light and goodness all round without seeking anything in return. ❖

Antony Elected to Rajya Sabha

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: CWC member and former Chief Minister of Kerala, Shri A.K. Antony was elected to Rajya Sabha in the by-election held here on May 27. This seat was declared vacant after the resignation of Shri K. Karunakaran. ❖

UPA Coordination Panel Reviews Progress



NEW DELHI: The UPA Coordination Committee met on 18th May. All parties comprising the UPA – the INC, RJD, DMK, NCP, PMK, TRS, JMM, LJSP, MDMK, AIMIM, PDP, JUML, RPI (A), RPI (G) and KC – were present. The representatives of the four Left Parties also attended and participated in the discussions that lasted over seven hours. The objective of the meeting was to review the achievements of the UPA government on the eve of its first anniversary on May 22nd.

Six broad themes were taken up for review. These were: 1. Agriculture, rural development and panchayat raj; 2. education, health and nutrition; 3. empowerment of weaker sections; 4. internal security; 5. infrastructure and economic growth and 6. defence and foreign policy.

Respective ministers made presentations of what has been accomplished and the new initiatives taken in each of these six areas. Those present at the meeting expressed overall satisfaction and resolved to move forward even more purposively to implement their collective political, social and economic agenda as embodied in the National Common Minimum Programme. A detailed progress report on the National Common Minimum Programme was presented to the people of India on May 22nd.

The Coordination Committee underscored the criticality of the recently-announced Bharat Nirman programme in bringing prosperity to our country's villages. It also appreciated the launch of the rural health mission, the national horticultural mission and the national urban renewal mission. It emphasized the need to fully empower panchayats as the key to Bharat Nirman, ensure gender equality and extend social security to workers in the accountability and probity in administration.

The UPA partners and the Left parties reaffirmed their resolve to confront and combat communal forces and strengthen the secular pillars of the Indian state. ❖



It's Collective Responsibility

Dr. K. Keshava Rao

Following is an interview with Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee president, Dr. K. Keshava Rao.

Q: How do you feel about your responsibility as PCC president?

A: The responsibility of a state leader of a national party is "collective". He needs to share it with the workers under the guidance of national leaders. I am at best a "Coordinator", ensuring harmony between the Govt., party and people. The cadre today feels neglected. It is to some extent true. I must allay that and make them feel important to the party. Secondly, training the cadre to take on the challenges of Opposition and to uphold the banner of secularism and democracy is important.

Q: What is the state of the party in the State now?

A: We have just won an historic election, trouncing a formidable foe. The mood is upbeat. We need to sustain it.

Q: Have you brought any qualitative changes in the functioning of the Party?

A: It is not for me to say. There is all-round appreciation, both by media and public. We have gone hi-tech in our communication network. There are no more shouting brigades. No unnecessary garlands and felicitation shows. There is a dress code for our "helpers". No smoking and non-vegetarian in Gandhi Bhavan (office). The office is redone – reception counter added. Library/research wing underway for the first time. Training and discussion sessions are a regular feature.

The banners which used to deify our local leaders have different look. Now, they carry slogans of social theme, trying to sensitize society. Activity reports are regularly sent by DCCs. A new activity profile, with focus on social work is developed, in line and coordination with NGOs. Special graffiti-campaign against social evils is taken up to sensitize society and take the party nearer to people. The focus is on the service orientation of the party. The "Spirit of sacrifice and choice of Party over Power", shown by our leader Soniiaji inspires us in the new action plan.

Q: Being a democratic party certain differences in the rank and file are rather natural. To what extent are these differences being handled?

A: There are no differences, but different views and suggestions, focusing different angles to an issue. Once we understand them in perspective, we can easily handle them and in fact, gain from

them. It is a challenge to the leadership to harmonize these suggestions and find an acceptable solution.

Q: What is the coordination and cooperation levels of the party workers in the three regions – Rayalseema, Telengana and Coastal districts – in Andhra Pradesh?

A: Very good, thanks to Soniiaji's inspiring leadership and deft handling of the issues by the Chief Minister at the Government level and guidance of Sri Digvijay Singhji at the party level.

Q: What is your view on Telengana and has this issue in any way affected the party unity, if so what steps are taken to keep the party united?

A: I am a protagonist of Telengana but this needs to be settled democratically, without any bickering. Each party has presented its case to our leader Soniiaji; and since she is seized of the matter, we need to leave the entire issue to her, without creating any hurdle or making unnecessary statements or comments. Hence, no comments. This has not affected the unity in the party. There is perfect understanding of each other's view.

Q: Sonia Gandhi has been advising closer cooperation between the government and party. To what extent has this been achieved in your state?

A: We have good coordination. The recently appointed coordination committee is helpful. The party and the government are two sides of the same coin. Government gives legitimacy to its programs through legislation; their implementation is secured by people's pressure and cooperation. This, the party needs to provide by mobilizing public support. This alone ensure change. There are a regular coordination meetings between the Government and the party. For the first time, the senior ministers come to party headquarters regularly for an interface with party functionaries. We have also asked the Ministers to undertake exclusive visits to district headquarters to confer with party cadre and to hear them.

Q: Are any special measures being taken to strengthen the party in rural areas?





A: Our entire stress is on rural areas. The party rejuvenation plan speaks greatly about it. In the recently-held organizational elections, we tried to concentrate on booth level committees and develop Mandal level leadership. It is a tall order. In the meanwhile, we are developing a committed trained cadre of 5,000 to act as Agents of Change, who in coordination with NGOs will take development work. It is our effort to make Congress party in the state – rural-centered and rural-oriented.

Q: Are any steps being taken to attract right kind of youth into party?

A: Yes. Our new DCCs today have 90 percent new faces. They are mostly young, educated and committed activists, unlike in the past. The intellectuals co-ordination committee, constituted by PCC with academics and other eminent persons holds regular meetings, where our young party functionaries participate. It is an earnest exercise to attract right kind of youth to party and sustain them.

Q: You have just completed a padayatra in rural areas. What are your experiences and observations?

A: As an HR activist and student of Gandhiji the ideals of peace and non-violence have been my first choice. Disturbed by the ever-increasing cult of violence on all fronts – factional, casteist, communal, domestic, the extremists and its counter violence by state, I have embarked on the Peace March to propagate the message of non-violence. I am inspired by the recent 75th year celebrations of Dandi Yatra by AICC and the clarion call of our leader Smt. Sonia Gandhi. We have been a witness to the victory of non-violence of Gandhiji over the mightiest violent force of British, in our own life-time, then why not practice it.

I have programmed the Yatra to cover the areas, which are affected by recent violent incidents by Maoists and police. The brunt of my speeches has been: "We have no right to take a life (kill), which we cannot return." The second theme is: Violence has two faces – seen and unseen: seen is bloodshed and unseen is hunger and poverty. There is an urgent need to fight both.

My experience and observations are heart-rending. The continued sad plight of our poor, particularly tribal areas and remote villages is no complement to our claim to the legacy of Gandhiji. We need to do something concrete to achieve Gram Swaraj of his dreams. ❖

Indira Gandhi Award for National Integration-Applications Invited

Shri Motilal Vora, Member-Secretary, Advisory Committee, Indira Gandhi Award for National Integration issued the following press release:

Indira Gandhi Award for National Integration was instituted in 1985 by the Indian National Congress in its Centenary year. The Award is for promoting National Integration, understanding and fellowship amongst religious groups, communities, ethnic groups, cultures, languages, and traditions of India and also to strengthen through thought and action, nation's sense of solidarity. The Award is given on the Martyrdom Day i.e. 31st October. The Award carries citation and cash amount of Rs. 1.51 lakh to be given either to a person or an institution for the outstanding contribution made to promote National Integration.

The Award for the year 2004 would be the recognition of outstanding contribution to the cause of National Integration in that year and two years immediately preceding it. Accordingly, the Chairperson, Advisory Committee, Smt. Sonia Gandhi invites proposals for the said Award latest by 31st July, 2005 in the prescribed proforma which may be obtained from the Office of the Advisory Committee, located in Room No. 101, Jawahar Bhawan, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road, New Delhi – 110 001.

The Award has so far been given to Swami Ranganathananda, Smt. Aruna Asaf Ali, Bharat Scouts & Guides, Shri P.N. Haksar, Smt. M.S. Subbulakshmi, Shri Rajiv Gandhi (Posthumous), Paramdham Ashram (Wardha, Maharashtra), Acharya Shree Tulisji, Dr. Bishambar Nath Pande, Sardar Beant Singh (Posthumous) & Shri Natwar Thakkar (Jointly), Gandhi Institute of Public Affairs (Karnataka), Indira Gandhi Centre for National Integration (Shanti Niketan), Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, Shri Shankar Dayal Sharma (Posthumous), Prof. Satish Dhawan, Shri HY Sharada Prasad, Ram-Rahim Nagar Slum Dwellers Association (Ahmedabad), Aaman Pathik – Peace Volunteer Group (Ahmedabad), Shri Ram Sinh Solanki and Shri Sunil Tamaiche (Jointly), Acharya Mahaprajna and Shri Shyam Benegal. ❖



The Leftist Contradictions

Ramesh Chennithala

At last the Indian left is emerging out of its self-created cocoon. In a major step forward from its puritanical, age-old Leninist rhetoric, the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has welcomed steps to take the global realities into account. The political resolution has pointed out a number of national and international conflicts faced by the capitalist camp and other Indian political parties. But about the conflicts within their movement they kept a gleeful and convenient silence. While vociferously pointing out the conflicts of the international capitalism, the resolution said nothing about the conflicts within the communist camp, which are looming large even years after the decline and fall of Soviet Union and other communist countries. It is easy for anybody to lace the rhetorical outbursts with quotes from classics. But to face stark reality with such quotes or rather misquotes from old text books is a futile exercise and will lead us to nowhere.

This can be interpreted as a culmination of the so called ideological war and schism between the theorists of the party who oppose the present system of democracy and always stick to the gospel of communism as revealed by Karl Marx, and their comrades who prefer to be chief ministers, ministers or managing committee members of amusement parks. They are practical politicians who believe that if revolution can't be the festival of the people what is wrong in making festivals a revolution. All these years while the former group was opposing all types of overseas investment and demanding an end to privatisation of state owned enterprises, the latter group with comrades from West Bengal as strong supporters, was busy organising road shows and five star seminars to attract overseas investors. The proletarian government of West Bengal sold off 15 public sector enterprises to private management and to add to that, the party, which always encourages agitation, strikes outlawed trade unions and strikers from many private management enterprises. Of course the differences are purely ideological just as the differences in a religious group are theological.

Marxism does not provide any specific method of solving questions that Marx did not put to himself or those did not exist in his lifetime. All social movements are to be explained by a variety of circumstances. Every philosophy, school of thought or ideology has a pre-history. The recently-concluded party congress of the CPM evoked interest in the political circles of the country because the party is a part of the ruling coalition. Moreover, the CPM believes that they can play a significant role in checking

the growth of hardcore Hindutva forces. As a major political force in some of the states they can do so.

The present UPA government is the fifth CPM-backed Central government. During the post emergency they also were swept away by the socialistic rhetoric of Janasangh, whom even Jayaprakash Narayan detested. Then came the governments of V.P. Singh and I.K. Gujral, supported by the CPM and BJP. All these experiments with Marxism failed miserably. By now the CPM think tank should have realised that there was something wrong in those so-called socialistic experiments. There is only one real socialist party in India and that is the Indian National Congress. Of course, the socialism of Indian National Congress is Gandhian Socialism with no hatred towards Marxian ideology and philosophy.

What is real Marxism or Communism? I don't say that it is a redundant ideology. No school of philosophy is redundant, whether it is Catholicism, Buddhism, Jainism, Existentialism or Marxism. The CPI (ML) people says that all others who claim to be Marxists are revisionists, the CPI says that all others who swear by Karl Marx are sectarianists and the CPI (M) accuses all others of revisionism and left deviation. As a Nehruvian and Gandhian socialist who is interested in political philosophy, I am in a dilemma. Because interpreting Indian history according to the Marxist views of history itself is globalisation.

Now India needs an industrial and employment revolution to fight against poverty, illiteracy and hunger. But, CPM, with its medieval approach and swearing in the interests of the working class opposes it because of its paranoia. They don't want a good and comfortable working force, because they know that an enlightened working force is against their interests of selling dreams. They sold land at highly subsidised rates in Bengal. But when the Kerala government did the same thing they claim that it is something wrong. Their hypocrisy and double standards were very much evident when the ADB team visited Kerala recently to finalise a deal with the CPM-led local district administration. The same Kerala CPM, which always greets the ADB officials with black flags, gave them a warm welcome.

The Bengal and Kerala branches of CPI (M) are singing the communist international song with entirely different tunes. World's largest Pizza Hut outlet and the top ranked Sony world franchisees are in Kolkata. PepsiCo has doubled its Rs.80 crore investment in Bengal. While the CPM-owned cooperative, Dinesh Beedi, which switched over to food



processing with a lot of festivities is facing lockout by the CPM capitalists, four French multinational lined up in the Writers Building and had closed door meetings with comrades for investments in food processing. According to the Planning Commission, Bengal has got Rs. 27,000 crore worth of private investment, which is second only to Narendra Modi's Gujarat.

The Bengal CPM is discarding the interests of workers. It is discarding the moribund and stale economic ideas hallowed with worker's militancy. But the same CPM is opposing all such things in Kerala.

If they look to China they will come to know that international communism is only a myth. When Wen Jiabo, the leader of Chinese Communist Party says that they achieved a growth rate of 9.5 only because of FDI, we can't contradict him. He is full of praise and extolling the process of opening up of economy to the multi-nationals, a process started by the Chinese Communist Party in 1978. The country had attracted 561.4 billion dollars as FDI since 1978. In simple terms it is a growth from communism to consumerism. When the CPC came to power in 1949 under the leadership of Mao Zedong, farms were collectivised into communes and resources were transferred to nationalised heavy industry, to make China an industrial giant. But by the time of Mao's death it was clear that the communistic experiment was a total failure, leaving China impoverished and isolated. The new leadership of Deng Xiaoping, free from the yoke of an autocrat and eager to avoid the blunders of the Soviet Communist regime, ended the collective communist farming and initiated a responsibility system. Deng's reforms led to a rapid growth and more market-based economy. None of the politburo members or communists accused him of revisionism or sectarianism. The CPM comrades of India can accuse the CPC in true international or global communist spirit, for confining the economic growth to cities and certain coastal towns. For the comrades in China's underdeveloped rural interior areas, life still is a difficult fight against the party bureaucracy.

The draft political resolution of the 18th congress of CPM has adopted a soft line to such bourgeois deviations. The reports and the comrades claim that the CPM, for the first time in the history of international communist movement, is in the process of giving shape to a policy on how a communist party should function in the age of globalisation. Because no real communist or socialist can justify the real estate and media conglomerates of Kerala communism and multinational capitalist communism of Bengal. Now onwards no comrade should ask disturbing questions about the preachings and sermons of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels or Rosa Luxemburg. Event management, television channel, fashion shows, pleasure companies, five star auditoriums

for party functions, all are part of revolutionary work and an integral part of dialectical and historical materialism. All those who question such revolutionary tactics would be excommunicated and would have the fate of John Huss or Joan of Arc.

We are in a dilemma. What will happen to a humanistic philosophy claimed to be the first school of philosophy with a scientific approach? ❖

(Author is a member of the CWC)

Sonia Gandhi Re-elected Congress President



NEW DELHI: Smt. Sonia Gandhi was formally re-elected Congress president here on 28th May. Her election had been a foregone conclusion since the organizational elections were announced. There was no opposition to her candidature for the post, which saw an election the last time in 2000. This will be her third term since she took over the reins of the party in March 1998.

Smt. Gandhi's re-election was announced by the chairman of the central election authority, Shri Oscar Fernandes, at the Congress headquarters. Of the 100 sets of nominations filed in her favour, three were found invalid — those of the All India Mahila Congress.

Soon after the formality of accepting her "election certificate" from Shri Fernandes, Smt. Gandhi told partymen that she would work shoulder-to-shoulder with them to build the organization.

Except Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, who was away in Himachal Pradesh, the entire senior leadership was present. Smt Gandhi was first appointed Congress President on March 14, 1998. In 2000, she faced a challenge from Jitendra Prasad, who managed only 10 votes. ❖



Uttaranchal Dedicated to Development

- Dr. Jaya Shukla

When Uttaranchal attained statehood six years back, it was one of the poorest areas in our country. Despite being one of the richest in natural resources, employment opportunities were minimal. Resources were exploited unscientifically and no developmental work in the area was done after the non-Congress governments came to power in U.P and the Centre.

Developmental process needed to be very fast, necessitating unorthodox measures. In the last three years, this is exactly what the Congress state-government has achieved, to the extent that people have started calling the CM, Shri N.D. Tiwari "Vikas Purush". Today, the state is adjudged the country's foremost in tourism development and 20-point programme implementation, with other departments also doing better than most states.

Literacy aggregate is 72.28% with the female literacy at 60.26% and male literacy crossing or nearing 90% in several districts, much higher than the national average. This available human resource is one of the major nodal points around which infrastructure for the developmental process was to be planned. While the state has national and international level private schools in Dehradun, Mussoorie and Nainital, in the remaining 80% of the state private sector is absent with complete load of education falling on the government. Besides upgrading of existing schools and colleges and appointment of several thousand new teachers at various levels in schools and colleges, one Degree College per district as center for excellent has been built, vocational computer education programme "Shikhar" was started in each Degree College. Vocational and employment-oriented education was started in 13 government degree colleges. Education in the 15 new degree colleges will be imparted via futuristic programme development from satellite information and multimedia. Networking and digital libraries are being set up for computer networking for higher education. 13 districts are covered under Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan.

Four private universities including the Petroleum and Power Study and IFCAI have been established with two more in the fray. World's first Microsoft IT Academy (at Dehradun) and IT Academy (at Nainital) are being built. MoU with Microsoft and Intel are signed for training teachers, about 8,000 teachers are already trained. MoU is signed with IBM for e-governance. Regional Academy (Pantnagar Technical College) and local academies at 10 top institutes are being established (Networking courses) for

enhancing employment capacity of youth with help from SISCO.

Uttaranchal has unfathomable potential for tourism, be it spiritual, pilgrim, eco-tourism, adventure, or cultural. Rs. 150 cr. are earmarked for 300 infrastructure related projects in progress. 3 Airstrips in the hills are coming up. For projects under the Master Plan. Tourism hubs are being developed all over (802 acres at Ramnagar for Rs. 500 cr. eco-park resort at Mussoorie in 200 acres; international-level ski-resort at Dayarabugyal, etc.) Tourist circuits are also coming up with UNDP aid. Chardham Development Council with a corpus of Rs. 212 crore for investment is being setup. Rs. 4 cr. are sanctioned by the Central Government for Rishikesh and Haridwar. INTECH has listed heritage and cultural sites. A competent hotel management institute is being set at Dehradun. For employing local units, Vir Chandrasingh Garhwali Self Employment Scheme has started, 215 projects are accepted where more than 500 people were sanctioned bank loans of Rs. 40 crore. 5,000 people are to benefit in the next 5 years with Rs. 400 crore financial aid. Rs. 250 crore worth of tourism properties would develop in the next 5 years villages are being identified for bio-villages and organic tourism. A multi-pronged publicity campaign to put this state on tourism world-map has started via websites, CD-rom, coffee table books, appointing international PR company, etc. The state has rightly been awarded several national level awards for the pioneer attempts (12 for eco-tourism) and the 2002 and 2004 awards.

Uttaranchal is a state of villages, to which development should reach, thus developing 80% of the state, in order to stop the exodus from the hills. Exemplary work has been done in the area. Rs. 2102.29 lakhs were spent till August 04 for Sampurna Gramin Swarozgar Yojana, employing 25.04 lakhs. For 04-05 for 56.51 thousand ton foodgrains are allocated. From 19,859 sanctioned works, 7,059 are completed. Under Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana, 44,864 swarozgaries have benefited, 17,619 groups were formed. For TTDC-II, Rs. 666.98 lakhs have been released. Large volumes of several beneficial projects like mushroom production, Angora wool rearing, rural-artisan, poultry, kesar production, textiles and fashion designing, medicinal and aromatic plant production including geranium and lemon grass, are implemented with government help.

Indira Awas Yojana, rural housing credit-cum-subsidy schemes, Pradhan Mantri Gramoday Scheme, etc., are being implemented in substantial numbers. The drought prone area project had Rs.



911,41 lakhs, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana are in full swing. The Rural Engineering Service was reorganized. To prevent continues erosion of sloping terraced fields and to ensure maximum income of farmers, techniques are also being taken from the neighbouring Himachal Pradesh. Horticultural Technology Mission is rejuvenating 665.5 hectares with Rs. 80 cr. The G.B. Pant University is creating Plant Health Clinic and Disease and Weather Forecasting Units. Potato Growers' Federation has been set up at Pithoragarh, which will produce 1,040 quintals of potato-seed. Horticultural Management Diploma course has started at Bharsaar (Pauri). Agriculturists have been distributed at subsidized rates 10 lakh fruit and 10 lakh vegetable saplings, 428 quintal vegetable, 200 quintal ginger and 3,600 quintal potato seeds, 2,082 equipments. 327 hectares were taken on long lease for developing tea-estates. 2,515 tea bush nurseries were setup. 6,550 silk-farmers benefited. A record production of 31 lakhs Oak-Tussar cocoons was achieved in 2004, winning a World Bank Commendation Certificates. Tremendous amount of work is being done for irrigation and flood-safety, the Maneri-Bhaali phase-II is restarted, Rs. 1,552.00 lakhs project for protection of Baliya drain (Nainital) is starting. 229.389 Km. canals are built and maintained since 03-04, irrigating 3,098.25 hectors land. With AIBP canals, 776-hectare capacity has been increased. Rs. 11,717.54 lakhs are marked for this year to irrigate barren land. A multipurpose dam on Song River is being researched, while Jamraani dam is going on. 789 small irrigation projects are transferred to users' groups. For flood safety Rs. 600 lakhs from the state and 300 lakhs from Central assistance were received in 03-04. 40 projects are going on in Muni-Kireti where flood safety work is completed. Watersheds are taken as basic units and managed as such in Pauri (Nainital), Udamsingh Nagar with help of World Bank. Over 300 farmers trained for organic farming. 189 bio-villages (928 hectares) are using organic farming. With Rs. 405 crore from the World Bank, a decentralized scheme in 10 districts in 20 blocks is in operation. Rs. 9.6 crore has been sanctioned to develop 16,000 hectors of wasteland.

Uttaranchal has a potential of becoming the future Power-house of India 4,171.3 Megawatt capacity projects are being developed. Of 17 micro hydroelectric projects being developed, 2 micro-hydroelectric and 6 micro hydels are completed. The Maneri-Bhaali phase-II (304 Megawatt), Paala-Maneria (416 Megawatt), Bhavla-Bandprayag (132 Megawatt), Tuni-Palaasu (42 Megawatt) and Aarkot-Tuni (70 Megawatt) hydroelectric project has started. 812 villages and 926 hamlets were electrified by June 04, with a further 454 villages and 570 hamlets were

electrified by Aug. 2005. 37,297 BPL families received Kutir Jyoti. Under APDRP 2,507.96 lakhs projects are completed with 5,953.8 lakhs work in progress.

Industrial development has been sought that is not totally focused in one area, but with a wider scope necessarily environment-friendly, with greater manufacture capacity and providing employment to more people, rather than those with high investment. SIDCUL has been formed (India's first combined industrial corporation) as a nodal agency, with single-window clearance, which has authorized investment of Rs. 50 crore of which 49% is to come from Financial Institutions. An industrial package with 5 year income tax exemption has been announced, with further 5 years' exemption of 30% for companies and 25% for others. Central transport excise facility is extended till '07, and investment on machinery and plants has a rebate of 15% upto Rs. 30 lakhs. Centralised industrial areas of international level are being developed in Haridwar (1,500 acres) and Pantnagar (3,000 acres), with Rs. 10 crore sanctioned. 250 units have been allotted land, including HLL, Control & Switch Gear, Anchor, Atlas Cycles, Polar Fans, Silo, Vam, Lee Cooper, Parle, Britannia, Haldiram, etc; while Mahendra & Mahendra, Videocon, Syntex, Kirbi, Samsung, Asai, etc., are under process at Pantnagar. Rs. 2,000 crore are to be invested with estimated employment to 35,000. About 150 units are being established in other Industrial estate with Rs. 700 crore to be invested, generating employment for 10,000. 50 units are being extended with estimated Rs. 200 crore investment. Industrial estate is under consideration at Kalsi (183 acres). An international level IT-park at Dehradun and a growth center at Kotdwar are being developed, as well as IIDCs in each district. A bio-tech park at Pantnagar is on the table. Theme parks, apparel park, food park, pharma-city, Urban-haats are being developed. 2,470 small-scale industries were set in '03-04, with Rs. 3,171 lakhs investment and 6,000 employments. 6,386 unemployed educated youth were granted loans (target was 6,000) under Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Yojana. In 03-04, 3 border districts were helped with Ekikrit Hathkargha Prashikshan Yojana. Kashipur design center has been modernized with CAD, carding plants in the border districts have been helped. 447 industrialists were helped via Margin-money scheme.

Commendable efforts are also being done in the fields of forest and environment, drinking water, medical and health, social welfare, soldier-welfare and rehabilitation, transport, urban development, cooperatives, youth welfare and sports ensuring a much brighter future. ❖



Assam Developed Despite Insurgency

Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi

GUWAHATI: "When we took charge in 2001, there was darkness everywhere. The darkness and gloom is disappearing now," said Chief Minister, Shri Tarun Gogoi on May 19 while presenting a report card of his Government's performance in the last four years. "We have checked economic stagnancy and a downward slide. The state is steadily marching towards progress," he said.

Addressing a press conference at the Janata Bhawan here to mark the completion of his four years at the helm of the State, Shri Gogoi said the Congress Government has done a better job at governing the state than the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) Government that preceded it. "We have made our Government rural-visioned, pro-poor and development oriented," he said.

The Chief Minister said that the successful holding of panchayat elections in the State was his government's first success. The Government has also transferred 29 subjects to the panchayat bodies, he said while criticizing the previous AGP Government for failing to hold the panchayat polls for years together.

Shri Gogoi said that economic development could not wait till normalcy is restored in the State. "We have proved that the State can develop despite insurgency." There has been a definite improvement in the law and order scenario and the fear psychosis, that had gripped the common people earlier, has gone. This has also led to a greater inflow of tourist traffic into the State. The investment climate has also become better, he said.

Dwelling on the government's economic performance, the Chief Minister said that tax collections have gone up and, coupled with better fiscal management, there has been greater resource mobilization. From Rs. 1,138 crore earlier, collections have soared to Rs. 2,350.24 crore now, he said, adding that there has been a 32 percent increase last year alone. Expenditure on development activities has gone up three-four fold than what was witnessed during the AGP regime. The annual plan outlay has gone up from Rs. 1,520 crore in 2001-02 to Rs. 3,000 crore in 2005-06. ♦

Party Team Reviews Tsunami Relief

MUMBAI: A delegation of ten Congress leaders was deputed to



assess the relief and rehabilitation work at Andaman & Nicobar Islands on 9th February, 2005. Two members on each island were sent so that monitoring of the relief and rehabilitation work was done smoothly at single time.

The delegation of Shri Avinash Pandey, vice president MPCC and Shri C haran Singh Sapra, president MPYC were deputed at Campbell Bay, which is a small town in Great Nicobar Islands. This is the town on the map of India from which Sumatra (Indonesia) is only 150 kms. They visited all villages on the coastal belt of Great Nicobar and assessed the destruction as total. Both Shri Pandey and Shri Sapra visited individual camps of tsunami-affected people and monitored their relief measures. They also initiated clearance of debris and development of damaged roads.

Shri Pandey and Shri Sapra also visited the last point on India's map known as Indira Point. Indira Point has a lighthouse, which is now submerged by 2 metres in the sea. They also saw a statue of late Smt. Indira Gandhi broken in two pieces. This statue was kept to be installed but tsunami waves took it away from the spot at least by 500 meters. Both the Congress leaders have now conveyed it to Smt. Sonia Gandhi, the Congress President and requested her to take necessary action for installation of a new statue at the earliest. ♦



ASSAM

Gogoi Claims Credit for NDFB Truce

Chief Minister of Assam, Shri Tarun Gogoi has described the signing of the ceasefire pact with NDFB as another feather in his government's cap. The state government has made it clear that a demand for a separate State would not be conceded.

Addressing a press conference here on May 25 Chief Minister said that conciliatory approach has been the hallmark of his government and the ongoing dialogues with the various militant groups has been the outcome of this attitude. "Confrontation would only lead to blood shed," he said.

Referring to the suspension of hostility pact signed with NDFB, the Chief Minister said that Bodo militant outfit has agreed not to carry out any fresh recruitment. The state government also took up the issue of extortion and they have agreed not to indulge in such activities.

DELHI

Sheila Dikshit: Strengthen Rape Laws

NEW DELHI: Expressing concern over the growing rate of crime against women, in particular cases of rape, Delhi Chief Minister, Smt. Sheila Dikshit on 6 June said that families and society need to be sensitized about these crimes. She also added that rape laws have to be strengthened.

The Chief Minister was speaking at a "National Seminar on Rape, Law and Society" organized here by the All India Mahila Congress. To enhance confidence among women, she said the number of women in the police force would have to be increased and women patrol parties will also be organized. However, Smt. Dikshit asked young girls to be more cautious while commuting during late hours.

Speaking on the occasion, former Chief justice of India, Justice Rangnath Mishra, said the law was meant to be a regulator of the conduct of society. Declaring that marriage cannot be an alternative to punishment for rape as it was unconstitutional, he said that no civilized society could accept it. Expressing concern over the fact that a majority of rape cases were happening within the family or neighbourhood, he advocated different levels of punishment to rapist.

Quoting startling statistics, the Director of the Centre for Social

Research, Smt. Ranjana Kumari, said over 5,600 rape cases are still pending in the courts. Lengthy court process not only increases the mental trauma of the victim but also helps the rapist escape punishment, she said.

Also present at the seminar were the former Chairperson of the National Commission for Women, Smt. Mohini Giri, former Joint Commissioner of Delhi Police, Shri Maxwell Pereira, and the president of the All India Mahila Congress, Smt. Rita Bahuguna Joshi.

IYC President Honoured

NEW DELHI: The Karol Bagh District Youth Congress president, Shri Sanjay Ghaloth (advocate) and Shri Sunil Kumar, incharge, KBDYC, organized a programme to felicitate Indian Youth Congress president, Shri Ashok Tanwar here on 10th May. Shri Tanwar was presented a sword, a symbol to fight against the evil forces.



Addressing the gathering, Shri Ashok Tanwar said the Congress party has always supported and protected secularism. This is the party which teaches us the theory of non-violence and tolerance, Shri Tanwar said and added that together we shall root out evil from the society alongwith our political activity.

Delhi Pradesh Youth Congress president, Shri Rajesh Lilothia said that they shall not allow the fundamentalist forces to harm the secular fabric of the Indian democracy at any cost. The felicitation programme was presided over by Shri Rajesh Lilothia.

Coordination Committee Constituted

Shri Ashok Gehlot, general secretary, AICC, Incharge Delhi Affairs, has on 1st June, 2005 constituted a Co-ordination Committee for co-ordination between Delhi Government and Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee, with immediate effect. The following are the members of this committee: 1. Shri Ashok Gehlot, general



secretary, Incharge Delhi Affairs – Convener; 2. Shri Ram Babu Sharma, President, Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee; 3. Smt. Sheila Dikshit, Chief Minister, Delhi; 4. Shri Janardan Dwivedi, MP; 5. Shri Ajay Maken, MP; 6. Dr. A.K. Walia, Minister, Delhi Government; 7. Shri Raj Kumar Chouhan, Minister, Delhi Government and 8. Smt. Tajdar Babbar, MLA. This was announced by Shri Tom Vadakkan, Secretary, AICC, Media Department.

NSUI Training Camp

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Chief Minister, Smt. Sheila Dikshit inaugurated a two-day training camp, Lakshya – 2005, for the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) office-bearers here on May 29. Speaking on the occasion Smt. Dikshit expressed the hope that the camp would help the participants to understand the ideology and history of the party better.



The ongoing camp, attended by NSUI office-bearers from Delhi University, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Jamia Milia Islamia and college presidents, would focus on the challenges facing the country and discuss ways to bring more students to the organisation's fold.

The Delhi Pradesh Congress president, Shri Ram Babu Sharma, the Indian Youth Congress president, Shri Ashok Tanwar, and the Secretary, All India Congress Committee, Shri Sudhakar Reddy, were also present on the occasion.

GOA

Four of Five Seats in Cong-NCP Kitty

PANAJI: Congress party and its alliance partner, Nationalist Congress Party, bagged four of the five seats during the Assembly bye-elections here on 5 June. While Congress won three seats, NCP bagged one. One seat was retained by the BJP.

With this the tally of the Congress combine in Goa has gone up

to 21 in an Assembly of 40 MLAs. Congress candidates who won were Shri Atanasio Monserrate from Taleigao, Shri Digamber Kamat from Margao and Shri Pandurang Madkaikar from Cumbarjua. NCP candidate, Shri Francisco Pacheco won from Benaulim. BJP's Ramesh Tawodkar retained the Poinguinim seat.

With one disqualified MA seeking redressal from the courts, the 40-member House now comprises Congress-18, NCP-2, MGP-1, BJP-17 and UGDP-1.

Rane Elected CM

PANAJI: Veteran Congress leader, Shri Pratapsinh Rane took charge as the Chief Minister of Goa for the seventh time on 7th June, a day after he was unanimously elected leader of the Congress Legislature Party.

NCP's, Dr. Walfred de Souza was retained as the deputy chief minister. Shri Ramakrishna Dhavlikar of MGP was also administered the oath of office.

HARYANA

Clean Sweep in bye-elections

CHANDIGARH: Congress made a clean sweep when it won all the three Assembly seats for contest in the bye-elections in Haryana here on 5 June. Chief minister, Shri Bhupinder Singh Hooda won from Kilo constituency while Smt. Kiran Chaudhary, the widow of late Agriculture minister, Shri Surender Singh, won from Tosham and similarly, Smt. Savitri Devi, the widow of late Power minister, Shri O.P. Jindal, bagged the Hissar seat.

It may be noted that Shri Surender Singh and Shri O.P. Jindal were killed in an air crash on 31st March, 2005. Congress now has 68 seats in the 90-member Haryana Assembly.

JHARKHAND

Seminar on Panchayati Raj

JAMSHEDPUR: The Congress Vichar Vibhag recently held a seminar on "Panchayati Raj in Jharkhand and our responsibility". Speaking on the occasion the newly-elected vice president of the Jharkhand State Bar Association, Shri Rajesh Kumar Shukla said that the state was killing democracy by not holding panchayat elections and said that Congress will continue its struggle for holding panchayat elections at the earliest.



Those who attended seminar were Shri Vijay Kumar Srivastava, Shri Sunil Kumar Shukla, Shri Somendra Ghosh, Shri Upendra Asthana, Shri John Rodrigues, Shri Ram Ayodhya Rai and Shri Anil Sharma.

MADHYA PRADESH

Rally Against BJP Failures

SEHDOL: The Sehdol District Congress Committee demonstrated against the state BJP government in front of the District



headquarters here on 9 May in failing to resolve peoples' problems. The demonstration was led by DCC president, Shri Rakesh Katore. A large number of Congressmen participated in the demonstration. The speakers spoke about the basic problems faced by the people like water, power and roads which the BJP government in the state has failed to attend to. After the demonstration to the Congress workers handed a memorandum to the District administration.

RAJASTHAN

May Day Blood Donation Camp

JAIPUR: Dr. (Mrs.) Param Navdeep Singh, Member AICC and secretary, Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee, organized a



blood donation camp at the Rajputana Hospital and Research Centre here on the occasion of 'May Day' on 1st May. Around 104 Congress workers donated blood. Later, Rajasthan PCC president, Shri B.D. Kalla, felicitated the blood donors who donated blood equivalent to the body weight of Shri B.D. Kalla.

TAMIL NADU

Youth Hold Dharna, Fast

CHENNAI: More than thousand youth of the Tamizhaga Rahul Gandhi Pervai participated in a day-long dharna and fast here on



4th May. The fast and dharna was held so that the Government General Hospital of Chennai be named after the great Congress leader and Bharat Ratna, Shri Rajiv Gandhi. Tamizhaga Rahul Gandhi Pervai patron, Shri C.D. Meyyappan inaugurated the fast.

UTTAR PRADESH

Rahul Gandhi Visits Amethi

SULTANPUR: Addressing Congressmen and the core group of the Seva Dal, Shri Rahul Gandhi, MP, while on his four-day visit to his parliamentary constituency here on 20 May, said that computer and technical education should be made a part of



primary education. The Seva Dal workers are busy educating illiterate people in the surrounding villages. Shri Rahul Gandhi asked them to make themselves acquaint with modern methods of education so that their efforts can have better results.

Earlier, talking to mediapersons in Baijal village in Gauriganj Vidhan Sabha region, Shri Gandhi said that the state government was giving step-motherly treatment to Rai Bareilly and Amethi. Shri Gandhi inaugurated fifteen roads and said that unemployment was the biggest challenge in Amethi and to overcome this will be the Congress Party's first priority. Replying to a question, Shri Gandhi said that soon an eye hospital will be set-up in Amethi and that Amethi will be linked to the national highway from all directions.

Congratulations to Sonia Gandhi

DHAMPUR (BIJNOUR): The local unit of the Youth Congress met here on 8 June and congratulated Smt. Sonia Gandhi for becoming the Congress president for the third successive term. They also hailed the completion of one year in office by the UPA government. The meeting was presided over by its president, Shri Lalit Garg. The meeting was convened by Shri Anup Aggarwal who said that law and order in U.P has deteriorated. Incidents of loot, dacoity, kidnappings, rapes and murders were rampant in the state.

The Congressmen present in the meeting pledged to make Congress strong and propagate its policies in every village.

Prominently present in the meeting were Shri Rajan Gandhi, Shri Ajay Sharma Baliya, Shri Fajjan Ansari, Dr. Rahat, Shri Pawan Gupta, Shri Rahul Tyagi, Shri Piyush Tiwari, Shri Saurabh Aggarwal, Shri Manoj Sharma Bobby, Md. Arif, Shri Imran, Shri Abrar Ahmad and Mohamed Javed.

Resolutions Against Law and Order

LUCKNOW: A one-day Convention of Legal Cell of Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee under the chairmanship of Shri S.C. Maheshwari was held on 14 May at the CMS Degree College Auditorium, Kanpur Road, Lucknow to discuss alarming law and order situation in the State of Uttar Pradesh and the ways and means to protect the democracy in the state vis-à-vis role of Congress lawyers.



The Convention was inaugurated by Shri Hansraj Bhardwaj, Union Minister for Law and Justice and presided over by Shri Salman Khursheed, president, UPCC. The Convention was attended by 5000 lawyers from all over the state and was addressed by the Central and State Congress leaders. The prominent delegates included Dr. Ashok Nigam, president, Avadh Bar Association, High Court, Lucknow, Shri Saroj Shukla, president, Lucknow Bar Association and Shri Chhotey Lal Pandey, president, Allahabad High Court Bar Association.

WEST BENGAL

Congress Gains in Civic Polls

CALCUTTA: The Congress has improved its position in Municipal polls of West Bengal held in the third week of May. It obtained 10 seats, 2 more than previous election while Trinamul Congress has lost 9 seats and got only 4 seats.

Elections were held for 79 seats. The formation of boards in as many as 13 municipalities appeared uncertain as no political party or pre-poll alliance had got the mandate to stake claim. In most of these municipalities, the boards can be formed if the Congress forges a post-poll alliance with Trinamul Congress. Among such municipalities are Tanluk, Beldanga, Murshidabad, Purulia, Basirhat, Baduria, Bongaon, Ramjivanpur, Suri, Rampurhat, Baruipur and Bhadeshwar.

The details of the election results are as follow: Elections held: 79, Left Front - 48 (+11); Congress - 10 (+2); Trinamul Congress - 4 (-9); GNLF- 1; Mahajot - 1; Alliance to smaller parties of independents - 2, Hung Boards - 13.



Rajiv Gandhi Remembered

RAIPUR (Chhattisgarh): The Chhattisgarh Pradesh Congress Committee Handicap Cell organized a function to pay homage to Rajiv Gandhi on his 14th death anniversary here on 21 May. A large number of Congressmen were present on the occasion to offer floral tributes at the photograph of Rajiv Gandhi. President of the Handicap Cell, Shri Mahendra Kochar distributed callipers to polio-affected children.

NEW DELHI: The Delhi state Akhil Bharat Anushuchit Jaati Parishad and Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar Sena organized functions to pay homage to Rajiv Gandhi on his 14th death anniversary here on 21 May.

The main function was held at Majnu-ka-Tila where floral tributes were offered to Rajivji's statue. Speaking on the occasion, the council president and Delhi Pradesh Youth Congress general secretary, Shri Kailash Bidla said that during the time of Rajiv Gandhi much work was done for the upliftment of dalits. Fruits and stationery material were distributed among children.

NEW DELHI: Many programmes were organized here on 21st May, the death anniversary of Shri Rajiv Gandhi. Delhi Pradesh Youth Congress distributed fruits amongst the poor and patients in government hospitals. In Chandravihar, the Rajiv Gandhi Ekta Samiti workers, led by its president, Shri Ravindra Gupta, offered floral tributes to the statue of Rajiv Gandhi. In Tirlokपुरi, a condolence meeting was held by the Delhi Youth Congress, led by its general secretary, Shri Ashok Bhutalia. A Sanskrit Kavi Sammelan was organized at Jhandewalan by the Delhi Sanskrit Academy.

In adjacent Noida, the district Congress president, Shri Ajay Chaudhary, Shri Kripa Ram Sharma, Shri Ramesh Chandra Sharma organized condolence meetings at their respective offices and pledged to follow the path shown by Rajiv Gandhi.

GIRIDIH (Bihar) : The Congressmen of the district discussed the prevailing situation in the state and the peoples' problems like water, power and other basic amenities. DCC president, Shri Pardhuman Kumar Singh led the delegation and handed over a ten-point memorandum to the District Commissioner.

Next day the Congressmen paid tributes to Rajiv Gandhi on his 14th death anniversary at the Congress district headquarters.

JAMSHEDPUR (Jharkhand): The Jamshedpur City Congress Committee organized functions in various parts of the city to pay



homage to Rajiv Gandhi here on 21 May. Under the leadership of City Congress Committee president, Shri Vijay Kumar, the Youth Congress workers celebrated the day as 'Balidan Diwas' and organized a blood donation camp in his memory.

MUMBAI: The Congress workers of Dharavi Block-33 observed the death anniversary of late Shri Rajiv Gandhi here on 21st May. The inmates of Salvation Army orphanage at Sion were given fruits on the occasion by Shri Eaknath Gaikwad, MP, Lok Sabha. The function was presided over by veteran Congress leader of the Mumbai Regional Congress Committee Shri Upendra P. Joshi.



Also present were Block-33 Congress president, Smt. Mundra Devi Tiwari, Mumbai Mahila Congress secretary, Smt. Naina Sheondoshi, Smt. Rekhi Doshi, Shri V. Anandraj, Shri Anil Ganacharya, Block-33 Youth Congress president, Shri Jeetsingh Raval, Mumbai Youth Congress general secretary, Shri Mohan Singh Saini and others.

PONDICHERRY: On the occasion of 14th death anniversary of Rajiv Gandhi the Pondicherry state Youth Congress organized the 'Rajiv Jyoti Rally' from Pondicherry city to Sriperumbudur.

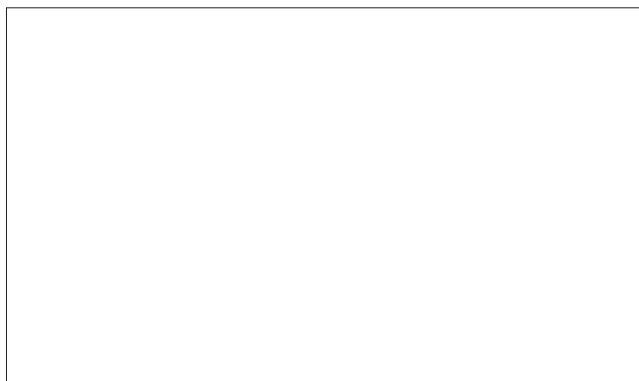
The rally commenced on 20th May from here on the 150 km stretch to reach Sriperumbudur on 21st May, led by PCC president,



Shri V. Narayansamy, MP, Chief Minister, Shri N. Rangasamy, Shri A. Elumalai, Smt. Mary Theresa, MLA, Shri N. Damodharan and participated by office-bearers of state, district and block level including Youth Congress office-bearers.



The state Youth Congress also organized a blood donation camp at the Government Child Hospital where fruits and bread were distributed to the inmates. The function was presided over by the state Youth Congress president, Shri K. Pandian.



SINGHI-KHERI (Uttar Pradesh): City Congress Committee here organized a function to pay homage to Rajiv Gandhi on his 14th death anniversary. Congressmen, led by DCC president, Shri Rajnesh Kumar Srivastava offered floral tributes to the photograph of Rajiv Gandhi.

Present at the function were Shri Mahendra Dutt Pant, Shri Siddhraj Upreti, Shri Murari Lal Gandhi, Shri Ahmed Ali, Shri Amar Singh, Shri Lokendra Narsingh Ram, Shri Kutub Khan, Shri Gurdeen Valmiki and party workers.

HAJIPUR (Bihar): On the 14th death anniversary of Rajiv Gandhi the Youth Congress Backward Class Cell distributed fruits among the inmates of the main government hospital. Former general secretary of the Cell, Shri Vijay Kumar Gupta led the Congress workers in distributing fruits to hospital inmates.

On the occasion Shri Jagdish Thakur, Shri Vinay Kumar Adhivakta, Shri Anil Kumar, Shri Shailendra Kumar Singh, Shri Vijay Vineet, Shri

Ajit Kumar, Shri Harihar Patel and Shri Ravindra Nath paid tributes to Rajiv Gandhi by offering floral garlands to his photograph. ❖

Sunil Dutt Passes Away



MUMBAI: Union Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Shri Sunil Dutt passed away in his sleep, following cardiac arrest at his home here on 25th May. The death of



the cine-artist turned politician was discovered only around 11 am when he did not wake up. He was 76.

Thousands of people including actors and politicians converged on his Pali Hill bungalow as the news of his death was flashed throughout the nation. Hundreds of Congress party workers shouting "Sunil Dutt Zindabad" filled the street. Shri Dutt lived in the constituency that returned him to Parliament five times as a member of the Congress Party.

Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh and Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi flew down from New Delhi to pay their last respects shortly before the body of Shri Sunil Dutt, draped in tricolour, was taken in an Army truck to the Santa Cruz crematorium to be confined to flames. Also accompanying them were Governor of Maharashtra, Shri S.M. Krishna, AICC general secretaries, Smt. Ambika Soni and Smt. Margaret Alva, former Chief Ministers of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, Shri Ashok Gehlot and Shri Digvijay Singh, Shri Ahmed Patel, Union Ministers, Shri Prithviraj Chauhan and Shri Vilas Muttemwar and Shri Rahul Gandhi, MP.

The last rites were performed by his son Sanjay Dutt. ❖



Programme for Shastri Birth Centenary



NEW DELHI: The first meeting of the Lal Bahadur Shastri Birth Centenary Celebration Committee was held at the AICC office, 24, Akbar road, here on June 3 under the leadership of Shri Motilal Vora. The convener of the meeting Shri Nirmal Khatri, welcomed the members of the committee and introduced the agenda of the celebration.

The proposed programmes are as follows:

1. Lal Bahadur Shastri memorial lecture "Together with a Symposium" to be organized at Allahabad (U.P), the place of action (Karm-Sthali) of Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri (July, 2005);
2. A Symposium to be organized at Varanasi (U.P) – the birthplace of Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri (August, 2005);
3. A "Mushaiyra" or Symposium to be organized at Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh (September, 2005);
4. The concluding event "Lal Bahadur Shastri Birth Centenary Year Samapan Samaroh" (Bhajan Sandhya) to be organized on his birthday, October 2, 2005 at New Delhi, and
5. In addition to above mentioned programmes many other programmes are under consideration during Lal Bahadur Shastri Birth Centenary Celebrations year.

Additional Programmes

(a) Programme on Kamaraj/Shastriji Birth Anniversary Celebrations is being organized at Chennai on 15 July by Shri Vasantha Kumar, general secretary, Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, and (b) a programme is being organized at Rewari, in the last week of September by Capt. Ajay Singh Yadav, Minister, Haryana government.

Shri Motilal Vora, Shri Janardan Dwivedi, Smt. Mohsina Kidwai,

Shri Makkan Lal Fotedar, Shri Ram Naresh Yadav, Shri Shiv Charan Mathur, Shri Shashibhushan, Ms. Nirmala Deshpande, Shri KP Singhdeo, Shri Anil Shastri, Shri Jagannath Pahadia, Shri Satyavrata Chaturvedi, Shri Bhupendra Singh Hooda expressed their viewpoints. The leaders suggested to organize programmes to honour ex-servicemen and farmers with reference to the slogan – "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan", freedom fighters' conference, other programmes in various parts of the country and to communicate PCCs for these and seminars in Jaipur and Fatehpur, etc.

In order to organize the programmes finalized by the committee, it was decided to set up a sub-committee. For Lucknow programmes, the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee president, Shri Salman Khurshid was nominated as Chairman, for Allahabad, the former UP Chief Minister, Shri Ram Naresh Yadav as Chairman, for Varanasi former UP Governor, Mata Prasad as Chairman. It was also decided that the names of the local leaders be added with these committees.

It was also decided that a brochure should be published on his life and be distributed during various such occasions. ❖

Homage to Nehru, Rajiv

PATNA: The Bihar Pradesh Congress Sevadal organized a function here on 27th May to pay homage to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Congressmen offered floral tributes at the photograph of Pandit Nehru. The function was presided over by additional chief organizer of the Sevadal, Shri Dalip Kumar.

Earlier, the Sevadal workers paid floral tributes to Rajiv Gandhi on his 14th death anniversary. ❖



UPA Instilling Belief in People

Archana Dalmia

Never before has a government's work been so closely followed and so mercilessly pilloried by friends and foes alike. And never before has a government thus calmunised come up smelling of roses. Never before had a government so faithfully fulfilled its promises and produced an honest report card of its performance.

Indeed, it has been an extraordinary year, full of hope and resolutions in spite of all the doomsday prophecies and a sulking, carping Opposition. One year of the UPA has proved that political parties of diverse ideologies can work together while retaining their identities.

The biggest gain from the UPA's rule has been the restoration of the country's secular fabric. The first year of the new Government has seen a marked lowering of communal tension across the country, reversing the trend of politics of hate, exclusion and divisiveness.

The UPA experiment, with Shri Manmohan Singh looking after the administration and governance and Smt. Sonia Gandhi taking it upon herself to manage the smooth functioning of the coalition, have proved perfect foils to each other. The efficacy of this model is evident from the extent to which Smt. Gandhi and Shri Singh have synchronized their steps, and how comfortable they are in picking up the telephone and talking to each other on any issue, without having to move through others.

In spite of the occasional hiccups, Smt Gandhi and Shri Singh have to be complimented for providing an alternative to the politics of exclusion and majoritarianism. They have countered the sociology of conflict and discrimination and, above all, provided an alternative to the ideological bankruptcy that one witnessed in the years immediately preceding the UPA's rule.

If a week is a long time in politics, a year is hardly enough for a Government to showcase its achievements. However, for a party uncomfortable in its role in coalition politics, one year of smooth functioning under the coalition dharma is an important milestone. The forging of the UPA, its political resilience and the durability of its alliance, bears testimony to the determination to offer the *aam aadmi* a platform to turn his dreams into reality. If anything, the resolve to carry on with the alliance is greater today than it was even a year ago.

In his first year in office, the Prime Minister has honed his diplomatic and political skills and dexterously steered the nation

towards prosperity and international recognition. Shri Singh has balanced the demands of various alliance partners with their regional aspirations and internal rivalries.

The UPA can certainly take pride in talking about resolving the border issue with China. China's wooing of India is a step towards closer economic ties in light of Beijing's rivalry with the US. Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi's arrival just two weeks after a landmark visit by Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao should be seen as the blossoming of relations between Beijing and New Delhi. Tokyo, contending with anti-Japanese feelings in China, is keen not to be left out of New Delhi's orbit.

Suddenly, India is the country that everyone wants to talk to. It is the destination every country wants to invest in as the world sits up to recognize it as a potential superpower. Shri Singh was heaped with high praise as the chosen representative for the South and Southeast Asian countries to articulate its people's aspirations.

The warming of relations with Pakistan's a huge gain. Suddenly, after years of protracted conflict dividing the people of the subcontinent for over 50 years, a solution to the intractable legacy of partition has appeared on the horizon.

The tsunami was the biggest natural disaster to have hit India since the UPA came to power. But the Government managed to bring back the nation to its feet. India turned down foreign aid, saying it had "adequate resources" to deal with the disaster. It also sent warships, helicopters and aircraft to distribute food, medicines and blankets in Sri Lanka and the Maldives and promised over US\$ 23 million in monetary aid.

In spite of their sound and fury, Left leaders admit that Smt. Gandhi is responsive to their views. Unlike the NDA, which marginalized its allies, the Congress believes in thrashing out differences with the Left.

Given this scenario, it is not surprising that incessant high decibel soundbytes came from the BJP, more out of desperation than any thought to the nation. The BJP has perfected the art of politics of boycott and, in the process, has lost more ground. It has also lost the opportunity to articulate the concerns of the



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Commercialization of Khadi Industries Necessary

Gopal Prakash Sharma

Both Congress Party and khadi have been instrumental in the freedom of the country. Gandhiji thought that Khadi would provide employment to rural folk and therefore, he tried to popularize Khadi made by poor and labour class with a view to make them economically independent. Therefore, the Congress government tried to encourage the khadi industries throughout the country.

But, after 1985, the khadi industries had to face an odd situation, with the result khadi became costlier and out of reach of the poor and middle class people. During the present days cotton and readymade clothes are cheaper while khadi clothes are four times costlier.

After serious discussions Mahatma Gandhi had prepared a cost chart for khadi which is still relevant but this chart too got affected by multi-national economy. Establishment cost of khadi is now 54% which was earlier 28%. Other miscellaneous charges are

not included. As a result khadi has become more costly. Though social protection were provided to khadi workers, but in this process the khadi institutions were ignored and were not consulted. This created the situation which created lack of confidence in the utilization of fund from the Centre.

During the present day there is a move for economic reforms under the guidance of Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh and Congress President, Smt. Sonia Gandhi, but the programme regarding khadi is still being ignored. Prime Minister, Dr. Singh is meeting the people of the khadi industries with their problems and seek their advice. There is a need of special efforts to encourage khadi industries. Gandhiji had suggested many programmes for the upliftment of the people and his stress was on village industries. Sarva Seva Sangh has constituted a Khadi Gramodyog Committee. Its efforts will certainly be to protect the interests of the khadi industries.

Decentralization process must be scientific. Use of solar energy in khadi industries is also suitable to the spirit and concept of Mahatma Gandhi. Seva Niketan of Eta (U.P) has taken elaborate steps in this regard and succeeded in their efforts to use solar energy for charkha. This was successfully demonstrated in Noida during 2002. it was appreciated throughout the country. But the certificate committee of Khadi Gramodyog Commission didn't approve it.

Solar energy is not only useful for knitting and weaving but for irrigation purposes too. So proper encouragement to new technology must be given. There are about 1.5 crore weavers in the country, who are below poverty line. His economic standard must be improved.

This is an era of competition. In this situation people do not want subsidy but cheap and durable products. Khadi too has been modernized. Khadi is being popularized among the youths on the basis of new designs. But khadi production has also been machinised. Only 5% weavers are engaged in this industry. Rest of the clothes is still being produced in mills. Thus, there is a need of special effort to give incentives to khadi industries. ❖

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people on the floor of Parliament, leading to the breakup of the NDA. The TDP has found it expedient to distance itself from the BJP and return to Parliament.

It is difficult to capture the essence of the 2004 poll verdict. Clearly, three things helped the Congress: One, the secular credentials of the Gandhi-Nehru family brought Muslims back to the party. Two, Smt. Gandhi determinedly forged alliances with regional parties. Three, she hit the road to reach out to the people. Images of Smt Gandhi holding deformed hands and putting her arm around emaciated women, sent out a strong message.

Indeed, the policy of letting actions speak louder than words has helped the UPA in instilling belief in the people that they have a government that provides expression to their aspirations. There is much that remains to be done, as Smt. Gandhi and Shri Singh would themselves admit. I quote the immortal words of Robert Frost: "The woods are lovely, dark and deep/ But I have a promises to keep/ And miles to go before I sleep/ And miles to go before I sleep." ❖

(Author is a secretary, AICC)

[The author is vice-president, DCC, Eta (U.P)]



Globalisation Versus Kisan Agenda

- Dr. Kishore Gandhi

Living in an independent yet interconnected and interdependent world that is shaped by communication technologies and capitalism, one is alarmed and fascinated by the forces of globalisation that are operating in all areas of life and idea. Globalisation is a process and its manifestations can be perceived in the growth and extension of international trade; stratification of international labour market, financial flows, transnational corporations of the multinational enterprises, proliferation of tourism and in the realm of politics where universal standards are operating, for example, in the human rights or the environment.

Central to all these developments, however, is the communication revolution that is sweeping across the globe. It was indeed a cultural phenomena that Marshal McLuhan was referring to, when he articulated the concept of the global village. He did not visualize the planetary network of communication but rather the network considered as an extension of the mind and sensibility of each individual.

It is fascinating to observe that our world is seemingly assimilating itself into a totally new pattern at a pace that is unprecedented in the history of human civilization. Interactive technology, virtual reality application and internet are vital forces which are moving on towards greater out-reach: connectivity. The super highways, application of satellite technology and fibre optics are opening new possibilities of networking of all circuits and all intelligence for the globalization of life and ideas. We are living in an era where the communication media is opening up world markets for their products and promoting consumer culture and new life-styles.

This is not the place to discuss in-depth the process of globalization and the protection of cultural identity but the issue that needs to be highlighted is that the imbalances and disparities in terms of access to resources, manpower capability, technology transfer, communication capacities and other sectors of development are serious and need to be bridged. They are affecting developing countries, such as, poverty, population explosion, rural exodus and urban over-crowding.

What is needed is a paradigm shift in our conceptual framework, perceptions, attitudes and the total approach to the developmental process. This is an essential step for the crucial transition from the culture of war, a culture of constraint to a culture of a dialogue, a culture of sharing and concern for the marginalized and deprived segment of the population. This could be achieved by diverting the material and manpower resources deployed in the non-productive weaponry technology towards the human and social development. In fact the universe has enough material and manpower resources and they are harnessed holistically and ecologically, perhaps we could eliminate illiteracy, ignorance, disease, squalor and poverty from the face of the earth and provide every human being enough inputs for the actualization of his total potentialities, such as, physical, intellectual, ethical, aesthetic and spiritual.

Granted that with the advent of 1990's, we have witnessed the collapse of Marxian and Newtonian ideologies and orthodoxies, dismantling of military and power structures, the end of cold world war, the super power diplomacy and the emergence of a new wave of human right and political freedom which are sweeping across the globe. Most of the countries, including India have brought about a paradigm shift in economy from command and controlled to the liberalized and market economy to integrate it with the global economy. While acknowledging the limitations of command economy, Dr. Manmohan Singh provided a promising thrust to our developmental programmes and called for a radial shift in planning perspectives – philosophy, policies and programmes – during his tenure as Finance Minister. Indeed he articulated the need for moving away from the notion of socio-economic structures to the dynamic patterns of change, with a focus on holistic and ecological paradigms of reality in the developmental process. A man of impeccable moral and intellectual integrity, he subscribes to Gandhian theory of means and ends.

I do not intend to highlight the contributions of Sonia Gandhi who has emerged as the saviour of the nation which was on the verge of disaster due to the short-sighted policies of NDA government. She was shattered by the diabolical goal of BJP



government in Gujarat for accomplishing the organized massacre of innocent children, women and old people of the minority community. She openly questioned the credibility of BJP-led NDA government in providing coherent policies for the welfare of the oppressed and submerged dalits, kisans and minorities. The country was grievously amputated and bleeding and the forces from within and without were threatening the functional viability of parliamentary democracy. What one could perceive was a settled anarchy and confusion of functions when ersatzes litter a phantom world in which the titanic and tawdry go cheek by jowl and being and nothingness speak across the peaks and the abyss.

The lesson that flows from the verdict 2004 is the celebration of Indian's civilizational strength, her upward spirit of unbroken continuity, harmony of various religious traditions, capacity of assimilation and absorption, universality of the spirit, pluralism and tolerance, dignity and divinity of the individual. After the loss of power, BJP is confronted with a serious dilemma and does not know whether to follow its core Hindutva agenda or move on to the moderate agenda of governance. The signals that are flashed by the Sangh Parivar clearly indicate that the party will be bereft of any vision and is bound to suffer long-term political isolation.

The planners must look at the new political paradigms which Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Dr. Rajasekhara Reddy have coherently evolved and developed by articulating the aspirations of debt-trapped kisans who were committing suicides and unemployed youth in India that was shining, a message that was flashed with captivating images that metaphors by American protégées. The maker of cyberabad was thrown out of power by the padayatra of Dr. Rajasekhara Reddy who identified himself with the oppressed and submerged farmers, dalits, minorities, unemployed youth and women and provided a new agenda of development.

In the State of Haryana, it was the confrontation between kisans and the government over the issue of payment of electricity bills at an exorbitant rate which led to the killing of several farmers by the Police in the district of Jind. Bhupinder Singh Hooda, the then president of HPCC identified himself with the tragic fate of the farmers and mobilized the party workers, intellectual and

Tributes



**Nation pays homage to
Shri Sanjay Gandhi on his
25th death anniversary on
23rd June**

social forces by observing fasts for a few days before launching his historic pad yatra from Jind to Delhi which turned out to be a turning point for the party.

Hooda's padyatra provided electrified the people and kindled new hopes and aspirations especially of the oppressed and submerged farmers who were upset by the atrocities of the government and looking for a leadership which could emancipate them from repression. This yatra was widely covered by the media and over a lakh of people converged at Ramlila Ground, New Delhi to express their solidarity with the Congress Party. I was an observer and participant in this padayatra and could safely say that the said historic day was the dawn of the Congress Party and a rebirth of the Congress leadership of the Haryana state.

Let me put the issue little explicitly: our planners and policy-makers are socialized in the western concepts and methods, specifically of reductionistic and mechanistic models and are reflecting their inability to understand that an economy is continually changing and evolving system, dependent on the changing ecological and social systems in which it is embedded. This apart, they must realize the basic fact that this rainbow coalition which has been skillfully engineered by Sonia Gandhi and is backed by the Left front needs to be nurtured and nourished by the planners and administrator for the sheer survival and renewal of secular and progressive forces and the stability and viability of parliamentary democracy. It is hoped that this government will complete its term and bring to fruition the dream of Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi of a united and vibrant India, bubbling with life and vitality. ❖



AICC

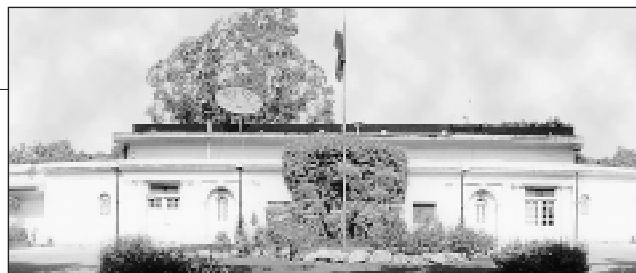
BOYCOTT**03.05.2005: Shri Anand Sharma addressed the media.**

Shri Anand Sharma said that the continuing boycott and undermining the institution of Parliament by the BJP-led NDA which has called for another comment, specially in the light of BJP's charge today that the UPA government is not prepared to discuss the issue of corruption and nothing can be farther from truth. The fact which is universally known is that the Prime Minister had made a public statement inviting the Opposition to discuss any issue on the floor of the House and had stated the willingness of the government to discuss them. So, this acquisition that the government is not willing to discuss corruption is not correct. All issues means all and there cannot be two interpretation of the word all, there is only one meaning. It is the BJP which has to make its explanation or give an explanation as to why they did not accept that offer and bring issues to the House for discussion.

UNFORTUNATE DECISION**04.05.2005: Shri Anand Sharma addressed the media.**

Shri Anand Sharma said that the unfolding scenario of the present Parliament session is indeed unfortunate chapter in our history of Parliamentary democracy. This decision of the NDA-BJP to boycott the remainder of the session is unfortunate, senseless and irresponsible. It shows the mindset of the political leadership which has lack of respect for the institution of Indian Parliament. This decision, infact amounts to derailment of Parliament. The Opposition cannot choose to remain absent when Opposition is there in a designated role, they have been assigned this role by the electorate and the government has throughout maintained that both the government and the Opposition are important for the functioning of Parliament. That's why the Prime Minister had reached out to the Opposition personally on more than one occasion and he stated willingness of the government to discuss any issues on record. The Speaker of the Lok Sabha also had not only personally spoken to all the senior leaders of the NDA-BJP but had also sent a personal letter urging them to return to the House.

Shri Anand Sharma said that ever since the change of government at the Centre, the House has been repeatedly stalled and disrupted just because of one person and that is the former Defence Minister, Shri George Fernandes.

**IMPORTANT BILLS CLEARED****05.05.2005: Shri Anand Sharma addressed the media.**

Shri Sharma said that I have given an account of the legislative business which is still before the House and 11 Bills have been cleared by the Cabinet which will come up now before the Parliament and most important being the Right of Information Bill-2004 which is referred to the Standing Committee and now it has come up in an amended form with improved version and a stronger piece of legislation. This will repeal the earlier Act, like Freedom of Information Act-2002, which was, one can say, inadequate and opaque.

The Bill on Disaster Management was also introduced and this legislation is again important. Shri Sharma said that when Tsunami had struck, at that time the manner in which the administration, the Armed Forces had responded to reach out to those who were affected by Tsunami, not within India but beyond the shores of India. Now this National Disaster Management will ensure that for any future calamity this country will be fully prepared and structure will be put in place for prompt responses and we congratulate the government for bringing these important Bills before the Parliament.

CALLOUS OPPOSITION**06.05.2005: Shri Anand Sharma addressed the media.**

Shri Anand Sharma said that the BJP, the party which has failed both as an Opposition today and also when it was a ruling party, they failed in governance and there are miserable failure as an Opposition because they have, as I said the other day, abdicated completely their obligation. They are absent whereas they should have been present. While in government they had shown their incapacity to govern effectively and their tenure was marked by callous indifferent approach towards those sections of the society which needed sensitive support from the government. They had betrayed while in power and they are betraying their people, their own electorate, as an Opposition party. When important issues and legislation is being brought in both the Houses, when Bills are brought, they are voted and that will become the law of the land. There cannot be any justification on the part of the



Opposition, not to put across its views, its opposition or support on behalf of their own people whom they represent in both the Houses, when such important Bills are to be passed. They have also failed to put across their viewpoint on all important matters and debates, be it on defence, internal security, ranging from environment to water resources or on political matters, they have been absent.

'SHAMEFUL BLOT'

09.05.2005: Shri Anand Sharma addressed the media.

Shri Anand Sharma said that in reference to the article written by the BJP general secretary, Shri Pramod Mahajan in the BJP's official organ "BJP Today" in which Shri Pramod Mahajan has accepted that the riots in Gujarat were not only a failure but a shameful blot and used the same words which earlier has been referred to by BJP leaders on various occasions when Atal Behari Vajpayeeji as Prime Minister had called it a 'Kalank', a shameful blot. Shri Advaniji had said so when he was faced by angry protestors on his visit to UK. Now, it is a confirmation to what has been said over the years, not merely by the media, the Opposition but by those who were in the know of it, specially the former senior police officials who served in that state and gave their own affidavits and testimony and the IAS officers. It is important to know whether there is a general soul-searching on the part of the BJP leadership.

ENDORSEMENT

10.05.2005: Shri Anand Sharma addressed the media.

Shri Anand Sharma said that the statements which have been made during the last two days, first the article by Pramod Mahajan, its endorsement by Arun Jaitely as party line sounds less convincing and smacks more of political hypocrisy on the part of a party which had a clearly defined a different line when it was in power. Had the BJP as a political party taken a firm line that the riots in Gujarat, the carnage, the blood-bath was a shameful blot. And maybe the then government in Delhi possible could have acted in time to preempt or prevent and also taken action against the deliberate default by the government in Gujarat. But nothing of that sort has happened and the BJP now is waking up to the reality that the people of this country have rejected their brand of communal politics.

SHOCKING INCIDENT

12.05.2005: Shri Anand Sharma addressed the media.

Shri Sharma said that a shocking incident has taken place in Madhya Pradesh that a Child Welfare department women official,

who was making enquiries on child marriage, specially among scheduled caste and other castes, had her hands cut off. Such incidents have happened in Madhya Pradesh earlier too in which social workers and social organization have been threatened. We demand stern action should be taken against those officials and organizations who are involved in this heinous deed and that protection be given to all those involved in removing such social stigma so that it does not recur again.

RE-CONFIRMATION

13.05.2005: Shri Anand Sharma addressed the media.

Shri Sharma said that a statement coming from the former Governor of Gujarat, Shri Sunderlal Bhandari is a re-confirmation of what has been alleged and said ever since that shameful carnage that took place in Gujarat. It was not only the inaction as the Governor has said that the chief minister was not serious in controlling the situation and had the Government and administration acted on the first day, the riots would not have spread on such a large scale leading to a blood-bath and also scarred India's image, as we have said, of a liberal, secular constitutional democracy.

Phukan Report Tabled

Shri Sharma said that referring to Justice Phukan's report that the Government has tabled today alongwith the Action Taken Report. We had earlier questioned certain actions of the commission, specially seeking and accepting hospitality from the then Minister of Defence whom and whose ministry the commission was supposed to be investigating. That was against all established norms, it was improper and unethical that compromised the impartiality and credibility of that commission and therefore in any case the report in this case was only a partial report – part I and that would have lacked any credibility.

Shri Sharma said that the most important aspect was the second one and that is exactly what the Commission has chosen not to look into. He arrived on a conclusion without dealing with the two terms of reference regarding the transaction and illicit gains by people in public office or the organization. So, it is strange that it is for the first time a report was presented where the conclusion was reached and the report says that the most important terms of reference would be dealt with in the other two parts of the report which was not ready and which has not even been submitted.

- Tom Vadakkan,
Secretary, AICC



1. National Secular Forum convener and Congress leader, Shri Sandeep Chandra and Muslim intellectuals' delegation called on Congress president, Smt. Sonia Gandhi at her residence.
2. Union Minister Shri Oscar Fernandes distributed tri-cycles to the disabled, donated by Mission Awareness on the death anniversary of Rajiv Gandhi on 21st May. Also seen are senior Congress leaders, Smt. Mohsina Kidwai and Shri Dharendra Tyagi.
3. Pimpri-Chinchwad District Youth Congress took out a Sadhbhavana Jyoti rally in Pune on the death anniversary of Rajiv Gandhi on 21st May.
4. Haryana Pradesh Rajiv Gandhi Yuva Sena president, Shri Kanwal Bhasin leading the office-bearers in paying homage to Rajiv Gandhi on his 14th death anniversary on 21st May.
5. Hyderabad City Congress general secretary, Shri Yogeshraj Srivastava distributing fruits to the inmates of the government hospital on the completion of one year in office by the Congress government in Andhra Pradesh.
6. Andhra Pradesh Congress Linguistic Minority Cell office-bearers paying tributes to Rajiv Gandhi on his death anniversary on 21st May.
7. TNCC general secretary and TNCC Traders' Cell Chairman, Shri H. Vasanthkumar giving Rs. 50,000 aid to the widow of Congress worker Nallukannu in Tirunelveli district who was killed in a political clash.