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at 30, Prithviraj Road on March 11, 2012*

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It is better to live on alms in this world without slaying these noble elders, because even after killing them we shall after all enjoy only bloodstained pleasures in the form of wealth and sense-enjoyments.

— (Bhagavadgita : Ch.-II, 5)

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"The United Progressive Alliance (UPA) model has failed; where the political power lies elsewhere and the PM is only the executing agency."

-Arun Jaitley

"The opposition is willing to extend its constructive cooperation to the government on the issue of national interest but this(UPA) government is not willing to take constructive cooperation of the Opposition."

-Rajnath Singh

"The Budget will not meet the challenges that the economy is facing. It will not meet the aspirations of the people of India. I feel that a great opportunity has been wasted"

-Yaswant Sinha

### Letter to the Editor

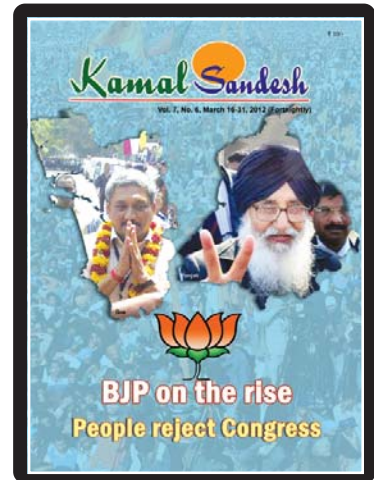
## Congress opposition against Modi will not work

Dear Editor,

Recently the Time magazine featured Gujarat CM Narendra Modi because something really beautiful has happened in Gujarat during the past decade, which wasn't possible anywhere else in India. Gujarat is progressing in all directions. Nowhere in the world there has been such peace and tranquility better than Gujarat, where all the citizens both the majority and the religious minority live peacefully. I think this is the biggest achievement of the wonderful Chief Minister Narendra Modi during his ten years rule in the State. Of course the Gujaratis and the State Administration who also played an important role deserve credit.

I may say the media and Congress opposition against Modi will not work. People understand it better that whatever drama they are playing is not for the benefit of riot victims but their frustration against the miraculous success and development in the State under Shri Modi. No one has ever achieved this and it is difficult to achieve it even in the near future.

Hemant Pathak  
Patna, Bihar



Write to us

The Editor,

Kamal Sandesh

We welcome

Your views & Suggestions

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## Not a 'Gathbandhan' but 'Kursibandhan'

# Editorial...

**J**ust ask the government! Is there a government at all? Even the government would accept, it is not to be seen anywhere. How far it is justified for a government to continue in office which has nothing to do with governance? Entire country accepts that there is a government in the centre but it is not working. And to continue a government which is not functioning can be seen as an attempt to suppress democracy. During the last 65 years the Indian democracy was never allowed to bleed in the manner which we see it today. India had never witnessed democracy facing such a critical situation. Today democracy is at perils in India. No one is concerned about the nation. Having become used to seeing governments which somehow function and continue we leave the democracy at the mercy of divine power alone. When one loses faith in oneself then the responsibility is always left on the divine power. Today the Indian democracy is facing the same situation. What more ludicrous situation would it be that the Rail budget which was presented in the morning takes the political sacrifice of the rail minister himself in the evening? It was heard till date that only Prime Minister has the prerogative to either select or remove his ministers. It happens only with the approval of the Prime Minister but whatever has happened with the then Rail Minister Dinesh Trivedi only points to the fact that the Congress led UPA government has lost its credibility and respect. Even a strong person sitting on a chair with fragile legs is supposed to become feeble. Dr. Manmohan Singh who has spent three-fourth of his life in bureaucracy and has become Prime Minister under the compulsion of political situation, his weakness has been further exposed by the resignation of Dinesh Trivedi.

It is not a government of *Gathbandhan* (coalition) but a government of *Kursibandhan* (under compulsion for chair). It is not a government on ethical grounds but an alliance forged on unethical principles. It is the height of hypocrisy when a government becomes immoral and binds itself with the compulsion of chair. The government has become without its soul. When instead of one, many souls enter a body then instead of connecting with gods, the body links itself with ghosts. Many incidents related to the adjectives like loss of faith, instability, helplessness, inability, incompleteness, powerlessness, ominous, incompetence, cruelty, heartlessness start haunting the scene. The compulsion for chair has become so obsessive for Congress that it has readily relinquished its responsibility towards people. Neither rule nor constitution, neither law nor purpose or good sense is prevailing, the last phase of internal war is taking its toll. What will happen, no one knows but it is for sure that the wheels on which the chair of Congress led UPA government rests will crash and the government will fall flat. And by then it will be too late. To save the legs of one's own chair by breaking the back of the nation is neither ethical nor justified.

*In such a situation, every soldier of the democracy who claims to be Indian will have to come together rising above the partisan politics. The party will be saved only if country is saved. If India survives, we Indian can survive. The time which passes never come back. The day which has passed gets buried in past. The day to come becomes a prospect for the future and the present becomes insecure. Today the Congress led UPA government is passing through a phase of instability and crisis. There is no one to save it. In elections Congress fights against SP-BSP and in parliament they join their hands. The one who plays a role in saving the*

*criminals is also an offender in the eyes of law. Saving the government which is weakening Bharat Mata with every passing day is an act which comes under the category of a crime.*

*What an irony is this that in Uttar Pradesh SP-BSP and Congress fights against each other but in Parliament they stand together. This new stream of politics instead of taking us to the sea will lead us to gutter. The current politics of the country has come to such a pass that its path is blocked all over by red signals. People are waiting that someone should come forward. Someone should come and clear the way ahead by removing all the red signals. The path for the Indian*

*politics needs to be paved so that democracy is rescued from its perils.*

*Time passes and it elapses very fast. No one could rein in time in the last 65 years but if even now we fail to recognize this fact then we will be thrown to such an abyss from where it will be very difficult to rise. Therefore it is time to take stock of the situation. In the path of recovering and regaining our lost position and rebuilding our democracy we will have to choose the path of struggle or coordination. Now it has to be seen as to who achieves the feat by dint of its merit. Congress will not get this opportunity. BJP is the only hope but it will have to keep away from any drift and remain committed to its ideology. ■*



### **Nitin Gadkari congratulates Sachin Tendulkar on completion of his hundredth century**

BJP President Shri Nitin Gadkari congratulated Sachin Tendulkar on completion of his hundredth ton in Asia Cup. Sachin Tendulkar scored his hundredth century against Bangladesh in the Asia Cup on March 16. In his message, Shri Gadkari said Sachin is undoubtedly the greatest cricketer this game has ever produced and I join the entire nation and the cricket lovers all over the world in celebrating this joyous occasion. ■

**Kamal sandesh Parivar wishes  
its esteemed readers  
a very happy  
Varsh Pratipada  
(Vikram Samvat 2069)**



# General Budget : Disappointing and directionless

**W**hich road will Pranab choose? This question kept the nation engaged for the past week especially after the Assembly election results, the subsequent Rail Budget fiasco and the lackluster Economic Survey laid in the Parliament last week. In this backdrop, the Union Budget was being seen as an opportunity to jumpstart India's slowing economy. But, the finance Minister not only failed to give any roadmap for revival of the economy but has taxed the common man already burdened with high inflation and unemployment through hike in indirect taxes and promising to curtail subsidies.

Disappointing a large section of people in the country, finance minister presented a directionless Budget on March 16, 2012. In his Budget speech Pranab Mukherjee raised the exemption limit for income tax by just Rs 20,000 from Rs 1,80,000 to Rs 2 lakh.

In his Budget speech the finance minister Promises to curb black money, major push on infrastructure, capital market reforms and huge

## Budget



### Budget 2012-13 displeases the Corporate Sector

“For the industry and the corporate sector all negatives...It is understandable but not acceptable”

**Bajaj Auto Chairman Rahul Bajaj**

“It is not going to stimulate the economy.”

**Ficci President R V Kanoria**

“The increase in all-round taxes would lead to further inflation.

**Godrej Group Chairman Adi Godrej**

“I was expecting that the personal income tax exemption limit would be raised to 2.5 lakh per annum. It is not done which is disappointing”

**Assocham President R N Dhoot**

“The increasing the quantum of tax free bonds from current Rs 30, 000 crore to Rs 60, 000 crore Finance Minister in the Budget 2012-13 has provided much needed impetus to certain deficit sectors such as infrastructure, power, aviation, low cost housing etc. which are very critical to higher economic growth in future.

**RK Jain, Group President (Corporate finance and accounts) Uflex Ltd**

subsidy cut etc. But neither given any clue regarding how and when he will implement these programmes.

The marginal rise in tax slabs in the Budget will give some direct tax relief to individuals.

However, eating out, buying cars, air travel, availing some professional services and investing in gold jewellery will become costlier.

For the corporate sector, the tax rates were remained unchanged; and the finance minister also assured cheaper access to funds for expansion, even as he tinkered with the excise rates and customs duties for specific items.

The Budget also proposed to raise the service tax rate to 12 percent from the present 10 percent.

The 2012 Union Budget came at a time when the ruling

I doubt whether interest rates can be lowered. "I am not hopeful that the RBI will be able to cut rates in April,"

**ICICI Bank MD and CEO Chanda Kochhar**

The telecom sector is already burdened with multiple and high tax levies which account for 30% of the telecom services revenue. The rise in Service Tax from 10% to 12% will increase cost of services to customers and also impact the P&L of telecom companies.

**Bharti Airtel India & South Asia CEO Sanjay Kapoor**

"A rise in excise & import duty and input costs will not be very conducive for the auto industry as the additional burden of increased duty will directly affect the buyers and hence would lead to slowdown in sales. CBU prices will also be affected on account of a rise in customs duty,"

**Toyota Kirloskar Motor DMD (Sales and Marketing) Sandeep Singh**

An area of concern for industry is the increase in excise duty and service tax from 10% to 12%. At a time when industry is already facing huge increases in input cost, this will further add to the burden. It is possible that this may not yield the revenue that the Minister is looking for and instead result in further slowdown in growth while adding to inflationary pressure.

**CII President B Muthuraman**

"We as the umbrella body of real estate in the country feel disappointed by the unyielding measures taken by Finance Minister in the Union Budget of 2012-13.

**CREDAI National President Lalit Kumar Jain**

## Budget disappointing, inflationary : Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan on March 16 termed the Union Budget as "disappointing" and "inflationary". "The Union Budget presented by the Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee is disappointing and inflationary as the excise duty and service tax were raised to 12% from the present 10%," Chouhan said in his reaction. The budget had once again exposed the Centre's anti-poor and anti-weaker section attitude, he added. Chouhan also said that lack of strong political will and uncertainty in policies had resulted in 1.5 per cent decline in growth rate, which was a matter of concern. The decline in industrial growth too was worrying, he added.



Congress led UPA coalition at the centre is facing multiple challenges from almost every quarter and the frustration of the masses is at its peak due to stiff price rise, inflation and corruption.

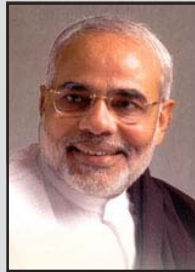
While the single biggest disappointment was that promised DTC could not be fully implemented in the current fiscal, there is certainly a move towards its spirit in the new scheme of taxation.

Experts are of the opinion that the biggest beneficiaries of this budget would be people having income between Rs. 8 lakh to 9.9 lakh per annum not the aam aadmi. The beneficiaries move from the 30 per cent slab to the 20 per cent slab. ■

## Budget Highlights

- ▶ GDP growth estimated at 6.9 per cent in real terms in 2011-12. Slowdown in comparison to preceding two years is primarily due to decline in industrial growth.
- ▶ A sharp increase in indirect taxes and especially the service tax – and, worse, its expansion to cover more services – has come as a rude shock to the common man.
- ▶ Lack of a clear strategy on managing high Inflation. There is neither any risk mitigation strategy on crude oil, nor a credible plan, on how to improve, in the short term, the supply of food and food related products.
- ▶ The promise to enact the Food Security legislation has been overlooked once again by the Finance Minister.
- ▶ Absence of a credible strategy on fiscal consolidation.
- ▶ Lack of an employment boosting growth strategy. India's industrial output witnessed a sustained slowdown over the past year, led by a steep fall in production of almost all sectors, particularly manufacturing, mining and capital goods. This has wider implications for general economy, economic growth and employment.
- ▶ The absence of any roadmap of reforms in land acquisition, labor laws, environment regulations, mining and natural resources in the Budget for encouraging private investment and boost employment is disappointing.
- ▶ Infrastructure sector has received lesser attention in this budget despite the fact that implementation of infrastructure projects in the central sectors like power, roads, highways, railways, aviation and ports etc are moving at a tardy pace.
- ▶ Stagnant social sector spending. Much higher allocation for health and education sectors were expected from the Budget. The allocation for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan is only marginally higher at Rs 25,555 and much lower than what was envisaged under the Right to Education.
- ▶ There is no significant jump in the allocation for health which is nowhere close to the 2.5% of GDP as envisaged under the 12th Five Year Plan.
- ▶ Inflation expected to rise further in next few months.
- ▶ Current account deficit at 3.6 per cent of GDP for 2011-12 and reduced net capital inflow in the 2nd and 3rd quarters will put pressure on exchange rate.
- ▶ Deterioration in fiscal balance in 2011-12 due to slippages in direct tax revenue and increased subsidies. ■

## Aam Aadmi missing from Union Budget : Modi



Gujarat Chief Minister Shri Narendra Modi on March 18 described the Union Budget for 2012-13 as anti-people, lack-lustre, directionless and absolutely disappointing, sure to take the nation from bad to worse days. "If someone searches for some relief for the common man, it is just missing," he said. Commenting on the budget proposals presented in the Parliament, he said, it reflects the Congress-led UPA Government's political instability, as well its inability to fight burning issues like corruption, inflation and unemployment. It shows absence of political will necessary for development.

Shri . Modi said that an additional burden of Rs.80,000-crore on the people, including Rs.40,000-crore in today's General Budget and another Rs.40,000-crore in the Railway Budget earlier, would adversely affect the general public across the board.

Taking a strong exception to the hike of two per cent on Excise Duty and Service Tax, he said it is cruel and would affect labour-intensive employment avenues like tourism.

While the Union Budget should reflect strong fiscal discipline, Shri Modi added , the latest budget doesn't even show any direction for planned development. Citing an example of the Centre's mismanagement of economy, he said, the fiscal deficit has also increased from 4.6 per cent last year to 5.1 per cent this year, and the market borrowings from Rs.3.53-lakh-crore to Rs.4.79-lakh-crore. This leaves no scope for the private sector. The budget also fails to address the farm sector and women's empowerment. The Chief Minister wished the Centre takes a cue from Gujarat in budgetary allocations. Gujarat earmarks 67 per cent of its budget on development works as against the Centre's paltry 30 per cent. Gujarat has allotted Rs.40,000-crore for Tribal Sub-Plan during the Five Year Plan, as against just Rs.21,000-crore by the Centre. There are many such instances. ■

### Karnataka's energy needs not met, says Sadananda Gowda

With the State grappling with the prospect of a severe energy crisis, Karnataka had hoped for a few favourable initiatives in the Union budget to accelerate the state's economic growth. But chief minister DV Sadananda Gowda, on March 16, expressed displeasure at Union finance minister Pranab Mukherjee's budget as it has let down the State.



Karnataka had sought dedicated coal blocks for its thermal power plants. "Some announcements have been made to make coal blocks available. However, it is not clear whether our coal requirement will be met as the announcement is for

plants to be commissioned by 2014-15. Similarly, our long-pending demand for allotment of gas has also been not considered.

Karnataka does not figure in the package announced for weavers and artisans," he said.

Terming the budget as a status-quo budget, he added: "It was expected that the finance minister will initiate steps to curb the rising prices of fuel. The budget can neither help economic growth nor revive the already sagging economy."

"People have been suffering due to the high inflationary trend in the last two years. The two-digit inflation rate has not come down. Food inflation had ranged between 18% and 22%. The finance minister should have initiated some measures to control inflation. But the budget has disappointed the people," he said.

Gowda expressed fears of the budget further fuelling the rise in inflation. "The hike in central excise and service tax by 2% (from 10% to 12%) will trigger higher inflation trends as the prices of goods and services will go up automatically, further burdening the middle classes and the poor," he said.

He welcomed the decision to provide Rs50 crore for research initiatives at University of Agricultural

### Bihar Deputy CM terms Union Budget as a big disappointment

Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi said that the Union Budget for 2012-13 has "nothing special"

for Bihar and was also highly disappointing for people as it had not tried to tackle the problem of price rise affecting the common man. He termed it a directionless budget which



would stoke inflation. "The budget will neither improve country's economy nor help the common man. The hike in excise and service taxes will lead to further price rise. There is nothing for women and senior citizens. The Centre included in its list even those services which used to be in state list for tax purposes," he said, adding that the Union government also ignored the demand by several States to reduce the age limit for widow pension from 40 to 18 and disability percentage from 80 to 40 for pension to handicapped persons. Modi said Bihar was likely to get Rs 870 crore less in 2011-12 in the form of state's share in central taxes.

Terming the Budget as a big disappointment, Shri Modi charged Union Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee did not take into account concerns of State governments on Service Tax and CST compensation. "Not a single concern of States has been taken into cognisance in the Budget. It is very disappointing," he said. The State governments had demanded 35 services, on which States impose levies, to be kept in the 'negative list' (ie Service Tax should not be levied on them).

Shri Modi said the demand was not taken into considerations and "this will lead to double taxation and litigation". State governments had also demanded raising the CST rate to four per cent from the current two per cent, which too does not find mention in the Union Budget. While Centre levy CST, States collect the revenue. ■



# Nothing more than an accounting statement

By Shri Arun Jaitley



The only way that the UPA government could have avoided committing a mistake in this Budget was to waste the opportunity and do nothing at all. And that's what it did. It decided to treat this budget not as an exercise which changes the direction of policy but to convert it into a mere accounting statement. Admittedly, the sentiment in relation to the economy is low. There is a dip in investment. Foreign investment has gradually reduced. Even domestic investors are looking for better investment destinations outside the country. Any Finance Minister would have wanted to reverse this sentiment. The government is beleaguered after the recent Assembly elections. The morale of the leadership is low. The budget was a historic opportunity to take some positive steps and boost the morale of its own cadres. However, the Finance Minister chose not to utilise this opportunity. He wanted to save the government from any adverse comment and therefore decided not to take any important steps.

## *Two ways out*

There were two courses open to him. The post-1991 course would have been to make the economy more efficient and competitive. More rational taxation, investment in roads, better infrastructure, more reforms, more investment attraction were certainly an important course open to the Finance Minister. He decided not to use this well-tryed

and tested course. He went back to the pre-1991 experiment of higher taxation and higher governmental expenditure — a step which may make the economy more sluggish and non-competitive.

He increased excise duty by two per cent across the board. He expanded the net of service tax and increased the taxation slab by two per cent. He tinkered with several other entries and imposed one of the highest tax burdens in recent budgeting history.

The impact of this higher taxation would indeed be adverse on the economy. The only boost to infrastructure comes from external commercial borrowings or tax-free bonds. The most alarming figure in the budget is the 5.9 per cent fiscal deficit. This appears to be understated because the full import of the subsidy burden is not reflected in this figure. After a huge dose of higher taxation and a hope that the expanded economy will give him higher collections, the Finance Minister has accounted for a higher corporate taxation amounting to Rs.45,547 crore, a higher income tax of Rs.23,907 crore, a higher custom duty of Rs.33,964 crore, a higher central excise of Rs.43,655 crore and a higher service tax of Rs.29,000 crore.

Despite this monstrous burden on the common man, he pegs the fiscal deficit at 5.1 per cent on the unrealistic assumption that the subsidies in the next year would reduce. In reality, the actual subsidy

burden for 2011-12 overshot the budget 2011 estimates by a whopping Rs.73,000 crore. Even if the additional impact of Food Security Bill is omitted, the actual burden of fiscal deficit in the coming year could be much higher.

Defence continues to be a neglected sector. The marginal increase in the allocation for defence equipment would be subsumed by inflation during the course of the year.

Once the government goes to the market for borrowings, amounting to Rs.4,79,000 crore the private sector runs the risk of being crowded out of the market itself.

The government's flagship scheme Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) had a dismal performance this year. Needless to say that the government has reduced the allocation of NREGA by Rs. 7,000 crore in the coming year. The economic policy formulation and its implementation require clarity, leadership and a larger consensus. This government appears to have attempted neither of them.

If the government wants to live and fight, it has to discard its do-nothing approach. ■

*(The writer is Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha)*

# Finance Minister wasted a historic opportunity, by presenting a non-Budget : Yashwant Sinha

The Indian economy is passing through challenging times. The sentiment with regard to the economy is low. The presentation of the Union Budget 2012-13 was a historic opportunity for the Finance Minister to take corrective steps. What was needed were leadership, clarity and cohesiveness in the UPA alliance. All these are lacking. The Finance Minister wasted a historic opportunity, by presenting a non-Budget. His Budget is an accounting statement but not a policy enhancing document. It fails to lift the sentiment of the economy.

The Fiscal Deficit for the FY 2011-12 has been put at 5.9 percent. There is an underestimation of the subsidy figure. The final figures may even be more disturbing. He had an opportunity to take steps to enhance economic activity, increase the size and volume of Indian economy, raise higher revenues from higher economic activities and correct the fiscal deficit. He has chosen a retrograde method. He has presented a Budget with a high dose of taxation. Never in recent history have taxes been increased on the tax payer to the level as this Budget has increased them. Excise duties have been increased by 2 percent across the board. All services except the exempted ones have been brought in the Service Tax. Service Tax has been increased from 10 to 12 percent. The rebate in the Direct Taxes is most minimal. Eventually, after the Direct Tax Code, when the changed structure of taxation comes into force, even these may disappear.



*Statement issued on March 16, 2012 by Former Union minister of Finance and Lok Sabha MP Shri Yashwant Sinha on Union budget 2012-13*

The Finance Minister has imposed a higher dose of Indirect Taxes at Rs. 45940 crores. The devil is, however, in the details. Higher rates of taxes, coupled with additional collections, has given rise to a budgetary premise that the increase in taxes would be as under-

Item	Increase (in Crores)
1. Corporate Tax:	Rs. 45,547
2. Income Tax:	Rs. 23,907
3. Custom Duty	Rs. 33,694
4. Central Excise	Rs. 43,655
5. Service Tax	Rs. 29,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>Rs. 175,803</b>

The next year fiscal deficit, despite such anticipated collections will still be at a monstrous 5.1 percent. Even this is based on a premise that subsidies are reducing by Rs. 26,000 crores. This is not withstanding that the Food Security Act may come into force. This is not withstanding the fact that, in the Budgetary estimates of 2011-12, and the revised estimates, the subsidy burden has merely

increased Rs. 73,000 crores. Infrastructure is an area, where India needs to grow. The Budget should have given an impetus through the system of Public Private Partnership. All it does is to continue the existing infrastructure initiatives, the funding of which will depend entirely on external commercial borrowings or tax-free bonds.

It is pertinent to mention that the expenditure on NREGA has been brought down in the Budgetary estimated by Rs. 7,000 crores. Reports have indicated that from April to December, 2011 the average employment under NREGA was only for 32 days. This is a dismal performance of government's flagship scheme.

There is no mention, let alone any bold even on minimal reforms in the economy. Obviously, the government has no intention of embarking on that course. It has performed an exercise wherein it has increased taxes to provide for additional expenditure and window-dress the fiscal deficit. The target of fiscal consolidation, which the Finance Minister has repeatedly spoken about appears to have been abandoned. Higher taxations, coupled with inflation, and high return interest rates is just to make Indian economy sluggish and slow. The non-competitive economy cannot turn around. Bereft of any ideas, the Finance Minister has brought back the conventional model of higher taxes and the higher expenditure, which certainly should not be the roadmap of Indian economy ■

# Poor are at receiving end

-Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi

*Former BJP president Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi while intervening in the debate on 'Situation arising out of widespread discontentment among the working class due to faulty Government policies' on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012 in Lok Sabha criticised the congress led UPA government for its apathy towards poor and destitute. He raised several question on the approach of government in devising rules and regulations which have become irrelevant in the current scenario. Citing an example he said that one who earns Rs 25-26 or Rs 32 is cosidered a rich person which is very shocking indeed. We are publishing the synopsis of his speech hereunder:*

**W**e are discussing a very important topic here which do not relate to a political party or a particular Government. This concerns about 70-75 per cent poor people

and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

As per National

the policies of the Government done for their good? Are these labourers getting minimum wages? This is the moot question. National Commission

on Rural Labour says that the annual earnings of the majority of the agricultural labourers in India is so low that they cannot meet even their minimum consumption needs. The primary reason for this condition is that they are not getting even the minimum wages what to talk of



*What is this decent standard of life? Is this decent standard of life for the rich only or for the common too? Is the Minimum Wages Act enacted in the year 1948 relevant today? If 60-70 per cent population of this country is forced to lead such a miserable life, how are we going to make this country a great country?*

of the country who are not affiliated to any party. Our Constitution says that the State should endeavour to secure to all workers a decent standard of life. The Constitution has also directed the State to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people

Commission on Rural Labour, agriculture wage workers are the most exploited lot. 50 per cent of them are Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. 94 per cent of the workers in the country are in unorganised sector, of which 11 crore are agricultural labourers. What is the economic status of this big workforce? What have

adequate wages. What is this decent standard of life? Is this decent standard of life for the rich only or for the common too? Is the Minimum Wages Act enacted in the year 1948 relevant today? If 60-70 per cent population of this country is forced to lead such a miserable life, how are we going to make

# Neither populist nor reformist

**U**nder precarious financial position and creaky infrastructure it is no secret that Indian Railways is passing through a difficult phase. But this comes as no

come as a disappointment to large majority of Indians who expected concrete and credible measures from the Railway Minister to bring the railways back on track.

petty and trivial measures to bring the railway finances back on track besides better railway infrastructure and amenities through out-of-box ideas. But the railway Minister faced with this crisis which was the making of his own government chose the easiest way of undoing the damage caused by his predecessors. He not only decided to pass the cost entirely on to the railway passengers but failed to give firm commitments that this step will improve the crumbling railway finances and amenities, and put a stop on the rising railway accidents.

The wrong policies, delayed actions and cooked-up numbers dished out by the Congress led UPA regime which caused irreparable damage to railway safety can be gauged from the fact that the number of accidents increased steadily over the years. And the present Budget did precious little to reverse this trend.

*Number of Causalities in Train Accidents*



surprise to large majority of Indians who have witnessed the milking of railways for petty gains at the cost of passenger safety and amenities under the Congress led UPA rule. Recently, the committee headed by Anil Kakodkar, chairman, Atomic Energy Commission said in its report, "The financial position of the railways is at the brink of collapse unless some concrete measures are taken". Besides, another panel set for modernization of the railways, led by Sam Pitroda, chairman of the National Knowledge Commission, said, "India suffers from a severe and chronic under-investment in railway infrastructure". In this backdrop the recent Railway Budget has

After ruining the aviation sector to the hilt, the Congress led UPA in the last few years repeatedly ignored reforms in Indian railways by promoting populist and ill-conceived measures, notwithstanding the poor state of railway finances. This pushed the Railways to the brink of sickness and inefficiency and caused severe hardships for the passengers. Aware of this as he claims, when the former Railway Minister Dinesh Trivedi rose to present the Railway Budget for 2012-13 it was hoped that he will go beyond

Former Railway Minister Mr. Trivedi has come out with only one solution to take care of the railway infrastructure, safety and sanitation, which has gone from

Year	Number of People Killed	Number of people Injured
2004-05	236	412
2005-06	315	627
2006-07	208	402
2007-08	191	412
2008-09	209	444
2009-10	238	397
2010-11	374	469

bad to worse over the years and that is a steep hike in the railway fares, with precious little on other tangible measures. Even on fare hike, for last seven years the UPA took the credit of not raising the railway passenger fares and instead of raising it in a calibrated manner the former Railway Minister broke all records in passenger fare hikes when inflation is far from comfortable. The fares have not only gone up by 20-25 percent on an average but the freight rates have also been raised substantially just before the Budget defying any logic and rationality putting extra burden on the common people. The cascading effect aside, the fare hike couldn't even convince his own Party chief Miss Mamata Banarjee and the Government.

Coming to the substantive part of the Railway Budget, the allocations made for railway infrastructure are far too meager to take care of the growing aspirations of the nation. While a number of promises made in the last Railway Budget remain unfulfilled till date, so obviously there are apprehensions everywhere on the credibility of the ambitious measures announced in this Rail Budget. Further, with dependence of people on railways growing manifold in the past few years in India the number of trains announced are not in keeping with the present needs and not even remotely in tune with future requirements. The railway infrastructure projects which are facing colossal cost and time overruns have grown in number with precious little being done for their timely execution. While the Railway minister has announced a five-year perspective plan for taking care of security, facility and time, the burden of increased fares has been slapped instantly on the common man. The former Railway Minister's intentions may be good but his prescriptions for improving the health of Indian railways are poor and burdened with policies that will adversely affect the common people of India.

With constant pressure from Mamata Banerjee the visionless Congress led UPA government and the new railway Minister may well roll-back the fares partially, but the failure to build broad-based consensus on key reform issues will cause irreparable damage to the Indian Railways. The government and the Railway Ministry not only failed to raise to the occasion but left more questions on the future of Indian Railways than he answered in the Budget speech. ■

### **Rail budget would burden the common man : BJP**

The BJP slammed the Rail Budget as a "dishonest" exercise that would burden the common man and questioned the financial figures provided by Minister Dinesh Trivedi as an "illusion". "We expect the Government to be straight-forward and candid on the Rail Budget. This is a budget intended to deceive the people," Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Arun Jaitley said. Pointing out that freight charges were already increased by 20 per cent on March 7, Jaitley said the Government intended to meet its shortfall in revenue by passing on the burden to the people through increase in fares and freight charges. Another senior BJP leader and former Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha also opposed the hike in train fares announced in the Rail Budget, saying the Government should not have increased the rate at one go and put an "additional burden" on the common man.

"The fares should have been increased long ago in small doses. However, this time the Railway Minister has put a big burden. For poor people, who are travelling 500 to 1,000 km, the increase is steep," he told reporters inside Parliament House. Replying to question on the fare hike, he said, "They have juggled with the figures to hoodwink the common man. When we go into the fineprint, we will know what is the real burden." Sinha also claimed that the figures given by Trivedi were "only illusions".

### **Gadkari condoles demise of Goa Minister Matanhy Saldanha**

BJP President Nitin Gadkari expressed deep sorrow over the most unfortunate and untimely demise of senior Party functionary and an efficient Minister for Tourism in the newly formed Goa cabinet, Shri Matanhy Saldanha. In his demise the Party has lost an able leader who has worked relentlessly for strengthening the BJP in Goa for several years. He was known for his concerns on environmental issues and was known for his passion for balancing development with ecology. He had a strong popular base in all the communities of Goa. His untimely demise is an irreparable loss to the Party.

# Politics for what?

By Prabhat Jha

Why to point finger at one another when all are guilty? Today no one wants to remain clean and those who want to remain as such, people never allow them to do so. One, who is not at fault today, becomes blemished the next day and those who are innocent are bemused as if they are to blame. Never in the last four decades such an era of outrageous politics was witnessed. Politics has become a thing to make profit. Politics has become a means to flaunt power. Politics is now related to status. Politics has become a school of dirty tricks. Politics has become an arena of arrogance. Politics has become a field of jealousy. Politics now means cut throat competition. Politics is a cartel where people defeat each other. Politics has become synonym of revenge. Politics is synonym of money and muscle power. Is it the last refuge of people power – it is really perplexing. To come to power is politics or is the politics only for the sake of gaining power? Why politics? Politics for whom? Politics for what? Most of those who are in Indian politics today are there without having an understanding about these questions. Even a very ordinary person has a feeling that if one's personal poverty is to be removed it is better to join politics



*Why are we bereft of the passion that forced the Britishers to leave the country? Don't we see the necessity of same zeal and fervor today? If we can throw the Britishers out can't we set the current political situation in the country right? Not only this but many more such questions are in the mind of the people. The situation has deteriorated to such an extent that today no one dares to claim that he is in politics. 'Politics' and 'politician' are two words which have acquired pejorative connotation these days.*

- not to remove country's poverty but one's personal poverty. Somewhere people are pained by it. Politics should have provided relief to the people but it has become a cause of grief. What an irony is this? Indians had the capability to force the Britishers to leave the country. After all why Indians were able to compel Britishers to leave the country? How we won the independence? Was getting independence our only aim? Didn't we draw a roadmap for independent India?

Why are we bereft of the passion that forced the Britishers to leave the country? Don't we see the necessity of same zeal and fervor today? If we can throw the Britishers out can't we set the current political situation in the country right? Not only this but many more such questions are in the mind of the people. The situation has deteriorated to such an extent that today no one dares to claim that he is in politics. 'Politics' and 'politician' are two words which have acquired pejorative connotation these days. If someone has to be shown in bad light it is sufficient to say that he is in politics. There is no need to heap any other charges. It is a pity that 'politics' and 'politician' have become synonymous with derogatory words in just 65 years. Everyone is Indian and India belongs to everyone. It is inscribed in the

constitution of every political party that the party will work for the development of the country but how many people are there today who really work in accordance with the policy and principle of the party. Ideological position of every political party has become slack. The Congress party of Mahatma Gandhi which won the independence for the country has in 65 years after independence reached in the hands of Sonia Gandhi and the situation has come to such strait that neither the people are able to forget Mahatma Gandhi nor they find themselves comfortable with Sonia Gandhi. Who has made the word Gandhi so much unacceptable? Why? What should be done? Is Congress mulling over these issues? What a pity that in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh the Congress had only a family to campaign for the party and none else. The situation turned out that the family was exposed thoroughly in both the elections. Neither Sonia, nor Rahul could bring solace to the Congress. Even after such humiliating defeats Sonia and Rahul could not say that they want to resign the post of party president and general secretary. If not they, then who is responsible? Only they can demand moral conduct from others who have themselves exemplified it by his own actions. The biggest irony is that both mother and son are neither offering to resign nor anyone is left in the party fully hijacked by the family to demand their resignations even in private. Those who boldly demand actions from other political parties become voiceless when it

comes to raising questions within their own party. The party or individual who lose the power to speak truth cannot hide their naked body or organization by the cover of falsehood.

Not only Congress but other political parties too, if we leave the BJP out, suffer from the same ailments. In RJD, Laloo Yadav perhaps had much more faith on his apolitical wife than on any of his party activists. That was the reason that he handed over the reins of power to his housewife dismissing the claims of all his activists and none had

the definition of socialism was re-written with nepotism and dynastic rules and all the socialist remained silent then who was left to take care of the democracy? Where will this new tradition of dynasty in democracy lead us? How Mulayamji and Lalooji will now criticize the dynasty politics of Congress? To whom one can complain now? If we take a look at BSP, no democratic tradition is seen, only Maya-cratic system is there. There, whatever comes out of the mouth of Mayawati becomes a rule. There is no place

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the guts to raise a finger. What a mockery of democracy it was! While himself being an offender of law in fodder scam, his wife became the protector of law. Should truth be not spoken in democracy? If one who was playing the role of a housewife becomes the chief minister of Bihar, could Bihar then progress? Why this truth was not uttered at that time? When one starts thinking about oneself and not about State and nation and when the zeal for struggle wanes and one is embroiled in the game of power then situation comes to such passé. If we look at Samajwadi Party, Maulayam leaves the scene and Akhilesh arrives. Can we say it to be a democratic system or socialism as propounded by Lohia? When

for discussion in BSP. The BSP has accepted the form of master-servant relationship. Mayawati is master and all other are servants and those who refuse to remain servile are thrown out of the party. In BSP, even truth can become a falsehood.

This is the situation that prevails in a democratic country. Maya sitting pretty over the faith of the Dalits, decorates herself with diamonds and pearls but the democracy there remains in tatters. India had never seen such a scintillating and illusive image of a Dalit leader. DMK and AIDMK also suffer from the same syndrome. No one understands why these parties are in politics. Can the ones rolling in wealth of billions understand the plight of

the poor? Although people have snatched power from the hands of those implicated in 2G spectrum scam but DMK has not shied away from its habits. It has a habit to mislead the poor. Both these parties encash faith. I've no hesitation in saying that democracy has restricted itself in Tamil Nadu. It is required that the party which can sideline these two parties and can sacrifice its generations for the sake of people should come forward. If Mamata Bannerjee

the parties that we have discussed, the status of the activists has been either reduced to staffs or to *chamchas*. The future of one is dependent on the future of the leader to whom he is associated. Never before such a crisis of ideology was witnessed. The meaning of the word 'commitment' is becoming blurred. Its real meaning is getting eroded everyday. Those who are committed cannot be weaned away so the ones who can be bought over are on sale.

the spirit of Indian politics. It can become synonym of *jana, gana, mana*. It can become a true inheritor of democracy. The destiny has provided such a golden opportunity to it. It has nothing much to do, it has only to come in the role of the pre-independence Congress. It has to take itself and its activists on the path of truth, non-violence and commitment. BJP will have to avoid the things which have led to the deterioration of Congress. If we move forward by relinquishing celebratory mode of functioning and choose the path of struggle and along with democratic system move ahead by trying to understand the ground realities then our 33<sup>rd</sup> foundation day on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2012 will help us in heralding new era of success and achievements. If we try to win over this divinely ordained opportunity through our vigour and hard work then even destiny will work in our favour and we can play a role in making the lotus of 'antodaya and sarvodaya' to bloom. It is said that BJP is not a party of politicians, businessmen, capitalists, stakeholders or feudal lords but a party of ordinary *karyakartas*. Every Indian who has love for India, possesses Indian-ness and worships *Bharatmata* can work for this party. ■

(Writer is Madhya Pradesh BJP President and a member of Rajya Sabha)

***Never before such a crisis of ideology was witnessed. The meaning of the word 'commitment' is becoming blurred. Its real meaning is getting eroded everyday. Those who are committed cannot be weaned away so the ones who can be bought over are on sale. People are openly on sale. Market is being organized in the name of ideologies. Those who are committed cannot get away so they are last in the row abiding by their dharma of commitment and those who can break the rules everyday are now able to become the frontrunners.***

alone can bring the winds of change in the stronghold of Left then why 'Jayalalitha and Karunanidhi embroiled politics' can't be set free from their strangleholds. There also a Mamta Bannerjee is needed who can fight relentlessly and struggle until the final result sees the light of the day. Which other States should be mentioned here? Whether it is Andhra Pradesh or Jammu and Kashmir, NT Ramarao, Farooq Abudllah or Biju Patnaik, all these parties suffer from dynastic politics. If dynasty becomes supreme then what will be the meaning of democracy? The democracy is becoming aimless in the blind alley of dynastic politics which even ails the regional parties. In

People are openly on sale. Market is being organized in the name of ideologies. Those who are committed cannot get away so they are last in the row abiding by their *dharma* of commitment and those who can break the rules everyday are now able to become the frontrunners.

The kind of politics that is seen today in India, BJP still remains different from others. It can now become the symbol of

## National Convention on Water held

A day long National Convention on Water was organized on March 22nd (Water Day) by Jaladhikar, a non-governmental organization, at Gandhi Peace Foundation in Delhi. Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Shri Ram Bahadur Rai, Shri Gopal Agrawal (President, Jaladhikar) & water man Shri Rajendra Singh were main speakers on the day. The theme of the convention was, 'Water : Right-to-Life.' ■



# UPA a bow-bend spineless government

By Amba Charan Vashishth

The Congress led UPA-II government led by Dr. Manmohan Singh is not functioning, only drifting. It has no course of its own. If any time it appears to be moving, it does so on the path towards which its allies pull and push it. It is a *jhuk-jhuk* (bow-bend) dispensation that can lay prostrate before anybody.

At times UPA does display some guts to stand up to its opponents, but only to surrender later. The often-quoted dialogue between a master and servant is relevant. A servant is said to have threatened his master: "Increase my wages, otherwise.....". "What otherwise?" shouted back the master. "Otherwise, I will continue on the existing wages", meekly replied the servant. The way Manmohan Singh government has dealt with the issues like the Railway Minister Dinesh Trivedi, NCTC and stand on human rights violation by Srilanka is a pointer to that direction. Congress did succeed in saving its government by manipulating the walkouts by Trinamool Congress (TMC) and Bahujan Samajwadi Party (BSP) and Samajwadi Party's (SP)s support. Yet, this win has not made it raise its head in pride; it has exposed its lack of clear majority which is 272 in a house of 543.

This government functions in isolation, at whims and has an element of mystery and surprise. Though an alliance government dependent upon the

support of other parties, it hardly takes its allies in confidence. That is the reason why it has had to face bouts of embarrassment many a times.

## *Autocratic instincts*

Sufficient to quote only three instances: Anna Hazare and Baba Ramdev movements against corruption and black money, and FDI in retail trade. Initially, they treated these issues as something between Congress and the crusaders to the exclusion of its alliance partners and the opposition. It drafted its elite Congress ministers to go into a huddle with Baba Ramdev and Team Anna. When things went out of its control and the matter came to a boil, it sought opposition help. On the Lokpal Bill tabled in Parliament the allies and supporting parties held divergent views on some of its vital provisions.

The UPA government surprised the nation by all of a sudden announcing its decision to allow 51 percent foreign direct investment (FDI) in retail trade. Not only was it vehemently objected to by the Opposition, even the allies like the TMC, and others openly expressed their resentment. Even some Congress MPs, like Sanjay Singh, and Kerala Congress President raised their voice of disagreement. Initially, the government did try to present a brave face but after gauging the mood of those opposed, it finally put the decision on hold. Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee explained later that they did not wish the government to fall.

Post-five State assembly elections, the scene has become all the more funny and devoid of all sense of morality. For Congress saving its government



Courtesy : Asian Age

and to continue in power is the be-all and end-all of all its efforts. It can stoop to any low and go to any length to achieve this objective no matter how high it costs the nation.

### *Sleeping with the enemy*

In West Bengal it fought assembly and parliament elections in alliance with TMC. But with TMC not falling in line with its dictatorial instincts on many issues, Congress now seems too willing to shirk its friend and, to quote an English

the person of Dr. Manmohan Singh who if ever appears to be in the acting mode, is only because of the remote control in the hands of Congress President Smt. Sonia Gandhi.

Dr. Singh's position has further been undermined by the oft-repeated demands of senior Congress leaders that Rahul Gandhi should take over as PM. Not to be left behind, Dr. Singh himself, has lent his voice, a number of times to the chorus that Rahul Gandhi has the all

government. There is a feeling that one day people will be treated to a Breaking News that Dr. Singh has resigned and Rahul taken over.

Congress today dreams of forming the next government again although it has minimal representation in the big States of UP, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamilnadu, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, etc. In Andhra Pradesh its fortunes are dwindling. In Maharashtra it is dependent upon Sharad Pawar's NCP and is playing a second fiddle to Miss Mamta Bannerjee's TMC in West Bengal. From where will the numbers come to make it win back power at the Centre?

*A helpless majboor sarkar  
Lame duck budgets*

A piquant and unprecedented situation has developed with the Railway Minister Dinesh Trivedi presenting UPA's railway budget for 2012-13 and Miss Mamta Bannerjee instantly demanding his resignation. After prevaricating for a while the Prime Minister succumbed to pressure and Trivedi has been replaced by Mukul Roy. The Railway budget was not the handiwork of an individual; it was the collective effort of the council of ministers. But what an irony that the Prime Minister remained a silent spectator to the axe falling on Trivedi

Miss Bannerjee has spoken of a rollback of the increased rail fares. If that doesn't happen, her party may go in for opposing the railway budget. It will be an unprecedented situation in which a person who presented the railway budget himself may have to vote against it in

**Rahul Gandhi, during the election campaign had, till March 6, been vowing to end the SP's *gunda-raj* and Mayawati's corruption-*raj* in UP. But, in the changed post-election political scenario, Congress is too anxious to feel honoured to have both Mulayam Singh and Mayawati on its side — to provide a free run to the *gunda-raj* and corruption-*raj* at the Centre.**

term, "too willing to sleep with the enemy" — the BSP and SP. The heir-apparent to the Congress dynastic throne Rahul Gandhi, during the election campaign had, till March 6, been vowing to end the SP's *gunda-raj* and Mayawati's corruption-*raj* in UP. But, in the changed post-election political scenario, Congress is too anxious to feel honoured to have both Mulayam Singh and Mayawati on its side — to provide a free run to the *gunda-raj* and corruption-*raj* at the Centre. The cup of corruption was already overflowing in UPA.

### *Weakest ever PM*

Above all is the fact that since Independence India has the weakest ever Prime Minister in

the qualities of being a good prime minister. "Personally, if you ask me, the general proposition that younger people should take over, I think, is the right sentiment," Dr. Singh told five senior editors on June 29, 2011 in New Delhi. "Whenever the party makes up its mind, I will be very happy to step down," he added.

Congress President too keeps her plans close to her chest, remains uncommitted about Dr. Singh completing his present term and equally mysterious about the timing when Rahul will don the prime minister's crown.

This situation has generated an element of uncertainty about the Manmohan Singh

obeyance to the party whip.

Stung by the reaction to the Railway budget from within his own alliance and the opposition, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, presented a budget that can virtually be called a lame duck one. The budget has pleased none, not even UPA supporters. In a post-budget interaction with industry leaders on March 18, FM himself admitted, "Many things which could have been done, rather should have been done, could not be done at the time of the Budget" because of the "ground realities in the political sphere." *Heads I win, tails you lose!*

Going by the practice followed in party since Smt. Sonia Gandhi dawned on the scene as Congress president more than a decade back, the principle is: Heads I win, tails you lose. Whenever, wherever Congress has won an election in a Municipal Council, State assembly or Parliament, the credit has been claimed, nay usurped, and given to Smt. Sonia Gandhi and Rahul. But where the party loses, the blame is squarely transferred to the local and State organizations. When Congress lost miserably in UP, Goa and Punjab, both Smt. Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi said the fundamentals in the States were not strong; there was wrong selection of candidates, and the State organization did not come up to expectations. The mother-son duo was the final authority in the allotment of tickets. For the last over two-and-a-half years Rahul Gandhi had taken directly in his hands the sole command of the elections in UP. Who was to tone up the State

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organization and strengthen its fundamentals? Both Smt. Sonia Gandhi and Rahul, none else. Yet, none had the moral courage to take responsibility for the humiliation in elections and resign.

*Minorities call the shot*

It is no exaggeration to say that under the present UPA dispensation it is not the will of the majority but that of the fundamentalists that prevails. To appease the minority community of Muslims on the eve of elections

standing among the comity of nations.

Every other day China has the audacity to threaten and protest when our prime minister or defence minister visits our own State of Arunachal or on other matters. Our government doesn't have the guts to tell the Beijing regime to mind its own business and not to interfere in our internal affairs.

On the other hand, we have compromised our position a number of times in the matter of

**Every other day China has the audacity to threaten and protest when our prime minister or defence minister visits our own State of Arunachal or on other matters. Our government doesn't have the guts to tell the Beijing regime to mind its own business and not to interfere in our internal affairs.**

to five State assemblies, particularly the UP, the Congress government in Rajasthan and the Union government resorted to the dirty tricks to block the attendance of Indian origin world renowned writer Salman Rushdie at the Jaipur Literary Festival on the manufactured excuse of a threat to him and of breach of peace.

The same Salman Rushdie attended a conclave organized by the *India Today* after a month. Not to speak of any threat to peace, not a single person protested against his presence. That exposes the style of functioning of this government. *Telling upon foreign standing*

That India has a weak government ruling at the Centre has started telling upon our

dealing with His Holiness the Dalai Lama whom we all consider as our revered guest.

UPA government tries to be apologetic for other nations' actions. Latest is the case of alleged Iranian involvement in blast of the Israeli embassy vehicle seriously injuring an Israeli diplomat. To gladden the heart of Iran our government in post haste and without waiting for the investigation to come to any conclusion, made the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to hurriedly announce on February 15, 2012: "We have no information or evidence of any country, organisation, entity and individual being involved."

The UPA government had, later, to eat its own words when the investigating agency filed criminal charges against three

Iranians for the crime.

Needless to point out that when on February 15 the MEA spokesperson volunteered that unwanted clarification, UP was in the thick of elections.

*Italy 'warns' India*

In the wake of Italian sailors killing two Indians on India's sea waters, the Kerala government arrested the two accused Italian sailors and started investigation under the law. But the Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti rang up Dr. Manmohan Singh and "warned" him against setting a "dangerous precedent" with the jailing and prosecution of two Italian naval guards in India. The two leaders, however, agreed to resolve the issue in accordance with "law and spirit of friendship".

Numerous times has the present government tried to extricate Pakistan of its involvement in acts of terrorism killing and injuring thousands of innocent citizens and destroying public and private property worth hundreds of crores in various parts of India. The Pakistani government has never, not the least cooperated in India's fight against terrorism. Yet our Prime Minister continues to harp: The talks will go on. No tangible result have come so far.

Dr. Manmohan Singh went to the extent of condescending that like India, Pakistan too was a victim of terrorism. But our Prime Minister failed to distinguish between the kind of terrorism in Pakistan and the one we are suffering in India. In Pakistan the acts of terrorism are native, inspired by local issues and the result of misdeeds of successive Pakistani rulers. But

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## Need for an effective mechanism to curb spurious drugs in the country : Prabhat Jha

Madhya Pradesh BJP President Shri Prabhat Jha demanded stringent law to curb spurious and adulterated drugs in the country. Shri Jha while speaking in Rajya Sabha said "There is turnover of drugs worth Rs. 85 thousand crore in India every year. Out of this about 20 to 25 percent share is of spurious and adulterated drugs. The maximum cases of spurious and adulterated drugs have been reported from Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Haryana." He added "These drugs are causing death to people even in small diseases. There is open business of spurious and adulterated drugs in the country. As per media report spurious drugs are coming in large quantity in Indian market from China." The poor and helpless people are becoming victim of it in large number, he added. In viewing the serious threat on the life of our people, Shri Jha demanded that the Government should enact law to curb the business of spurious and adulterated drugs in the country and take concrete action to strengthen the monitoring mechanism. ■



we in India are the victim of cross-border terrorism inspired, aided and financed by Pakistan and anti-India elements given shelter by Pakistan.

UPA-II was not given a clear mandate by the people to rule the country. It only contrived majority by post-poll alignment with diverse elements with whom Congress had fought a bitter electoral battle. The people's mandate is to govern in the interests of the nation but Congress has made it an ugly fight for loaves and fishes of office. The Prime Minister and Finance Minister have

repeatedly declared their helplessness to act. If the Congress cannot rule and govern, it has no business to stay in office. Instead of making unprincipled compromises that are harming the interests of the country within and outside, it should go to the people to seek a fresh mandate to govern. Otherwise, Congress-led UPA-II too will go down in the history as the worst-ever government independent India has suffered. ■

(The writer is the National Convener of BJP Literature & Publication Cell)

# Development oriented Budget

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Prof. Prem Kumar Dhumal who also holds the finance portfolio on March 19 presented a development oriented budget. Covering almost every section of society except the smokers who will have to pay more for cigarettes and bidis. Prof. Dhumal extended financial benefits right from the poorest of poor by raising the social-security pension from Rs 330 to Rs 400 per month as well as to the legislators, by increasing the local area development fund from Rs 30 lakh to Rs 50 lakh and allowing them to spend it anywhere in the district in view of changes in their constituencies due to delimitation. There is something for all categories of employees, including daily wagers and part-timers, pensioners, farmers, contractors, students, youth and women, in substantial or small measures.

There is no proposal for fresh tax or for increasing the existing rate in the Budget. The only exception are cigarette and tobacco products for which the rate of VAT is to be hiked from 16 per cent to 18 per cent and on bidi from 9.75 per cent to 11 per cent.

Prof Dhumal increased the minimum daily wage from Rs 120 to Rs 130, daily-waged and contract employees to be

regularized after eight years of service and part-time employees to be made daily wagers after 10 years of continuous service as on March 31, 2012. While 7 per cent DA will be released to employees along with the current month's salary, arrears from July 2011 will be paid with the salary of April. Pensioners will be paid 7 per cent DA along with arrears and the



pay-revision arrears in April in cash. The rate of fixed medical allowance has been increased to Rs 250 from Rs 100 and drivers will be paid two advance increments on completion of 20 years of service. A policy for absorption of employees of PSUs on government will be framed.

*Atal Nirdhanta Chhatravriti Yojna*, to be launched for children of BPL families and top 4,000 students of Plus One, will be provided Aakash laptops. The amount deposited under *Beti Hai Anmol* Scheme will be increased from Rs 5,100 to Rs 10,000. *Atal Swasthya Seva Yojna* will also be expanded by adding 27 new ambulances to provide inter-facility transfer service, stipend

of PG students and senior residents in medical colleges will be enhanced.

According to the proposal VAT on Central Police Canteens, operating in the State, is to be reduced to 4 per cent, pension amount of ex-servicemen and their widows not getting any other pension will be enhanced from Rs 330 to Rs 400 per month.

Second World War veterans and their widows will get enhanced financial assistance of Rs 750 per month and "Samman Rashi" of freedom fighters will be increased to Rs 7,500 per month. "Samman Rashi" for widows and daughters of freedom fighters to be increased from Rs 3,000 to Rs 3,500

per month and the monthly ration allowances of policemen increased by 50 per cent. Elderly persons aged over 80 years to be given a social security pension of Rs 600 per month.

He proposed, all journalists in the State to be covered under the *Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana* with an insurance cover of Rs 1.75 lakh and the corpus of journalist welfare fund will be increased from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 25 lakh. Newsprint used for printing of newspapers will be exempted from levy of entry tax.

The total Budget outlay is Rs 20243.92 crore with a deficit of Rs 1939 crore (2.8 percent of the GSDP), which is lower than the norm of 3 per cent but higher than

2.2 per cent committed for availing development policy loan from the World Bank.

#### Highlights of the Budget

- The per capita income increased from Rs 43,966 in 2007-08 to Rs 65,535 in 2010-11 and is expected to be Rs 73,608 in 2011-12
- MLA Local Area Development fund increased from Rs 30 lakh to Rs 50 lakh
- Milk procurement price up by Re 1 per kg.
- Atal Swasthya Seva Yojna to be expanded by adding 27 new ambulances
- Stipend of PG students and Senior Residents in medical colleges to be enhanced
- Social Security Pension to be increased from Rs 330 to Rs 400 per month
- Elderly persons over 80 years of age to get a pension of Rs 600 per month
- Amount under Beti Hai Anmol Scheme increased from Rs 5,100 to Rs 10,000
- Second World War veterans and their widows to get enhanced financial assistance of Rs 750 per month.
- "Samman Rashi" of freedom fighters increased to Rs 7,500 per month
- 11,400 rural poor to be provided housing assistance at the rate of Rs 48,500
- Top 4,000 students of Plus I to be given Aakash laptop.
- Minimum daily wage raised from Rs 120 to Rs 130
- Fixed Medical Allowance increased from Rs 100 to Rs 250
- 131 watershed projects sanctioned in last 3 years with project cost of w1035 crore.
- Additional area of 4000 ha to be brought under different fruits for diversification in horticulture.
- Adequate fund provision under MIS scheme to ensure timely payments to the orchardists with a budget provision of w14 crore.
- Survey for feasibility of Aerial Ropeways to transport fruit produce from interior areas to the road head to be undertaken.
- Mukhya Mantri Gramin Parivahan Yojna started to increase transport facility in rural areas and generate employment.
- Model Inspection and Certification Centre to be established at Taradevi, Shimla at a cost of w12.60 crore to improve safety of bus travel.(FOC) ■

## CM presents a revenue surplus Budget for 2012-13

**K**arnataka Chief Minister DV Sadananda Gowda tabled a revenue surplus budget on 21 March 2012 in the Karnataka Assembly. The Chief Minister, who also holds the finance portfolio, made several provisions keeping the common man of the State in mind.

The chief minister who also presented a separate agriculture budget for 2012-13 in the assembly announced that rate of interest on short term crop loan of up to 1 lakh rupees would be reduced to zero from 2012-13 even



as it earmarked 1660 crore rupees for agriculture and related allied activities.

Some major provisions of Karnataka Budget 2012-13 are as follows:

- Gross expenditure for 2012-13 projected at 1,02,742 crore rupees
- An increase of 20.42 per cent over the Budget of 85,319 crore rupees in 2011-12.
- First time the Budget size has exceeded 1 lakh crore rupees.
- Revenue surplus is estimated to be 931 crore rupees.
- Fiscal deficit at 2.94 per cent of the GSDP stands at 15,312 crore rupees.
- Recommendations of the official pay committee for government employees would be given effect from 1 April.
- The total additional outgo on account of the pay and pension revision is estimated to be 4,450 crore rupees on a full year basis.
- Sales tax on diesel to be reduced to 16.75 percent from 18 percent
- Increase in VAT for tobacco products.
- Additional excise duty on Indian made liquor (IML) like beer and low alcoholic beverage by 7.5 percent to 10 percent across 17 slabs.■

# Rs 37,113.80 cr budget presented

**B**JP led Jharkhand government presented a total budget estimate of Rs 37,113.80 crore for the year 2012-13 that includes Rs 18,404.13 crore as non-plan expenditure and Rs 18,709.67 in the plan segment. The State plan has jumped from Rs 12,232.75 crore to Rs 16,300 crore relative to 2011-12. The State is estimated to receive Rs 1,793.96 crore for centrally sponsored schemes.

Presenting his second Budget Finance Minister Hemant Soren said that irrigation projects had been given the highest priority in the upcoming financial year and



plans of total Rs1,950 crore had been allocated for the sector. "The amount is Rs11.96 crore of the total Budget. We have included several irrigation schemes in AIBP for that 90 per

cent of the money would be provided by the Centre," said Hemant Soren. Road Construction with Rs1650 crore is the second top recipient that shares 10.12 per cent of the total State plan.

Against the total expenditure, total tax revenue has been estimated as Rs17,236 crore whereas non-tax revenue is Rs3960.89 crore. The State as grants-in-aid and contributions would get Rs11,227 crore and Rs8,502.29 as share in central taxes. The Finance Minister in his speech said that total of Rs18,781 crore has come as revenue receipt during 2010-11 that is 24 per cent more than the last year. "The State Government is taking all measures to raise internal revenue resources and for the year 2012-13 the tax revenue is estimated to go up by 22 per cent. Non-tax revenue has been estimated as Rs3,960 crore that is 10 per cent higher than the current financial year," he said.

A total of Rs2,150 crore is estimated to be spent on building roads whereas Rs1,400 (8.59 %) on education, Rs1,178 crore (7.23 %) on energy, Rs1,150 crore (7.09 %) on rural development, Rs998 crore (6.12 %) on urban development, Rs970 (5.95 %) on Panchayati raj and Rs597 crore (3.07 %) on health would share the budgetary allocations. ■

## Highlights

- Brand new Johar scheme for generating income of BPL families through agri-based activities. A sum of Rs 42 crore to be spent on that
- 6,000 dwellings for Naxal-infested Saranda. A sum of Rs 150 crore under Indira Awas Yojna
- GSDP is expected to reach Rs 1,39,570 crore in 2012-13 with 12.41 per cent growth. Per capita income with 8.7 % rise is expected to reach Rs 39,134 in 2011-12
- Tax hiked on tobacco products from 14 per cent to 20 per cent
- All cinema halls and multiplexes need not pay entertainment tax for a year. Tax reduced from 5% to 1% on minor forest products such as *mahua* and tamarind. Entry tax removed from kendu leaves
- Sales tax reduced from 5% to 2% on PDS kerosene. Rs 2 rebate on every litre of diesel used by marginal and small farmers for agricultural purposes
- Professional tax to be levied on all professionals aimed to generate Rs 50 crore additional revenue. Bill to be tabled to set up rule for Jharkhand Advertisement Tax Act-2012
- VAT rate upped from 4% to 5% and from 12.5% to 14%. Additional revenue of Rs 150 is expected to be received. Energy charge for industrial units fixed at 5 paise per unit. 20 paise per unit for private nursing homes and shopping malls
- Model Rural Housing Scheme to be started to provide high quality dwellings to BPL families, martyrs, widows and people from Jharkhand movement. Rs 20 crore allocated for that
- Total computerisation of PDS during 2012-13 by spending Rs 36 crore. ■

# After Gandhi and Patel, Modi third Gujarati on 'Time' cover

By Kanchan Gupta

Sixty-five years ago, on January 27, 1947, the venerable American magazine *Time* had featured Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on its cover. It was captioned: 'India's Vallabhbhai Patel'. But he wasn't the first Indian leader to make it to the cover of the world's largest circulated news weekly. That honour went to Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who appeared on the cover of the March 31, 1930 issue of *Time*. The caption read: 'Saint Gandhi'.

With the March 26 issue of *Time* hitting the stands, Chief Minister Narendra Modi becomes the third Indian leader from Gujarat to feature on its cover. The caption reads: 'Modi means business — But can he lead India?' Inside the magazine, the story is headlined: 'Boy from the Backyard'. A blurb follows: "Narendra Modi has defied humble origins to become the powerful leader of booming Gujarat. Here's why Indians both love and loathe him."

The reasons why some 'loathe' Modi, as listed in the story, are predictable — the 2002 post-Godhra violence; the allegations of state complicity (till now unproved); the charges levelled by his detractors; and the hostile campaign against him by activists.

Jyoti Thottam, the author of the story, mentions them all. So, it's not what's called a puff job. Not that *Time* would do one.

But the reasons why some "loathe" Modi stand diminished when compared to the details of how, over the past 10 years, he has transformed Gujarat into a development success story that evokes both admiration and envy. As *Time* puts it, Gujarat is today "India's most industrialised and business-friendly territory", a State that can boast of "good planning - exactly what so much of India lacks". The credit for that goes to a leader

with the "ability to get things done".

Under Modi's leadership, *Time* says, Gujarat has "largely escaped the land conflicts and petty corruption that often paralyse growth elsewhere in the nation". Listing the many achievements of the Government led by Modi, the magazine points out that Gujarat is the only State in India where both big businesses and small farmers can expect uninterrupted power supply. If elsewhere in India badudom can prove to be an insurmountable hurdle, in Gujarat a "streamlined bureaucracy" serves as a facilitator.

"Unlike many Indian politicians, Modi doesn't put his faith on display. There are no religious icons in his office; the only adornments are two statues of his hero, the philosopher Swami Vivekananda," *Time* says, adding, "In a country where nepotism and dynastic politics are the norm, Modi's family is invisible." His brother, who works in the State Government, hasn't visited him even once at his office.

"To his loyalists," *Time* points out, "Modi is a decisive leader





deserving a bigger platform than Gujarat, deserving, indeed, of all India, and of the prime – rather than just a chief – ministership.” Modi is “perhaps the only contender with the track record and name recognition to challenge Rahul Gandhi”, the magazine says, adding, when people “think of someone who can bring India out of the mire of chronic corruption and inefficiency – of a firm, no-nonsense leader who will set the nation on a course of development that might finally put it on par with China – they think of Modi”.

Gujarat’s “\$85 billion economy may not be the largest in India, but it has prospered without the benefit of natural resources, fertile farmland, a big population center like Mumbai or a lucrative high-tech hub like Bangalore”. Gujarat’s success, “even Modi’s detractors acknowledge”, is a “result of good planning” – something which, as Time highlights, “exactly what so much of India lacks”.

Other Indian leaders and politicians have featured on Time’s cover, most notably Subhas Chandra Bose, Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and Manmohan Singh. The leader who has been featured on the magazine’s cover the most is Nehru.

But it was a leader from Gujarat whom the magazine named as the ‘Man of the Year’ while featuring him on the cover of its January 5, 1931, issue. That was Gandhi, a year after he first appeared on the cover of Time. ■

(Courtesy: The Pioneer)

### *Continued from page 13*

this country a great country? If 70-75 crore people of the country are leading such a miserable life being unable to afford the expenditure on the medical treatment, education of their children and cannot arrange two square meals for their families, how can we claim to be a world power? That can be on papers only. Rate of unemployment is increasing in the country. People in the age group of 15-29 years are the most productive and energetic ones. If they are left behind, they will remain so for years. India is expected to be the country with maximum number of young people not only till 2025-30 but 2040 upto. Employment is registering decline in private as well as public sector. The workers who work sincerely and honestly are forced to work as contract labour and those indulging in corrupt practices get promotion after promotion. How the pay and perks of CEOs increase? On the other hand people are living on a daily income of Rs.15. One who earns Rs. 25-26 or Rs.32 is declared rich person. An industrialist earns Rs. 17 lakh per day but there is no minimum wages fixed in his establishment. There are lakhs of beedi workers and weavers. The Constitution guarantees the right to life to them also. The Government does not ratify the resolutions of international labour organisations. I would like to say that the policies of the IMF and the World Bank have failed the world over. These policies profess only growth and for growth, inequality is compulsory. In western system of growth, there cannot be growth without inequality. There is inequality in China also. There is prosperity but resentment is also there. Today, we can see the politics of globalization. Such economy is based on inequality. The Labour Ministry has also not approved of FDI in retails. If we adopt the provisions of FDI in retails here, it will harm the interest of workers acutely. It will have a very bad impact on all industrialists too. This economy had failed in toto. The so called reforms are meant for the rich only and not for the poor. Globalization is not in the interest of the poor. The people in the west are clamouring for jobs. The economists are very much worried there. If the people do not get their wages in proper proportion, it can lead to great unrest. Once the proletariat and the destitute make up their mind to change this economy, how long can you withstand the protest of this 80 crore population. A provision of indirect taxes of Rs.40,000 crore has been made in this new Budget. Due to this, the poor are at the receiving end. Their very survival is at stake. It is not the matter of India only, but we have to wage war for three billion people of the world through this very Parliament lest anybody should starve. If we want to have a vision of 21<sup>st</sup> century for India, let us resolve here itself that every Indian will be provided minimum wages and all the discrepancies and inequality will be removed. ■

MADHYA PRADESH

## State to lead from the front among developed States : Shivraj Singh



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan while giving away State-level Ramji Mahajan Backward Class Service Awards on March 18 has said that the State Government is committed to bring forward those who have lagged behind in the race of development. Besides,

Madhya Pradesh has also to be placed in first row of developed States. The function at Ravindra Bhavan was presided over by MP State BJP President and Rajya Sabha MP Shri Prabhat Jha. At the function, 16 social workers were conferred with Ramji Mahajan Backward Class Service Awards.

Shri Chouhan said that the State Government has implemented most of the recommendations made by Backward Class Commission, which was constituted under the chairmanship of the late Ramji Mahajan.

He said contribution of backward classes is significant in the State's development. Now, Madhya Pradesh is creating a record in wheat procurement. Scholarships are being given to 35 lakh students belonging to backward classes in the state. Talented students of these classes are also being provided assistance for study in foreign countries.

He said the fund crunch will not be allowed to come in the way of development. A policy is being chalked out under which lands can be made available to various social organizations for constructing hostels and *dharmshalas*. The State Government has also chalked out an assistance scheme if five backward class students hire a house to pursue education. Efforts are also being made to make agriculture profitable.

He said Madhya Pradesh is the first State in the country to provide Rs. 100 per quintal bonus on procurement of wheat on support price and loans to farmers at one percent interest rate. He said that attention should be given to other trades also

besides agriculture. *Panchayats* are being held in the State for interaction with people of every section of society.

Backward Classes' Welfare Minister Ajay Vishnoi said that the budget for scholarships to students of backward classes has gone up to Rs. 400 crore from Rs. 200 crore during the last two years. Self-employment schemes for youths and Chhatra Grih Yojna for students belonging to backward classes have been chalked out. Now, the State Government will give a subsidy of Rs. 2.50 lakh on Rs. 10 lakh loan under self-employment scheme. At the programme, backward class students securing top three positions in PET, PPT and MPA exams and those selected in State Public Service Commission, MLAs and various sections of backward classes were also honoured. Mohammad Yakub threw light on the life of the late Ramji Mahajan.

## Madhya Pradesh BJP protests against Railway fare hike

Bharatiya Janata Party protested in several places of State against hike in railway fare and demanded that the Central Government should cancel the order of hike. BJP State president Shri Prabhat Jha leading the protest in Indore said that citizens have already rejected the Congress led UPA in Bihar and U t t a r



Pradesh due to inflation. Congress members of Parliament from Khandwa, Mandsaur, Ujjain, Jhabua, and Shajapur should meet the Prime Minister along with Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and demand to return the order to increase railway fare.

Shri Jha further said it was just a warning for the Congress-led UPA Government that in the next elections, citizens will reject them. This rail budget and resignation of the Railway Minister is a step towards the mid-term polls. The Government has increased the troubles of common man by hiking

the fare of trains by 2, 5 and 10 paise per km. These paise multiply into a large amount.

Shri Jha demanded if fares are being increased, the facilities should also be increased, because since Independence infrastructure of railways has also not improved and passengers have to face a lot of trouble during their journeys. The Government is increasing the fare but it is doing nothing for the passengers' facilities.

The BJP MP president further said that State Congress president Kantilal Bhuria has praised the budget saying it was a citizen's budget. It shows Congress' anti-citizen attitude. The Congress has looted the citizens with this railway budget.

Meanwhile, BJP party workers under the leadership of BJP district Presidents protested in front of DRM offices and in Indore, Ujjain, Jabalpur, Ratlam, Shahdol and Sagar, Harda, Vidisha, Morena, Datia, Bhind, Ashok Nagar, Chhatarpur, Narsinghpur, Baira of Rajgarh districts and raised slogans against the injustice meted out towards Madhya Pradesh in the rail budget.

#### HIMACHAL PRADESH

### Committee on water carriers on anvil : Dhumal

Himachal Government is mulling up to set up of a Committee to form a policy and submit a comprehensive report to the Government for the part time water carriers in the State in which employees leaders would also be included.

Chief Minister Prof. Prem Kumar Dhumal, addressing part time water carriers who met him at his official residence Oakover at Shimla said that the recommendation of the Committee consisting of officers earlier to make its recommendations with regard to formulation of a comprehensive policy for the part time water carriers would not be implemented by the State Government. He added that instead a new Committee which would also include representatives from the employees union would be set up on priority and would be asked to submit its report and recommendations to the State



Government within next three months.

He further said that the proposed Committee would frame a policy to protect the interests of part time water carriers by determining the period of their service to become whole timer and there after regular so that the State Government could accordingly move forward in protecting the interests of part time water carriers within the fixed time frame. He said that it would help water carriers in feeling secure with their job.

Prof. Dhumal said that the State Government would also examine providing of additional opportunities to the highly qualified part time water carriers in competing for higher posts in different departments. "Efforts would also be made to remove pay anomalies of water carriers so that entire category was given equal honorarium. Extra care would be taken to safeguard the interests of those water carriers who are over age," he added.

#### ANDHRA PRADESH

### BJP to undertake 'Palle Poru' for completion of Polavaram project

Activists of the BJP will undertake a campaign called "Palle Poru" in the coastal Andhra region for six days from April 1 to press for early completion of the Polavaram and other major irrigation projects, senior party leader Shri K. Haribabu has said.

Shri Haribabu, told a press conference that though the Congress had promised to complete 86 projects at an estimated cost of Rs.1,85,000 crore to bring under irrigation an additional one crore acres, but not even one major project had been completed even after spending Rs.60,000 crore since 2004.

In the case of some projects, reservoirs had been completed, but not canals and vice-versa, he added. Though the Polavaram project would benefit all the three regions in the State, the tenders had not yet been finalised despite getting all clearances from respective ministries. "It is unfortunate that the taking up of the Polavaram project has been linked to the Pranahita-Chevalla project, which has no central clearance," he added. Urging the State government to bring out a white paper on the power situation, he said the government's failure to ensure adequate gas allocation for gas-based power plants from the Centre was responsible for the acute power shortage. ■

# All this has happened before

By Rock Furtado

In an interesting conversation with a spiritually evolved friend, the sharing revolved around the purpose of life on this planet – where is it coming from and where is it going? Of the many thoughts shared, the one that struck a chord was the story of a new-age guru who saw his own death scene being played out – he knew the date, time and place of his own death. Was this an out-of-body experience? How does this work?

We are born of our parents and our parents are born of their parents and so it continued over generations in time. Extending this further, it could be assumed that future generations will come forth from us, and so the chain of physical human experience will likely continue, all other

things being equal. However, in this model, the future generation is already in existence somewhere in the cosmos and the chain would ensure that the existing generation perishes in order for the next to take over physical body and space.

Here's one explanation: The cosmos has a major influence on all life on earth. Since the influence of the sun and stars that make up the cosmos take a certain time to reach the earth, it can safely be assumed that by the time the next set of rays and other influences of the cosmos

reach earth – the in-between period is history and is already concluded or in motion.

The story of the earth of our generation and many more generations after us – keeping the cosmos time in view – as Mahavira says, is as follows: "Whatever is happening has already happened". Visiting the



death scene of a physical body of any particular lifetime does appear to be a possibility. This concept takes a little time to understand but seems quite plausible. Many renowned authors of metaphysical works have hinted at this possibility. Similarly, several Zen masters allude to this possibility. There appears to be a significant number of people who can help others to walk through this experience. Research on Past Life Regression and Future Life Progression work is therefore gaining in popularity as a way

to possibly get a firsthand view of this intriguing phenomenon.

Did Abraham Lincoln see his own death? There is a story about Lincoln. In a dream he reportedly saw that he was murdered and his lifeless body was kept in a particular room in the White House and surrounded by mourners whom

he readily recognized. He woke up disturbed and narrated the contents of his dream to his wife. They both had a good laugh and went back to sleep.

Three days later, Abraham Lincoln was murdered and his body was in the very same room he'd described to his wife – from his dream – with even the sequence of

mourners matching what he saw in his dream.

Is it good to know the future? Will progression to the death scene make us better human beings? Would we see the futility of living a life created by greed, control and fear? Will the fact that "from nothing to nothing" is how physical life ends, enable us to experience a new realization to live a balanced life on earth? Would human suffering at the hands of other human beings be a thing of the past? I wonder...! ■

Courtesy: ToI