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Courtesy : The Hindu



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Lord Krishna said, O Arjuna when gives up all desires for sense gratification produced within the mind and becoming satisfied by the realization of the self in the pure state of the soul; then it is said one is properly situated in perfect knowledge.

– (Bhagavadgita : Ch.-II, 55)

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"This Budget is a new ray of hope for the poor and downtrodden sections of society."

-Narendra Modi

"Every attempt has been made to meet the aspirations of all Indians and to assuage their pain."

-Amit Shah

"Exhibiting an appetite for change the Union Budget provides an enabling framework to realise the true potential of Indian economy."

-Rajnath Singh

Raksha Bandhan : 10 August, 2014

Raksha Bandhan is a Hindu festival that celebrates the love and duty between brothers and sisters. It is called Rakhi Purnima, or simply Rakhi, in many parts of India. On Raksha Bandhan, sisters tie a rakhi (sacred thread) on her brother's wrist. This symbolizes the sister's love and prayers for her brother's well-being, and the brother's lifelong vow to protect her. The festival falls on the full moon day (Shravan Poornima) of the Shravan month of the Hindu calendar



Raksha Bandhan in Sanskrit literally means "the tie or knot of protection". On that day the sister performs a Rakhi ceremony, then prays to express her love and her wish for the well being of her brother; in return, the brother ritually pledges to protect and take care of his sister under all circumstances. It is one of the several occasions in which family ties are affirmed in India.

Raksha Bandhan is an ancient festival, and has many myths and historic legends linked to it.

According to Hindu scripture Bhavishya Purana, in the war between Gods and demons, Indra - was disgraced by the powerful King Bali. Indra's wife Sachi consulted Lord Vishnu, who gave her a bracelet made of cotton thread, calling it holy. Sachi tied the holy thread around Indra wrist, blessed with her prayers for his well being and success. Indra successfully defeated the evil and recovered Amaravati. This story inspired the protective power of holy thread.

According to the Hindu scriptures Bhagavata Purana and Vishnu Purana, after Vishnu won the three worlds from King Bali, he was asked by Bali that Vishnu must live in his palace, a request Vishnu granted. Vishnu's wife, Goddess Lakshmi did not like the palace or his new found friendship with Bali, and preferred that her husband and she return to Vaikuntha. So she went to Bali, tied a Rakhi and made him a brother. Bali asked her what gift she desired. Lakshmi asked that Vishnu be freed from the request that he live in Bali's palace. Bali consented, as well accepted her as his sister.

In the epic Mahabharat, Draupadi tied a Rakhi to Krishna, while Kunti tied her Rakhi to her grandson Abhimanyu, before the Great Mahabharat War.

Even the Rajput queens practiced the custom of sending rakhi threads to neighboring rulers as token of brotherhood. The festival is observed by Hindus, Jains, and Sikhs. Raksha Bandhan is primarily observed in India, Mauritius and in Nepal. It is also celebrated by Hindus and Sikhs in parts of Pakistan and Bangladesh and by people of Indian origin around the world. ■



Budget aims at 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas'

The nation was awaiting the first budget of the Narendra Modi government with lots of expectations and hope. It may be said without an iota of doubt that people were not denied the opportunity to celebrate. While a lot of new initiatives were announced in the budget, much sought after reliefs to people in general were granted while maintaining the fiscal prudence. The budget has not only ensured fiscal discipline but also laid a roadmap of building a strong and confident India.

The Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had the onerous task of meeting the expectations of the people amid the sagging morale and the news of deficient monsoon. He had to contend with the legacy of Congress led UPA government which left the economy in shambles. The challenges appeared to be insurmountable as only 45 days were available to him to present a budget amid high hopes and rising aspirations. The difficult fiscal deficit situation, slide in GDP growth rate, slow movements of projects affecting industrial sectors and rising inflations were some of the major challenges which Arun Jaitley was to address in his budget speech. In addition to that the massive mandate that was given to Narendra Modi and BJP led NDA made the task even more challenging as the victory of BJP led NDA and Narendra Modi assuming the office of Prime Minister was greeted by huge surge in sensex which indicated the investors' confidence in the government and high expectations of the market. To maintain that momentum of positive energy was a huge task before the finance minister. It may be said with utmost satisfaction that finance minister's maiden budget came out with flying colours as it was again greeted by market which registered a surge as soon the budget presentation was over.

The budget was not only greeted by the market with cheers but by almost every expert who keeps close watch over the Indian economy. While it addressed the immediate concerns of the economy, it also spelt out the strategy which the government plans to undertake in the days to come to make India stronger and vibrant. While the finance minister emphasized on keeping the fiscal deficit within 4.1%, he also underlined the intention to bring it down to the level of 3% by 2016-17 while taking the Indian economy to the growth trajectory of 7-8% in the next 3-4 years. The main focus of the budget remained on cutting inflation, ensuring fiscal discipline, employment generation with skill development and improving overall scenario for high growth rate. The plan to start new IITs, IIMs, AIIMs and National Sports University in Manipur will definitely satisfy the aspirational urge of today's youth. In addition to that, the push in construction, manufacturing and infrastructure sectors will help in generating employment while strengthening the fundamental parameters of the economy. Apart from these, schemes like Deendayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Rurban Mission, Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya Teaching Programme and Jaya Prakash Narayan National Centre for Excellence in Humanity along with huge allocation for river Ganga are the landmarks of the budget. Special focus on North East and Jammu & Kashmir will help in improving the economic condition of these regions.

It should be kept in mind that the budget was prepared within a very limited time. The finance minister should be congratulated for meeting the expectations of almost every section of the society within 45 days of hard work. The most important thing is that the election manifesto was sought to be implemented through various initiatives announced in the budget. It was truly aimed at fulfilling the mandate of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' as promised in the election manifesto of BJP. The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has rightly termed the Budget as a Budget that converts hopes and aspirations of the people into trust. The Budget has set the direction for the 'acche din' and if implemented effectively India will definitely emerge as a strong and vibrant economy in the world. ■

Amit Shah becomes new BJP National President

The BJP Parliamentary Board met on 7th July 2014 at BJP National Headquarters which was followed by a press conference which was addressed by Shri Rajnath Singh who announced the name of Shri Amit Shah as new BJP National President. Addressing the press conference Shri Rajnath Singh said that he tendered his resignation as party president to the BJP Parliamentary Board, which decided that Shri Amit Shah will be the new National President of the Bharatiya Janata Party. Shri Rajnath Singh lauded Shri Amit Shah's "management skills" and credited him with the BJP's success in Lok Sabha election in Uttar Pradesh. Earlier during the meeting the BJP Parliamentary Board had decided the name of Shri Shah as the new party president.



Shri Amit Shah has taken over from Shri Rajnath Singh who is now the Union Home Minister and has announced he will relinquish his BJP role in keeping with the party's "one-man, one-post" formula. The meeting was attended among others by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, senior leaders Shri L K Advani, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, Shri M Venkaiah Naidu, Shri Nitin Gadkari, Smt. Sushma Swaraj, Shri Arun Jaitley, Shri Ananth Kumar, Shri Thawarchand Gehlot and BJP National General Secretary (organisation) Shri Ram Lal.

Shortly after the announcement Shri Narendra Modi and Shri Rajnath Singh offered sweets to Shri Amit Shah while other leaders including Shri LK Advani, Dr. MM Joshi, Smt. Sushma Swaraj and Shri Arun Jaitley gave him bouquets. Shri Rajnath Singh said on the occasion that "Shri Shah is full of imaginative ideas and is good at organizational skills. As in charge of UP during Lok Sabha polls, he



Modi congratulates Amit Shah



Shri Narendra Modi has congratulated Shri Amit Shah on being appointed BJP President, and expressed confidence that the party will become stronger under his leadership.

Amit Bhai started his journey as an ordinary Karyakarta & has repeatedly proven himself through tireless hardwork & determination. I would like to specially thank Rajnath ji for his great leadership, under which the Party scaled new heights of success. With the blessings of Party elders & selfless efforts of Karyakartas, BJP's mission of creating a strong & developed India continues." ■

Resolution passed in BJP Parliamentary Board

The Parliamentary Board of BJP today placed on record its deep sense of appreciation towards Union Home Minister and outgoing Party President, Shri Rajnath Singh for giving leadership to the party. Shri Rajnath Singh took over in a very crucial period and from there, he has strengthened the party organisation and under his leadership BJP has given its all time best performance by getting clear majority in Lok Sabha Elections. Shri Rajnath Singh's tenure was the highest point in the history of BJP and epoch making time in Indian politics. All the members of Parliamentary Board while expressing its gratitude to Shri Rajnath Singh hopes that his leadership and guidance will always be available to the party. ■

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got a roaring success. BJP had never been so successful in its history in UP.” He also credited former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Shri LK Advani for making the Indian polity from unipolar to bipolar. Shri Singh said under Shri Narendra Modi’s leadership, the party got thumping majority in the Lok Sabha elections, thus becoming the single largest party to get majority on its own after nearly 30 years.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi said that the election of Shri Amit Shah as the BJP’s new president will help the

party to expand its influence and become stronger. In tweets, Shri Modi said: “Amit Bhai started his (political) journey as an ordinary ‘karyakarta’ and has repeatedly proven himself through tireless hard work and determination. “I would like to specially thank Shri Rajnath Singh for his great leadership, under which the party scaled new heights of success,” Shri Modi added, referring to the outgoing BJP president. The Prime Minister said “with the blessings of party elders and selfless efforts of karyakartas, (the) BJP’s mission of creating a

strong and developed India continues”. As Shri Amit Shah assumed the office of the party president celebrations started at the party national headquarters in New Delhi. BJP leaders and karyakartas started congratulating Shri Amit Shah for his new role in the party. Reports of celebrations by BJP leaders and karyakartas from across the country started pouring in. The decision was greeted with joy by party workers who danced and distributed sweets among people saying the party would touch a new height under his leadership. ■

Profile of BJP President Shri Amit Shah

A man known for proven organisational abilities and strategic planning, Amit Shah is a politician of the hinterland with a distinguished political record and commitment for the ideals he stands for.

Born on October 22, 1964, politics was not in Shri Amit Shah’s blood. Instead, it was the desire to serve the society that was passed on to Shri Amit Shah by his philanthropist family. At a tender age of 14, Shri Amit Shah joined the Rashtriya Syawamsevak Sangh (RSS) as a ‘Tarun Syawamsevak’. That was the turning point of his life.

Organizational Role in Gujarat BJP:

In 1982, as a student of bio-chemistry, he was handed over the responsibility of the secretary of the students’ organisation ABVP in Ahmedabad. He later became the secretary of BJP Ahmedabad city unit. There was no looking back since then. Shri



Amit Shah went on to hold many crucial posts to rise up in the ranks of the Gujarat unit of BJP. He became the national treasurer of Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (B.J.YM.) in 1997 and later the Vice President of the Gujarat State unit of the BJP. Emphatic electoral achievements:

In 1995, Shri. Amit Shah was

elected, for the first time, as the MLA from Sarkhej assembly constituency. He was re-elected from the same constituency in 1998. This time, he defeated his rival with a margin of 1,32,477 votes. He made a record of sorts in 2002 when he was re-elected from Sarkhej constituency by beating his rivals with a triumphant 1,58,036 votes. He broke his own record in the year 2007; this time the margin of the winning vote was 2,32,823 votes. In 2012 he was elected to the Gujarat Assembly for the fifth time from the Naranpura constituency.

Turnaround of the co-operative sector:

Every dying entity needs a visionary to turn its destiny around. This is true to the Ahmedabad District Co-Operative Bank Limited, which in the year 2000, was in totters and declared a weak bank due to lack of leadership. It was then

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that Shri Amit Shah was brought in as the chairman of the Bank to persevere the challenge. Shah started on a positive note, believing that the Bank could see green and pay dividends with able administration, work ethic and tenacity. That was the year when the Bank had registered a loss of Rs 20.28 crore. Only a year after he took over, the Bank cleared its debts and fell in line of other profit-making banks, with declaration of 10% dividend. Today, Ahmedabad District Co-Operative Bank Limited is a leading bank among the 367 co-operative banks in the country.

When people's faith was floundering in co-operative banks due to the closure of the Madhavpura and other urban co-operative banks, Shri Shah took it upon himself to bring the trust of the depositors back. His representation saw the government and the RBI introducing a reconstruction package for Madhavpura Bank. Shri Shah also led from the front in ensuring introduction of the flexi deposit scheme, enabling co-operative banks to invest their funds safely and profitably. The co-operative law was also modified by the state government due to the persistence of Shri Shah. The law now ensures action against defaulting co-operative leaders.

Notable successes in state administration:

In 1995, during the tenure of Shri. Keshubhai Patel as CM of Gujarat, Shri. Amit Shah became the youngest chairman of Gujarat State Financial Corporation (G.S.F.C.). In 2002, Shri Amit Shah became the Minister of State in Narendra

Modi govt. During his tenure as minister, he has held several portfolios including that of transport, police, housing, border security, civil defense, gram rakshak dal, home guards, prison, prohibition, excise, law and justice, parliamentary affairs and the coveted home ministry.

2014 general elections:

His skill in political strategy and vision led to his appointment as the General Secretary of the party in 2010 and him being made incharge (Prabhari) of electorally significant state of Uttar Pradesh. Within a short span of time, Shri. Shah turnaround the electoral fortunes of the BJP in UP and delivered a spectacular result, in which the BJP and it ally won 73

out of 80 Lok Sabha seats. BJP's vote share in the state increased almost two and half times in less than two years when he was the Prabhari of UP.

Shri Shah was also a Member, of BJP's Election Panel and in 2014, given the responsibility of public relations, mass marketing and new voter enrollment. His result-oriented strategy-making skills played an important role in the enviable result for the BJP in 2014 Lok Sabha elections.

Sports Administration:

Shri Shah has also served as the President of Gujarat State Chess Association. In 2009, he became the vice-president of the Gujarat Cricket Association only to take over as its President in 2014. ■



Shri Kushabhau Thakre

(Birth Anniversary : 15 August)

Shat-Shat Naman!

BJP Parliamentary Party Executive Committee reconstituted



The Bharatiya Janata Party reconstituted its Parliamentary Party Executive Committee, with Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh as the deputy leader of the party in the Lok Sabha and Union Finance and Defence Minister Minister Shri Arun Jaitley as the party's deputy leader in the Rajya Sabha.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is the new leader of the reconstituted BJP Parliamentary Party in both Houses of Parliament.

The BJP has nominated Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu as the government's Chief Whip in Parliament.

The party has also named 13 Whips in Lok Sabha and three in Rajya Sabha. Ministers of State for Parliamentary Affairs Shri Santosh Gangwar and Shri Prakash Javadekar will be the

deputy Chief Whips in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha respectively.

Lok Sabha member from Rajasthan Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal will be the party's Chief Whip in the Lok Sabha while Rajya Sabha member from Punjab Shri Avinash Rai Khanna will be the new party Chief Whip in the Upper House.

The BJP has also named Shri Ganesh Singh, a member from Madhya Pradesh, as party Secretary in the Lok Sabha and Shri Bhupendra Yadav from Rajasthan in the Rajya Sabha.

Shri P.C. Mohan from Karnataka is the new treasurer of BJP Parliamentary Party.

The 13 whips named by BJP in the Lok Sabha are: Sarvshri Suresh Angadi (Karnataka), Sanjay Dhotre (Maharashtra), Sanjay Jaiswal (Bihar), Sunil Singh (Jharkhand), Ratan Lal

Katariya (Haryana), Parvesh Verma (Delhi), Kirit Solanki (Gujarat), Rakesh Singh (Madhya Pradesh), Kamla Patle (Chhattisgarh), Om Birla (Rajasthan), Mahendra Pandey, Ramshankar Karhuriya and Pankaj Choudhary (all Uttar Pradesh).

The three party whips in the Rajya Sabha are Sarvshri Bimla Kashyap Sood (Himachal Pradesh), Mansukh L Mandaviya (Gujarat) and Narayanlal Panchariya (Rajasthan).

The party has appointed Sarvshri Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Anurag Thakur and Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi as the spokespersons for the Lower House of the Parliament.

On other hand, Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and Shri JP Nadda have been appointed as the party's spokespersons in the Upper House. ■

Narendra Modi's path breaking visit to Brazil a grand success

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Brazil to attend BRICS summit was a great diplomatic success for India and BRICS' nations. The summit's outcome of a New Development Bank for the global south and Contingency Reserve Arrangement to insulate emerging economies from currency volatility is a grand success in building new world order.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi accompanied by Commerce Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman left India for Brazil on July 13 to attend 6th BRICS summit. Two-day BRICS summit was organized in Fortaleza, the



5th largest city of Brazil. In the opening remarks of the summit Shri Narendra Modi offered full

supports in taking the BRICS agenda forward for the benefit of BRICS's countries , and the

Modi looks forward to work with Putin

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, met Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit at Fortaleza on July 15.

The Prime Minister conveyed his sincere appreciation and admiration for President Putin's decisive leadership in deepening and expanding the India-Russia special and privileged strategic partnership.



The Prime Minister expressed deep appreciation for Russia's friendship and unstinting bilateral and international support for India's economic development and security since the early days of India's independence. The Prime Minister reaffirmed that relations with Russia will continue to enjoy the priority that they always had in India's foreign policy and that he looks forward to working with President Putin to further deepen and broad-base the strategic partnership including in the areas of defence, nuclear energy, space, energy, trade and investment, people-to-people contacts and addressing regional and global challenges. The two leaders looked forward to their Annual Summit in Delhi in December 2014 as an

opportunity to outline a bold vision and roadmap for their relationship in the years ahead. Prime Minister recalled the warmth and goodwill he had experienced on his earlier visits to Russia and looked forward to visiting Russia in 2015. Shri Modi talked in Hindi while conversing with Putin.

world at large. Shri Narendra Modi, in meeting with the members of the BRICS Business Council in Fortaleza on July 15 appreciated the Council's role in promoting trade and business links among member countries. Leaders of India, China, Brazil, Russia and South Africa issued a joint declaration on July 15 at the sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza in Brazil. The leaders put forward 72 points in the

Sixth BRICS Summit-Fortaleza Declaration. The major outcome of this declaration is to open a New Development Bank and for the global south and Contingency Reserve Arrangement (CRA) to insulate emerging economies from currency volatility. The countries agreed upon to open the bank headquarter at Shanghai in China and to make India first President of the Bank. Unlike

Bretton woods institution, laying the strong democratic foundation of the New Development Bank the BRICS countries made consensus that all five countries would have equal shareholding. Earlier in the discussion China proposed to contribute more than other funding member. But Narendra Modi diplomatically thwarted China's endeavor to make yuan hegemony in the BRICS bank by

Brazil - a key global partner for India : Modi

Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff hosted Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Brasilia on the margins of the Sixth BRICS Summit. Although it is not a bilateral visit, President Rousseff, in a special gesture, received Prime Minister of India with full military honours at the Presidential palace before their meeting over breakfast.

Prime Minister warmly congratulated President Rousseff and the people of Brazil for an excellent FIFA world cup, which showed the World Brazil's excellent organizational skills and warm hospitality. He thanked President Rousseff for a well organized and successful BRICS summit, and in particular, arranging a meeting for BRICS with South American leaders.

Shri Narendra Modi described the sixth summit hosted by Brazil as a historic one, which has produced two important agreements - the New Development Bank and the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement

- and lauded President Rousseff for her guidance during the Summit. Describing Brazil as a key global partner for India, Prime Minister noted that as two democracies and major emerging economies, India and Brazil not only had vast potential for bilateral cooperation, but also to strengthen each other in international forums and advance the interest of the developing world at large. He also noted that Gujarat has emerged as a prime driver of India's economic relations with Brazil.

President Rousseff emphasized the special place this relationship enjoyed in Brazil's foreign policy, because of the potential for bilateral cooperation and the international significance of their partnership. She congratulated Shri Narendra Modi for his impressive victory in the elections and wished him all success for India's progress and development. The two leaders recalled the historical and cultural ties between the two countries, despite the distance, including the Gir cows that were brought to Brazil from India, the textiles and the fruits that came from India to Brazil since 18th and 19th centuries.

The two leaders also agreed to take steps to further expand and diversify trade and investment flows and deepen cooperation in agriculture and dairy science, conventional and renewable energy, space research and applications, defence, cyber security and environment conservation. They also agreed to intensify their cooperation in international forums and multilateral institutions, including the G20. As leaders of G4 countries, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, and President Rousseff called for urgent progress on reforms of the United Nations, including the Security Council, by the time of the seventieth anniversary of the UN in 2015.

Prime Minister expressed hope that he would be able to visit Brazil on a full bilateral visit soon and invited President Rousseff to visit India.



bringing consensus on equal shares of capital for all the founding members, and thus equal votes. The bank and CRA also came out as a warning to developed world to address governance issues in not just IMF and World Bank but also at the UN.

Last day of the summit Narendra Modi stated to put BRICS in fast lane and emphasized the need of the hour is to decentralise and go beyond the Summit

During a technical halt at Germany on July 17 while returning home after a three-day visit, prime minister Modi spoke to German chancellor Angela Merkel and conveyed that Germany was a valued friend of India and he was looking forward to working with her to make bilateral ties stronger.

Indian media wrote on the PM visit "Prime Minister Narendra Modi is not just another brick in the wall. He once again proved it at his first global summit since becoming the Prime Minister.

As he made an impact on the BRICS leaders in Fortaleza, Brazil, his style statement too grabbed global eyeballs." Latin American nations also hailed the decision to create new BRICS bank. ■

PM meets Chinese President Xi Jinping in Fortaleza

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, met Chinese President Xi Jinping shortly after his arrival in Fortaleza, Brazil, today on the eve of the Sixth BRICS Summit. The 80-minute meeting was the Prime Minister's first summit-level interaction with China. The two leaders observed that India and China had enormous opportunities to not only forge mutually beneficial partnerships, but also serve as catalytic agents of Asian and global prosperity. President Xi Jinping underscored the importance of the bilateral relationship and said: When India and China meet, the whole world watches.

The two leaders were pleased with the opportunity to meet within a few weeks of the assumption of office by Prime Minister. They expressed satisfaction at the high momentum of bilateral engagement during the past few weeks, including the visit of Vice-President of India Shri Hamid Ansari to China and the visit of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to India as President Jinping's Special Envoy, in June.

Both sides emphasized on the need to find a solution to the Boundary Question. The Prime Minister stressed the importance of strengthening mutual trust and confidence, and maintaining peace and tranquility on the border. He said that if India and China could amicably resolve the Boundary Question, it would set an example for the entire world, on peaceful conflict resolution.

Shri Narendra Modi suggested the addition of one more route for the Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra, keeping in view the terrain difficulties. President Xi Jinping accepted this as a suggestion for consideration.

The Prime Minister called for enhanced Chinese investment in the infrastructure sector in India, and hoped that the trade imbalance between the two countries is resolved. President Xi Jinping agreed that balance in trade is necessary for a sustainable economic relationship. He also said enhanced services exports from India to China could be one way to address the issue.

China has invited India to attend an APEC meeting in November this year. President Xi Jinping also said India should deepen its engagement with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The Prime Minister said India currently has observer status in the SCO, and was ready to accept additional responsibility, if asked to.

Shri Narendra Modi warmly recalled his visits to China as Chief Minister. He underlined that relations between countries are built on the strength of relations between their people. He expressed hope for increase in tourism and ties between the people of the two ancient civilizations.

Prime Minister expressed hope that President Xi Jinping's planned visit to India this year was an opportunity to chart a new and ambitious agenda for the strategic partnership between India and China. He expressed appreciation for the invitation extended to him to visit China and looked forward to an early visit. ■



Our effort is to revive growth spirit of Indian economy : Arun Jaitley

Finance minister Shri Arun Jaitley's maiden Budget on 10 July put more money in the hands of salaried employees, made apparitional goods cheaper for the poor and set up a fund to counter spikes in food prices. The economic document, which had a strong imprint of PM Shri Narendra Modi, lifted stock markets, revived the faith of industrialists, investors and achieved the difficult task of not disappointing the salaried, poor and middle class people.

Shri Jaitley, delivered a clear message in a marathon 127-minute speech. It nurses public finances, tames inflation and simplifier tax laws; growth, investment and jobs will follow. But he was clear about the transition being painful. "The prevailing economic situation presents a great challenge. It calls for a conscious choice to be made by all of us. Should we allow this drift to carry on and watch helplessly? Should we allow our future to suffer because of our indecisiveness? Should we be victims of mere populism or wasteful expenditure?" he said.

Shri Jaitley tried not to disappoint his audience, outlining host of measures aimed at spinning jobs, multiplying income and helping families deal with ballooning home budgets.

The salaried class got tax breaks; the young, who were instrumental in voting the BJP to power, got a skill development plan to smoothen their entry into job market and for those looking to branch out on their own, concessions were announced.

India needs to create some 100 million jobs over the next



decade or so if it is to enter the league of developed nations, but risks economic and social disaster if it fails to provide employment to its burgeoning youth population.

As it looks to cities for employment and living, a plan to build 100 smart cities was set in motion. Infrastructure, one of the biggest hurdles in India's growth story, was put in the fast lane, with Shri Jaitley setting an ambitious target of building 23km of highways per day.

Asia's third-largest economy is now in its longest slump for a quarter century but

Shri Jaitley is hamstrung by little room to offer tax giveaways or launch into big spending.

But he did manage to cut excise and customs duty on a host of products or inputs: Soaps, batteries, footwear, processed food, cement, yarn and computers.

Importantly, the government made clear its stand on the controversial retrospective taxes – these will now be applicable only in genuine cases.

"The sovereign right of the government to undertake retrospective legislation is unquestionable. However, this power has to be exercised with extreme caution and judiciousness

keeping in mind the impact of each such measure on the economy and the overall investment climate," Shri Jaitley said.

He raised the annual income tax exemption limit by Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 2,50,000 for men and women, and to Rs. 3,00,000 for senior citizens.

The minister pegged the fiscal deficit – a measure of the amount the government borrows to fund its expenses – at 4.1%, the same as P Chidambaram's interim budget estimates, saying he wanted to take it as a challenge.

Highlights of the budget 2014-15

- ▶ Negative list for service tax reduced
- ▶ Excise duty on cigarettes raised from 11 percent to 72 percent
- ▶ Thirteen more airports to get 24x7 customs facilities
- ▶ Excise duty to be cut to revive manufacturing
- ▶ Allocation of Rs.500 crore for Delhi's water schemes
- ▶ Colour TVs to cost less on reduced customs duties
- ▶ Free baggage allowance raised from Rs.35,000 to Rs.45,000
- ▶ Gas pipeline grid of 15,000 km needs to be doubled
- ▶ Excise duty on footwear halved
- ▶ Total expenditure in 2014-15 estimated at Rs.17,97,892 crore; plan expenditure estimated at Rs.12,19,892 crore
- ▶ Government to take a view on Direct Tax Code
- ▶ Six debt recovery tribunals to be set up
- ▶ Five new tourist circuits to be established
- ▶ World class convention centre to come up in Goa
- ▶ IT exemption limit for those below 60 raised from Rs.2 lakhs to Rs.2.5 lakhs; from Rs.2.5 lakhs to Rs.3 lakhs for senior citizens
- ▶ No change in surcharge for corporates; education cess to continue
- ▶ Allocation of Rs.1,000 crore for implementing One Rank One Pension scheme
- ▶ War Memorial and War Museum to be established at Princess Park in New Delhi; Rs.1,000 crore allocated
- ▶ Allocation of Rs.50 crore for National Police Memorial
- ▶ Allocation of Rs.2.037 crore for creating integrated Ganga conservation mission
- ▶ National sports foundations to be set up for disciplines like shooting, wrestling and boxing; Jammu and Kashmir gets Rs.200 crore to upgrade sports facilities; Sports university to come up in Manipur
- ▶ Defence allocated Rs.229,000 crore; modernisation gets Rs.5,000 crore over and above interim budget
- ▶ Bharat Depository Receipt to be created
- ▶ Uniform KYC norms to be introduced across entire financial sector
- ▶ Steps to revive SEZs
- ▶ Sixteen new port projects to be taken up this fiscal
- ▶ Jal Marg Vikas programme to be launched to promote navigation on Ganga from Allahabad to Haldia
- ▶ Hastkala Academy to be set up with allocation of Rs.30 crore
- ▶ Six more textile clusters to be set up with allocation of Rs.200 crore
- ▶ Corpus of Rs.5,000 crore for long-term loans to farmers
- ▶ Kisan TV to be launched to disseminate information in real time
- ▶ Allocation of Rs.14,389 crore for rural roads
- ▶ Allocation of Rs.50 crore for breeding of indigenous cattle
- ▶ Export promotion mission to be established to bring all stakeholders under one umbrella
- ▶ FDI limit in insurance sector raised to 49 percent
- ▶ All states to get AIIMS like institutions
- ▶ Allocation of Rs.100 crore for soil testing facilities
- ▶ Second Green Revolution to be launched with focus on protein revolution
- ▶ Allocation of Rs.100 crore to promote good governance
- ▶ Allocation of Rs.3,600 crore for drinking water schemes
- ▶ Allocation of Rs.500 crore for 5 more IITs and 5 more IIMs
- ▶ Allocation of Rs.4,000 crore for National Housing Bank
- ▶ Allocation of Rs.500 crore to improve broadband connectivity in rural areas
- ▶ To print currency notes with Braille signs
- ▶ Allocation of Rs.150 crore to improve safety of women in larger cities
- ▶ Allocation of Rs.500 crore to provide 24x7 power in rural areas
- ▶ Allocation of Rs.100 crore for "Beti bachao, beti padao" programme
- ▶ Allocation of Rs.8,000 crore to improve rural housing
- ▶ E-visas to be introduced at nine airports

...Continued on page 27

New initiatives envisaged in budget will prove transformational for Indian Railways : Sadananda Gowda



Union Railway Minister Shri D. V. Sadananda Gowda who hails from the Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka currently represents the Bangalore North Constituency in the Lok Sabha. He began his political career as a member of the Jan Sangh and was elected to the Karnataka Legislative Assembly in 1994 and 1999 representing the BJP. He was elected to the 14th Lok Sabha in 2004 from the Mangalore Lok Sabha Constituency and was appointed as President of Karnataka State BJP in 2006. He earned National Prominence as the State President of the Party when BJP won the assembly election for the first time in South India in May 2008. He was elected to the 15th Lok Sabha from Udupi Chikmagalur Constituency before he became the Chief Minister of Karnataka in August 2011. Shri Gowda served as the national Vice-President of the BJP before being elected to the 16th Lok Sabha in the recent General elections. He took oath as a Union Minister in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cabinet and was entrusted with the Railway Ministry. Shri Gowda recently presented his maiden Railway Budget

where he has announced a slew of reforms to bring the Indian railways back on track. In an Exclusive Interview for Kamal Sandesh with Editorial Board Member Ram Prasad Tripathy, Shri Sadananda Gowda revealed the challenges and his priorities for the Indian Railways. He outlined some of the ambitious plans for the railways and candidly accepted his limitations given a decade of mismanagement of Indian railways. Excerpts:

Q. Many Congratulations on assuming the charge of Union Railway Minister and for the presentation of your maiden Railway Budget. You have taken some bold decisions and announced several ambitious measures in your Railway Budget. But, Sir, what is the real state of the Indian Railways today?

This Railway Budget is a vision document for the future of the railways in India. The focus was to move away from the unsustainable past practices and lay a solid foundation for the future. I have not made any hallow promises without commensurate budgetary support. I have tried to give a new direction to the railways and the results will be evident in some time.

However, the unfortunate part is the systematic neglect of the Indian Railways by my predecessors in the last few years which

has severely dented the image of the railways. With losses accumulating over the past several years there was virtually no budgetary support for several of the on-going projects announced by the UPA government in the last 10 years. They politicized everything relating to Indian Railways and done nothing tangible for the growth of the sector. I have to deal with this legacy issue while charting a new roadmap for the future.

Q. Issues of Security, Sanitation and Hygiene have been areas of concern for railway passengers. What steps have you taken in the Budget to address these concerns?

The core of my Budget is to improve the Security, Sanitation and Hygiene levels in the trains. Improved amenities in trains is inescapable. Infact, the passengers are ready to accept a

fare hike provided they get the right services.

So far as the quality of food served in the railways is concerned, provisions are being made to provide ready to eat food to the passengers and also ensure that hygiene is maintained in the base kitchens.

Sanitation is another area of concern. Modi ji is aware of this challenge from the beginning and therefore we have started a cleanliness drive in the stations across the country from the first day in office. Toilets both in the trains and in the stations are so badly maintained that people avoid these facilities. To improve the sanitation in our railways I have increased the allocations by a whopping 40% in the Budget for this sector.

We have also given priority to safety issues in the Budget. Traffic congestions, unmanned level crossings and security inside trains are other areas which have been addressed. For the security of women inside the trains I have allotted funds for CCTV cameras inside the coaches, lady RPF personnel in the trains and for that we will recruit more than 4000 women police constables to improve the safety of passengers travelling in the trains.

Q. You have announced Diamond Quadrilateral project for High-speed trains which will be a giant leap for the Indian Railways. What is its road map and in how many years it is going to materialize?

The emerging India wants change which is in tune with the times. It needs modern infrastructure which is comparable with the best in the world. So, keeping in mind the needs of time Prime Minister Shri Modi had promised High-speed and Bullet trains during the elections.

As you know recently we made a trial run of a High-Speed train between Delhi to Agra and we have figured out another eight stretches in the country where in the initial phase we will run the high-speed trains. Bullet train is another concept. Inspired by the Golden Quadrilateral project initiated by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee during the previous NDA government, Shri Narendra Modi has also proposed for a Diamond Quadrilateral project connecting all parts of the country including the metros. For that I have made a proposal in the budget and in the next few months we will

get a feasibility report from JICA. We will move forward depending on their feasibility. I hope in the next 4-5 years a stretch between Mumbai to Ahmedabad will become functional in the initial phase and we will expand the network after that. It will take another 10 years time to complete this ambitious project throughout the country.

Q. Resource mobilization is critical for the development of the railways. What new methods will you adopt that your predecessors have not done?

Two things are there. The operating cost of Railways is approximately 94%. So, firstly we have to reduce the operational cost and secondly we have to ensure that private players must come for the development of some select sectors in railways. We will also attract FDI for Bullet trains, Freight corridors and High-Speed trains.

But the core operational area is ring-fenced and nobody will be allowed to intervene in it. For other big infrastructural projects we will definitely consider the FDI and Viability Gap Funding (VGF) routes. Private players are interested in investing more than Rs 15,000 crore in industrial and port connectivity as well as Wagon manufacturing projects. For these types of projects the private players can play a major role which will eventually benefit the railways and the people at large.

Q. After 67 years of independence, backward regions like South Odisha, parts of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and North Eastern states are yet to get decent railway connectivity. Given the fact that projects in these areas are non-profit making will you give priority to these projects?

What has happened is past. I believe that in the next four to five years major cities of every unconnected region will get connectivity. To materialize this we have taken up some of the projects in Kashmir and North-East region as National Projects for which special funds will be there and additional funds will not be a constraint. Keeping this in mind we have not taken up any new project in this Budget as our priority is to finish the on-going projects sooner. A whopping Rs. 5 lakh crore is required to finish these projects and only Rs.

30 crores is available in the accounts as surplus. Therefore we have decided to give priority to the unfinished work and next step is to give connectivity to the unconnected areas so far.

Q. Stations in the Coastal areas of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu get damaged due to recurring cyclones every year. As you know previous years cyclone Phailin completely devastated major stations like Brahmapur in Odisha. Do you have any plan to minimize damages caused by these recurring natural calamities?

It's a very important area we need to cover. First we are trying to identify the areas which are prone to such recurring natural calamities. We want to have structures equipped to resist such recurring natural events and ensure safety of passengers as well as railway properties.

Q. Currently railways experience heavy passenger traffic on most routes leading to long waiting list for passengers who are often exploited by agents. To ensure zero-waiting list in major routes what is your proposal?

We have taken more IT-based initiatives in ticket booking and due to the advanced technology soon we can book 300% more tickets per-minute from IRCTC on-line booking system. We will also going for a mechanical mode of booking system by which we are hoping to reduce the waiting list. The introduction of High-Speed trains will also help improve the current situation.

Q. Many western countries are using non-conventional energy sources in their railway systems. Are you planning to use non-conventional sources of energy in Indian trains?

It is a good suggestion. To cut down the operating cost it is highly essential. Electricity is comparatively cheaper than diesel. So, in the first hand we are trying for electrification of all routes. Our Prime Minister while inaugurating the Katra railway station proposed to change the rooftops with solar panels. We are thinking on those lines and trying our best to encourage solar energy in all stations of the country. The initial target is 500 MW of solar energy. We will achieve it and we have selected certain

places for installation of wind mills as well.

Q. Sir, you have announced a Railway University in your Budget speech. What is its nature and objective and when is this going to start?

In collaboration with the HRD Ministry we are currently designing the course syllabus. The main objective is that the manpower entering the railways sector must get the best of training and exposure to technology. We also need to encourage innovations and develop systems tailored to our needs. We have already located the area, we have our own land and infrastructure and the University will be functional in another couple of years.

Q. You have proposed to attract FDI in various sectors of Indian railways. What are these sectors and will FDI be able to solve the resource constraint in the railways?

I think FDI will give a morale boost to Indian railways. To bring more international standard infrastructure like High-Speed train service, Bullet trains, Freight Corridor and for international standard infrastructure in railway stations we need FDI. But the core operational area will always remain with the railway department. I think certainly if we are able to attract FDI in large numbers then it will solve the problem of resources and bring modern cutting-edge technology to Indian railways.

Q. Sir, are you planning to involve state governments for quick execution of the on-going railway projects in different states?

Even at present some State Governments are cooperating. They are giving free land and 50% of the cost of the project to allow speedier execution of railway projects in their respective states. Now land acquisition and resource mobilization are the major problems. So, we definitely need the cooperation of state governments. To ensure participation of all states, I have written letters to all Chief Ministers in this regard seeking their cooperation through sharing the burden of the project cost to the tune of 50% and making available free land. Specifically I would like to get cooperation from the states in the execution of the Freight corridors. After all the linkages will help the development of the states and hopefully they will come forward.

Q. Recently you made a surprise visit to the Bangalore railway station. What was your experience there and would you like to follow this across the country?

I went there at 6 AM without any media. Except my personal staff I did not even inform it to the DRM. I saw the passenger amenities, including toilets, kitchen, drinking water, ticket counters and found many loopholes which call for action. I travelled in a second class compartment, interacted with the people and saw the lack of cleanliness in the compartment and the toilets. I directed the officials and concerned authorities to take care of these issues in future and they have taken it positively. This visit not only gave me the experience but it has strengthened my resolve to turn things around for the Indian railways. I also plan to visit other parts of the country in the time to come.

Q. When are the people going to see the transformation of Indian railways?

Definitely the railways need time and resources for visible transformation. However, we have taken some urgent steps in the mean time to bring a qualitative change. We have started a massive cleanliness drive. I have directed the DRMs to visit a station every day to monitor the hygiene and cleanliness in the stations, kitchens and the catering area and to create awareness among the public and to seek their cooperation. Public awareness and support is indispensable to take Indian railways to a new level. ■

Tribals' role vital for the growth of BJP : Jual Oram

The national executive of the BJP Scheduled Tribe Morcha on 19 July convened a meeting in Ranchi to compliment the community for its role in the growth of the party as an alternative to the Congress as well as appraise the party's prospects in Jharkhand in the upcoming Assembly elections.

Brimming with confidence after an emphatic win in the Lok Sabha elections in Jharkhand, party leaders expressed their resolve to repeat the performance in the coming Assembly elections in the State.

Union Tribal affairs Minister Shri Jual Oram reiterated the commitment of Tribals to the party and boosted the morale of party



workers by reminding the community members of their importance in the Indian polity. The Union Minister underscored the importance of the community in the coming elections in Jharkhand praised the workers of the ST wing for displaying a great degree of enthusiasm to dislodge the incumbent government from power. He said Tribals' role is vital for the growth of BJP.

Shri Oram had inaugurated the two-day conference. National President of the ST Morcha, Shri Faggan Singh Kulaste echoed the thoughts of Shri Oram about the timing and selection of the venue for convening the meeting of the executive committee of the ST Morcha of BJP. Kulaste claimed that the party will win all seats reserved for the community. "Role of the ST wing will be significant in the coming assembly elections. The conference has been organized keeping in view the elections," maintained Shri Oram.

Former Chief Minister of Jharkhand Shri Arjun Munda asserted that the party would win the maximum number of seats in the Assembly elections. "A history was made in the country when the BJP formed a Government with full majority at the Centre and now a BJP Government will be formed in the State also," said Shri Munda.

"The Hemant Soren Government is against the tribal community. No developmental work is taking place in the State." added Shri Munda. Union Minister and Lohardaga MP Shri Sudarshan Bhagat reaffirmed Modi's Government's stand on providing assistance to State. The two-day conference was attended by Union Minister Shri Mansukhbhai Vasava, BJP State President Shri Ravindra Kumar Rai, BJP MP Shri Lakshman Gilua, Ranchi Mayor Ms Asha Lakra and representatives of the BJP ST wing from as many as 12 states including Jharkhand. ■

Rail Budget Development oriented and people friendly : Sadananda Gowda

Introduction of bullet trains starting off with the Mumbai-Ahmedabad sector and an ambitious plan to have a Diamond Quadrilateral network of high speed rail connecting major metros and growth centres are on the anvil.

The announcement was part of the maiden Rail Budget presented by Railway Minister Shri D.V. Sadananda Gowda in Lok Sabha on July 08 which also spoke of efforts to increase the speed of trains in select sectors to up to 200 km per hour.

The Rail Budget has identified nine sectors in this regard that includes the prestigious Delhi-Agra rail line and the busy Delhi-Chandigarh and Mumbai-Ahmedabad sectors.

Besides, the speed of trains is to be increased to 160-200 km in the Delhi-Kanpur, Nagpur-Bilaspur, Mysore-Bangalore-Chennai, Mumbai-Goa, Chennai-Hyderabad and Nagpur-Secunderabad sectors.

A provision of Rs 100 crore has been made in the Budget for High Speed project to Railway Vikas Nigham Limited/High Speed Rail Corridor for taking further steps.

“It is the wish and dream of every Indian that India runs a bullet train as early as possible. Indian Railways is on its way to fulfill that long cherished



dream,” Shri Gowda said.

The Minister said while bullet trains will require completely new infrastructure, higher speed for existing trains will be achieved by upgrading the present network.

“Hence, an effort will be made to increase the speed of trains to 160–200 kmph in select sectors to significantly reduce travel time between major cities,” he said.

Tourist trains to connect pilgrim centres

Aiming at boosting domestic tourism, Railways announced several tourist trains connecting

pilgrim centres across the country.

Special pilgrim circuits like Devi Circuit, Jyotirling Circuit, Jain Circuit among others have been identified by railways for running pilgrim trains were announced in the Rail Budget 2014-15.

Besides, the NDA government’s maiden Rail Budget proposed to introduce trains in Christian Circuit, Muslim/Sufi Circuit, Sikh Circuit, Buddhist Circuit and other famous temple circuits across the country.

Private participation in the pilgrim sector will also be encouraged, Railway Minister Shri Sadananda Gowda said while presenting Rail Budget 2014-15.

He said there is a huge untapped potential in the field of domestic tourism in the country. “We plan to take up eco-tourism and education tourism in North-Eastern states,” he said.

Railways also proposed a tourist train from Gadag to Pandarpur passing through Bagalkot, Bijapur and Solapur covering the pilgrim and tourist places of Karnataka and Maharashtra.

Tourist train from Rameswaram covering pilgrim and tourist places like Bengaluru, Chennai, Ayodhya, Varanasi and Haridwar.

The Rail Budget also proposed a special train

featuring life and works of Swami Vivekananda.

Operating ratio would be 92.5 per cent, which is an improvement of 1 per cent over the last fiscal. While passenger traffic grew by 2 per cent, passenger earnings stood at Rs 44,645 crore after revenue foregone of Rs 610 crore on account of rollback in monthly season ticket fares, Shri Gowda said, adding freight earnings are estimated at 1,05,770 crore for this fiscal.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE RAILWAY BUDGET

Achievements / Initiatives

- ▶ Major landmark achievement in National Project of Kashmir -
- ▶ State of Meghalaya and capital of Arunachal Pradesh to be on Railway Map by this fiscal.
- ▶ Gauge Conversion of strategically important 510 km Rangiya - Murkongselek line in Assam to be completed by this fiscal.
- ▶ XIth Five Year Plan Targets exceeded in New Lines (2,207 km) , Doubling (2,758 km) and Electrification (4,556 km), Production of Diesel (1,288) & Electrical (1,218) Locos and Acquisition of Wagons (64,875)
- ▶ Dedicated Freight Corridors on the Eastern and Western Routes - leading to strategically critical capacity augmentation.
- ▶ Railways met from its own means the total additional impact of Rs one lakh crore due to implementation of 6th Pay Commission
- ▶ In 2013-14, 1532 km of New Lines, Doubling and Gauge Conversion commissioned.
- ▶ Production commenced at the new factories - Rail Wheel Plant, Chhapra; Rail Coach Factory, Rae Bareilly; and Diesel Component Factory, Dankuni.
- ▶ Specially designed coaches for adverse weather condition for rail travel in Kashmir.
- ▶ Successful development of Corrosion resistant, lighter wagons with higher pay-load and speed potential up to 100kmph.
- ▶ Railways sports persons dominate national events by winning titles in 23 disciplines and runners up in 9 disciplines. In various international championships a total of 2 Gold, 4 Silver and 3 Bronze Medals won.
- ▶ Unigauge Policy started in 1992 has converted 19,214 km to Broad Gauge, benefitting several States including Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar

Pradesh, Assam and Tamil Nadu.

Measures for improving Safety & Security

- ▶ No unmanned Level Crossing. A total of 5,400 unmanned level crossings eliminated - 2,310 by manning it and 3,090 by closure / merger / construction of ROBs or RUBs.
- ▶ Improved audio - visual warning to road users in advance of approaching trains.
- ▶ Induction of indigenously developed Train Collision Avoidance System
- ▶ Development of 'crashworthy' coaches
- ▶ In last five years, offering employment to over one lakh persons in Group C categories and to 1.6 lakh persons in erstwhile Group D categories.
- ▶ Provision of Vigilance Control Device in all locomotives
- ▶ Various measures to prevent fire incidents on trains -
- ▶ Fire retardant materials
- ▶ Multi-tier protection for electric circuits
- ▶ Portable fire extinguishers in coaches
- ▶ Induction based cooking to replace LPG in pantry cars
- ▶ Intensive checks against explosives and inflammable materials.

Financial Health

- ▶ Rail infrastructure by cost sharing arrangement with State Governments; Karnataka, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Haryana agreed to several projects
- ▶ Several Public Private Partnerships (PPP) projects are in the pipeline.
- ▶ FDI being enabled to foster creation of world-class rail infrastructure.
- ▶ Rail Land Development Authority raised Rs 937 crore so far.
- Modernisation and Technology Induction

High Speed Trains

- ▶ Joint feasibility study by India and Japan for Mumbai - Ahmedabad Corridor to be co-financed by Japan International Cooperation Agency
- ▶ Business Development Study by SNCF for Mumbai - Ahmedabad corridor.

Semi- High Speed Projects

- ▶ Exploring low cost option of speeds 160- 200 kmph on select routes

Green Initiatives

- ▶ Railway Energy Management Company becomes functional. Windmill and solar power plants to be set up with 40% subsidy from Ministry of New & Renewable Energy.
- ▶ 200 Stations, rooftops of 26 buildings and 2,000 level crossing gates to be covered.
- ▶ Railways bagged 22 out of 112 awards given by the Government.
- ▶ 'Green Curtains' along the track close to major stations; Pilot work at Agra and Jaipur
- ▶ Coverage of Bio-toilets in 2,500 coaches and would be increased progressively.

Passenger Friendly Initiatives

- ▶ Overwhelming public response to e-booking of ticket
- ▶ On-line tracking of exact location and running of train movements
- ▶ 51 Jan-Ahaar outlets for Janta Meals ; 48 passenger escalators commissioned at stations and 61 more being installed ; air-conditioned EMU services in Mumbai from July 2014 ; information display system in important trains to indicate stations & arrival time.
- ▶ 'Upgradation' Scheme extended to AC Chair Car and Executive Chair car passengers.

No new increase in passenger fares and freight charges

- ▶ 58 new trains and extension of 11; 864 additional EMUs to be introduced in Mumbai over 2 years
- ▶ Bullet train on Mumbai-Ahmedabad Sector
- ▶ Diamond quadrilateral for high speed trains throughout the country
- ▶ Plan to hike speed of trains to 160-200 km/hr in 9 sectors
- ▶ Online booking to support 7,200 tickets/minute; to allow 1.2 lakh users log in simultaneously
- ▶ Reservation system to be revamped, ticket-booking through mobile phones, post offices to be popularised
- ▶ Online platform, unreserved tickets
- ▶ Combo parking-platform tickets at stations
- ▶ Women RPF Constables to escort ladies coaches; 4,000 women constables to be inducted
- ▶ Retiring room facility to be extended to all stations
- ▶ Battery operated cars for differently abled and

- senior citizens at major stations
- ▶ Feedback services through IVRS on quality of food
- ▶ Food can be ordered through SMS, phone; Food courts at major stations
- ▶ Cleanliness budget up by 40 percent over last year
- ▶ CCTVs to be used at stations for monitoring cleanliness
- ▶ Setting up of corpus fund for stations' upkeep; RO drinking water at stations and trains
- ▶ Automatic door closing in mainline and sub-urban coaches
- ▶ FDI in railway projects, except in operations
- ▶ FDI, domestic investments in rail infrastructure
- ▶ Office-on-Wheels: Internet & Workstation facilities on select trains
- ▶ Wi-Fi in A-1, A category stations and in select trains
- ▶ Rail university for technical and non-technical subjects
- ▶ Some stations to be developed to international standards through PPP model
- ▶ Parcel traffic to be segregated to separate terminals to make passenger traffic unhindered
- ▶ Loss per passenger per kilometre up from 10p (in 2000-01) to 23p (2012-13)
- ▶ Solar energy to be tapped at major stations
- ▶ Highest ever plan outlay of Rs 65,455 crore for 2014-15
- ▶ Expenditure in 2014-15 pegged at Rs 149,176 crore.

Rail Tariff Authority to advise on fares and freight

- ▶ Mumbai to get AC EMUs in July
- ▶ Trains to display info on next stations, arrival times
- ▶ More Jan Ahaar outlets, escalators at stations
- ▶ Upgradation scheme extended to AC Chair Car and Executive Chair car passengers
- ▶ Annual Rail Plan envisaged at Rs 64,305 crore with a budgetary support of Rs 30,223 crore
- ▶ FDI being enabled for creation of rail infrastructure
- ▶ Railways to end current year with surplus
- ▶ Surveys for 19 new lines and 5 doubling of tracks
- ▶ Railways to encourage transportation of milk
- ▶ Steps to reduce running of empty freight

carriages

- ▶ Bio-toilet facility to be provided in more trains.

Demand Management through Dynamic Pricing

- ▶ Premium AC Special train introduced in Delhi - Mumbai Sector with shorter advance reservation period and dynamically varying premium over Tatkal fare

Information Technology

- ▶ Initiatives taken include - proliferation of cash accepting Automatic Ticket Vending Machines ; ticketing on mobile phones in unreserved segments ; system update on PNR status; online booking of retiring rooms at important stations ; online booking of meals for selected en-route stations ; introduction of e-forwarding note and electronic transmission of railway receipts for freight customers. ■

Rail Budget shows where we want to take the Railways : Narendra Modi

Calling the Railways an engine of development, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi said the Railway Budget had its focus on transparency and passenger safety.

The Rs.149,176 crore budget presented in the Lok Sabha focused on "transparency and integrity" as well as the safety needs of commuters, Shri Modi said.



The budget "keeps in mind the development of India. We can see the great use of technology also", he said.

"This budget shows where we want to take the railways and at the same time where we want to take India through the railways," the prime minister said.

The budget introduces the country's first Bullet train, to ply between Mumbai and Ahmedabad, and increase the speed of passenger trains up to 200 km an hour on select routes.

The budget "strengthens institutionalized mechanism" in the Indian Railway network, which carries 23 million passengers every day. Shri Modi said the railways play "a very important role" in the country's development. He said the country should have paid more attention to railways after independence in 1947. "Better late than never." ■



68th Independence day

*Kamal Sandesh Parivar wishes a
Very Happy Independence day
to its esteemed readers.*

Congress working real hard to wipe itself off

By A Surya Prakash

That the party's strength in the Lok Sabha has been diminished is well known. But, a State-wise study shows that the electoral damage suffered by the party is much deeper than is superficially evident.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's impressive success in the recent Lok Sabha election has altered the political scenario in very many ways both at the national and regional levels. The Bharatiya Janata Party's saffron has come to replace the Congress's tricolour in many States and Union Territories in India. The Congress's defeat is so comprehensive that it faces the danger of being dislodged from its perch as a truly national party. That credit has now been snatched away by the BJP. For example, in 2009, the Congress won Lok Sabha seats in 29 of the 35 States and Union Territories in the country. In 2014, it could establish its footprint in just 15 of these States and Union Territories. Meanwhile the BJP, which had a presence in just 14 States and Union Territories in 2009, won Lok Sabha seats in 23 of them this year.

There are other indicators as well. For example, in the 2009 Lok Sabha poll, the Congress secured 120 million votes constituting 28.55 per cent of the votes polled. In 2014, the Congress polled just 107 million votes and its vote share dipped to 19.30 per cent. The party's loss of votes since the last parliamentary election is all the more significant because over

100 million new electors were added to the electoral rolls this time. On the other hand, the BJP, which secured just 78 million votes (18.80 per cent) in 2009 more than doubled its vote share in this election by securing over 170 million votes.

That the Congress's strength in the Lok Sabha has crashed from 206 to 44 seats in the recent election is well known. But, a State-wise study of data of the Lok Sabha election indicates that the electoral damage suffered by

the party is far wider and deeper than is generally appreciated.

The voters' anger against India's oldest party in best gauged by the following facts: The Congress did not win a single seat in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Goa; it failed to touch double digits in any State including Karnataka and Kerala, considered its best bets; finally, the party's vote share in percentage terms crashed to abysmally low levels in States like Uttar Pradesh (7.5), Andhra Pradesh (11.5), West Bengal (9.6), (Bihar 8.4), Jharkhand (13.3) and Tamil Nadu (4.3).

While it is true that one should not write off any political party, there are distinct signs of decline of the Congress in most States. The party ruled Uttar Pradesh and Bihar for decades after independence but it is now in terminal decline in these States. In 1984, it bagged 83 of the 85 seats in Uttar Pradesh and over 51 per cent of the votes. Thereafter, its fortunes crashed. It won just two seats this time and its vote share has crashed to 7.5 per cent. In fact, ever since the BJP and the two regional parties — the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party —

he Bharatiya Janata Party's saffron has come to replace the Congress's tricolour in many States and Union Territories in India. The Congress's defeat is so comprehensive that it faces the danger of being dislodged from its perch as a truly national party. That credit has now been snatched away by the BJP. For example, in 2009, the Congress won Lok Sabha seats in 29 of the 35 States and Union Territories in the country. In 2014, it could establish its footprint in just 15 of these States and Union Territories.

dislodged the Congress in the late 1980s, the party has never been able to recover ground.

The Bihar story is similar. The party won 48 seats and 52 per cent of the vote in this State in 1984. It bagged two seats this year and just 8.4 per cent of the vote. The party now appears to be in terminal decline in West Bengal, the truncated Andhra Pradesh and possibly, Odisha. In West Bengal, the party ruled for long years until the Communists dislodged it in 1977.

Thereafter, the Left Front clung to power for 34 years and try as it might, the Congress was unable to recover ground. However, there was one glimmer of hope when in the early 1980s, a feisty young woman member of the party, called Mamata Banerjee, displayed the pugnacity of a street-fighter and took on the Marxists. As she grew politically, the party's high command (the Nehru-Gandhis) could not tolerate the rise of a strong, independent leader and began giving her pinpricks. They wanted to reap the benefit of her agitational politics but wanted her to be under their thumb.

Fed up with the machinations of the so-called high command, Ms Banerjee broke away and launched the Trinamool Congress. Thereafter, the Congress, which was number two in the State behind the Marxists, was relegated to the third place. Now, this May has brought another shock for the party. The BJP has emerged as a serious player in West Bengal and pushed the Congress to fourth place in terms of vote share. In this election, the BJP

secured 17 per cent of the vote, as against just 9.6 per cent of the Congress.

In Odisha, another State where the Congress was long entrenched in power, its vote

Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka. Barring Karnataka, in all the other States, the gap between the BJP and Congress in terms of vote share

Finally, we come to the big States where the Congress is directly pitted against the BJP — Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka. Barring Karnataka, in all the other States, the gap between the BJP and Congress in terms of vote share is huge.

share has fallen to a dangerous 26 per cent in this election and the BJP, with 21.6 per cent, is already snapping at its heels. There is every danger of the BJP upstaging the Congress in this State also.

The party's condition is even more worrisome in the truncated Andhra Pradesh after the division of that State into Andhra and Telangana. The party, which had swept the polls in 2009, was completely trounced this year with its candidates securing just three to four per cent of the votes. It is now relegated to fourth place behind the Telugu Desam Party, the YSR Congress and the BJP.

Finally, we come to the big States where the Congress is directly pitted against the BJP — Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan,

is huge. In Gujarat and Rajasthan, the gap is a humongous 25 per cent, while in Madhya Pradesh it is 19 per cent. It is over 10 per cent in the other States. It will require a miracle for the party to recover ground in these States.

Going by these indicators, one can say that Mr Modi has made considerable progress towards his goal of uprooting the Congress in the country. But, there is still some work to be done and many leaders of the Congress like Mr Digvijaya Singh, who want Mr Rahul Gandhi to lead the party in the Lok Sabha, appear to be working overtime to help Mr Modi achieve his goal of a 'Congress-Mukt Bharat'. ■

(The writer is a renowned columnist)

Satish Upadhyay is new Delhi BJP President

Satish Upadhyay, the chairman of the Standing Committee of the South Delhi Municipal Corporation, was appointed new Delhi BJP President. He took over from Union health minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan, who was appointed state president just before the Lok Sabha polls. ■



Jungleraj-2 has gripped the State after JD(U)-RJD alliance : BJP

Amid chalking out plans for its 'Mission 175' for the Bihar Assembly polls due next year, the Bharatiya Janata Party threw a challenge to former Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to dissolve the House. BJP was ready to tackle the 'Jungleraj-2' that has gripped the State because of the alliance between JD(U) and RJD, the party said.

"Nitish Kumar has betrayed the mandate given by the public against the 'Jungleraj-1' of RJD. He has allied with Lalu Prasad and 'Jungleraj-2' has set in. The law and order situation has worsened and people are thinking that old, lawless days have come," said Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council and former Deputy Chief Minister Shri Sushil Kumar Modi.

"I challenge Mr. Kumar to dissolve the Assembly and face fresh elections. He and Prasad are together, but it's no problem for us. We destroyed 'Jungleraj-1', we will decimate 'Jungleraj-2' as well," said Shri Modi while addressing the final session of the two-day State party executive meeting. He asked party workers to gear up for mid-term Assembly elections as JD(U) is facing a severe rebellion from within and the government may fall anytime.

Criticising the State Government, Shri Modi said development of Bihar has stalled with no new industry coming in the last 15 months and proposals

worth Rs. 5 lakh crore going away as land was not available.

The former deputy CM said the people should see for themselves whether the State government is capable of handling the special package and status as promised by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. They

should give a chance to the BJP now as they have seen the rule of Congress, RJD and JD(U). Speaking at the State executive meet, Union Petroleum Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan said Bihar figures prominently in BJP's plan for national development as the PM believes the growth of Eastern India is necessary for the growth of the country.

Shri Pradhan said: "Nitish himself has shook hands with the 'jungle raj party' and is responsible for destroying the image of the State."

BJP's State unit President Shri Mangal Pandey said the Assembly by-polls to 10 seats on August 21 remains the party's 'top priority' right now.

"Prepare for the by-elections in 10 Assembly seats as they have been declared. Winning them is our top priority and challenge as it will strengthen the party in future in the State," Shri Pandey said while

addressing the meeting.

Membership campaign

Shri Pandey said the BJP will conduct a Statewide



membership campaign from August 6 to August 20 in which it will ensure that 30 per cent of new members are from backward and mahadalit castes.

The party will also hold demonstrations at all district headquarters between August 5 and August 7 over issues like electricity supply, ration and Public Distribution System (PDS) cards.

"We will also launch a 'save Bihar campaign' on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya on September 25. It will continue till Jayaprakash Narayan's birth anniversary on October 11. Our workers will hold at least three meetings in every panchayat during this campaign," added Shri Pandey. He said BJP will also observe 'anti-terrorism day' at all district headquarters on October 27, the day of serial bomb blasts at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally last year. [FOC] ■

President appoints new governors for five states



Senior BJP leader and former Union Minister Shri Ram Naik was on July 14 appointed as Governor of Uttar Pradesh and party's veteran leader Shri O.P. Kohli was appointed governor to Gujarat, in the first appointment of five Governors by Shri Narendra Modi government.

The 78-year-old **Shri O P Kohli**, who was a Rajya Sabha member from 1994 to 2000, took over as Governor in Gujarat. A former Chief of BJP's Delhi unit in 2009, Shri Kohli has been associated with RSS since his student days and was President of ABVP — and later became Chief of Delhi University Teacher Association.



Shri Ram Naik took over in Uttar Pradesh. A three-time Parliamentarian, the 80-year-old Shri Naik has the rare distinction of being the only Minister who completed five years as Petroleum and Natural gas minister in one government.



Shri Keshari Nath Tripathi, a former Uttar Pradesh Speaker took take over in West Bengal. A poet and author of books, Shri Tripathi, who will turn 80 in November this year, was a five-time MLA and has written a few books like Commentary on "The Representation of the People Act, 1951" and two poetic books in Hindi — 'Manonukriti', and 'Aayu Pankh' In his student life, he went to jail in connection with the Kashmir Movement.

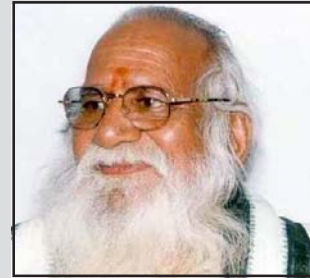


Shri Balram Das Tandon, 87, founder member of Jan Sangh in 1951, was appointed Governor of Chhatisgarh after Shekhar Dutt tendered his resignation on June 18. Tandon was the Deputy Chief Minister of Punjab in 1969 and later served as Cabinet Minister in Parkash Singh Badal's government.



Shri Padmanabha Acharya, a member of working group on North East region of BJP and Co-Convener of Overseas Friends of BJP, was appointed Governor of Nagaland. The President asked Shri Acharya to also perform the duties of Tripura Governor until regular arrangements are made. ■

Acharya Giriraj Kishore passes away



Senior Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leader Acharya Giriraj Kishore, who was actively associated with the Ram temple movement, passed away in Delhi at the VHP Headquarters in R K Puram on July 13 evening following prolonged illness. He was 94. Acharya Giriraj Kishore had joined the RSS at an early age and was one of its seniormost 'pracharaks'.

The Sangh had sent him to VHP. A bachelor, Acharya Giriraj Kishore, was wheelchair-bound for the last several years. He had recently pledged to donate his body for social cause. BJP National president Shri Amit Shah condoled the death of Acharya Giriraj Kishore, saying his life and thoughts epitomized selfless service.

"Acharya Giriraj Kishore served the society and country through RSS, Jan Sangh and VHP till his last breath. He left his job as a teacher to dedicate his life for the cause of Lord Ram. He fought against Emergency and went to jail," BJP President Shri Amit Shah said in his condolence message. "A symbol of sacrifice and fearlessness, he donated his body for the social cause. He will remain a source of inspiration for people," he said.

Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shri M Venkaiah Naidu also mourned Acharya's death. ■

...Continued from page 14

- ▶ New scheme to provide assured irrigation
- ▶ Total sanitation in every household by 2019
- ▶ Shares of PSU banks to be sold to retail investors
- ▶ Aiming at fiscal deficit of 3 percent by 2015-16 and 2 percent by 2016-17
- ▶ FDI in defence sector raised to 49 percent from 26 percent
- ▶ CBDT to scrutinize all cases under 2012 law on retrospective tax cases
- ▶ Problem of black money to be fully addressed
- ▶ Expenditure Management Commission to be established this fiscal
- ▶ Slow decision-making has resulted in lost opportunities
- ▶ Green shoots of recovery in world economy
- ▶ Budget will lay down steps aimed at 7-8 percent growth in next few years
- ▶ The aim is "Sub ke saath, sub ka vikas" (With everyone, For everyone's development) ■

Budget will convert hopes and aspirations of the people into trust : Modi



Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi termed the Budget as a Budget that converts hopes and aspirations of the people into trust. The Prime Minister expressed confidence that the Budget will take India to newer heights of progress and stated, "This Budget is a new ray of hope for the poor and downtrodden sections of society." ■

Jaya lauds forward looking budget

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Ms J Jayalithaa welcomed the 2014-2015 Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley on 10 July. "It is a forward looking exercise in positivity. The Union Budget 2014-15 reflects the seriousness with which the new Government of India has set about the task of addressing the challenge of revival of growth and improving the macro-economic situation of the country. It is a very responsible document which has placed fiscal prudence at the fore-front and at the same time addresses the heightened expectations from the new Government," Jayalithaa said in a release. Ms Jayalithaa thanked the Prime Minister for setting up the National Institute of Ageing at the Madras Medical College and the proposal to build an Ultra Mega solar Power Plant in the State. ■



Congress' Last Bastion in Gujarat falls to BJP

BJP stormed the last urban Congress citadel in Gujarat, winning 41 of the 60 seats in the Junagadh municipal corporation. It has not only wrested back the Junagadh civic body that it lost to the Congress in 2009, but now also controls all eight municipal corporations in the state.

The BJP already controls more than 75 per cent of the nagarpalikas or 120 in Gujarat and in the recent general elections had won all 26 Lok Sabha seats in the state, which has given the country its new Prime Minister.

The Congress' diminution is now more or less complete. The BJP had earlier wrested the Gandhinagar municipal corporation from it.

Junagadh in Saurashtra has been seen as a Congress stronghold. The civic polls were also being watched closely because these are the first elections in many years that were held with a person other than Shri Modi in the chief minister's chair. For Ms Anandiben Patel, the emphatic victory is an important validation. ■

WEST BENGAL

Thousands of Forward Bloc leaders join BJP

At least 2,000 supporters of All India Forward Bloc (AIFB) and dozens of State and local level leaders joined the BJP on 20 July. The BJP state president Shri Rahul Sinha and the BJP general secretary Shri Ashim



Sarkar, handed over party's flag to the leaders and welcomed them.

Interacting with the media the Forward Bloc leaders listed a series of grievances

against the leadership for leaving the party. Many said that they left AIFB as the senior leaders failed to provide any protection. Many of the AIFB leaders targeted party's State secretary Ashok Ghosh (91) for holding the top position for decades. "I request him to quit, but is it reasonable to remain in the highest position for ages," asked one of the former State Secretariat members, Shri Subhasish Dutta, who joined BJP. He said, 'Mr Ghosh recently got a mention in the Limca Book of Records for serving the longest term at the helm of the party in a State. He was elected as the secretary of the party a year after Independence, in 1948 and since then re-elected to the post 15 times (in 66 years), without a break, the latest being in February, 2013.' Shri Subhasish Dutta asked is it democracy in AIFB.

Children, women and men from various districts of Bengal joined the BJP on the same day. They came predominantly from Dakshin Dinajpur, Medinipur, Malda, North 24 Paraganas and Kolkata. The supporters were led by AIFB's former State secretariat members and youth wing leaders, Shri Ajay Agnihotri and Shri Anirban Chowdhury.

Members of the party's women's wing and State secretariat, Bithika Mandal, Sashi Agnihotri and Asma Khatun also left the left-coalition to join the BJP. They took their turns to lambast the 75-year-old party. "I read in a newspaper that the highest leadership has said we are rotten fruits, spoiled by insects. The

leadership forgot that when a tree rots, the fruits naturally get spoiled," said Bithika Mandal. "BJP & AIFB both believe in the ideas and ideologies of Netaji. But while BJP respects Netaji, AIFB's senior leaders are using Netaji to do business," Ms Mandal said. So she said we left the Forward Bloc and many activists will follow soon.

Addressing the new-comers and BJP Karyakartas, State BJP president Shri Rahul Sinha said the AIFB supporters liberated themselves.

MADHYA PRADESH

MP will be developed as advanced and progressive State by 2018 : Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shri Chouhan had one-to-one meetings with industrialists, ambassadors of various countries and senior officers of Central ministries in Delhi with a view to giving a new fillip to industrialization in the State. It may be mentioned that a Global Investors Summit will be held in Indore in October 2014. These meetings will prove to be milestones in the success of the summit.



Chouhan had one-to-one meetings with Chairman of Big companies and held detailed discussions on investment possibilities. The Chief Minister invited all the industrialists to invest in Madhya Pradesh.

After the meetings, Shri Chouhan said that Madhya Pradesh will be developed as advanced and progressive State by 2018. The State Government is striving to give the plan a concrete shape. He said Madhya Pradesh holds immense investment potential. It has maintained 20 per cent agriculture growth rate for the last three years. A network of industries will be laid in the State to provide good employment opportunities to the youth.

He said that new thermal power plants have been set up in the State due to which Madhya Pradesh will not only become self-sufficient in power, but will also supply power to other States.

Shri Chouhan informed that several industrialists have evinced keen interest in investing in health and education sectors apart from cement, textiles, automobile and food processing sectors in Madhya Pradesh. He said that some industrialists have also shown interest in opening universities in the State.

During the one-to-one meetings with ambassadors, the Chief Minister invited the Ambassadors of Australia, Mexico, Sweden, France, Spain, Germany, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia and New Zealand for investment in Madhya Pradesh. Senior officers of Central and State Governments were present at the meetings.

ODISHA

Maoist leader accused of Swami Laxmanand murder arrested

In a major achievement for the Police, top Maoist leader Sabyasachi Panda wanted in 61 criminal cases and wanted for the murder of Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati, was arrested late on 17 July from Brahmapur (Berhampur) city in South Odisha.



Panda was active in the Maoist movement for more than two decades and he was the guiding spirit behind formation of the Chasi Mulia Samiti and Kui Lawenga Sangh in 1995 in Rayagada and Gajapati

districts of South Odisha. These organisations were the foundation for spreading Maoist network in South Odisha and neighboring states like Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Panda was operating in southern Odisha including the districts of Rayagada, Gajapati, Ganjam, Kandhamal and Nayagarh.

The Maoist leader was involved in numerous sensational cases like the Nayagarh and R Udayagiri armoury loots, killing of revered saint Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati and his five supporters, abduction of two Italian nationals and blowing up of an ambulance in Kandhamal, besides his overall involvement in killing of 25 security personnel and 34 civilians.

CHHATTISGARH

To create employment opportunities shops will be allocated to tribal youths : Dr. Raman Singh

To create more employment opportunities in Tribal areas now shops will be allocated to tribal youths under the Bastar and the Surguja tribal development authorities as a part of *Amar Shaheed Veer Narayansingh Swavalamban Yojana*, during the current financial year. While reviewing the works of both- Bastar Development Authority as well Surguja Development Authority—in separate meetings held in Raipur, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Dr. Raman Singh has immediately sanctioned Rs 9 crore for allotting shops to the tribal youths.

After discussing with the people's representatives of Surguja Development Authority, the Chief Minister declared compensation from the Campa Fund of forest department to the families, whose crops and houses were destroyed by wild elephants in the districts.

He asked the officers to prepare action plan for it. In the meeting, the Authority members said that both the authorities have received Rs 35 crore each budget for the current financial year. The Chief Minister asked the members to prepare and submit proposal for further construction works immediately. The Chief Minister instructed the collectors to complete all under construction works by December. He told the members that Rs 50,000 to Rs 1 lakh would be given to the power company for the electrification of irretrievable irrigation pumps of farmers. The amount will be in addition to the Rs 75,000 being given by the power companies to the farmers. In the meeting of Bastar Development Authority, the chief minister instructed the public sector major, National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC), to comply with the model rehabilitation policy of the Chhattisgarh government seriously for the assistance of families affected by NMDC's project in Nagarnar under Bastar district.

Home Minister Ramsevak Paikra, Agriculture Minister Brijmohan Agrawal, Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste development minister Kedar Kashyap, PWD minister Rajesh Munat, Women and Child Development minister Ramshila Sahu, MLAs from Bastar and Surguja area of both the authorities besides Chief Secretary Vivek Dhand, Additional Chief Secretaries- DS Mishra and Ajay Singh, attended the meeting. ■

Concentration

By Sri Swami Sivananda

A mental process, not a muscular exercise

Concentration is purely a mental process. It needs an inward turning of the mind. It is not a muscular exercise. There should be no undue strain on the brain. You should not fight and wrestle with the mind violently.

When you concentrate on any object, avoid tension anywhere in the body or mind. Think gently of the object in a continuous manner. Do not allow the mind to wander away. How to increase your power of concentration

Concentration can be done only if you are free from all distractions. A man whose mind is filled with passion and all sorts of fantastic desires can hardly concentrate on any object even for a second. His mind will be jumping like an old monkey. Japa of any Mantra and Pranayam (breathing exercise) will steady the mind, remove tossing, and increase the power of concentration.

Too much physical exertion, too much talking, too much eating, too much mixing with the opposite sex and undesirable persons, too much walking, will cause distraction of mind. Those who practise concentration must abandon these things. Whatever work you do, do with perfect concentration. Never leave the work without finishing it completely.

When you sit for prayers and meditation, never think of your

office work. When you work in the office, never think of the child who is sick or of any other household work. When you take bath, do not think of games. When you sit for meals, do not think of the work that is pending in the office. You must train yourself to attend to the work on hand with perfect one-



pointedness.

Celibacy, Pranayam, reduction of wants and activities, renunciation of objects, solitude, silence, discipline of the senses, annihilation of lust and greed, control of anger, non-mixing with undesirable persons, giving up of the newspaper habit and of visiting cinemas, all these pave a long way in increasing the power of concentration.

You must try to be always cheerful and peaceful. Then only you will have concentration of mind. The practice of friendship with equals, compassion towards inferiors or distressed persons, complacency towards

superiors or virtuous persons, and indifference towards sinners or wicked persons will produce cheerfulness or serenity and destroy hatred, jealousy, and dislike.

You should have real and intense thirst for God-realisation. Then all obstacles will be obviated. Concentration will be quite easy for you then. Mere emotional bubbling for the time being out of sheer curiosity, or for attaining psychic powers, cannot bring any tangible result. Concentration and Pranayam

The practice of concentration and the practice of Pranayam are interdependent. If you practise Pranayam, you will get concentration. Natural Pranayam follows the practice of concentration. A Hatha Yogi practises Pranayam and then controls the mind. He rises upwards from below. A Raja Yogi practises concentration and thus controls his Prana. He comes downwards from above. They both meet on a common platform in the end. There are different practices according to the different capacities, tastes, and temperaments. To some, the practice of Pranayam will be easy to start with; to others, the practice of concentration will be easier. The latter had already practiced Pranayam in their previous births. Therefore they take up, in this birth, the higher limb of Yoga, i.e., concentration.

To Be Continued

Source: Divine Life Society