

## Higher allocation for States promised

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, DEC. 23. The Rajya Sabha yesterday returned by voice vote the Appropriation Bill no. 4, 2004 for supplementary demands after the Union Finance Minister, P. Chidambaram, assured members that the allocation of funds for States would be raised as per the 12th Finance Commission's recommendations.

During a discussion on the demand for grants, Mr. Chidambaram said that the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government's aim was to make India an "economic powerhouse through cooperative federalism."

On the demand from the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and the Telugu De-

sam Party members for higher allocation to the State Governments, he said: "My heart is in the right place and so is my head, but the States must spend money." Many States had unspent balances. He also expressed unhappiness at the delay in project implementation.

He, however, did not address the Opposition and the Left members' concerns on unemployment, price rise and the equitable distribution of the benefits of liberalisation.

The supplementary demands were for the priority areas set by the UPA Government in education, food and health and "frontline areas" of research and human resource development. Mr. Chidambaram assured members that the

Government was committed to the road project.

### Revenue and fiscal deficits

To a query from Jairam Ramesh (Congress) on the road map for managing revenue and fiscal deficits, Mr. Chidambaram said that he was hopeful of achieving the minimum target of 0.5 per cent reduction in revenue deficit and 0.3 per cent in fiscal deficit.

On the gross and net Non-Performing Assets, he said it was the "dharma" of the banks to lend honestly. "If some loans fail, it was a part of business."

Mr. Chidambaram said that although the forex reserves were the highest ever at \$ 130 billion, one of his concerns was the liquidity induced inflation

which would have to be managed.

To Sanjay Nirupam's (Shiv Sena) concern at the "unnatural" buoyancy in the share market, he said he was watching the situation.

He did not believe it was a "bubble building up," but would ask the Securities and Exchange Board of India and the Department of Company Affairs to initiate action against "vanishing companies" which were still listed.

On the delay in the setting up of the desalination plant at Chennai, he said the Centre had offered funding, design and implementation support to the Tamil Nadu Government but only if it had a role in the Special Purpose Vehicle.

# New panel likely on Centre-state ties

**Statesman News Service**

NEW DELHI, Dec. 8. — In a major development, the UPA government has decided to constitute a new commission on Centre-state relations within a few weeks. The home ministry placed the parameters before the Cabinet this evening.

The Union government believes that there is a political need for this as its strongest ally, the RJD, is a regional party, while the Left has strongholds in only three states. The Centre believes there has been a "sea-change" in Centre-state ties since the previous commission.

The Centre has moved

from one-party rule to coalition politics. All the recommendations of the previous Sarkaria Commission haven't been taken into account. It had spoken of the appointment of the Governor and consultations between Centre and states. It also suggested that Article 356 should be sparingly imposed.

The Centre is also looking at the amendment to the Bihar Reorganisation Act, 2000, regarding delimitation of constituencies. It would mean the omission of Section 21 and 22 of the Act, but it would not be applicable to the Assembly polls in March. At present, Bihar has 39 Assembly constituencies reserved for SCs and none for STs.

09 DEC 2004

THE STATESMAN

# PM for honourable Naga settlement

*Centre* *State* *8/11* *8/12*  
**Sanjoy Hazarika in New Delhi**

Dec. 7. — For a first meeting, it went like a dream — Dr Manmohan Singh conversed with the two men who have led the Naga movement for independence against New Delhi for over 40 years and told them that he wanted a mutually honourable and acceptable settlement to the lingering problem. The Prime Minister spoke without notes and, as is increasingly clear in his political growth over the past months, from the heart as well as the head.

And he urged Isak Chis Swu and Th Muivah, the leaders of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (I-M), on their second visit to India in as many years to reach out to people across the country by travelling to different parts and telling the Naga story. Naga organisers associated with the visit now say they are preparing for conversations with civil society groups in New Delhi as

well as meet Naga students before heading to Nagaland.

The hard talk is to begin once they return, aides said. Swu and Muivah, chairman and general secretary of the NSCN (I-M), are scheduled to travel to Nagaland next week for about a month and then, if things go according to plan, shuttle between home base and New Delhi, trying to hammer out an acceptable resolution of the Naga imbroglio, which has troubled the North-east for 50 years.

Swu and Muivah are about 73 and 68 years old and have given the best years of their lives for the Naga cause, a movement which was launched in the 1950s by an earlier generation of pro-independence political leaders and fighters such as AZ Phizo and “generals” Thinsolie and Mowu Angami. Both sides have agreed that the Naga political problem cannot be resolved by force.

Responding to the Prime Minister, Muivah was quoted by an aide of Dr Singh at the talks as saying that “we understand

your constraints and you should understand ours”. These are not remarkably new positions, they assert ground previously held by earlier governments. But it is worth noting that while the Naga leaders have remained united since they began talking with the government in 1995, the country has been led by no less than five Prime Ministers!

At today's talks, which lasted 40 minutes, the Prime Minister's security advisers Mr JN Dixit and Mr MK Narayanan, Mr Padmanabhiiah and Dr Singh's information adviser, Mr Sanjaya Baru, were present. Swu and Muivah were also accompanied, among others by V Atem, the former chief of the NSCN army.

But while the conversations went smoothly and were seen as courtesy calls — first on Dr Singh and then on home minister Mr Shivraj Patil — it appears clear that the hard talk on issues as tough and unrelenting as territory

■ See NAGA TALKS: page 4

08 DEC 2004

THE STATESMAN

# Nine-point roadmap for J&K peace

OUR SPECIAL  
CORRESPONDENT

**New Delhi, Nov. 29:** The Union home ministry has outlined a nine-point strategy to put Jammu and Kashmir on the peace track that speaks of building bridges between the people of India and Pakistan and the Centre's open-door policy for talks with separatists.

Guided by Union home minister Shivraj Patil's experiences during his three-day visit

emphasis on provision of basic necessities like drinking water, education, healthcare, women's empowerment and creation of employment opportunities.

Patil's strategy, released by the government today, also spoke of the home ministry promoting interaction with the people of Pakistan by pursuing the opening of the Jammu-Sialkot, Uri-Muzaffarbad and Kargil-Skardu roads to help people-to-people contact and open up trade.

Significantly, this was the only reference to Pakistan in the document released by North Block that is traditionally known to be Delhi's most vocal section in the government on Pakistan-backed terrorism. Home ministry officials suggest the nine-point strategy, that has also promised inquiries into human rights violations, was evolved in view of the changes in the ground situation in Jammu and Kashmir and in Indo-Pak relations.

Security forces have acknowledged Islamabad's change of heart but have cautioned that the reprieve could be temporary. As Border Security Force director-general Ajai Raj Sharma put it: "The infrastructure for exporting terror across the Line of Control is reported to be intact. The terrorist training camps have not been wound up but only shifted away from the border".

He insisted that the problem of terrorism had only decreased and not vanished. More would depend on the future of relations with Pakistan, he said, urging the home ministry to be prepared to clear a proposal to sanction additional forces, which is pending before it.



Shivraj Patil

to Jammu and Kashmir earlier this month, the home ministry's refurbished strategy has laid special emphasis on taking the development route rather than rely on security forces to bring about peace in the state.

The strategy envisages that the Centre would ensure "balanced" development of the three regions of the state — Jammu, Kashmir valley and Ladakh. It would also include expediting completion of infrastructure projects like railways, roads and power; implementation of schemes for development of agriculture, horticulture, tourism, trade, handicrafts and industries; and

# Hold plebiscite, Ulfa tells Centre

## Back channel talks fail in Kolkata

Rahul Karmakar and  
Anirban Roy  
Guwahati/Kolkata, November 27

REJECTING PRIME Minister Manmohan Singh's offer of unconditional talks, Ulfa has advised the Centre to hold a referendum on the issue of Assam's sovereignty.

"If colonial New Delhi can't discuss sovereignty, it can surely hold a plebiscite on the independence of Assam," Ulfa chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa said today. The statement, coming 48 hours after Singh's refusal to talk sovereignty, coincided with a spate of subversive strikes across eastern Assam.

Sources said Rajkhowa's statement also signalled a breakdown in three days of behind-the-scenes parleys in Kolkata to arrange a meeting between emissaries of the two sides to ready the ground for peace talks.

Incidentally, Assam chief secretary S. Kabilan has been camping in Kolkata since arriving in the city on Thursday night from New Delhi with B.M. Mazumder, commissioner-secretary of the home department.

Though neither Kabilan nor Mazumder was available for comment, one of several middle-

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Centre  
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rung Ulfa leaders camping in Kolkata told *HT* this evening that they have now been told by their high command not to proceed with the peace process. "We aren't meeting any government representative now," he said.

Expanding on the plebiscite theme, Rajkhowa said a "mass vote" could seal the sovereignty issue once and for all. He urged intellectuals, writers, politicians, students, peasants and people from other walks of life to oppose a "domineering, colonial" New Delhi individually and collectively.

Blasting the Prime Minister for "pretending" to be a resident of Assam, Rajkhowa said, "A Prime Minister of colonial India cannot be our PM. And anyway, renting a house at Sarumotoria (in Guwahati) cannot make one a citizen of Assam."

The strident pitch was in sharp contrast to indications a couple of months ago that Ulfa was ready to talk peace. Its commander-in-chief Paresh Baruah had even sent missives to the government that Ulfa could consider dropping one of its preconditions — dialogue in a third country under UN mediation — for a ceasefire, though it stuck to its demand for sovereignty.

28 NOV 2008

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

# New panel to look into Centre-state ties soon

Sarkaria proposals now irrelevant, feels govt

Rajnish Sharma  
New Delhi, November 26

THE CENTRE is in the process of constituting a new commission to study Centre-state relations. Highly placed Home Ministry sources said the announcement on the constitution of the new commission — which will be on the lines of the Sarkaria Commission — is expected soon.

Senior ministry officials said the Centre was of the view that the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission had become irrelevant in the present context.

In fact, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government's Common Minimum Programme (CMP) had also laid stress on the need for strengthening Centre-state relations.

"The new commission will take a fresh look at how the federal structure can be strengthened further and spell out how contentious issues between the Centre and the states can be resolved", a senior ministry official remarked.

The Centre-State Division of the Home Ministry is already working on the proposal for the new commission and is expected to finalise it shortly.

Ministry sources said one of the contentious issues that the commission would look into were the Centre's

## ON THE CARDS

- The new panel will study how the federal structure can be strengthened further
- It will spell out how contentious issues between the Centre and the states can be resolved
- One of the contentious issues that the commission would look into is the Centre's role in resolving disputes between two states
- The Centre would also try and make some of the recommendations of the commission binding on the states — which did not happen in the case of the Sarkaria Commission

role in resolving the disputes between two states.

Ministry is of the view that the Centre should play a greater role in resolving contentious issues between states. "At times, the Centre's intervention can lead to an early solution to contentious issues — such as the water dispute between states", the official added.

The Centre is also keen that the commission should spell out a uniform policy on

distribution of foodgrain and financial assistance to the states.

This, ministry sources said, was important since several state governments had accused the Centre of a biased treatment, particularly regarding distribution of foodgrain and funds in the wake of a natural calamity.

Often, a favourable government at the Centre saw some state governments walking away with hefty economic packages.

The UPA government is keen on a uniform policy on this and the new commission will study this issue at length.

Sources said the Centre would also examine the possibility that some of the recommendations of the commission be made binding on the state governments — which did not happen in the case of the Sarkaria Commission.

So, even after nearly 14 years of the Sarkaria Commission being constituted, only half of the 247 recommendations have been accepted.

"The Centre is willing to discuss the recommendations of the new commission in the Inter-State Council with the chief ministers and try and evolve a consensus that some recommendations be made binding on the states", a ministry source pointed out.

27 NOV 2004

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

# India, Pakistan and the Kashmiris need to sit at a rounder table

## Debates and divisions

5-18  
PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

There is little doubt that the prime minister, Manmohan Singh, would like to leave a substantial legacy in Kashmir. But his options are not entirely clear. It is perhaps a reminder of the gap in perceptions that exists between Kashmir and the rest of India, that the impact of his visit has been assessed in very different ways in Kashmir and in Delhi.

The Delhi press, with its usual mixture of sentimentalism and historical ignorance, saw the visit as an important breakthrough; the Kashmiris seem to have seen it as anything but. While Delhi was focused on the prime minister's intentions, Kashmir was focused on his strategy. And there is still something of a gap between the two.

Any leader who visits Kashmir has to go the extra mile to establish credibility. The task is even more difficult for a Congress leader, who has to bear the burden of his party's historical blunders in Kashmir.

It would have helped if Singh had, on this occasion, not just expressed empathy with the plight of the Kashmiris, but also distanced himself from the past of the Congress party. This would have sent a decisive signal. The announcement about the redeployment of troops seems to have gone down well, although the government was careful to not commit too much. But the Rs 24,000 crore package seems to have backfired. It unwittingly gave the impression that there was more money on offer. But most of the money has apparently already been earmarked and that too for Central power projects. As wonderful as power projects are, they do not do the political hard work in Kashmir for the following reason. There is a sense that these projects are simply a way of the rest of India using Kashmir for its own purposes; and the ownership of these projects does not devolve to Kashmiris. The package added needless confusion to an otherwise heartfelt speech.

The visit seems to have left three issues unresolved. The first issue is: who is going to represent the Kashmiris? The prime minister tried to address the Kashmiri people directly, but any concrete negotiations will have to occur through representatives. The dilemma is that the elected government of Kashmir does not enjoy the kind of mandate to be regarded as unproblematically representative. The Hurriyat on the other hand has never had its mettle tested in electoral politics. But excluding the Hurriyat — all its factions — from talks would be a political mistake. The Hurriyat still enjoys popular support and for an enduring peace,

this is the constituency that will need to be addressed. Moreover, as Shivraj Patil's inept statements demonstrated, if you make a distinction between moderate and hardliners, including one and excluding the other faction, you put the credibility of the moderate faction in jeopardy. At least for the purpose of talks, we should be talking to everybody. The other option is to make the Hurriyat irrelevant, but it is not clear if the government is in a position to do this.

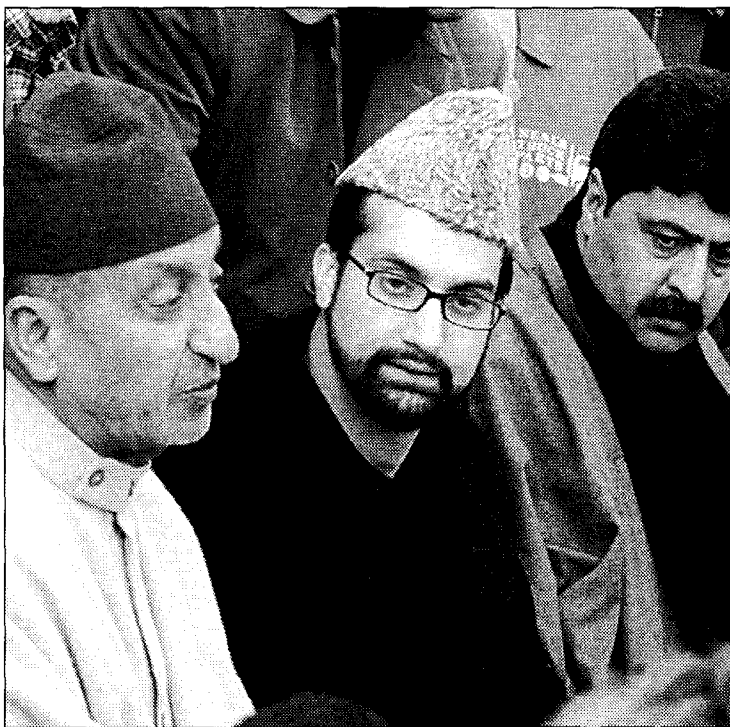
The second drama centred on ex-

with Pakistan, where does this leave the Kashmiris? On the other hand, if we cut a deal with the Kashmiris, what is going to be Pakistan's role? There is probably not too much consternation about Pakistan's possible role. But there is a genuine worry that Kashmiris might be marginalized in any India-Pakistan negotiation. Ironically, the more powerful signals we send to Pakistan that we are willing to talk, the more it raises doubts in Kashmir about what exactly we are up to.

The process of peace is often

sleeve. But the government will have to be very clear on what its goals are. The broad parameters are relatively fixed: Kashmir is an inseparable part of the Indian Union. But within this constraint, the government can think of an autonomy package.

But if this is the goal, then the government will need two things. First, an autonomy package that gives enough to the Kashmiris to make them happy, without compromising on the government's core interests. Coming up with such a package will take extraordinary political finesse and imagination. Second, Kashmiris will have to be given a more tangible stake in the rest of India. At one level, it is obvious to anyone in Kashmir that the state will always have to be dependent upon India. But we have been unable to create enough of a political stake for Kashmir's Muslims in the power structures in Delhi.



Most states are integrated into the Union, because their political elites acquire a stake in access to power at Delhi. Kashmiris feel politically marginalized in this respect, and from the government's point of view, we will have to create mechanisms of integration that give them a real sense of power in Delhi.

Looking at the impasse in Kashmir, one cannot but be impressed by the British cunning at creating that peculiar institution: the Round Table Conference. Although they were not always successful, they at least got almost all the parties together in one forum. This had the dramatic effect of showing each party that its concerns were not the only ones on the table. The divisions between the parties changed the parameters of debate. Any solution will have to be an all-things-considered solutions. But all-things-considered solutions require fora where all parties can be simultaneously represented. The government's strategy in all its negotiations, whether in Kashmir or the North-east, has been dyadic: negotiate with each party separately. This generates the fear that concessions may be given to one group that would be detrimental to another; we co-opt one group and unleash another. Even in Northern Ireland, the crucial breakthrough was through a kind of omnibus forum. Perhaps it might be a little premature to think of such an option. But at some point, the need for such a mechanism will become inevitable.

The next time we announce a package in Kashmir, it might be worth taking the Planning Commission and having it camp out for a week in Srinagar. Let the Kashmiris tell us what they want to spend money on. Our economic assistance should not be seen as a form of paternalism. After all, perceived paternalism is what the dispute is, in part, about.

**‘ We have been unable to create enough of a political stake for Kashmir's Muslims in power structures in Delhi ’**

wrecked, not by militancy, but by the uncertainties of the participants in a peace process. That is why, even where there is a commitment to peace, residual anxieties about motives and intentions, or simply an uncertainty about what other participants might be thinking, can prove to be insurmountable obstacles. Singh's visit sends a strong signal about his commitment to peace with justice. But whether the signals were sufficiently strong to overcome these indeterminacies remains to be seen.

This is only the first stage of a dialogue process and it would be surprising if the prime minister did not have more credible offers up his

actly what counts as a precondition for talks. We ended up in a Catch-22 situation where the Hurriyat seemed to be saying that if the government was interested in talks without preconditions, then why was it objecting to Hurriyat leaders travelling to Pakistan? Was this not a ruse to exclude them? The government, by contrast, interpreted the lack of preconditions to mean that Hurriyat should talk even if permission to travel was denied. This is one issue where the government could have been more liberal. It is not clear that any of our core interests would have been put at risk if the Hurriyat had been allowed to travel to Pakistan.

But the Pakistan link is crucial for another reason. The government of India has a two track process on Kashmir. The first is designed to address India-Pakistan differences on Kashmir; the second is to address the differences between the Kashmiri people and the government of India. But in Kashmir, the refrain was: what is the relationship between the two dialogues? If India is going to cut a deal

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# The Telegraph

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## TREAD SOFTLY <sup>7-18</sup>

To diagnose a disease well is to half cure it. The prime minister, Mr Manmohan Singh, had the good doctor's instinct in knowing that economic packages alone would not solve Manipur's problems. He struck a different note by candidly admitting that he had not gone to Imphal to "buy the people's loyalty with packages". Several of his predecessors made a mistake about the direct relation between economic benefits and militancy in the North-east. No wonder that promises of such benefits did little to promote peace in the region. This is not to deny that Manipur needs financial and other kinds of aid from New Delhi. It is more important, though, to end the sense of alienation from which the state — and much of the rest of the North-east — suffers. Many states in India may need as much economic help from the Centre as Manipur or Assam. But a crisis of identity and the consequent alienation are typical of the North-east. Also, the drive against militancy brings in a sense of persecution. The prime minister must have had this larger picture in mind when he put his emphasis on "winning the minds and hearts" of the people of Manipur. The "restoration" of Kangla Fort to the people of Manipur was one long-awaited move to win their hearts.

However, two issues will prove to be crucial tests for New Delhi's strategy on Manipur. One is the review of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act. The prime minister's promise of the review and a possible replacement of it by a more "humane" law is of immediate concern. While it is a timely response to the growing public anger against the act, the failure to keep the promise may be seen as a betrayal. The uproar over the Assam Rifles' alleged role in Thangjam Manorama's death represented years of public outrage at the excesses committed with the help of the AFSPA. But the anxiety to stop human rights abuses by security forces or the police has to be balanced by the state's duty to maintain peace and uphold the rule of law. Manipur's militants, like their counterparts elsewhere, have a perverse agenda of unleashing terror that prompts the authorities to act. The other issue that New Delhi must handle with utmost caution is the Naga rebels' demand for inclusion of parts of Manipur in the so-called Greater Nagaland. Any false step on this issue may trigger another tremor in Manipur.

23 NOV 2004

THE TELEGRAPH



# Talk unconditionally, PM tells Ulfa

**'Power flows from ballot box, not from the barrel of a gun'**

Vishal Thapar & Rahul Karmakar  
Guwahati, November 22

PRIME MINISTER Manmohan Singh today virtually buried the issue of sovereignty of Assam as he advised the Ulfa to come forward for unconditional talks. "Assam is an integral part of India, and no one should doubt that", he said, avoiding a direct reply to queries about the Ulfa's insistence on sovereignty as a precondition for talks.

The outfit had agreed to drop its two other preconditions — talks in a third country and under UN mediation. "There's no issue, no grievance that's so intractable it cannot be resolved through a patient, constructive dialogue free from preconditions. This is the only possible way forward", the PM said.

"The Indian democratic system is open and flexible enough to welcome the participation of all shades of opinion. Power in India can only flow from the ballot box, never from the barrel of a gun", he maintained.

Reiterating that his government was ready to talk to any outfit willing to shun the path of violence, the Prime Minister admitted that informal contacts had been established with the Ulfa for possible talks soon.

On setting a timeframe for talks with various militant groups — the NSCN(I-M) peace process has been seemingly aimless for six years now — Singh said the Centre had not been sitting idle. "The government has some obligations, but it is committed to peace in the region", he said.

The government's concern for the region, the PM felt, was evident from the trans-

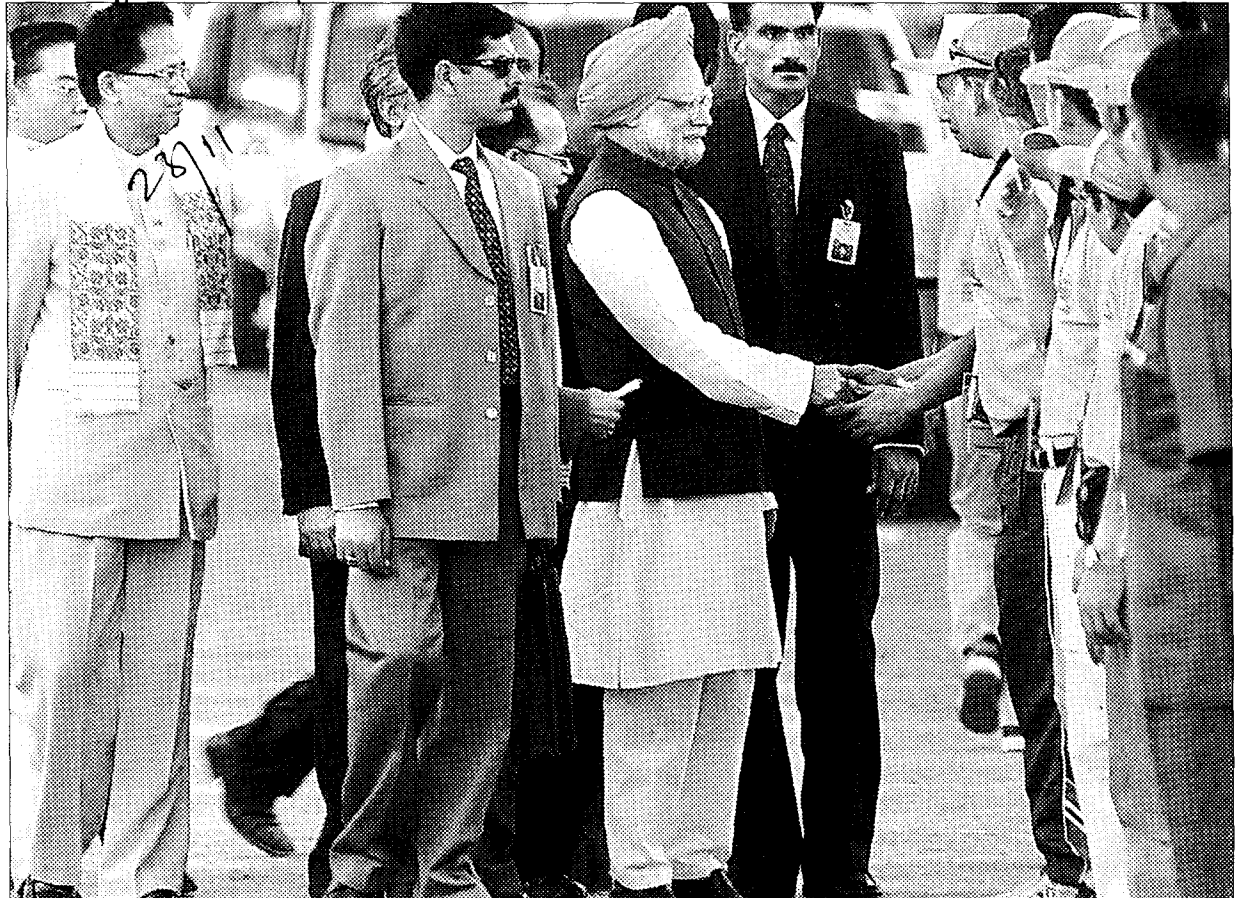
fer of the historic Kangla Fort in Imphal from the Assam Rifles to the civil administration. So was the setting up of a panel to review the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958.

The Prime Minister, however, defended another contentious Act that has been ribbing Assam — the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act. "The IMDT is not designed to encourage illegal influx, but to prevent harassment of the minorities in the process of detection", he said. "India is greatly concerned about the presence of illegal Bangladeshis, and we've taken up the issue with Dhaka", he said, adding that steps, like border-fencing and stricter vigil on the boundary were being taken to arrest the problem. "Fencing in Jammu and Kashmir has made a lot of difference".

Bangladesh has also been a worry on the militancy front, he pointed out. "We haven't succeeded in seeking Dhaka's cooperation to check militant activities from its soil unlike Myanmar, but we're hopeful".

## Indo-Asean car rally

Earlier, Singh flagged off the first Indo-Asean car rally from the Nehru Stadium amid much fanfare. He hoped the rally would usher in a new era of cooperation between the South-East Asian countries and India, particularly the Northeast, the "Gateway to Asean". The rally, covering 8,000 km, will end at Batam Island in Indonesia. Meanwhile, a sky-diver was injured during the rally's ceremonial flag-off. The sky-diver fell down and got entangled in a tree to suffer serious injuries in his left arm. He was rushed to hospital.



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh shakes hands with participants of the first India-Asean car rally in Guwahati on Monday. AP

## No home on 'homecoming' trip

Rahul Karmakar  
Guwahati, November 22

PRIME MINISTER Manmohan Singh's two-day visit here was billed as his "homecoming". But his home was missing from the itinerary.

All of Assam — if one takes chief minister Tarun Gogoi's word for it — was elated by the PM's trip to his adopted home state. So was his landlady, but not quite.

Hemoprova Saikia, sericulture minister in Gogoi's Cabinet and widow of former chief minister Hiteswar Saikia, was unhappy that

"tenant" Singh could not come home. "I know he has his compulsions," she said. The landlady had to be content with sharing the dais with her high-profile tenant at the Sankardeva award distribution ceremony last night.

"He apologised for staying away from his home and promised to make it next time," Saikia said. Singh was leased out a two-bedroom first-floor flat by Hiteswar Saikia at his Nandanpur residence in the Sarumotoria locality here in 1991. The former was made a tenant overnight to fulfill the criterion of being a

resident of the state in order to be eligible for contesting the Rajya Sabha election from Assam.

Singh has been elected to the Upper House thrice since 1991, and over the years has virtually enjoyed a kinship with the Saikias.

The Prime Minister has been paying a rent of Rs 7,000 annually to retain the apartment — sparse furniture and a Guru Granth Sahib adorning it. This works out to Rs 583.33 per month for a 'home' that would normally fetch a rent of Rs 4,000 at current market prices.

## 'Healing touch', now from HRD

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, November 22

EVEN AS Prime Minister Manmohan Singh delivers his 'healing touch' in the Northeast, the government announced setting up of a high-level group chaired by HRD Minister Arjun Singh to address issues pertaining to education, women & child development in the Northeastern region, including Sikkim.

The 25-member group will also address funding of projects for education, women and child development from the Non-lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) for the Northeast. The group's brief includes advising suo motu, or in reference to queries made to it, state governments from the Northeast or the Centre on any issues relating to education or women and child development, a spokesman said.

Among other members of the group will be the Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region, union ministers of state in the HRD ministry, CMs and education ministers of NE states.

# মণিপুরে উন্নয়নের আশ্বাস দিয়ে

## সন্ত্রাস বন্ধের ডাক মনমোহনের

জিৱিবাম, ২০ নভেম্বর (পি টি আই)— মণিপুরে জঙ্গিদের মূলস্রোতে ফিরে রাজ্যের উন্নয়নে শরিক হওয়ার আহ্বান জানালেন মনমোহন। তিনি জানালেন, উত্তর-পূর্বাঞ্চলের রাজ্য মণিপুরের সার্বিক উন্নয়নে আগ্রহী ইউ পি এ সরকার। কেন্দ্র-রাজ্য যৌথ উদ্যোগে এই কর্মসূচি রূপায়িত হবে। কেন্দ্রের হাত শক্ত করতে জঙ্গিদেরও মূলস্রোতে ফেরা উচিত। সন্ত্রাস বন্ধ না হলে উন্নয়ন কর্মসূচি রূপায়িত হবে কীভাবে? কাম্বীয়ে ২৪,০০০ কোটি টাকার কর্মসংস্থান ও উন্নয়ন প্রকল্প ঘোষণা করে বিপুল সাড়া জাগিয়ে দু'দিনের সফরে প্রধানমন্ত্রী আজ মণিপুর এসেছেন। ঐতিহাসিক কাঙলা দুর্গ আজ মণিপুরের হাতে তুলে দিলেন তিনি। রাজ্যের দীর্ঘদিনের দাবি ছিল এটি। কাঙলা দুর্গ হস্তান্তরের পর এক জনসমাবেশে তিনি জানালেন, সেনাবাহিনীর বিতর্কিত বিশেষ ক্ষমতা আইন পুনর্বিবেচনার জন্য এক কমিটি গড়া হয়েছে। জাতীয় নিরাপত্তার দিকটি খতিয়ে দেখে ওই কমিটি সিদ্ধান্ত নেবে। সকাল ১০টা ২৫ মিনিটে ইম্ফল যাওয়ার পথে তাঁর হেলিকপ্টার নামে সীমান্তবর্তী জিৱিবাম শহরে। জিৱিবামে ৯৮ কিলোমিটার দীর্ঘ রেলপথ প্রকল্পের শিলান্যাস করেন তিনি। সঙ্গে ছিলেন কেন্দ্রীয় রেলমন্ত্রী লালুপ্রাসাদ, রাজ্যপাল এস

এস সিধু এবং মুখ্যমন্ত্রী ইবোবি সিং। জিৱিবাম-টুপুল রেল প্রকল্পের ফলে একদিকে ইম্ফল, অন্যদিকে আসামের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ গড়ে উঠবে। এখানকার মানুষের বহুদিনের চাহিদা মিটেবে। লালু জানান, ৬ বছরে প্রকল্পটি রূপায়িত হবে। মনমোহনের ইঙ্গিত, রাজ্যের উন্নয়ন ও কর্মসংস্থান বাড়াতে কেন্দ্রীয় প্যাকেজ ঘোষণার তোড়জোড় চলছে। এদিকে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সফর বয়কটের উদ্দেশ্যে রেভলিউশনারি পিপলস ফ্রন্ট (আর পি এফ) ২৪ ঘণ্টার 'কাফু'-র ডাক দেওয়ায় ইম্ফল এবং অন্যান্য শহরে আজ কার্যত বন্ধের ছবি চোখে পড়ে। দোকানপাট বন্ধ, রাস্তাঘাট ফাঁকা, যানবাহন কম— এই ছিল আজকের চেহারা। মনমোহনের সফরকে স্বাগত জানাতে নানা সংগঠন আবার তাদের বন্ধ স্থগিত রেখেছে। কুকি ন্যাশনাল ফ্রন্ট তাদের অন্যতম। সেনাবাহিনীর বিশেষ ক্ষমতা আইন প্রত্যাহারের দাবিতে গত ৬ মাস ধরে বন্ধ, বিক্ষোভ আন্দোলনে অচল মণিপুরে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর প্রথম সফর রাজনৈতিক দিক থেকেও বিশেষ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ঘটনা হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে। রাজ্যের সাধারণ মানুষের মধ্যে যথেষ্ট উদ্দীপনা লক্ষ্য করা গেছে। আগামীকাল দুপুরে আসাম যাবেন মনমোহন।

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# WB willing to help in J&K peace process

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**New Delhi:** The World Bank can and is willing to play a role in the economic development aspects of the peace initiative over Kashmir, Bank chief James D Wolfensohn said here on Thursday.

Appreciating Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's approach aimed at winning the hearts and minds of the people of Jammu and Kashmir through a Rs 24,000-crore economic development plan, he said the Bank can make its contribution towards "giving hope to young people who otherwise do funny things not helpful to peace".

At a news conference winding up his two-day India visit, Wolfensohn said the Bank could play a role in the economic development in Pakistan and "some of the disputed territories" as well to help the peace process. He, however, added that he has not discussed it with the PM.

Wolfensohn's comments assume significance in the light of the role that the WB played in bring about the Indo-Pak agreement on sharing of Indus waters in the 50s. The Bank-sponsored Indus Waters Treaty has stood the test of time and the two countries have honoured their commitments under the treaty at all times during the last five decades even as they fought several wars.

The Bank chief pointed out that economic development has to be an important aspect of any peace agreement to hold. Referring to the Middle East peace process, he said the Bank would be ready to help economic development of the troubled West Bank and Gaza.

Wolfensohn, however, made it clear that the "politics" should be sorted out before the Bank moves in. "We do not want to get into pol-

areas of infrastructure: water, power, roads (especially rural roads) and railway modernisation. "We are, of course, not going to give up on health and education," he said.

Wolfensohn sought to dispel any impression that the "World Bank runs India". "The World Bank cannot run a billion people. Even the assistance we give is only a fraction of the country's GDP," he said.

Referring to the political controversy often raised in India over the role of the World Bank, he said: "We are ready to be partners and stay out of the headlines. We are going to move with the government with their sense of direction and not ours."

On some of the Indian states providing free power to farmers, Wolfensohn said: "There is no doctrine of the World Bank that says cut out all subsidies." He said the Bank recognises that "very poor people need help", but India must have an appropriate policy targetting the subsidies at specific groups and ensuring that power and water are not wasted. The challenge for India is to sustain the supply of power and water and "giving away power and water does not really encourage investment", he added.



**We do not want to get into politics in which we do not have any experience. But we can contribute to the economic development part of peace initiatives**

—James D Wolfensohn

itics in which we do not have any experience. But we can contribute to the economic development part of peace initiatives," he said.

Summing up the outcome of his visit, during which he met President Abdul Kalam and Union ministers and had a meeting in the Planning Commission on Thursday in which finance minister P Chidambaram also took part, Wolfensohn said the Bank will provide assistance of \$9 billion over the next three years to India. As flagged by the Indian government, the Bank will focus on four

# রাজ্যকে দেওয়া ঋণে সুদ কমাবে কেন্দ্র

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার: কেন্দ্রের বন্ধু সরকার অন্তত সুদের ক্ষেত্রে পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকারের দাবি মেনে নিল। পশ্চিমবঙ্গ-সহ রাজ্যগুলির ঋণের বোঝা কমানোর জন্য সুদের হার হ্রাস করতে কেন্দ্রের আপত্তি নেই বলেই জানিয়েছেন যোজনা পর্যদের ডেপুটি চেয়ারম্যান মন্টেক সিংহ অহলুওয়ালিয়া। তাঁর ঘোষণা, রাজ্যের দীর্ঘকালের এই দাবি যুক্তিসঙ্গত। এই ব্যাপারে অবশ্য চূড়ান্ত সিদ্ধান্ত নেবে পরবর্তী অর্থ কমিশন। সব মিলিয়ে এতদিনে কেন্দ্রের কাছে পশ্চিমবঙ্গ-সহ অন্য রাজ্যগুলির একটি বড় দাবি মিটল।

মঙ্গলবার কলকাতায় পশ্চিমবঙ্গ, বিহার, ঝাড়খণ্ড ও ওড়িশার সঙ্গে দশম পঞ্চবার্ষিকী পরিকল্পনার মধ্যবর্তী পর্যালোচনায় বসেন অহলুওয়ালিয়া। এই বৈঠকেই রাজ্যের অর্থমন্ত্রী অসীম দাশগুপ্ত আর্জি জানান, কেন্দ্র তার মহাজনি কারবারে এবার রাশ না টানলে রাজ্যগুলির আর্থিক অনটন মিটবে না। কারণ, রাজ্যগুলিকে দেওয়া যে কোনও ঋণের ক্ষেত্রে দিল্লি ১১.৫ শতাংশ হারে সুদ ধার্য করেছে। অথচ, কেন্দ্র ৬ শতাংশ হারে বাজার থেকে টাকা ধার নেয়। এমনকি, ডি এফ আই ডি-র মতো সংস্থার অনুদান, যার উপর সুদ থাকে না, রাজ্যগুলির কাছে সেই টাকার উপরেও কেন্দ্র সুদ নিয়ে থাকে।

অসীমবাবুর কথায়, “পশ্চিমবঙ্গ কেন্দ্রের কাছে বকেয়া প্রায় ৫৬ হাজার কোটি টাকার উপর বছরে সাড়ে ১১ শতাংশ হারে সুদ গোনেন। যদি বাজার চলতি হারে এই সুদ ধার্য হয়, অন্তত কেন্দ্র সাড়ে ৫ শতাংশ হারে সুদ নেয় তবে আমরা হাফ ছেড়ে বাঁচব। উন্নয়ন খাতে আমরা বরাদ্দ আরও বাড়াতে

পারব।” অর্থমন্ত্রীর হিসাব অনুযায়ী সুদের হার ন্যূনতম ৫ শতাংশ কমলেই পশ্চিমবঙ্গ বছরে আড়াই হাজার কোটি টাকা বাঁচাতে পারবে। বৈঠকে একই যুক্তি দিয়েছে অন্য রাজ্যগুলিও। ওড়িশার মুখ্যমন্ত্রী নবীন পট্টনায়েকও জানিয়েছেন,

সুদের হার কমলে কিছু স্বস্তি মিলবে। শেষ পর্যন্ত

অবশ্য মন্টেক সিংহ অহলুওয়ালিয়াই ঘোষণা করেন, অসীমবাবুর যুক্তিতে কোনও খামতি নেই। তিনি সাংবাদিকদের বলেন, “রাজ্য কেন্দ্রের কাছ থেকে যেসব ঋণ নিয়েছে, তাতে সুদের হার কমলে যে রাজ্যগুলির স্বস্তি মিলবে, তাতে সন্দেহ নেই। আমিও মনে করি, এটাই হওয়া উচিত। পরবর্তী অর্থ কমিশনও রাজ্যগুলির এই আর্জি পর্যালোচনা করছে। তারাই সিদ্ধান্ত নিতে পারে। আমিও আশায় রইলাম।”

সামগ্রিক ভাবে ঋণের ক্ষেত্রে যে রাজ্যগুলির যে অনেকটাই ভারমুক্ত হতে চলেছে সেই ব্যাপারে এদিন স্পষ্ট ইঙ্গিত দিয়েছেন অহলুওয়ালিয়া। তিনি জানান, নভেম্বরের মধ্যেই অর্থ কমিশনের রিপোর্ট জমা পড়ার কথা। সেই রিপোর্টের ‘সূত্র’ ধরেই এগোবে যোজনা পর্যদ। এতদিনে বিজয়ীর হাসি হাসলেন অসীম দাশগুপ্ত। অহলুওয়ালিয়া বলেন, “মোট



মন্টেক ও মুখ্যমন্ত্রী। মঙ্গলবার। — রাজীব বসু

অভ্যন্তরীণ উৎপাদনের (জি ডি পি) হারের তুলনায় রাজ্যওয়ারি উৎপাদনের হারে পশ্চিমবঙ্গ এগিয়ে রয়েছে। এই ক্ষেত্রে পশ্চিমবঙ্গের রেকর্ড প্রশংসনীয়।”

মোট অভ্যন্তরীণ উৎপাদনের ক্ষেত্রে যোজনা পর্যদের লক্ষ্যমাত্রা ৮ শতাংশে পৌঁছানো যে অসম্ভব, এদিন তা স্বীকার করেছেন অহলুওয়ালিয়াও। আপাতত যে হার ৬ শতাংশ, তা দশম পঞ্চবার্ষিকী পরিকল্পনার শেষ বছরে অর্থাৎ ২০০৬-৭ সালে ৮ শতাংশে পৌঁছানোর বাস্তব লক্ষ্যই নির্ধারণ করেছেন অহলুওয়ালিয়া।

মন্টেকের সঙ্গে মুখোমুখি আলোচনায় মুখ্যমন্ত্রী বুদ্ধদেব ভট্টাচার্য দাবি তোলেন, দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব সহ গোটা এশিয়ায় শিল্প-বাণিজ্যের বাজার ধরার খাতিরেই কলকাতায় একটি ওয়ার্ল্ড ট্রেড তথা কনভেনশন সেন্টার গড়ে

এর পর ছয়ের পাতায়

## সুদ কমাবে

প্রথম পাতার পর

তোলা দরকার। আর এর জন্য রাজ্যের বন্দর ও বিমানবন্দরগুলির সামগ্রিক উন্নয়নও প্রয়োজন। পাশাপাশি, তাঁর খেদ, শহরাঞ্চলে বেকার সমস্যা দূরীকরণে কেন্দ্র উদ্যোগী ভূমিকা নিচ্ছে না। সুন্দরবনের উন্নয়নেও আরও অর্থ প্রয়োজন। দরকার ভাঙন রোধে, আর্সেনিক-দূষণ ঠেকাতেও। দারিদ্রসীমার নীচের মানুষদের জন্য রাজ্যে গণবন্টন ব্যবস্থায় চাল-গমের দাম আরও কমানো জরুরি।

এদিকে, উত্তর-পূর্বাঞ্চলের রাজ্যগুলিও কেন্দ্রের বিরুদ্ধে উন্নয়ন পরিকল্পনায় বরাদ্দ নিয়ে যে প্রথা রয়েছে, তার বিরোধিতা করে নানা বৈষম্যের অভিযোগ ইতিমধ্যেই এনেছে। পরিকল্পনা তৈরির সময় উত্তর-পূর্বকে যে বরাবরই অবহেলা করা হয়, সে-কথা ডেপুটি চেয়ারম্যানকে গুয়াহাটির বৈঠকে পরোক্ষে শুনিতে দিয়েছেন কয়েক জন

10 NOV 2004

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

# Patil orders winter strike on militants

Rajnish Sharma

New Delhi, November 9

Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil has directed the security agencies to launch a massive offensive against militant outfits in the Valley during the winter months. The fresh instructions were given at a meeting convened by Patil on Tuesday following his recent visit to Jammu and Kashmir.

Highly placed Home Ministry sources said Patil believed that, since there had been a drop in the level of infiltration since January this year and the security scenario had improved in the Valley, the paramilitary forces and the Army should launch

to a drop in infiltration, the strength of the militants in the Valley has reduced. So, this is the ideal time to move in for the kill", a Ministry official said.

The BSF, CRPF and the Army will soon submit a comprehensive blueprint to the ministry for targeting militants during the next few months. Ministry sources said Patil's meeting was primarily a debriefing session.

"Patil met a lot of people during his visit, including officials of the security forces, and made several commitments to them. So, he wanted various agencies to start working on the assurances he had given during his visit to the Valley, Jammu and Leh", an official added.



Shivraj Patil

a fresh offensive against militants holed up in the Valley.

"During winter, the militants cannot cross over, since the mountain passes are closed. Due

Among others present at the meeting were ministers of state Sriprakash Jaiswal and S. Raghupaty, home secretary Dharendra Singh, the Centre's interlocutor, N.N. Vohra, Director, Intelligence Bureau, A.K. Doval, and directors-general of the CRPF and BSF. Principal secretary to the Prime Minister, TAK Nair, also met the home minister and discussed, among other issues, his recent visit to Kashmir.

The home ministry is also preparing a comprehensive report on Patil's Kashmir visit, which will be submitted to the Prime Minister. The report will elaborate on the prevailing security situation and also deal with some development issues.

# কাশ্মীরে ছরিয়ত-সহ সবার সঙ্গেই নিঃশর্ত কথায় রাজি কেন্দ্র

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ৩ নভেম্বর: বিভিন্ন কাশ্মীরি সংগঠনের সঙ্গে 'বিনাশর্তে' আলোচনায় বসতে রাজি নয়াদিল্লি। চলতি মাসের ১৭ তারিখ প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ তাঁর প্রথম কাশ্মীর সফরে যাওয়ার কথা। তার আগে উপত্যকার পরিস্থিতি খতিয়ে দেখতে এই সপ্তাহের শেষে সেখানে যাচ্ছেন স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী শিবরাজ পাটিল। এই সফরকে সামনে রেখেই আজ এক অনুষ্ঠানে পাটিল বলেন, "জম্মু কাশ্মীরের সমস্ত সংগঠনগুলির নেতৃত্বের সঙ্গে বিনা শর্তে আলোচনায় বসার প্রস্তাব রাখছে ভারত।"

সংগঠনগুলির সঙ্গে আলোচনার পাশাপাশি, উপত্যকার মানুষের জীবনযাপনের মানোন্নয়নের জন্য প্রধানমন্ত্রী বিভিন্ন প্রশাসনিক এবং অর্থনৈতিক পদক্ষেপের কথা ঘোষণা করবেন বলেও জানান তিনি।

পাটিলের সফরকে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সফরের প্রস্তুতি হিসাবেই দেখা হচ্ছে। তিনি বলেছেন, "আমি বহু মানুষের সঙ্গে দেখা করব। ছরিয়ত কনফারেন্স-সহ বিভিন্ন সংগঠনের প্রতিনিধিদের সঙ্গেও। কোনও বিশেষ একটি গোষ্ঠীর উপরে আলাদা করে লক্ষ্য স্থির করতে চাই না।"

পাটিল ফিরে এসে যে রিপোর্ট জমা দেবেন, সেই অনুযায়ী মনমোহন উপত্যকার মানুষের জন্য একটি উন্নয়ন-পরিকল্পনা করবেন। সরকারি সূত্রের খবর, প্রধানমন্ত্রী কাশ্মীরে গিয়ে ৩ হাজার কোটি টাকার একটি প্যাকেজ ঘোষণা করবেন। কর্মসংস্থান থেকে পরিকাঠামো বিভিন্ন প্রকল্প থাকবে তার মধ্যে।

উল্লেখ্য, সাবির শাহ, ইয়াসিন মালিক, সৈয়দ আলি শাহ গিলানি-সহ ছরিয়তের বিভিন্ন নেতারা এই মুহূর্তে দিল্লিতে। পাকিস্তান দূতাবাস আয়োজিত ইফতার পাটিতে যোগ দিতে দিল্লি এসেছেন তাঁরা। তবে দিল্লিতে এলেও সরকার পক্ষের কোনও প্রতিনিধির সঙ্গে কোনও আলোচনার মধ্যেই তাঁরা যাচ্ছেন না। ইফতার শেষ করে কাশ্মীরে ফিরে যাবেন।

প্রসঙ্গত ছরিয়ত নেতৃত্বের সঙ্গে কেন্দ্রের মনকষাকষির অবসানের জন্য গত একমাস ধরেই তৎপর হয়েছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ। স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী শিবরাজ পাটিল, স্বরাষ্ট্রসচিব ধীরেন্দ্র সিংহ, সীমান্তরক্ষী বাহিনীর অতিরিক্ত ডিজি এ কে মিত্র, জম্মু ও কাশ্মীর নিয়ে সরকার পক্ষের মধ্যস্থতাকারী এন এন ভোরা-র সঙ্গে দীর্ঘ বৈঠক করেছেন তিনি। স্বরাষ্ট্র দফতরের প্রতিনিধি শ্রীপ্রকাশ জয়সওয়ালও বলেছেন, "আমরা সবার সঙ্গেই আলোচনার দরজা খোলা রেখেছি। ছরিয়তের সঙ্গে বিনা শর্তে আলোচনা করতে রাজি আছি।" প্রসঙ্গত, সেপ্টেম্বর মাসেই প্রধানমন্ত্রী এবং স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রীর কাশ্মীর সফর নির্ধারিত ছিল। কিন্তু উপ-নির্বাচন থাকায় নির্বাচন কমিশন সেই সফরে নিষেধাজ্ঞা আরোপ করে।

প্রসঙ্গ নকশাল গোষ্ঠী: হায়দরাবাদে নকশাল গোষ্ঠীর সঙ্গে অন্ধপ্রদেশ সরকারের প্রথম পর্যায়ের বৈঠকের পর শিবরাজ পাটিল যথেষ্ট আশাবাদী। তিনি বলেছেন, "আশা রাখি, আলোচনা চলবে এবং শেষ পর্যন্ত তার ইতিবাচক ফল পাওয়া যাবে। অন্ধ সরকার যে এই রাজনৈতিক প্রক্রিয়া শুরু করেছে, তাকে যথেষ্ট সময় দেওয়া উচিত।"

তবে একই সঙ্গে মাওবাদী জঙ্গিদের সঙ্গে জনযুদ্ধের আঁতাত সম্পর্কেও তিনি সতর্ক করে দিতে চেয়েছেন তাঁর মন্ত্রককে। পুলিশের ডিজি স্তরের বৈঠকে তিনি বিষয়টি তুলে মন্তব্য করেছেন, "জনযুদ্ধ-এম সি সি সংযুক্ত হয়ে যে সিপিআই (মাওবাদী) গঠন করেছে নিরাপত্তা সংস্থাগুলির উচিত আগামী দিনে তাকে গুরুত্ব দিয়ে দেখা।"



Patil and Jayalithaa

## Jaya Patil in war of words

The Tamil Nadu government's application before the Supreme Court includes the following conversation between Union home minister Shriraj Patil and chief minister Jayalalithaa on changing the governor, P.S. Ramamohan Rao. The conversation took place on Thursday at 12.30 pm:

Patil: I am sorry to inform you of the change of the governor of Tamil Nadu.... I have spoken to Mr Barnala and he has agreed.

Jayalalithaa: Are you consulting me or are you informing me?

Patil: I am informing you.

Jayalalithaa: Whether it is a decision already taken?... I would like to have two days to think over the matter and get back to you.

(The application says: "But the Union home minister said that the time cannot be granted because the file had already gone from him")

Jayalalithaa: Has the order been issued?

("Patil said it can be issued any time since the decision has been taken")

Jayalalithaa: How could you take the decision without consulting the chief minister? Should I not have been consulted before the decision was taken?

Patil: The Sarkaria Commission has made this recommendation, but this is the way we usually do these things.

Jayalalithaa: How could you remove the governor without any reason?

("When Patil said that on August 15, 2004, the governor did not take the salute, the chief minister replied that in Tamil Nadu on Independence Day, it is always the chief minister who takes the salute and hoists the flag. The home minister said the governor did not host the tea party on Independence Day.")

Jayalalithaa: Are you saying that you are removing the governor only because he did not host the Independence Day tea party?

Patil: Yes, it is a serious mistake but I don't want to discuss the reasons any further.

Jayalalithaa: Can you give me some time, at least two days, to consider the matter and get back to you?

Patil: I am sorry. It is a decision already taken.

Jayalalithaa: This means you are informing me and not consulting me.

Patil: Yes, I am informing you.

(PTI)

THE TELEGRAPH

30 OCT 2004

# Amma pins Patil down on Governor

## Rao puts in papers

Statement News Service

**CHENNAI, Oct. 29.** — Ending the controversy over the Congress-led government's move to transfer him, Tamil Nadu Governor Mr PS Ramamohan Rao, today put in his papers. He faxed his resignation letter to President today with a request that the resignation be given effect from 2 November. He said it was "inconvenient" for him for "family reasons" to go to the N-E. "I realise a contest between a constitutional functionary, subject to the constraints of his office, and public persons who have no such constraints, is a totally unequal one in which the constitutional functionary is bound to lose," he said in a statement.

### Punjab Governor quits

Punjab Governor Mr OP Verma handed over his resignation to the President today, a day after he was reportedly asked by the Centre to resign. He became the fourth NDA appointee to resign as Governor after Mr Rama Jois (Bihar), Mr ML Khurana (Rajasthan) and Mr Ramamohan Rao.

## Iron fist in velvet Guv?

Excerpts of the conversation between Ms Jayalalitha and Mr Shivrav Patil

**Patil:** I am sorry to inform you of the change of Governor in Tamil Nadu. I have spoken to Mr Barnala and he has agreed.

**Jaya:** Are you consulting me or informing me?

**Patil:** I am informing you.

**Jaya:** Is the decision already taken?

**Patil:** Yes. It is a decision already taken.

**Jaya:** I would like to have two days to think over it and get back to you.

**Patil:** No time can be granted as the file has already gone from me.

**Jaya:** Has the order been issued?

**Patil:** It can be issued any minute as the decision has already been taken.

**Jaya:** Where is the file as of now? Is it with the President?

**Patil:** It has gone from me. I do not know where the file is. It could be with the Prime Minister, it could be with the President. The order could be issued any minute.

**Jaya:** How could you take the decision without consulting the chief minister? Should I not have been consulted before the decision was taken?

**Patil:** The Sarkaria Commission has made this recommendation, but this is the way we usually do things.

**Jaya:** How can you remove the Governor without any reason?

**Patil:** On 15 August, Independence Day, the Governor did not take the salute.

**Jaya:** In Tamil Nadu, it is the CM who takes the salute and hoists the flag on Independence Day. The Governor never does it. The Governor hoists the flag only on Republic Day.

**Patil:** The Governor did not host the tea party on Independence day as he is supposed to do.

**Jaya:** In the past, the present Governor has always hosted the tea party. Only this time he was away from the country. Are you saying that you are removing him only because he did not host the Independence Day tea party?

**Patil:** Yes, it is a serious mistake but I don't want to discuss the reasons any further.

Our Legal Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, Oct. 29.** — In a judicial twist to the controversy over appointment of Governors, the Tamil Nadu government today drew the attention of the Supreme Court (coram, Lahoti, CJ, Takker, Naolekar, JJ) to the manner in which the Centre had merely "informed" the state of its decision to replace Governor Mr PS Ramamohan Rao bypassing the Sarkaria Commission's recommendations.

The state government produced excerpts of a telephonic conversation between home minister Mr Shivrav Patil, and chief minister Ms Jayalalitha, yesterday noon which records the former telling the latter that though the Sarkaria Commission does make such a recommendation (that the CM be consulted before the appointment), "this is the way we usually do these things".

Mr Patil said the Governor did not "take

the salute on Independence Day" and did not "host tea party" on the occasion.

Ms Jayalalitha refuted these arguments. She sought time to get back to the Centre on the matter only to be told the "decision had already been taken on the matter" and she was being "informed" about it.

The government alluded to all this in a fresh application filed before the Supreme Court seeking an "ex parte" stay on the "imminent" appointment of Mr SS Barnala as the new Governor in place of Mr Ramamohan Rao who has been transferred to Goa. However, the court turned down the state's prayer.

Rejecting the prayer, Chief Justice Mr Lahoti said: "We are not giving you any ex parte relief. These issues should be dealt with elsewhere. They are dumped here. But we have a duty to hear it, so we will hear the matter when it comes up in regular course."

Another report on page 4



Bengal open to talks but sceptical

# CM salvo at Andhra on Naxalites

OUR BUREAU

2/19  
Calcutta/New Delhi, Sept. 23: Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee today said the Andhra Pradesh government's initiative to hold peace talks with Naxalite outfits has helped them spread in other states.

"Andhra Pradesh is the problem. Their policy is causing damage to others," the Bengal chief minister said.

At the recent meeting of chief ministers and officials of the nine Naxalite-affected states with Union home minister Shivraj Patil in Hyderabad, everyone criticised Andhra, Bhattacharjee said at Writers' Buildings. "No government approved of Andhra's move to hold talks. Since the time the new chief minister held talks with PW (People's War), the outfit has expanded its area of operation."

Director-general of police Shyamal Dutta represented Bengal at the meet. The chief ministers of Andhra, Orissa and Jharkhand turned up but none of their counterparts.

Congress' Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy took over as Andhra chief minister after N. Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party lost the May elections.

"The leaders of both (rebel) groups which operate in Bengal speak Telugu. These outfits sneak into Jharkhand, Bihar and Bengal from Andhra," Bhattacharjee said.

He also blamed the porous Jharkhand border for the Naxalites' easy access to Bengal.

"If it weren't for the Jharkhand border, we would never have allowed them here." Bhattacharjee added that joint operations and intelligence exchanges with Jharkhand were on.

The chief minister also said the Left Front government is in principle open to talks with the People's War-Maoist Communist Centre. "However, there is no basis for the talks. They want police operations to stop but they are moving freely with arms. Where is the basis for a dialogue in such a condition?" he asked. "There is also no basis for dialogue as their leaders are absconding. Where can we find them?"

However, a Union home ministry official said it is not an insurmountable problem. Talks are hardly ever initiated directly with the extremists and mediators who have contacts, the official said.

Minister of state for home affairs Sriprakash Jaiswal said some states did raise the issue in course of the deliberations in Hyderabad but added that if the states want talks, they have to identify mediators.

Dutta declined comment when asked if the state was softening its stand in saying it was open to talks with the Naxalites. But, once pressed, he asked: "What's the harm?"

"No one from their side has expressed any eagerness to talk with us," he added.

The state has asked for another battalion of central reserve police to combat the rebels.

## Hand of rebels in rifle raid

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Purulia, Sept. 23: It has been confirmed that the "dacoity" last night on a government bus bound for Calcutta from here in which four police rifles were snatched was committed by Naxalites.

A lull in rebel activity in the Purulia-Bankura-West Midnapore belt was broken even as police today detained 11 people and suspended three of the four constables "escorting" the passengers.

Inspector-general (western range) Jogesh Chatterjee, deputy inspector-general (Midnapore range) Anil Kumar and the superintendents of Purulia and Bankura were among the senior security personnel who went into a huddle this morning at Ranibandh police station, about 50 km from the scene of the heist.

Eleven days after the chief minister "challenged" the Naxalites at a public meeting in Jhalda near here, nine armed men posing as passengers boarded the South Bengal State Transport Corporation bus that leaves Bandwan at 8.45 every evening. They had bought the tickets in advance.

In the bus, which had about 60 passengers, they sat in twos — in the front, middle and rear. As it crossed Kuilapal, about 11 km into the journey, one of them asked for matches from a colleague in front. As the two met in the aisle next to where the four constables were seated, one of them threw chilli powder while another near the driver held a carbine to his head.

As the driver slammed the brakes, the rebels fled.

# Border disorder

Apex court's N-E proposal welcome

Assam's border row with Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Meghalaya has often soured inter-state relations and the delay in settling disputes results in the parties trading charges of encroachment. But with all of them claiming to exercise restraint, it is difficult to pinpoint the real offender. What makes an understanding difficult, though, is the growing assertiveness of the newly-carved out states. Kohima refuses to recognise the border as defined in the 1962 Nagaland Act and claims Assam's Doyang and Dasso areas as part of the Naga Hills because these were separated by the British in 1866 for administrative purposes. The restiveness led to the killing of about 60 Assamese villagers in 1979, and in 1985 police personnel of the two states fought a virtual "war". Yet the Centre wants them to sort things out among themselves — which seems all too unattainable. Arunachal, too, refuses to accept the 1951 Notification on the common border. Assam and Meghalaya agreed to settle their disputes based on the demographic line but little progress has been made.

Against this background, the Supreme Court's proposal to appoint a commission to probe the issue is welcome. This is what Soli Sorabjee had suggested in 2001. But unless the commission's recommendations are made binding on all states concerned, it would go the way the Sundaram and Shastri Commissions did. Not only did Nagaland not cooperate with the survey team, it refused to accept the Sundaram Committee recommendations. The border is a touchy subject but there is nothing that cannot be solved through the spirit of give and take. One can only hope that the NSCN-IM, which is digging in for Greater Nagaland, does not throw a spanner in the works of the new commission.

21 SEP 2004

# Sorry for deletion of Gujarat in anthem: Kerala

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, SEPT 17

**S**EEKING to set at rest the controversy over the deletion of the name of Gujarat from the national anthem in some textbooks in Kerala, Chief minister Oommen Chandy today apologised for the lapse.

"The mistake in some of the textbooks was unfortunate. I am offering my apology on behalf of the government if

anyone's feelings are hurt with the inadvertent error," Chandy told reporters here.

As soon as the error was brought to his notice yesterday, a correction erratum was issued and circulars sent to all schools to include the missing word in the anthem. New textbooks had been printed, a copy of which had been sent to Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi.

Chandy said he had faxed the details of corrections made in the textbooks to Modi last night and would be speaking

to Modi over phone later today. He said it was unfortunate that a false campaign about the state was going on in Delhi and Ahmedabad for the "admitted error" even after corrections were issued.

The Chief Minister said Kerala had always been in the forefront of upholding nationalist ideals. Even during the anti-Hindi agitation in the South, the state had stood by nationalist sentiments. It was unfortunate that a printing error was turned into a controversy, he said.

## Angry Modi writes to Manmohan

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
GANDHINAGAR, SEPT 17

him to take prompt action in the matter. In the letter, a copy of which was sent to Kerala CM Oommen Chandy, Modi has described as "shocking" the omission of "Gujarat" from the national anthem in the textbooks. He also drew attention to the fact that the same thing had happened last year and the Kerala Education Minister had then given the assurance

that the error would be corrected. But the error has been repeated, he said. At a function in Vadnagar on Thursday, Modi threatened to launch an agitation from October 2 to October 31 if the Centre, the Congress chief and the Kerala government failed to apologise for "a deliberate attempt to omit 'Gujarat' from the national anthem in the textbooks".

THE omission of "Gujarat" from the national anthem in two textbooks published by the Kerala Education Department has struck the wrong chord in the Mahatma's land. Chief Minister Narendra Modi has shot off a letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, urging

18 SEP 2004

# Centre ready for talks: Patil

9- Centre State ● 'Manipur agitators should meet Chief Minister first' 17/9 17/9

By Sandeep Dikshit

**NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16.** The Central Government today reiterated its willingness to talk to Apunba Lup, the umbrella organisation of 32 forums in Manipur agitating for the withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). But it would like them to first meet the Chief Minister, Ibobi Singh.

After an hour-long meeting with Mr. Ibobi Singh, the Union Home Minister, Shivraj Patil, told the media: "They [agitators] said we want to meet you. We said we are willing to talk to anybody. But the best thing would be that they should talk to the Chief Minister and their own people first. After that whenever they want to meet us, we are ready," Mr. Patil told correspondents after the meeting.

Members of the Apunba Lup had walked out of a meeting with Mr. Patil when he visited Manipur on September 5 and accused the Centre of taking a hard line on their demand for withdrawal of the AFSPA. The first signs of a thaw came when the former Manipur Chief Minister, Reishang Keishang, MP, called on Mr. Patil earlier this week and indicted the agitators' willingness to resume the talks with the Centre.

Mr. Patil said the Centre was weighing three opinions that had emerged — some wanted the Special Powers Act to be withdrawn completely, some were against its removal while

some wanted it to be made less stringent. "The law is not applicable throughout the country but only in some areas. It is not a perpetual thing. Laws are made after ideas evolve, discussions are held." "However, this is a decision which will not be taken individually by me, this is a Cabinet decision and if there is a need to review it, the same has to be done by the Law Ministry. Believe me, all the issues will be resolved with people's assistance and wisdom."

## 'Assam Rifles will move out'

Mr. Patil said the Assam Rifles would vacate the Kangla Fort in Imphal soon. Most of the troops had moved out and the remaining personnel would vacate the fort at the earliest. Mr. Ibobi Singh called on the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, and the Union Minister for the North-East, P.R. Kyndiah.

Earlier, Mr. Ibobi Singh described the situation in the State as "more or less normal" but ruled out a complete withdrawal of the AFSPA because law and order was still a problem. "Extortions and secessionist and separatist movements are still going on in other areas of the State. They [Apunba Lup] are insisting on its [Act] withdrawal but at this juncture, it is not possible to withdraw further. Only when there is no extortion, secessionist or separatist movement and there is complete normalcy, can it be withdrawn from the entire State," he said.

## Manorama's credentials questionable: Vij

**SRINAGAR, SEPT. 16.** Asserting that Thanjam Manorama Devi, whose death in the custody of the Assam Rifles created a furore in Manipur, had "questionable credentials," the Army Chief, N.C. Vij, said there were reports of her "underground" connections.

"As far as the credentials of this lady are concerned, they are questionable. Everyone knows that she was mixed up with the underground. There

are reports available on that," Gen. Vij told reporters here.

"Even the State Chief Minister was on record having said this."

Referring to the post-mortem report of Manorama Devi, which reportedly ruled out her rape in the custody, the Army Chief said: "It has come out clearly that there is no rape and I think this is one fact which must reach everyone." — PTI

# States must talk to Naxals: Centre

Rajnish Sharma  
New Delhi, September 16

THE CABINET Committee on Security (CCS), which met here on Wednesday, endorsed the Andhra Pradesh government's move of initiating talks with Naxalite groups and said home minister Shivraj Patil should impress upon other Naxalite-affected states to adopt a similar strategy.

Patil is scheduled to hold a meeting with the chief ministers of such states in Hyderabad on September 21.

According to sources, the CCS expressed the view that the Andhra government's move to lift the ban on the People's War Group and bring them to the talking table was giving "favourable results".

It said that states like Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Orissa, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, which are participating in the Chief Ministers' meeting, should explore similar possibilities.

Further, the committee added that the Centre is willing to provide additional funds for development in Naxal-affected districts, particularly the tribal areas, in these eight states.

Once the agenda for the chief ministers' meeting is cleared, the CCS will focus on starting the dialogue process in these states.

"The Centre is of the view that there should be a long-term strategy to tackle the Naxal problem instead of mere-

ly reducing it to a law and order situation," a source said.

It may be mentioned that these issues were discussed at length during a recent meeting of the chief secretaries, home secretaries and DGPs of these eight states in New Delhi.

"The groundwork for the CMs' conference was done at the meeting of state DGs. Even the CCS endorsed it," a senior home ministry official said.

The CCS meeting was chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and attended by Home Minister Shivraj Patil, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Finance Minister P. Chidambaram.

## 13 PW men in the net

Our correspondent adds from Bhubaneswar that the police have arrested 13 Naxalites and four of their sympathisers from the Gobindpalli forest area of Malkangiri district. Malkangiri Superintendent of Police S.D. Singh told *Hindustan Times* that the 13 arrested Naxalites are cadres of the People's War and were wanted in connection with different incidents of violence. They were also accused in a couple of incidents of firing and landmine blasts before the last Assembly elections in the state.

The Naxalites were trying to enter the district late on Wednesday night along with participants from the district in the Naxal sympathisers' rally in

## Andhra: Ground situation

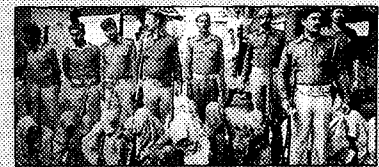
**VIOLENCE:** No police-Naxal clash since June 16, when govt lifted ban on PWG

**PEACE:** People free of terror; villagers and cops a relaxed lot

**RELIEF:** Naxal recruitment going down

### DIALOGUE PROCESS:

- Next 'decisive' phase of talks expected in October first week
- First round focused on modalities
- Leaders of three different outfits expected to participate in the next round
- Agenda: restoration of democratic rights, land related matters



File photo of Naxalites arrested

Bhubaneswar. With police permission, 90 Naxal sympathisers had gone from the district to take part in the rally at Bhubaneswar. During their return, their headcount showed 107. Along with the PW cadres, four Naxal sympathisers wanted in certain cases were also held.

# বুদ্ধদেব-মনমোহন কথা কাল

## উদ্বাস্ত পুনর্বাসনে

### ৫ হাজার কোটির

# আজি পশ্চিমবঙ্গের

১-সেপ্টেম্বর-৪২

১৯৪২-২ ৪৩/১

জয়ন্ত ঘোষাল • নয়াদিল্লি

১৫ সেপ্টেম্বর: পশ্চিমবঙ্গের বিবিধ আর্থিক সমস্যার সমাধানে প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ নিজেই বিশেষ ভাবে সক্রিয় হয়েছেন। শুক্রবার মুখ্যমন্ত্রী বুদ্ধদেব ভট্টাচার্যের সঙ্গে বৈঠকের আগে আজ প্রধানমন্ত্রী পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকারের সম্ভাব্য দাবিগুলি পর্যালোচনার কাজ শুরু করে দিয়েছেন। হলদিয়া পেট্রোকেম থেকে শুরু করে উদ্বাস্ত পুনর্বাসনের টাকা— যাবতীয় বিষয়ে সংশ্লিষ্ট মন্ত্রী-আমলাদের সঙ্গে কথাবার্তা বলে রীতিমতো 'হোমওয়ার্ক' করছেন মনমোহন।

প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সচিবালয়ের যুগ্ম সচিবেরা বিভিন্ন মন্ত্রকের দায়িত্বে। রাজ্যের উন্নয়নের বিষয়গুলি যে সব মন্ত্রকের অধীনে, প্রধানমন্ত্রী সেই কর্তাদের কাছ থেকে ব্রিফিং নিয়েছেন। মোট ২১টি বিষয়ে কেন্দ্রের সাহায্য চাইছে রাজ্য। যার মধ্যে মিড ডে মিলের জন্য আরও টাকা থেকে শুরু করে চারটি রাষ্ট্রায়ত্ত্ব সংস্থা খোলার প্রস্তাবও রয়েছে। হলদিয়া পেট্রোকেমের সমস্যা নিয়ে পেট্রোলিয়ামমন্ত্রী মণিশঙ্কর আইয়ারের সঙ্গেও একপ্রান্ত আলোচনা সেরেছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। ইন্ডিয়ান অয়েল কর্তৃপক্ষের সঙ্গে মণিশঙ্করও কথা বলছেন। হলদিয়ায় বিনিয়োগ করলেও পরিচালনার নিয়ন্ত্রণ নিয়ে যাতে আই ও সি কঠোর মনোভাব না নেয়, তার চেষ্টা চলছে।

পাশাপাশি, মনমোহন প্রধানমন্ত্রী হওয়ার পরে রাজ্য কেন্দ্রের কাছে উদ্বাস্ত পুনর্বাসনের জন্য ৫০১০ কোটি ৬০ লক্ষ টাকার প্রস্তাব পাঠিয়েছে। রাজ্যের বিভিন্ন জায়গায় মাল্টিপ্লেক্স বা আবাসন তৈরির জন্য যে জমি দরকার, তার অনেকটাই উদ্বাস্তদের দখলে রয়েছে। তাদের পুনর্বাসন না হলে, এই জমি পাওয়া যাচ্ছে না। জমি ছাড়া বসবাসকারীদের তাড়িয়ে দেওয়াও সরকারের পক্ষে কঠিন। এই টাকা পেলে উদ্বাস্তদের পুনর্বাসনের পরিকাঠামো গড়ে তোলা যাবে। সরকারের বক্তব্য, এই পুনর্বাসনের সঙ্গে রাজ্যের শিল্প পরিস্থিতি উজ্জ্বল হওয়ার প্রকল্পটাও জড়িয়ে রয়েছে।

প্রধানমন্ত্রী বিষয়টি নিয়ে কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী শিবরাজ পাটিলের সঙ্গে আলোচনা করেছেন। পাটিল বলেন, “জুলাইয়ে রাজ্যের কাছ থেকে এই প্রস্তাব পেয়েছি। পূর্ব পাকিস্তান থেকে আসা উদ্বাস্ত মানুষের আর্থিক ও জমিগত পুনর্বাসন দেওয়াটাই এই প্রস্তাবের লক্ষ্য। জমি অধিগ্রহণ, নতুন কলোনি তৈরি ও আর্থিক সাহায্য দেওয়ার কথা ভাবা হচ্ছে।” তিনি বলেন, টাকা দেওয়ার নির্দিষ্ট সময়সীমা বেঁধে দেওয়া এখনই সম্ভব নয়। স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রকের বক্তব্য, এত টাকা

তারাই বা একসঙ্গে কোথা থেকে পাবে? এই সমস্যার সমাধানে প্রধানমন্ত্রী একটি সূত্র দিয়েছেন। একসঙ্গে সব টাকা না দিয়ে, প্রকল্প-ভিত্তিক টাকা কিস্তিতে দেওয়া যেতে পারে।

গঙ্গার ভাঙন নিয়ে দীর্ঘদিন ধরে কেন্দ্রীয় সাহায্য দাবি করে আসছে রাজ্য। প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় এবং প্রিয়রঞ্জন দাশমুঙ্গির সঙ্গেও বুদ্ধবাবুর এই নিয়ে কথা হয়েছে। কিন্তু রাজ্য এখনও পর্যাপ্ত টাকা পাচ্ছে না বলে অভিযোগ করছে। আবার প্রিয়বাবুদের পাল্টা অভিযোগ, রাজ্য ঠিকমত খরচের হিসাব দিচ্ছে না বলেই কেন্দ্রীয় প্রকল্পের টাকা পাচ্ছে না। এই বিষয়টি নিয়েও বুদ্ধবাবু ফয়সালা করতে চাইছেন।

প্রধানমন্ত্রী যোজনা কমিশনের ডেপুটি চেয়ারম্যান মন্টেক সিংহ অহলুওয়ালিয়াকেও নির্দেশ দিয়েছেন, যাতে বামফ্রন্ট সরকারের সঙ্গে বিরোধের বিষয়গুলি মিটিয়ে নেওয়া হয়। মন্টেককে নিয়ে প্রথম থেকেই বামপন্থীদের একটি বড় অংশের অস্বস্তি ছিল। তাই প্রধানমন্ত্রী তাঁকে পশ্চিমবঙ্গেও বুদ্ধবাবুর সঙ্গে বৈঠক করতে পাঠিয়েছিলেন। তারপরেও সমস্যা মেটেনি। এখন বিশ্বব্যাপক বা বহুজাতিক সংস্থাকে যোজনা কমিশনে পরামর্শাতা হিসাবে রাখার যে প্রস্তাব মন্টেক দিয়েছেন, তার বিরোধিতা শুরু করেছে বামেরা। এই অবস্থায় প্রধানমন্ত্রীর নির্দেশেই মন্টেক বাম দলের নেতাদের চিঠি দিয়ে বিষয়টির নিষ্পত্তির চেষ্টা করেছেন। প্রধানমন্ত্রী নিজে বাম দলগুলির দাবিগুলিকে যথাযথ মর্যাদা দেওয়ার জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রতিটি মন্ত্রকে নির্দেশও পাঠিয়ে দিয়েছেন।

প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গে এর আগে বুদ্ধদেববাবু একবার বৈঠক করেছিলেন। সে বার বুদ্ধবাবু বলেন, প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কাছে আর্থিক প্যাকেজ নিয়ে দাবি জানানো তাঁর কাজ নয়। বিভিন্ন মন্ত্রকের সমস্যা নিয়ে মন্ত্রীরা সংশ্লিষ্ট কেন্দ্রীয় মন্ত্রকের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করবেন ও সমস্যা সমাধানের চেষ্টা করবেন। এক কথায়, নতুন সরকারে তিনি যে চম্পাবু নামডু হতে চান না, রাজ্যের জন্য প্যাকেজ নিয়ে রাজনৈতিক দর-কষাকষি করতে চান না, সেটা স্পষ্ট করে দিয়েছিলেন বুদ্ধ।

গত দুই মাসে সেই সূত্র ধরেই রাজ্য এগিয়েছে। সম্প্রতি সর্বদলীয় বিধায়ক দল দিল্লিতে বিভিন্ন মন্ত্রক ও যোজনা কমিশনের কাছে রাজ্যের উন্নয়নের জন্য দরবার করে। তৃণমূল প্রতিনিধি পাঠায়নি, কিন্তু রাজ্য সরকার ৯ জন মন্ত্রীকে পাঠিয়েছিল। যাঁদের মধ্যে অন্যতম সুভাষ চক্রবর্তী, কান্তি গঙ্গোপাধ্যায়, গণেশ মন্ডল। সর্বদলীয় প্রতিনিধি দলের বৈঠক পূর্ব শেষ হওয়ার ঠিক পরেই প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গে বুদ্ধের বৈঠক এই প্রক্রিয়ারই যথাযথ পরিসমাপ্তি বলে মনে করা হচ্ছে।

# হিসাব দিচ্ছে না পংবঙ্গ, ফের বলল কেন্দ্র

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ১৪ সেপ্টেম্বর: কেন্দ্রের বিরুদ্ধে বঙ্গনার অভিযোগ তোলার সুযোগ এখন আর পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকারের নেই। কিন্তু দিল্লির সরকার বদলালেও পশ্চিমবঙ্গের প্রতি কেন্দ্রের পুরনো অভিযোগই বহাল রয়েছে। তা হল, রাজ্য সরকার বিভিন্ন প্রকল্পের খরচের খতিয়ান সময়মতো পাঠায় না। বিভিন্ন প্রকল্প নিয়ে দরবার করতে দিল্লিতে এসে রাজ্যের পরিষদীয় প্রতিনিধি দলকে যোজনা কমিশনের কাছে সেই সমালোচনাই ফের হজম করতে হয়েছে। এমনকী, কেন্দ্রীয় জলসম্পদ উন্নয়নমন্ত্রী প্রিয়রঞ্জন দাশমুঙ্গিকেও বলতে হয়েছে, কেন্দ্রের অর্থ পাওয়ার জন্য রাজ্যকে আরও তৎপর হতে হবে।

সমুদ্র এবং নদীর ভাঙন রোধ এবং বিভিন্ন সেচপ্রকল্পের জন্য তদ্বির করতে গত কাল মূলত যোজনা কমিশনের কাছে গিয়েছিলেন রাজ্যের মন্ত্রী ও বিধায়কদের প্রতিনিধিদল। বিভিন্ন প্রকল্পের খরচের খতিয়ান বকেয়া রয়েছে বলে কমিশন তখন পাল্টা অভিযোগ জানায়। প্রতিনিধিদল সূত্রেই খবর, কমিশনের পক্ষ থেকে বলা হয়, আগের বার যে ৩০ কোটি টাকা গঙ্গার ভাঙন রোধে দেওয়া হয়েছিল, তার পুরো হিসাব এখনও আসেনি। রাজ্যের দিক থেকে বিভিন্ন প্রকল্প-প্রস্তাব সময় মতো আসছে না বলেও প্রতিনিধিদের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করেছে কেন্দ্র।

প্রতিনিধিদলের নেতা পশ্চিমবঙ্গের পরিষদীয় মন্ত্রী প্রবোধ চন্দ্র সিংহও এই দু'টি সমস্যার কথা মেনে নিয়েছেন। তবে এর জন্য কেন্দ্র তাদের কোনও প্রকল্প রূপায়ণ করতে অস্বীকার করেনি বলেই দাবি করেছেন তিনি। সেচমন্ত্রী গণেশচন্দ্র মণ্ডল বলেছেন, “খরচের কাগজপত্র পাঠানোর দায়িত্ব রাজ্যের অর্থ বিভাগের। অনেক সময়ে ওদের গাফিলতি হয়, আবার অনেক সময়ে বিভিন্ন বিভাগ থেকেও ঠিক সময়ে খরচের হিসাব যায় না। কলকাতা ফিরে বিভিন্ন দফতরকে বলতে হবে আরও তৎপর হতে।” পুরনো অভিযোগ ফের শুনে হতাশা কংগ্রেসের পরিষদীয় দলনেতা অতীশ সিংহের বক্তব্য, “কেন্দ্র এটা বারবারই বলে। রাজা থেকে প্রকল্পও সময়ে যায় না। রাজ্য পাঠায়, কেন্দ্র বলে পায়নি। কোথাও ফাঁক থেকে যাচ্ছে।”

প্রিয়রঞ্জন দাশমুঙ্গির সঙ্গে আজ দেখা করতে গিয়েছিল রাজ্যের প্রতিনিধিদলটি। তিস্তা ব্যারেজ প্রকল্পের ক্ষেত্রে রাজ্যের বেশ কয়েকটি টিলেমির উদাহরণ তুলে প্রিয়বাবু তা দ্রুত মেটাতে পাল্টা অনুরোধ করেছেন। তবে প্রিয়বাবু কয়েকটি আশার কথাও শুনিয়েছেন। জলাশয় সংরক্ষণের জন্য কেন্দ্রের যে পাইলট প্রকল্প, তার অধীনে রাজ্যের জলা এবং জলাশয়গুলি ইতিমধ্যেই চিহ্নিত করা হয়েছে। ব্রহ্মপুত্রের আদলে বন্যা নিয়ন্ত্রণে একটি বিশেষ ‘উত্তরবঙ্গ নদী ব্যবস্থাপনা পর্যদ’ তৈরির কথা ভাবছেন প্রিয়। নদীর ভাঙনের বিষয়টি যাতে জাতীয় বিপর্যয় প্রতিরোধ প্রকল্পের আওতায় আনা যায়, তারও চেষ্টা চলছে।

সমুদ্রের ভাঙন নিয়েও প্রিয়বাবু, মস্টেক সিংহ অহলুওয়ালিয়া, এবং বিজ্ঞান ও সাগরোন্নয়নমন্ত্রী কপিল সিবালের সঙ্গে কথা বলেন রাজ্যের নেতারা। সিবালের কাছে তাঁরা ২৫৬ কোটি টাকার প্রকল্প-প্রস্তাব জমা দেন। সিবাল কথা দিয়েছেন, সুন্দরবন, দিঘার মতো ভাঙন-আক্রান্ত জায়গাগুলি তিনি দেখতে যাবেন।

# কেন্দ্র-রাজ্য সম্পর্কের ক্ষেত্রেও সংঘাতের পথে যাচ্ছে বিজেপি

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ১২ সেপ্টেম্বর: রাজ্যপালের অপসারণ থেকে শিবু সোরেন—প্রতিটি প্রশ্নেই নতুন সরকারকে তোয়াক্কা না-করা বিজেপি সংঘাতের রাস্তায় হটিতে চাইছে কেন্দ্র-রাজ্য সম্পর্কের ক্ষেত্রেও। আজ বিজেপি শাসিত রাজ্যগুলির মুখ্যমন্ত্রীদের সম্মেলন শেষে বিজেপি শীর্ষ নেতৃত্ব সফ বুলিয়ে দিলেন, কেন্দ্র-রাজ্য সাংবিধানিক সম্পর্ককে উন্নত করা তো দূরস্থান, তাঁরা সংঘাতের পথেই যাবেন। সংঘাতে যাওয়ার প্রধান অস্ত্র হিসাবে বিজেপি বেছে নিয়েছে 'পোটা'কে। দলীয় নেতৃত্বের বক্তব্য, কেন্দ্র যদি শেষমেশ পোটা প্রত্যাহার করে, তা হলে ৬ মুখ্যমন্ত্রী (বিজেপি শাসিত রাজ্যের) রাজ্যস্তরে প্রতিবাদে মুখর হবেন। তৎক্ষণাৎ সন্ত্রাসবাদ-বিরোধী নতুন আইন আনা হবে।

লোকসভায় দিনের পর দিন অচলাবস্থা, প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহের বিরুদ্ধে অশিষ্ট আচরণের অভিযোগ, আলোচনা ছাড়াই বাজেট পাশ করে দেওয়ার পর্বের পর প্রধান বিরোধী দলনেতা লালকৃষ্ণ আডবানী অবশ্য জানিয়েছিলেন, এই ধরনের ঘটনা যাতে ভবিষ্যতে না-হয়, সে ব্যাপারে সতর্ক থাকবেন তিনি। ঘটনাগুলির জন্য দুঃখও প্রকাশ করেন তিনি। তবে আডবানী এ কথা বললেও পোটা-সহ বিভিন্ন বিষয়ে যে ভাবে কড়া অবস্থান নিচ্ছেন মুখ্যমন্ত্রীরা, তা থেকে স্পষ্ট, কেন্দ্র-রাজ্য সম্পর্ক আরও বেশি সংঘাতের মুখে পড়বে। রাজনৈতিক শিবিরের মতামত, বাজপেয়ী জমানায় পশ্চিমবঙ্গ থেকে কেরল— বিভিন্ন

রাজ্যের সঙ্গে কেন্দ্রের সম্পর্কে যে সংবিধানসম্মত মান্যতা ছিল, তাতে অদূর ভবিষ্যতেই চিড় ধরতে চলেছে।

পোটা-প্রত্যাহার, 'ইতিহাস বইয়ের বিকৃতি', কেন্দ্রীয় অর্থ ঠিকমতো 'বিশেষ কিছু রাজ্যে' না-আসার মতো বিষয়গুলি নিয়ে বিজেপি যে ছেড়ে কথা বলবে না, সে কথা আজ স্পষ্ট করে দেওয়া হয়েছে। বিজেপি জানিয়ে দিয়েছে 'সন্ত্রাসবাদী, দেশবিরোধী শক্তি, অভিবাম জঙ্গিদের' সঙ্গে কোনও আপস নয়। প্রাক্তন প্রধানমন্ত্রী অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী বৈঠক শেষে বলেছেন, "একতা রক্ষার প্রশ্নে দেশের অভ্যন্তরেই কিছু বিপদ রয়েছে। তারা দেশকে ভাঙতে চায়। নিজেদের স্বার্থসিদ্ধির জন্য দেশের অখণ্ডতাকে বিপদের মুখে ফেলতে তারা তৈরি।"

বিজেপি শীর্ষ নেতৃত্বের সিদ্ধান্ত, সরকার যদি পোটা প্রত্যাহারের পথে যায়, তা হলে তার সর্বাঙ্গিক বিরোধিতা করা হবে। বেঙ্কাইয়ার কথায়, "বিজেপি শাসিত রাজ্যের মুখ্যমন্ত্রীরা পোটা প্রত্যাহারের বিরোধিতা করবেন। তা সত্ত্বেও যদি পোটা প্রত্যাহার হয়, তা হলে সেই রাজ্যগুলিতে দ্রুত সন্ত্রাসবাদ বিরোধী আইন আনা হবে।" প্রসঙ্গত, পোটা যাতে তুলে নেওয়া না-হয়, সে জন্য সরকারেরই একটি অংশ সরব। আমলা এবং গোয়েন্দা বিভাগের একটি বড় অংশ চাইছে পোটা থাকুক। এই অংশের দাবি, যদি একান্তই তুলে নেওয়া হয়, তা হলেও যেন সরকার একটি বিকল্প আইন আনে। সেক্ষেত্রেও বিজেপি শীর্ষ নেতৃত্বের বক্তব্য, পোটার বদলে নতুন কোনও কেন্দ্রীয় আইন

আনা চলবে না।

সন্ত্রাসবাদ দমনের প্রশ্নে সরকারের বিরুদ্ধে জেহাদের কথা বলে বিজেপি আজ নাম-না করে আক্রমণ করেছে মানবসম্পদ উন্নয়নমন্ত্রীকেও। সঙ্ঘ পরিবারের সঙ্গে সরাসরি জেহাদের রাস্তায় গিয়েছেন অর্জুন। শিক্ষায় নির্বিষকরণের জেরে বন্দলাচ্ছে ইতিহাসের পাঠ্যবই। আজ বেঙ্কাইয়া অর্জুনের এই প্রয়াসের সমালোচনা করে বলেছেন, "পাঠ্যবইয়ের বিকৃতি ঘটানো হচ্ছে। বামদের আদর্শকে আরও বেশি করে নিয়ে আসা হচ্ছে। এই উদ্যোগের বিরোধিতা করা উচিত। যোগশাস্ত্র এবং মূল্যবোধের শিক্ষা আরও বেশি করে স্কুলে নিয়ে আসা উচিত।" বিজেপি সভাপতির মতে, বেশ কিছু ব্যাপারে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের পক্ষপাত দেখা যাচ্ছে। উদাহরণ ব্যাখ্যা করতে না-চাইলেও বিজেপি শাসিত রাজ্যগুলির প্রতি কেন্দ্র যে একশো দিনের মধ্যেই বৈষম্যমূলক আচরণ শুরু করেছে, সেই ইঙ্গিত দিয়েছেন বেঙ্কাইয়া। প্রধানমন্ত্রী গ্রাম সড়ক যোজনার প্রসঙ্গটি তুলে তিনি বলেন, "এই প্রকল্পটি তো চালু রয়েছে। কিন্তু এর টাকা সব রাজ্য পাচ্ছে না।" দলীয় বিবৃতিতেও একই কথা বলা হয়েছে, "রাজ্যের জন্য বরাদ্দ অর্থ প্রদানে যাতে বিলম্ব না-হয়, তার জন্য বিজেপি শাসিত রাজ্য সরকারগুলি কেন্দ্রের কাছে দাবি জানাবে। বিশেষত, যাতে বিজেপি শাসিত রাজ্যগুলিতে প্রধানমন্ত্রী গ্রাম সড়ক যোজনার অন্তর্গত প্রকল্পে গ্রামীণ রাস্তা তৈরির জন্য টাকা আসতে বিলম্ব না-হয়।"



# Buddha sounds Red alert for UPA on CMP

CM Says Cong Has Never Done Anything For The Poor

Jhalda (West Bengal)  
11 SEPTEMBER

**W**EST Bengal chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee on Saturday warned that his party will withdraw support to the Congress-led UPA government if it failed to implement the Common Minimum Programme in letter and spirit. "We have provided support to the central government on the understanding that it will not pursue any anti-people policy and at the same time take our political compulsions into consideration, Mr Bhattacharjee told a conference of the West Bengal biri workers union here in Naxalite-hit Purulia district.

"If the Congress provides good governance, we will continue to support the UPA, but if it does not follow the CMP in letter and spirit, our support will cease. I say this emphatically," the chief minister said. The chief minister said: "We know the Congress for the past 57 years. They have not done anything for the poor. So, is the Congress capable of delivering the goods now? We will have to



keep a careful watch."

He said the BJP wanted to establish a Hindu rashtra, but people rejected the party in the election. "And the Congress which formed a coalition government sought our support which we gave because they pledged to do good work for the people." Mr Bhattacharjee's comments came a day after party veteran Jyoti Basu expressed unhappiness over the functioning of the UPA government.

The chief minister was critical of the decisions to hike the prices of petrol, diesel and LPG saying that it had hit the common man. He said: "We are against rise in the prices of the petrol, diesel and LPG every now and then. Our party MPs have protested against this in Parliament." He said his party was also opposed to the policy of hire and fire and wanted the government to implement its pledge to provide a minimum of 100 days job to each family in a year. — PTI

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Sept. 11. — In an apparent show of strength, the BJP today asked chief ministers of the six BJP-ruled states to lay greater emphasis on development despite the uncooperative attitude of the Centre.

The party called upon them to take pro-active measures to implement the two-child norm and take steps to detect illegal Bangladeshi immigrants.

In fact, there was competition among the chief ministers later to tell the media that they were sincere in implementing the party agenda on population. The Rajasthan chief minister, Mrs Vasundhara Raje, said that all states should try to implement the

# Progress push at CMs' meet

will put pressure on the nation and its infrastructure.

The leader of the Opposition, Mr LK Advani, in his address said that the problems of population explosion and the "Tricolour" issue should not be seen from a communal angle. He stressed the dangers to national security from illegal immigration from Bangladesh.

He charged the UPA government with displaying a "lack of concern" for the nation's security concerns. It viewed these problems from a "political and electoral perspective".

"Governments both at the state as well as the Centre must take positive steps in identifying them and expedite their deportation. The government must enact laws if needed to plug loopholes in our system," he said.

When the NDA government started a drive to deport illegal Bangladeshis, the West Bengal government initially opposed it. Later its chief minister realigned the situation was "serious" and asked for cooperation with the Centre, he pointed out.

The consolidation of Maoist elements in Nepal should be a cause for

concern for at least six states in India as far down as Andhra Pradesh, he said. Yet, the Centre was talking of removing the ban on PW and revoking Pota, he pointed out.

CMs of Gujarat (Mr Narendra Modi), Jharkhand (Mr Arjun Munda), Goa (Mr Manohar Parrikar), Madhya Pradesh (Mr Babu Lal Gaur), Rajasthan (Mr Vasundhara Raje) and Chattisgarh (Mr Raman Singh) were present.

Mr Venkaiah Naidu said that the leadership was watching their actions and asked the CMs to take measures to achieve better coordination with party workers and people. He stressed implementation of plans to ensure roads, electricity, water, education and health.

# Tamil Nadu opposes tribunal reconstitution

By J. Venkatesan

*Centre (Rao)*  
*1107*  
*9/9*

**NEW DELHI, SEPT. 8.** Karnataka today moved the Supreme Court seeking reconstitution of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal and Tamil Nadu filed a petition strongly opposing the plea.

Earlier in the day, Anil Divan, senior counsel for Karnataka, requested the tribunal (which resumed its hearing) to adjourn the proceedings as the apex court was to hear on Friday a petition challenging the orders passed by its two members that they would undertake a visit to the Cauvery basin to understand ground realities, though the Chairman opposed the trip. Counsel said if the request was not acceded to Karnataka might not take part in the proceedings.

The tribunal comprises the Chairman, Justice N.P. Singh, and the members, N.S. Rao and Sudhir Narain.

C.S. Vaidyanathan, senior counsel for Tamil Nadu, said the hearings before the tribunal had nothing to do with the case coming up on Friday. The tribunal, however, adjourned the proceedings till September 27.

On August 20, the apex court, acting on a special leave petition (SLP) filed by the Gandhi Sahitya Sangh Trust, restrained Mr. Rao and Mr. Narain from undertaking the visit and issued notice to the Centre, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Pondicherry and the tribunal.

## 'Disturbing events'

Karnataka, in its affidavit, said the visit by only two members was contrary to the provisions of the Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956, as they did not constitute the tribunal; further inspection after closure of evidence and completion of arguments on availability of water would be prejudicial to Karnataka. The disturbing and dis-

tressing events, reflecting a lack of collegiality and unity in the tribunal, made the task difficult and embarrassing.

In these circumstances, Karnataka said, it fully supported the petitioner's contention that "the tribunal has almost broken down" and the situation could be remedied only by reconstituting it.

## 'Consistent defiance'

In its response, Tamil Nadu questioned the petitioner's locus standi to file the SLP as the apex court in April 2003 dismissed a similar petition filed by the same organisation.

It said Karnataka had been defying the tribunal's interim orders and for this year also there was a cumulative deficit of 35 thousand million cubic feet (tmcft). The present petition at the behest of Karnataka was meant to delay and thwart the proceedings of the tribunal, which was to complete its hear-

ing shortly and give its final award. The attempt by Karnataka was to hold control of all waters flowing in its reservoir until they surplussed.

Tamil Nadu charged Karnataka with also discrediting the tribunal to make a ground for challenging the award that might be passed.

## 'Baseless averment'

The petitioner's averment that the people of Karnataka would suffer a grave and irreparable hardship was baseless. It was not known how the inspection of the site by the members would cause hardship to any State.

The tribunal had powers to visit the basin States, the affidavit said.

Contending that the State had full confidence in the tribunal, it sought dismissal of the SLP. The case comes up for hearing on Friday.

'Challenge to Centre': Page 4

## ‘ভুল’ করলে কেন্দ্রকে সমর্থন নয়: বুদ্ধ

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, তালডাংরা (বাঁকুড়া): পেট্রোল, ডিজেল, রাম্মার গ্যাসের দাম বাড়ানোর মতো ‘ভুল’ করলে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারকে সমর্থন করবে না সি পি এম। শনিবার বাঁকুড়ার তালডাংরায় সি পি এমের যুব সংগঠন ডি ওয়াই এফ আইয়ের জেলা সম্মেলনের প্রকাশ্য সমাবেশে বক্তব্য রাখতে গিয়ে এ কথা বললেন মুখ্যমন্ত্রী তথা সি পি এমের পলিটব্যুরোর সদস্য বুদ্ধদেব ভট্টাচার্য।

মুখ্যমন্ত্রী বলেন, “কংগ্রেসকে তো এত দিন দেখছি। মানুষের জন্য কী করেছে? সরকারে এসেই দুম করে রাম্মার গ্যাস, পেট্রোল, ডিজেলের দাম বাড়ানো হল। এইসব ভুল করলে কংগ্রেসকে সমর্থন নয়।” সর্বশিক্ষা অভিযানে রাজ্যের প্রাথমিক স্কুলগুলিতে মিড ডে মিলের ব্যাপারে কেন্দ্রের আর্থিক অনুদানের প্রতিশ্রুতি রাখেনি বলেও তাঁর অভিযোগ।

সেই প্রসঙ্গ টেনেই সি পি এম পলিটব্যুরোর ওই সদস্য জানিয়ে দেন, দিল্লিতে সরকারে না-গিয়ে তাঁরা ‘কাজের কাজ’ করেছেন।

এই প্রশ্নে তিনি এখন যে আর জ্যোতি বসু, হরকিশেণ সিংহ সুরজিত-সহ দলের উদারপন্থী নেতাদের সঙ্গে নেই তা পরিষ্কার করতেই মুখ্যমন্ত্রী বুদ্ধদেব ভট্টাচার্য বলেন, “সে সময় কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারে যোগ দেওয়া উচিত বলে কেউ কেউ মত দিয়েছিলেন ঠিকই। কিন্তু তা সম্ভব নাকি! ওরা বরাবর জোতদার, শিল্পপতি, উচ্চবিত্তদের রাজনৈতিক প্রতিষ্ঠান। আর আমরা মধ্যবিত্ত, খেটে খাওয়া মানুষকে নিয়ে চলতে চাই। ওদের সঙ্গে সরকারে যাওয়ার তাই কোনও প্রসঙ্গই আসছে না।”

দলের রণকৌশল স্পষ্ট করতে গিয়ে তিনি বলেন, “বাইরে থেকে কংগ্রেস জোটের কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারকে

সমর্থন জানালেও তাদের কোনও অন্যায় দেখলে আমরা প্রতিবাদ করতে পিছপা হব না।”

তালডাংরায় সমাবেশের আগে এ দিন দুপুরে বাঁকুড়ার গোরাবাড়িতে কেন্দ্রীয় অনুদানে রাজ্যের তফশিলি উপজাতি শিক্ষা কল্যাণ পর্ষদের গড়া একটি একলব্য আদর্শ আবাসিক বিদ্যালয়ের উদ্বোধন করেন মুখ্যমন্ত্রী। সেখানে রাজ্যের ২৫ শতাংশ অতি-দরিদ্র মানুষের অধিকাংশই যে আদিবাসী তা স্বীকার করে নেন তিনি।

সরাসরি আমলাশোলের কথা উল্লেখ না-করেও মুখ্যমন্ত্রী বলেন, “আদিবাসীদের মধ্যে অনেকেরই অবস্থা বেশ খারাপ। শিক্ষার পাশাপাশি তাঁদের স্বাস্থ্যের দিকটিও সরকারকে দেখতে হবে।”

Pratap Singh  
Centre Station

# SYL canal row: court contempt against Cent

By J. Venkatesan

HD-12 31/8 So

**NEW DELHI, AUG. 30.** The Sutlej-Yamuna Link canal row today took a new turn with the brother of the Haryana Chief Minister, Om Prakash Chautala, filing a petition in the Supreme Court seeking the initiation of contempt proceedings against the Centre and the Punjab Government for "disobeying" the Supreme Court's orders for construction of the SYL canal.

The petitioner, Pratap Singh Chautala, submitted that Punjab and the Centre had violated the court judgments for political gains.

"Tomorrow, residents of the State of Haryana would be forced to violate the directions of the apex court by stopping Yamuna water to the State of Delhi for keeping their bodies

and souls together." The Supreme Court had twice directed the Punjab Government and the Centre to complete the construction of the Punjab portion of the SYL canal facilitating the flow of Ravi-Beas water to Haryana.

Last week, the court also dismissed the Punjab Government's review petition making it mandatory for the Centre to go ahead with construction of the canal but the work did not begin.

## 'Centre too responsible'

Describing the inaction as a clear case of contempt, the petitioner said that not only Punjab but also the Centre was equally responsible for not implementing the court directions of January 15, 2002 and June 4.

THE HINDU

31 AUG 2004

# Patil blames Ibobi for withdrawing Act

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 17 AUGUST

**T**HE Centre, on Tuesday, conceded that Okram Ibobi Singh did an Amarinder Singh by withdrawing the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act from Imphal when Union home minister Shivraj Patil told Parliament that the Act was withdrawn on August 12, "against the advice of the Union government."

What was equally startling was the Union government's confession that the situation in the state has not been showing any improvement. "There has been no change in the situation even after the Act was withdrawn from the city of Imphal," said a statement laid in both the Houses.

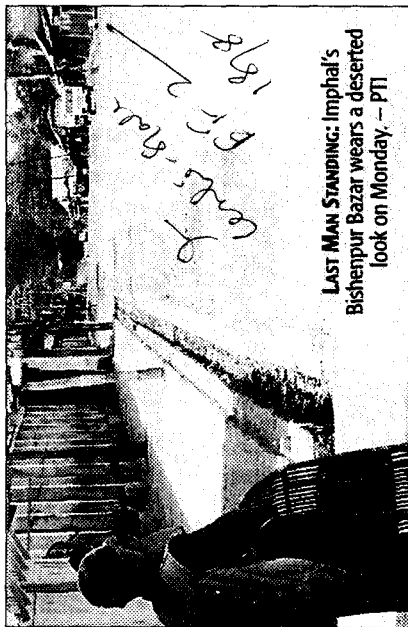
treaty between Punjab and its neighbouring state governments. Capt Singh also publicised the fact that he did not consult the Centre and the Prime Minister on the issue. At a time when the security situation in the North East appears to be worsening, the Ibobi Singh government's decision has only given a fillip to similar demands for withdrawal of the Act. It may be recalled that Nagaland had raised the demand soon after Ibobi Singh called for withdrawal of the Act from Imphal.

In Rajya Sabha, Mr Patil's intervention has not been satisfying to those who expected the government to take a firm stand to tackle the situation. In fact, he almost defended the state government's decision to partially withdraw the Act, saying, "the chief minister was only trying to

improve the situation" and that the "Centre would not let him down."

"We are giving an opportunity to elected representatives to do their duty and if they fail, the nation will do its duty," he said, but ruled out an immediate central intervention. If the situation becomes amenable to law and order, the Centre will not take any step," he clarified, giving away the government's "wait and watch" policy.

At the same time, Mr Patil acceded to the BJP's demand for a political dialogue with the agitating groups in Manipur. He told Rajya Sabha that the government was willing to hold "unconditional" talks with "anybody who is willing to talk to us" to bring normalcy in the sensitive border state of Manipur.



**LAST MAN STANDING: Imphal's Bishenpur Bazar wears a deserted look on Monday. — PTI**

gressmen themselves were puzzled by the tone and tenor of the statement.

It was only recently that in a blatant act of misbehaviour, Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh decided to scrap the water

The two remarks of the minister cannot but strengthen the impression that the Centre is wobbling on national security issues. While the Opposition used the statement to attack the "ineptitude" of the government, Con-

# ইশফলের সিদ্ধান্তের তোয়াক্কা করবে না কেন্দ্র

জয়ন্ত ঘোষাল ও প্রভাত ঘোষ

নয়াদিল্লি ও ইফল, ১৩ অগস্ট: রাজ্য সরকার সশস্ত্র বাহিনী বিশেষ ক্ষমতা আইন আংশিক বিলোপের সিদ্ধান্ত নিলেও কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার তার তোয়াক্কা করবে না বলেই ঠিক করেছে। উল্টে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার সংবিধানের ৩৫ ধারা অনুসারে ১৫ অগস্টের পরে মণিপুরে জঙ্গি-কার্যকলাপ রোধে বড় ধরনের অভিযানে নামবে। আজ মন্ত্রিসভার নিরাপত্তা বিষয়ক কমিটির বৈঠকে এই সিদ্ধান্ত হয়েছে। সরকার তড়িঘড়ি করে এমন কিছু করবে না, যাতে পরিস্থিতি বিগড়ে যায়। সিপিআই-ও আজ বলেছে, চটজলদি সিদ্ধান্ত না নিতে। সিপিআই-এর সাধারণ সম্পাদক এ বি বর্ধন বলেছেন, “যা করার ধীরে সূত্রে করাই উচিত।” কিন্তু যতই সতর্ক হয়ে এগোক, শেষ পর্যন্ত এ নিয়ে কেন্দ্র-রাজ্য সংঘর্ষ এড়ানো কঠিন হয়ে পড়ছে। মণিপুরের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী ওকরাম ইবোবি সিংহ প্রধানমন্ত্রীর

জানিয়েছেন, পরিস্থিতির চাপে পড়ে তিনি এই সিদ্ধান্ত নিতে বাধ্য হন। কিন্তু এই ঘটনায় মনমোহন ক্ষুব্ধ হয়েছেন। কিছুদিন আগে জলবটনের প্রশ্নে পঞ্জাবের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী অমরিন্দর সিংহ কেন্দ্রের কংগ্রেস নেতৃত্বাধীন সরকারকে অন্ধকারে রেখে বিধানসভায় বিল পাশ করেছেন, তাতেও প্রধানমন্ত্রী প্রবল অবস্মিতে পড়েন। আবার মণিপুরের মুখ্যমন্ত্রীও সেই একই পথ অনুসরণ করে কেন্দ্রকে অবজ্ঞা করলেন। সরকার ক্ষমতায় আসার পরে মাত্র দুই মাসের মধ্যে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রীয় কাঠামোর মধ্যে এই রকম দুটি ঘটনা হল। দুটি ক্ষেত্রেই কংগ্রেসী রাজ্য কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারকে অবজ্ঞা করল। প্রথম ঘটনার ক্ষেত্রেও সন্যাস এবং মনমোহন ইকানবন্ধ ভাবে পঞ্জাবের মুখ্যমন্ত্রীর চাপের মধ্যে রাখেন। আবার এই ক্ষেত্রেও একই রকম কৌশল নিয়েছে কেন্দ্র ও কংগ্রেস নেতৃত্ব। মণিপুরের প্রাক্তন মুখ্যমন্ত্রী রিশাং কেইশিংকে ডেকে তার সাথে আলোচনা করার প্রশ্ন উঠেছে, তবে কি মণিপুরে মুখ্যমন্ত্রীকে সরানো

হতে পারে? পাল্টা চাপ দিতে মণিপুরের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী আজ কেন্দ্রকে কিছুটা সতর্ক করে দিয়ে বলেছেন, “মণিপুরের পরিস্থিতি ও মানুষের দাবি বুঝতে না পারলে কেন্দ্র ভুল করবে। আইন মোতাবেক কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার রাজ্যের সিদ্ধান্ত খারিজ করে নতুন করে এই আইন জারি করতে পারে ঠিকই, কিন্তু তা করলে বিরাট ভুল করবে।” তার মন্তব্য, “অসম রাইফেলস আইনের আশ্রয়ে থেকে এ রাজ্যে মানবাধিকার হরণ করেছে, তাদের বাচানোর বা ভাবমূর্তি রক্ষা করার কোনও দায় কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের নেই।” মুখ্যমন্ত্রী আজ সকালে তার মন্ত্রিসভার সদস্যদের সঙ্গে নিয়ে প্রাচীন মণিপুর রাজ্যের প্রাসাদ কাংলা দুর্গে গিয়েছিলেন, কদিন আগেও এই দুর্গে অসম রাইফেলসের ঘাঁটি ছিল। মালোরমা দেবীর মৃত্যুর পরে মহিলারা এই দুর্গের সামনেই বিক্ষোভ দেখিয়েছিলেন। সেই কাংলা দুর্গে ১৮৯১ সালে ব্রিটিশ শাসকদের হাতে

নিহত মণিপুরের যুবরাজ টিকেজিং সিংহের স্মরণে রাজসনের সামনে পুষ্পার্ঘ্য দেন। তারা। ওই অনুষ্ঠান উপলক্ষে বক্তৃতায় মুখ্যমন্ত্রী সাম্প্রতিক বিতর্কের উল্লেখ করে বলেন, “গতকাল রাজ্য সরকার ইফল পুরএলাকা থেকে সশস্ত্র বাহিনীর বিশেষ ক্ষমতা আইন তুলে নিয়েছে, কারণ, এটাই ছিল রাজ্যের মানুষের দাবি। এই সিদ্ধান্ত কেন্দ্র মানতে চায়নি ঠিকই, কিন্তু এ ছাড়া আমাদের অন্য উপায় ছিল না।” তার পরেই টি কে পার্কে (যেখানে ব্রিটিশরা টিকেজিংকে প্রকাশ্যে ফাঁস দিয়েছিল) জনসভায় মুখ্যমন্ত্রী আরও কড়াসুরে অসম রাইফেলসের ভূমিকার সমালোচনা করেন।

এ সব বলার সঙ্গেই কিন্তু মুখ্যমন্ত্রী ইঙ্গিত দিয়েছেন, এই বিতর্কে কেন্দ্র করে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার ও কংগ্রেস হাইকমান্ডের সঙ্গে সংঘর্ষে নামার বদলে একটা আপসের পথে আসতেই তিনি বেশি আগ্রহী। মুখ্যমন্ত্রীর আশা, কেন্দ্র একপেশে মনোভাব নেবে না। তবে মণিপুরের মানুষ এখনও গোটা

হতে পারে? পাল্টা চাপ দিতে মণিপুরের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী আজ কেন্দ্রকে কিছুটা সতর্ক করে দিয়ে বলেছেন, “মণিপুরের পরিস্থিতি ও মানুষের দাবি বুঝতে না পারলে কেন্দ্র ভুল করবে। আইন মোতাবেক কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার রাজ্যের সিদ্ধান্ত খারিজ করে নতুন করে এই আইন জারি করতে পারে ঠিকই, কিন্তু তা করলে বিরাট ভুল করবে।” তার মন্তব্য, “অসম রাইফেলস আইনের আশ্রয়ে থেকে এ রাজ্যে মানবাধিকার হরণ করেছে, তাদের বাচানোর বা ভাবমূর্তি রক্ষা করার কোনও দায় কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের নেই।” মুখ্যমন্ত্রী আজ সকালে তার মন্ত্রিসভার সদস্যদের সঙ্গে নিয়ে প্রাচীন মণিপুর রাজ্যের প্রাসাদ কাংলা দুর্গে গিয়েছিলেন, কদিন আগেও এই দুর্গে অসম রাইফেলসের ঘাঁটি ছিল। মালোরমা দেবীর মৃত্যুর পরে মহিলারা এই দুর্গের সামনেই বিক্ষোভ দেখিয়েছিলেন। সেই কাংলা দুর্গে ১৮৯১ সালে ব্রিটিশ শাসকদের হাতে

নিহত মণিপুরের যুবরাজ টিকেজিং সিংহের স্মরণে রাজসনের সামনে পুষ্পার্ঘ্য দেন। তারা। ওই অনুষ্ঠান উপলক্ষে বক্তৃতায় মুখ্যমন্ত্রী সাম্প্রতিক বিতর্কের উল্লেখ করে বলেন, “গতকাল রাজ্য সরকার ইফল পুরএলাকা থেকে সশস্ত্র বাহিনীর বিশেষ ক্ষমতা আইন তুলে নিয়েছে, কারণ, এটাই ছিল রাজ্যের মানুষের দাবি। এই সিদ্ধান্ত কেন্দ্র মানতে চায়নি ঠিকই, কিন্তু এ ছাড়া আমাদের অন্য উপায় ছিল না।” তার পরেই টি কে পার্কে (যেখানে ব্রিটিশরা টিকেজিংকে প্রকাশ্যে ফাঁস দিয়েছিল) জনসভায় মুখ্যমন্ত্রী আরও কড়াসুরে অসম রাইফেলসের ভূমিকার সমালোচনা করেন।

এ সব বলার সঙ্গেই কিন্তু মুখ্যমন্ত্রী ইঙ্গিত দিয়েছেন, এই বিতর্কে কেন্দ্র করে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার ও কংগ্রেস হাইকমান্ডের সঙ্গে সংঘর্ষে নামার বদলে একটা আপসের পথে আসতেই তিনি বেশি আগ্রহী। মুখ্যমন্ত্রীর আশা, কেন্দ্র একপেশে মনোভাব নেবে না। তবে মণিপুরের মানুষ এখনও গোটা

# CMS divided on small states

Press Trust of India  
New Delhi, August 6

AS THE clamour for more small states becomes louder, many a Chief Minister who has had firsthand experience of bifurcation feels there is nothing wrong in addressing the neglected demands, as long as the feasibility and viability of the new entity is ensured.

"Demand for a new state arises because of neglect. However, if a big state has the financial resources and will to develop a backward area, the demand would not arise", Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy said while participating in a panel discussion at a Chief Minister's conclave on the 'state of states' here today.

Echoing Reddy's opinion, Sikkim CM Pawan Chamling said, "Smaller states lead to decentralisation of power and strengthening of the hands of the local people, who then identify themselves with the country". The Centre, he said, should be sympathetic towards such demands and oblige if it was in the "interest of the nation".

However, Samajwadi Party general secretary Amar Singh, representing UP, said bifurcation of his state in carving out Uttaranchal had led to bitterness on the issue of inclusion of Hardwar and Udham Singh Nagar districts in the new state.

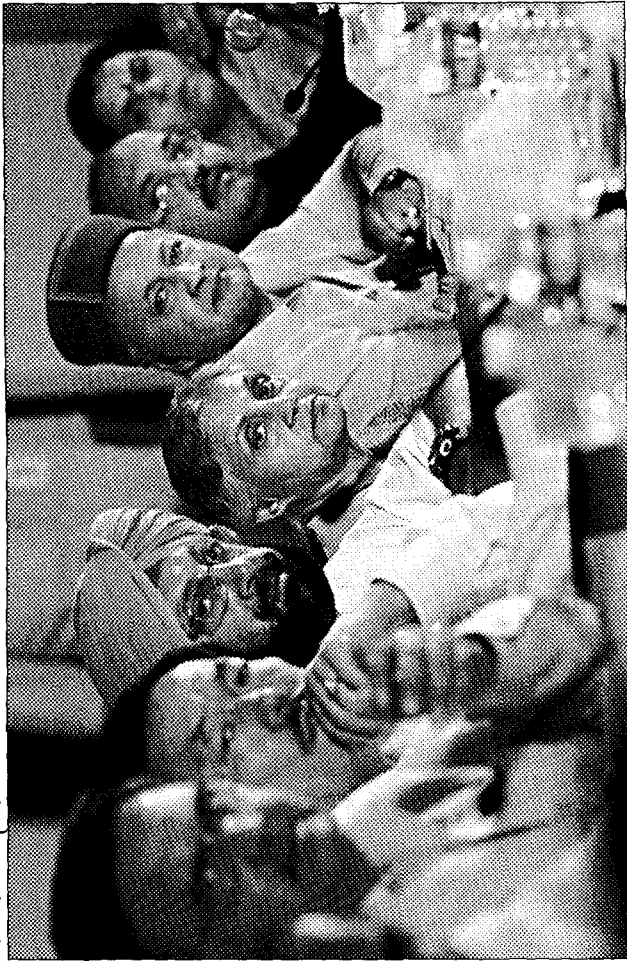
said the carving out of Haridwar and the hill districts into Himachal Pradesh had resulted in his state losing its industrial belt of Gurgaon and Faridabad and forest and tourism wealth in districts that went to the hilly state.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje pointed out that the primary task of keeping the people satisfied lay with state governments but allocation of responsibilities and powers between the Centre and the states had "not" kept pace with the times.

Observing that there was "no" clear divide between good politics and good economics, she said, in many instances, these two requirements were often at loggerheads, forcing politicians to do some tightrope walking.

Another hot topic of discussion was whether allocations for centrally-sponsored schemes for local development should be directly disbursed to Panchayati Raj institutions bypassing the state governments.

While Chief Ministers of Sikkim and Rajasthan favoured a role for the state governments in the process, Uma Bharati was not opposed to the money going to the people directly especially in the spheres of 'jan' (community), 'jameen' (land), 'janwar' (livestock development) and 'jungle' (forest conservation).



PTI  
Chief Ministers, including Amar Singh, who represented the Uttar Pradesh CM, at a conclave of Chief Ministers on the state of states — 2004, in New Delhi, on Friday.

of problems because 'its case was not properly argued when assets like the state electricity board were being divided'.

Many a systemic problem came to light as a result, she said, and added it was being sorted out gradually.

Chief Minister Dr Raman Singh of neighbouring Chhattisgarh said their demand had stemmed from long years of neglect.

In order to ensure the state's financial viability, his government had made a con-

scious decision of spending 68 per cent of the state allocation on development and the rest on establishment (salaries of government employees and so forth).

In the two years since its inception, the government, he said, had privatised 25-30 loss-making PSUs and had prepared a literal roadmap for development with impressive plans on manufacturing bio-diesel and harvesting forest produce.

However, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh

According to him, the solution lay in good governance and not in division. "There's no need to divide. That's no solution".

Supporting the idea of small states per se, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Uma Bharati said division of assets and liabilities should be carefully planned and implemented so that no one state feels it has been left out.

Citing the instance of MP, from which Chhattisgarh was carved out, she said the parent state was facing a lot



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# Manmohan discusses Manipur with allies

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Aug. 3. — In a bid to work out a formula for bringing peace in Manipur, the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, today discussed the volatile situation in the north-eastern state with key supporters of the ruling UPA, a day after the Centre directed the Union home ministry to restore normalcy in the valley. The PM also met Mrs Sonia Gandhi as well as the Manipur chief minister over the issue. Mr Singh held a 55-minute meeting with CPI-M general secretary, Mr Harkishan Singh Surjeet, and his CPI counterpart, Mr AB Bardhan, and a separate one with Samajwadi Party leaders, Mr Amar Singh and Mr Ram Gopal Yadav.

Manipur chief minister Mr O Ibobi Singh has been camp-



Students demonstrate near Mr Ibobi Singh's residence in Imphal on Tuesday. — EP

ing here with a mission to resolving the problem in his state in the wake of the demand for lifting the controversial Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, also met the Dr

## New Governor

NEW DELHI, Aug. 3. —Dr Shivinder Singh Sidhu has been appointed Manipur Governor, a Rashtrapati Bhavan communique said today. Dr Sidhu, who is former Civil Aviation Secretary, replaces Mr Arvind Dave. He was Director of India's Civil Aviation Administration (Feb 1985-Oct 1987) and has been Chairman of Air India and Indian Airlines. — SNS

Singh late tonight. Mr A B Bardhan did not divulge details of the discussions but said it was about the ways to "deal with the sensitive situation".

In Imphal, people court ed arrest and students demonstrated demanding withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. SP leader Mr Amar Singh said he had assured the government of all possible support on the matter.

## জলবর্তন: রাজ্য ও কেন্দ্রের মত চায় সুপ্রিয় কোর্ট

স্টাক রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২ অগস্ট: প্রতিবেশী রাজ্যগুলির সঙ্গে অতীতের যাবতীয় জলবর্তন চুক্তি বাতিল করে পঞ্জাব যে নতুন আইন পাশ করেছে, সে সম্পর্কে আজ কেন্দ্র ও সংশ্লিষ্ট পাঁচটি রাজ্যকে মতামত জানাতে বলল সুপ্রিয় কোর্ট। বিবদমান এই বিষয় সম্পর্কে শীর্ষ আদালতের মত জানতে চেয়েছিলেন রাষ্ট্রপতি এ পি জে আব্দুল কালাম। তারই প্রেক্ষিতে আজ কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার ও দিল্লি, পঞ্জাব, হরিয়ানা, রাজস্থান, হিমাচলপ্রদেশ এবং জম্মু ও কাশ্মীর সরকারকে নিজেদের অবস্থান জানাতে বলেছে সুপ্রিয় কোর্ট। প্রধান বিচারপতি আর সি কাহোটির নেতৃত্বাধীন পাঁচ সদস্যের সাংবিধানিক বেঞ্চ মতামত জানানোর জন্য কেন্দ্র ও রাজ্যগুলিকে ছয় সপ্তাহ সময় দিয়েছে। এই নিয়ে একটি জনবিজ্ঞপ্তি জারি করার জন্য আদালতের কাছে আর্জি জানিয়েছিলেন কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের আর্টান

কেন্দ্রের মত চায় সুপ্রিয় কোর্ট সেই আর্জি খারিজ করে বলে, “এই ক্ষেত্রে জনবিজ্ঞপ্তি জারি করার দরকার নেই।”

দেশের সর্বোচ্চ আদালতে যখন পঞ্জাবের জল বিবাদ প্রসঙ্গ উঠেছে, তখন কেন্দ্রীয় জলসম্পদমন্ত্রী প্রিয়রঞ্জন দাশমুন্সি সব রাজ্যের মুখসচিবদের নিয়ে বৈঠকে বসেছিলেন জল সংক্রান্ত বিভিন্ন বিষয়ে আলোচনা করতে। সেখানে গঙ্গার ভাঙনের পাশাপাশি জলবর্তনের কথাও উঠেছে। বৈঠকে প্রিয়রঞ্জন অভিযোগ জানিয়ে বলেছেন, “জল সংরক্ষণ বা নদীর ভাঙন রূখতে কেন্দ্র যা টাকা দেয়, অনেক রাজ্যই তা ঠিকমতো খরচ করে না।” সব রাজ্যকে এই ব্যাপারে সতর্ক করেছেন তিনি। পশ্চিমবঙ্গের গঙ্গা ভাঙন নিয়েও প্রিয়বাবু একই অভিযোগ করেছেন।

সুপ্রিয় কোর্টে পঞ্জাবের বিতর্কিত আইন নিয়ে লোটিশ জারি করার কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারও খুশি। আজ

মন্ত্রিসভার রাজনৈতিক বিষয়ক কমিটির বৈঠকে এই নিয়ে আলোচনা হয়েছে। কেন্দ্র মনে করছে, সুপ্রিয় কোর্টের মাধ্যমে বিষয়টির নিষ্পত্তি হলে রাজ্যগুলির মধ্যে যেমন তিজতা এড়ানো যাবে, তেমনই কেন্দ্রের সঙ্গে সরাসরি সংঘাতের পথেও যেতে হবে না পঞ্জাবের কেন্দ্রের সরকারকে।

বস্তুত, মনমোহন সিংহ বা সনিয়া গাঁধীকে না জানিয়েই বিতর্কিত পঞ্জাব টার্মিনেশন অফ এগ্রিমেন্টস অ্যাক্ট ২০০৪-পাশ করার সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়ার পরে এখন মুখ্যমন্ত্রী অমরিন্দর সিংহও কেন্দ্র তথা কংগ্রেসের শীর্ষ নেতৃত্বের সঙ্গে সঙ্ঘর্ষ গড়ে তুলতে বাধ্য। কিন্তু জলবর্তন নিয়ে অমরিন্দরের অবস্থানে মনমোহন অত্যন্ত কুণ্ড। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সচিবালয় সূত্রে খবর, বিলাটি পাশ হবার পরে সনিয়ার সামনে বসেই মনমোহন এই নিয়ে ফোনে অমরিন্দরকে তিরস্কার করেন। এরপর অমরিন্দর আলোচনা করে সনিয়ার সঙ্গে কথা

বলাতে চেয়েছিলেন। সনিয়া এক কথায় তা খারিজ করে দিয়েছেন। প্রধানমন্ত্রী যে বিষয়ে জড়িয়ে আছেন, সেখানে তাঁকে এড়িয়ে আলোচনাই তিনি করবেন না, অমরিন্দরকে বুঝিয়ে দিয়েছেন সনিয়া। এই অবস্থায় অমরিন্দর দলের পক্ষ থেকে পঞ্জাবে দায়িত্বপ্রাপ্ত গ্রন্থ মূখোপাধ্যায়ের সঙ্গে কথা বলেছেন। সি পি এম সম্পাদক হরকিষণ সিংহ সুরজিতের সঙ্গেও কথা হয়েছে তাঁর।

অমরিন্দরের এই ‘ওদ্ধতা’ সঙ্গেও মুখ্যমন্ত্রী-পদ থেকে তাঁকে সরানোর কথা অবশ্যতার ভাবচ্ছে না কংগ্রেস নেতৃত্ব। দলের মনোভাব হচ্ছে, পঞ্জাবের কৃষকদের জন্য জল সুরক্ষিত করার কথা বলে ইতিমধ্যেই রাজ্যে নায়কের মর্যাদা পাচ্ছেন অমরিন্দর।

এই অবস্থায় তাঁকে সরালে কংগ্রেসের কোনও লাভ হবে না। পঞ্জাবে দলের মধ্যে অমরিন্দরের বিরোধীর সংখ্যা প্রতিদিন বাড়ছে।

) Centre -  
State

SATURDAY, JULY 24, 2004

## PASSING THE BUCK

110-12 ✓  
24/7

IT HAS BEEN CLEAR from the start that what we are witnessing in Punjab is as much a political game as a water dispute. Early indications of this came from the promptness with which the Governor gave his assent to the Punjab Termination of Agreements Bill, 2004, which annulled all past water-sharing agreements and accords with other States. There has been a closing of ranks in the State, with bitter political opponents supporting the Government on this issue. Haryana, Rajasthan, and Himachal Pradesh, on the other hand, have legitimately cried foul. In this context, the Manmohan Singh Government's decision to seek the Supreme Court's opinion under Article 143 of the Constitution on the Punjab legislation amounts to passing the buck. The Centre has not been prepared to take a clear stand against Punjab's unilateral and provocative action, which has serious implications for federalism; it has not been willing to take political risks through mediation; and it could not afford to remain a passive observer either. So it has tried to hand over the hot potato to the Supreme Court's advisory jurisdiction. Under Article 143, the apex court's advice does not have the force of a judgment but it does bind all other courts in the land.

This is not the first time the Centre has resorted to Article 143 to find a way out of a politically challenging situation. In 1991, when Karnataka promulgated an ordinance to counter the Interim Order of the Cauvery Tribunal, the Centre made a presidential reference and the Court obliged. In 1993, the Narasimha Rao government, which came under intense pressure on the Ayodhya issue, sought the apex court's advice on "whether a Hindu temple or any Hindu religious structure existed prior to the construction of the Ramjanmabhoomi-Ba-

bri Masjid in the area in which the structure stood." The Court wisely declined to answer that single point reference, holding it to be "superfluous" and "unnecessary." The current presidential reference asks the Supreme Court to advise whether the Punjab Termination of Agreements Act, 2004, is in accordance with the Constitution, the Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956, the Punjab Reorganisation Act and the Central notification issued under that Act in 1976; whether the Act is a valid termination of the 1981 and other Agreements; and if so, whether Punjab stands discharged from the obligation to comply with the Supreme Court's directions regarding the Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal. Even if these questions are answered, that will not be the end of the story; indeed the plot could get more complicated, with embarrassing institutional implications.

The Centre does not appear to have appreciated the fact that there is an important difference between the 1991 and 2004 river water dispute references. When the Supreme Court expressed the opinion that the Karnataka ordinance was unconstitutional, the State Government let the ordinance lapse. In the present case, an Act passed by the legislature and assented to by the Governor is in place. In the event of the Supreme Court advising the Centre that it is unconstitutional, the Punjab Act will not cease to exist. It will need a further political act of repeal, and, if that is not forthcoming, decisive Central action — and possibly a pressing on of the legal challenge and a judicial determination of the issues. So under the circumstances, given the real possibility of its advisory jurisdiction being invoked in vain, will the apex court entertain the presidential reference? If it does not, the Centre will have mud on its face and the hot potato back in its hands.

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# Presidential Reference in Supreme Court

By Gargi Parsai

**NEW DELHI, JULY 22.** The Central Government today filed a Presidential Reference under Article 143 in the Supreme Court in the matter of construction of the Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal, seeking the court's opinion on the Punjab Government's enactment of the Punjab Termination of Agreements Act, 2004.

The Act terminates all inter-State treaties/tribunal awards which are yet to be given effect.

In his four-point reference, the President, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, seeks to know whether the Act is constitutionally valid and really discharges the State Government from the water agreements. It affects the agreement on sharing of the waters of the — Ravi, Beas and Sutlej — among Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. The matter is likely to be referred to a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court.

## Pressure on Government

A decision to move the Supreme Court was taken at an informal meeting here today of the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh.

The Government is under pressure to take action with all the State Governments concerned threatening legal action. Besides, the matter was raised in Parliament two days ago where the Prime Minister gave an assurance that action would be taken within two to three days.

The Centre filed an application in the Supreme Court on July 16 showing compliance with its order of June 4 for setting up a central agency to complete the canal in Punjab and seeking directions in view of the

enactment of the Punjab Act.

The SYL Canal runs for 121 km in Punjab and 90 km in Haryana and is supposed to carry a major share of Haryana's average share of the Ravi-Beas waters under an agreement between the States concerned in 1981.

The construction of the canal in Haryana is complete. Punjab

## Article 143 of the Constitution

(1) If at any time, it appears to the President that a question of law or fact has arisen, or is likely to arise, which is of such a nature and of such public importance that it is expedient to obtain the opinion of the Supreme Court upon it, he may refer the question to that Court for consideration and the Court may, after such hearing as it thinks fit, report to the President its opinion thereon.

(2) The President may, notwithstanding anything in ... the proviso to Article 131 [Original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court], refer a dispute of the kind mentioned in the said proviso to the Supreme Court for opinion and the Supreme Court shall, after such hearing as it thinks fit, report to the President its opinion thereon.

undertook in 1982 to complete the construction of its portion of the canal but abandoned it in 1991. Haryana moved the Supreme Court which on June 4 ordered the Centre to ensure the completion of the canal and provide security to the staff.

See also Page 11

TUESDAY, JULY 20, 2004

## REVIVING GOOD PRACTICE

PRIME MINISTER MANMOHAN Singh — a cerebral leader who takes the challenges and burdens of governance seriously — must be commended for reviving an excellent tradition: Jawaharlal Nehru's regular letters to Chief Ministers, known as 'fortnightlies', which were followed keenly by a much wider circle of readers than those to whom they were addressed. Those letters from a great communicator, written in an informal style, ranged over "issues and problems confronting the government and people of India ... and are invaluable ... for the insight they provide into the evolution both of Nehru's thought and of official policies" (to quote from the Editorial Note in the first in the five volume series, *Letters to Chief Ministers, 1947-1964* edited by G. Parthasarathy). Read today, they stand out as a model of transparency and thoughtfulness in governance. One wishes they could also be held up as models of fealty to 'cooperative federalism', because that was one area where the practice of India's first and greatest Prime Minister fell conspicuously short of what a federal polity really required. Given the hegemony of the Congress during the Nehru era and its intolerance of any other party ruling anywhere, the Central Government could get away with 'cooperative federalism' under Central tutelage. Today, of course, the situation is radically different: even if constitutional federalism in India is still far from perfect, especially in the field of Centre-State fiscal relations, the realities and compulsions of coalition politics have brought into existence a kind of political federalism.

Following the Nehru approach, Prime Minister Singh's inaugural letter to Chief Ministers addresses an ensemble of issues and problems but seems to focus on the imperative of reforming and revitalising public systems and institutional relations — and on forging a vibrant partnership, with a clear division of responsibility, between the Centre and the States to ensure that development programmes are well conceived and re-

ach those they are intended to benefit. Reportedly shaken by the mass distress and deprivation he recently glimpsed first hand in Andhra Pradesh, Dr. Singh is looking for fresh and possibly radical answers to the problem of the breakdown of delivery systems and the poverty of anti-poverty recipes and programmes across the country. He also seems troubled over the 'non-inclusiveness' of the process of economic development in India, notably post-1991, and over the phenomenon of "uneven development, between regions and between people." This Prime Minister is too honest and too modest a man to suggest that he has all the answers and his first letter to his peers at the State level, representing a good part of the Indian political spectrum, is an exploratory attempt to establish a congenial wavelength for Centre-State communication on all issues and problems that matter. There can be no question that this revival of a good practice, which no Prime Minister after Nehru had the vision and the intellectual energy to keep alive, is admirable.

What is not is the signal sent out by an institutional misstep that occurred in Kumbakonam on Sunday: Congress president Sonia Gandhi's announcement of the sanctioning by the Central Government of a sum of Rs. 1 crore to provide relief to the bereaved parents of the school children who died in Friday's fire accident. Ms. Gandhi's awkward announcement that "on behalf of the Prime Minister" she was "required" to communicate the Centre's decision reflected the institutional inappropriateness of what she was doing, or made to go through. It speaks to a political culture that needs reform as much as anything else. Ms. Gandhi is the president of the largest party in the country, the one with the most seats in the Lok Sabha. Her visit to Kumbakonam to express solidarity with the bereaved and the suffering will be widely appreciated. But there was no need at all to do anything that suggested an overlapping of functions between her and the office of Prime Minister.

THE HINDU 20 JUL 2004

# জল-সঙ্কট মেটাতে কেন্দ্র রাষ্ট্রপতিরই দ্বারস্থ

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ১৯

**জুলাই:** পঞ্জাব সরকার জল-বন্টন চুক্তি বাতিল করায় যে সঙ্কট তৈরি হয়েছে তা নিরসনের জন্য গোটা বিষয়টি রাষ্ট্রপতির কাছে পাঠানোর সিদ্ধান্তই নিল মনমোহন সরকার। সরকারি সূত্রের খবর, আজ কেন্দ্রীয় মন্ত্রিসভার রাজনীতি বিষয়ক কমিটি (সি সি পি এ) বৈঠকে বসে এই ব্যাপারে সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে। বিষয়টি রাষ্ট্রপতির কাছে পাঠানোর পর সংবিধানের ১৪৩ ধারা অনুযায়ী রাষ্ট্রপতি এই ব্যাপারে একটি সাংবিধানিক বেঞ্চ গঠন করার জন্য সুপ্রিম কোর্টকে অনুরোধ করতে পারবেন। আজ আনুষ্ঠানিক ভাবে বিষয়টি নিয়ে মুখ খোলেনি কোনও মন্ত্রী। কাল তাঁরা বিষয়টি রাষ্ট্রপতিকে জানাবেন।

জল-যুদ্ধের ফলে কংগ্রেসের অভ্যন্তরীণ সঙ্কট চরমে পৌঁছনোয় রাষ্ট্রপতিরই শরণাগত হতে হল সরকারকে। পঞ্জাবে নিজে রাজনৈতিক অবস্থান অটুট রাখতে জলবন্টন চুক্তি নাকচ সংক্রান্ত আইন পাস করে সংযুক্ত প্রগতিশীল জোট সরকারকে বিপাকে ফেলে দিয়েছেন পঞ্জাবের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী অমরিন্দর সিংহ। আজ সি সি পি এ-র বৈঠকে বিষয়টি নিয়ে দীর্ঘ আলোচনার পর স্থির হয় বিষয়টির দ্রুত নিষ্পত্তির জন্য রাষ্ট্রপতির হস্তক্ষেপই একমাত্র উপায়। বৈঠকে ছিলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ, স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী শিবরাজ পাটিল, প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়, অর্থমন্ত্রী পি চিদম্বরম। শরিক নেতাদের মধ্যে ছিলেন লালুপ্রসাদ, দয়ানিধি মারান, রামবিলাস পাসোসয়ানেরা। ছিলেন জলসম্পদমন্ত্রী প্রিয়রঞ্জন দাশমুন্সিও। অমরিন্দরের অনমনীয় মনোভাবের জন্য বিক্ষোভ উচ্চগ্রামে পৌঁছতে শুরু করেছে প্রতিবেশী রাজস্থান ও হরিয়ানায়। বিক্ষুব্ধ হরিয়ানার প্রদেশ কংগ্রেস নেতৃত্বও। কিছু দিনের মধ্যেই হরিয়ানায় বিধানসভা নির্বাচন। তার আগে এই ধরনের

চাপানউত্বের যথেষ্ট অস্বস্তিতে পড়েছে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার। আজ সকালেই হরিয়ানা প্রদেশ কংগ্রেস সভাপতি ভজনলাল বিধায়কদের একটি কমিটি নিয়ে দেখা করেন নেত্রী সনিয়া গান্ধীর সঙ্গে। তাঁদের দাবি, অবিলম্বে ব্যবস্থা নিতে হবে অমরিন্দরের বিরুদ্ধে। সনিয়ার সঙ্গে দেখা করার পর ভজনলাল আজ সাংবাদিকদের জানান, “অমরিন্দর যে কাজ করেছেন তা জাতীয় স্বার্থের পরিপন্থী। হরিয়ানার মানুষের প্রতি এটা ঘোরতর অন্যায্য। দলের সভানেত্রীর কাছে আমরা দাবি করেছি অমরিন্দরের বিরুদ্ধে দ্রুত শাস্তিমূলক ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া হোক।” পরে তাঁর প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গেও দেখা করেন। মনমোহন তাঁদের আশ্বাস দিয়েছেন, জল বন্টনের প্রশ্নে সমস্ত রাজ্যের সঙ্গে ন্যায্যবিচার কর হবে। হরিয়ানায় ওম প্রকাশ টোটালার ইন্ডিয়ান ন্যাশনাল লোকদল সরকার এবং রাজস্থানের বসুন্ধরা রাজ সিদ্ধিয়ার বি জে পি সরকারও যে শীঘ্রই একে রাজনৈতিক প্রচারের বিষয় করে তুলবে সেই ইঙ্গিতও স্পষ্ট হচ্ছে।

আজ রাজ্যসভার বিরোধী দলনেতা যশোবন্ত সিংহ বলেছেন, পঞ্জাবের সমস্যার প্রতি নজর দেওয়া উচিত। তবে অন্য রাজ্যের স্বার্থে যা দিয়ে নয়। তিনি সরকারের কাছে দাবি করেছেন, বিষয়টি নিষ্পত্তি করে যত দ্রুত সংসদকে ব্যাপারে অবগত করা হোক। আইনমন্ত্রী এইচ আর ভরদ্বাজ আশ্বাস দিয়েছেন দু’তিন দিনেই বিষয়টির নিষ্পত্তি হবে যাবে। আইনমন্ত্রী আজ রাজ্যসভা জানিয়েছেন, সংশ্লিষ্ট রাজ্যের মুখ্যমন্ত্রীকে সঙ্গে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কথা বলেছেন। তঁ বক্তব্য, “হরিয়ানার মুখ্যমন্ত্রীর কাছ থেকে পরামর্শ চেয়েছিলাম লিখিত ভাবে। এ নিয়ে একটি উচ্চক্ষমতাসম্পন্ন কমিটি তৈরির কথাও হয়েছিল। টোটালার কাছ থেকে কোনও সাদা পাওয়া যায়নি।”

20 JUL 2004

## LETTER TO CHIEF MINISTERS

# Reform public systems, says Manmohan

By Harish Khare

*HO-1  
19/7*

**NEW DELHI, JULY 18.** The Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, has written to all the Chief Ministers, inviting attention to the need to reform the public institutions at the State and the Central levels. According to Dr. Singh, the reforms of public systems "involved energising institutions of governance and ensuring accountability in the provisions of public services, transparency in handling of public funds and aligning incentives with desired outcomes."

Dr. Singh's letter is meant to revive a tradition set by the first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who wrote letters every month to Chief Ministers, explaining and exhorting them to join cheerfully in the task of nation-building. The idea is also to build a national consensus on the fundamentals of governance, over and above the political parties' mutual antagonism. The Prime Minister's communication is remarkably free of any partisan note.

Dr. Singh has come back a troubled man after his visit earlier this month to Andhra Pradesh, where he saw first hand the complete breakdown of the delivery system. He is reported to be keen to see that administrative effectiveness is reinvented.

In his first letter to the Chief Ministers, Dr. Singh said: "Maintenance of law and order is critical in providing an atmosphere conducive to economic development and social harmony." In this respect, he drew attention to the Chief Minister's exercise of his favourite power of transferring officials. "Frequent transfers of public servants have a debilitating impact

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not only on their performance and morale, but also on the whole process of governance. Development administration also involves learning that to a large extent depends on the regularity of tenure. "Therefore, I urge you to ensure stability of tenure to officials in key positions in order to ensure effective administration and proper delivery of public services," he wrote.

The thrust of the letter is on a vibrant collaboration between the Centre and the States. While "the Centre can generate funds for development programmes, their success is dependent on the efficacy of implementation which is entirely in your hands," he said. That meant "collective endeavours in the true spirit of an abiding partnership in the best traditions of cooperative federalism."

Acknowledging that a lot has been achieved since Jawaharlal Nehru spelt out national goals of an egalitarian social order, Dr. Singh also conceded that "we face a situation of uneven development, between regions and between people." Hence, according to him, the need is "to make our process of economic reforms inclusive, both at the Centre and in the States." And, he defines inclusiveness as "ensuring equal opportunities for vulnerable sections like the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, other backward classes, women and minorities."

Dr. Singh ended his letter by inviting the Chief Ministers to "play the role of visionary leaders working towards transforming the socio-economic conditions of millions of our countrymen who are looking up to us for enhancing the quality of their lives."

# Sarkari scandal

Cover-up can only make it worse

It is only coincidental that Dilip Sinha, former vice-cellor of Visva-Bharati, was arrested for alleged foul play over the appointment of a lecturer a few days prior to the shocking revelation that Pabitra Sarkar, former vice-cellor of Rabindra Bharati University, used improper means to secure academic appointments carrying handsome salaries and perks. The first was jailed after his attesting documents of a candidate without verifying qualifications from original documents which, it now appears, don't exist. The second is allowed to defend himself with the assurance that the chief minister stands by him in this crisis. Anil Biswas ducks the question, suggesting this is an academic, not a political, matter. If it hadn't been for the chief minister would not have cared to reassure the public that he is safe because of his reputation as a linguist. It doesn't occur to Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee that he is being totally out of context: that academic qualifications unrelated to acts of fraud for which another former vice-cellor is paying the penalty. If Sarkar belongs to the protected class, it is because the Left has polluted education in the manner in which it had accused the Sangh Parivar of polluting history.

The facts of the case are simple: the PhD that facilitated Sarkar a series of academic appointments was done in America at Chicago University but the certificate hasn't reached India after 29 years. Sarkar would have everyone believe that it is a "technical" error and that the certificate should reach India by September. That still doesn't explain how he secured several academic positions — often in preference to candidates who were equally, if not more worthy — without producing the necessary documents. The first revelation of a criminal lapse was in an article published in this paper last November. Since then the academic world and society outside the committed Left have had reason to be puzzled that one of America's leading universities should allow the matter to hang for 29 years. If Sarkar had actually completed his thesis. If, as he claims, there are "formalities" pending, the institution that accepted him in good faith has a right to know the truth. It is typical of the loyalist to flaunt his political credentials, which, it must be said, are irrelevant in the eyes of the public. The cover-up for "one of their own" can only protect Sarkar for a point. Buddhadeb owes it to those who trusted him to allow the law to take its course.



## জলবন্টন নিয়ে কংগ্রেসে সঙ্কট তীব্রতর চুক্তি বাতিলের প্রতিবাদে হরিয়ানায় ইস্তফা ১৯ কংগ্রেসি বিধায়কের

চণ্ডীগড়, ১৭ জুলাই: শতদ্রু-যমুনা জলবন্টন নিয়ে কংগ্রেসের অভ্যন্তরীণ সঙ্কট ক্রমশ তীব্র হচ্ছে। পঞ্জাব বিধানসভায় আইন করে অতীতের সবক'টি জলবন্টন চুক্তি একতরফা ভাবে বাতিল করে দেওয়ার প্রতিবাদে হরিয়ানার ১৯ জন কংগ্রেস বিধায়ক আজ ইস্তফা দিয়েছেন। তাঁরা তাঁদের ইস্তফাপত্র প্রদেশ কংগ্রেস সভাপতি ভজনলালের হাতে তুলে দিয়েছেন। ইস্তফাপত্র হাতে পাওয়ার কথা স্বীকার করলেও 'তাড়াছড়ো করে এখনই কোনও সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া হচ্ছে না' বলে জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন ভজনলাল।

আজই কংগ্রেসের সাংগঠনিক পুনর্গঠনে পঞ্জাবের দায়িত্ব দেওয়া হয়েছে কেন্দ্রীয় প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়কে। তিনি পুরো বিষয়টিকে অত্যন্ত দুঃখজনক আখ্যা দিয়ে বলেছেন, "পঞ্জাব বিধানসভায় যে ভাবে জলবন্টন চুক্তি বাতিল করা হয়েছে তা অত্যন্ত দুঃখজনক। যুক্তরাষ্ট্রীয় কাঠামোয় অনেক সময়েই বিভিন্ন রাজ্য নিজেদের মধ্যে জল, খনিজের মতো বিভিন্ন প্রাকৃতিক সম্পদ ভাগ করে নেয়। এ নিয়ে মতভেদ হতেই পারে কিন্তু তা নিয়ে এই ধরনের চরম সিদ্ধান্ত কখনওই নেওয়া উচিত নয়।" হরিয়ানার কংগ্রেস বিধায়কদের ইস্তফা দেওয়ার প্রসঙ্গ নিয়ে প্রণব বলেছেন, প্রধানমন্ত্রী ইতিমধ্যেই সংশ্লিষ্ট রাজ্যের মুখ্যমন্ত্রীদের সঙ্গে কথা বলেছেন। শীঘ্রই সমাধানের পথ বেরোবে এমন আশা প্রকাশ করলেও প্রণব বলেন, পরিস্থিতি যা, তাতে সমাধান কোন পথে হবে তা বলা খুবই কঠিন।

এ দিকে, শতদ্রু-যমুনা সংযোগ খাল কাটার বিষয়টি নিয়ে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের সমালোচনা করে হরিয়ানার মুখ্যমন্ত্রী ওমপ্রকাশ চৌটীলা হুমকি দিয়েছেন, কেন্দ্র যদি পঞ্জাবের এই সিদ্ধান্ত বাতিল না-করে তবে হরিয়ানা বিধানসভাতেও যমুনা জলবন্টন চুক্তি বাতিল করে দেওয়া হবে। উল্লেখ্য, যমুনা জলবন্টন চুক্তি বাতিল হলে খোদ দিল্লি জলসঙ্কটের সম্মুখীন হবে। এ সম্পর্কে চৌটীলা বলেন, দিল্লি আমাদের দেশের কেন্দ্র। কিন্তু যমুনা চুক্তি বাতিল হলে রাজধানীর

বাসিন্দাদের জলসঙ্কটের মুখোমুখি হতে হবে। এর মধ্যেই রাজস্থানের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী বসুন্ধরা রাজে জয়পুরে একটি সর্বদলীয় বৈঠকের ডাক দিয়েছেন। পঞ্জাব সরকার সবক'টি জলবন্টন চুক্তি বাতিল করায় তাদের পরবর্তী পদক্ষেপ কী হবে তা ঠিক করতেই এই বৈঠক ডাকা হয়েছে।

আজকে হরিয়ানার রাজ্য নেতা ও বিধায়কদের নিয়ে ডাকা প্রদেশ কংগ্রেসের সভা প্রথম থেকেই পঞ্জাবের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী অমরিন্দার সিংহের সমালোচনায় মুখর ছিল। সভায় রাজ্যের বিধায়করা ছাড়াও উপস্থিত ছিলেন রাজ্যের তিন কংগ্রেস সাংসদও। সভা শেষে ভজনলাল বলেন, "অনেকগুলি রাজ্যের স্বার্থ জড়িত কোনও চুক্তি একটি রাজ্য একতরফা ভাবে বাতিল করতে পারে না।" সরাসরি অমরিন্দারের সমালোচনা করে ভজনলাল বলেন, 'সস্তা জনপ্রিয়তা'র লোভেই তিনি এমনটা করেছেন। কেন্দ্রের কাছে এখনই পঞ্জাব সরকারের এই সিদ্ধান্তকে বাতিল ঘোষণা করারও দাবি জানান তিনি।

জলবন্টন সঙ্কট নিয়ে প্রদেশ কংগ্রেসের পরবর্তী পদক্ষেপ ঠিক করতে ভজনলালের নেতৃত্বে একটি কমিটি গঠন করা হয়েছে। ভজনলাল জানান, পঞ্জাবের কাছ থেকে হরিয়ানার ন্যায্য জলের দাবি আদায় করে নিতে তাঁরা রাজ্য জুড়ে অহিংস আন্দোলনে নামবেন। আগামী দু'এক দিনের মধ্যেই ওই কমিটি প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ এবং কংগ্রেস সভানেত্রী সনিয়া গাঁধীর সঙ্গেও দেখা করবে। ভজনলাল বলেন, "দু'টি রাজ্যের মধ্যে অনিবার্য সংঘর্ষ এড়াতে তাঁদের এই বিষয়ে হস্তক্ষেপ করার দাবি জানাব।" সামনেই হরিয়ানায় বিধানসভার নির্বাচন। তা মনে করিয়ে দিয়ে হরিয়ানার প্রদেশ কংগ্রেসের সাধারণ সম্পাদক বীরেন্দ্র সিংহ সাফ জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন, জলবন্টন নিয়ে রাজনৈতিক বাধ্যবাধকতার কারণে যদি হরিয়ানায় দলের ভবিষ্যত ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হয়, তবে তা তাঁরা কোনও মতেই বরদাস্ত করবেন না।

— পি টি আই

# The Truth behind Punjab's River Waters



**Capt. Amarinder Singh**  
Chief Minister, Punjab

- Punjab is proud of its position in the Indian Union and has equal concern for its neighbours. As a sovereign authority, Punjab considers it its bounden duty to uphold the Constitution and the laws and to protect the interests of its inhabitants;
- 'Indus system' which was prevalent before the partition of the country has become irrelevant after partition, since only three east flowing rivers namely, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej, out of the six rivers constituting the said system remained within Indian territory for its exclusive use;
- Presently all the three rivers, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej flow through the territory of Punjab. None of them flow through either Haryana or Rajasthan and therefore do not constitute their basin areas. Even according to the Irrigation Commission only 9,939 sq. km. of areas within Haryana fall within the 'Indus Basin' (**not within the Ravi and Beas basin**), as against 50304 sq. km. areas within Punjab;
- Haryana presently utilizes about 5.95 MAF of water (about 4.33 MAF from Sutlej and about 1.62 MAF from Ravi and Beas);
- Punjab's claim of its share in Yamuna water has been turned down even though parts of Punjab fall within Yamuna basin while Haryana and Rajasthan have continued to utilize the waters of rivers Ravi and Beas though they are neither riparian nor basin States. Punjab as a good neighbour accepted such utilizations by Haryana and Rajasthan as usages 'by sufferance', but not as a matter of any recognition of their rights;
- No reliable and scientific study of hydrological, ecological and sociological impact of large scale trans-basin diversion from Punjab to Haryana and Rajasthan was undertaken when Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan entered into an agreement on 31.12.1981 allocating 3.5 MAF of water to Haryana and 8.60 MAF of water to Rajasthan out of the surplus flow of the rivers Ravi and Beas, then estimated at 17.17 MAF based on 1921-1960 flow series;
- Such a huge trans-basin diversion of water is likely to have permanent adverse impact on the irrigation and other requirements within the basin areas of Punjab rendering about 9 lakh acres of the basin areas dry and barren with an adverse impact on livelihood of 1.5 million families. Diversion of water on such a large scale from the donor deficit basin of Ravi and Beas to the surplus basin of the Yamuna river is contrary to national water policy guidelines;
- There is material and substantial change in ground realities adverse to the interests of Punjab because the total availability of waters in the rivers Ravi and Beas has reduced from 17.17 MAF (assumed under the Agreement dated 31.12.1981) to 14.37 MAF as per the flow series of 1981-2002. Moreover, under the Yamuna Agreement dated 12.5.1994, Haryana has been allocated 4.65 MAF of water, which will be further augmented by the Sarda Yamuna Link;
- In the circumstances, the terms of the said Agreement dated 31.12.1981 have become onerous, unfair, unreasonable and contrary to the interests of the inhabitants of the Ravi and Beas basin, who have lawful rights to utilize the water of the rivers Ravi and Beas;
- Being conscious of the legal position that the obligations arising from an Agreement or a contract do not fetter the powers of the Legislature to enact a law in public interest, the Punjab Vidhan Sabha has enacted the Punjab Termination of Agreements Act, 2004.
- **The Punjab Termination of Agreements Act, 2004 fully protects current utilization of Ravi, Beas and Sutlej waters by the neighbouring States. Section-5 of the Act clearly stipulates that all existing and actual utilizations through the existing systems shall remain protected and unaffected.**

**Save Water-Save Punjab**

# Govt takes SC cover in Punjab water war

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, July 15

THE CENTRE today filed an application before the Supreme Court seeking fresh directions on the construction of the Sutlej-Yamuna Link canal in the wake of the controversy arising from Punjab's unilateral decision to scrap its agreements with neighbouring states on sharing of water. The Bill passed by the Punjab Assembly has also scrapped Clause 9.3 of the Rajiv-Longowal Accord on the construction of the canal.

The application was filed by the Congress-led government in the vexed SYL canal case in which the apex court had directed the Centre to take over the construction of the Punjab portion of the canal after noting the state government's continued reluctance to do the same. The application said fresh directions were required as Punjab's decision to enact the law has rendered the completion of the SYL canal, as directed by the court, difficult.

The SC had directed the Centre to identify within a month an agency to take control of the construction work. It also directed the Punjab government to hand-over the area demarcated for the

construction of the canal to the central agency within two weeks.

But soon after the Centre asked the PWD to take up construction work, the Punjab Assembly on July 12 passed a Bill terminating all water sharing agreements with Haryana and Rajasthan.

Moved by Chief Minister Amarinder Singh at a special one-day session, the Bill "for terminating and discharging the government of Punjab from its obligations" on all agreements relating to the waters of Ravi-Beas rivers "in public interest" was supported by the Opposition SAD-BJP alliance.

The move to approach the SC was cleared by the CCPA on Wednesday keeping in mind the July 15 deadline set by the apex court for the state to hand over to the Centre the possession of the canal in the Punjab area.

The move is part of the Centre's two-pronged strategy to deal with the situation. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh summoned Amarinder, besides holding meetings with Haryana, Rajasthan and Himachal CMs. Haryana and Rajasthan are worried that water distribution would be hit, a fear that Amarinder sought to dispel citing a clause in the new Act on "current annual usage" of water.

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THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

# Canal CMs tattle to PM, Amarinder stays firm

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

**New Delhi, July 14:** Punjab's decision to scrap its water-sharing pacts today created rifts within and outside the government and raised doubts on whether its unilateral move had set a precedent that struck at the spirit of a federal structure envisaging co-operation among states.

Aggrieved chief ministers from the states immediately affected by Punjab's decision — Rajasthan, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh — met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and urged him to prevent Punjab from implementing the bill passed by its Assembly. The bill became the Punjab Termination of Agreements Act 2004 after the governor signed it last night.

The Punjab chief minister, however, said there was no going back. Amarinder Singh has rallied behind his government not

only his own party but also the Opposition that supported the bill. He made it clear today that he had gone ahead with the move without consulting his party president Sonia Gandhi or the Prime Minister.

Angry BJP and Shiv Sena members walked out of the Lok Sabha because they were unhappy with United Progressive Alliance chairperson Sonia's silence on allegations that she had approved Amarinder's move to annul the river water-sharing agreements with Rajasthan, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.

Within the Opposition, too, alliances were threatened, with the Shiromani Akali Dal, a BJP ally, making it clear that it would not allow any "rollback" by the Punjab government.

Former Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee and leader of the Opposition L.K. Advani, however, told an Akali delegation that the BJP would not support any unilateral



Amarinder Singh, Om Prakash Chautala, Veerbhadra Singh

move by a state against the Centre. "If any state ends its obligation to other states, there will be a chaotic situation. We have told the Shiromani Akali Dal that when a state government annuls a central agreement, we are opposed to it," Sushma Swaraj said.

The BJP leader said the row showed the "failure" of the Centre's information network to visualise the developments. "It is



forward their views. Rajasthan chief minister Vasundhara Raje said after a meeting with the Prime Minister that her state government was likely to move the Supreme Court against the Punjab move. "We are very worried and we have expressed our concern in the Assembly. The Prime Minister is holding meetings with the chief ministers and I have taken the opportunity to tell him our position in detail. I have urged him to protect the rights of states," she said. Raje's views were echoed by Himachal Pradesh chief minister Veerbhadra Singh and Haryana chief minister Om Prakash Chautala. "The water issue is not only between Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.... This type of problem exists between many other states as well. If this method (adopted by Punjab) succeeds, then everybody else will also resort to this," the Himachal chief minister said after meeting

the Prime Minister. Chautala has threatened to launch an agitation. "If (the termination of the agreement) will lead to anarchy," he said at a meeting in Kurukshetra. "We can also pay Amarinder back in the same coin," he said. "But we do not want the country to disintegrate." PM sources said Singh was listening to the chief ministers and would act accordingly. The discontent was also palpable at the ground level in the neighbouring states. Farmers in the western districts of Rajasthan, who used to receive irrigation water through the Indira Gandhi canal system, lashed out against the Punjab government.

"Punjab has no right to usurp Rajasthan's share of water from the Ravi and the Beas and lakhs of farmers in the desert state would fight the unconstitutional move by the neighbouring state," said Jai Narayan Vyas, the head of Jan Kisan Panchayat.

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# Amarinder lobbies to protect Act

By Sarabjit Pandher

**CHANDIGARH, JULY 14.** The Punjab Chief Minister, Amarinder Singh, spent a day at the Parliament to "protect" the controversial Termination of Agreements Bill, 2004, which was passed by the Assembly on Monday. While he stood guard against attempts to sabotage the step, he also met other Members of Parliament to explain the "real situation".

Sources close to the Chief Minister, said Capt. Singh has been quite concerned at the attempts to portray Punjab as a "sinner", even when its rights were usurped and no amicable

solution had been worked out since the State was re-organised on linguistic basis in 1966. So far alone in the Congress, Capt. Singh seems to have launched a campaign to win friends to project Punjab's case before the party as well as the country.

Reports received here indicated that the Chief Minister spent considerable time in the Central Hall today, amid reports that at least one Rajya Sabha member and a former Lok Sabha member had contacted Congress MPs from Punjab, to dissuade them from supporting Capt. Singh's efforts. However, when contacted

over phone in Delhi, former Lok Sabha member, Jagmeet Singh Brar, said there was no question of opposing the Bill passed by the Assembly. Mr. Brar said he himself had courted arrest about six times on the issue, made more than two dozen special mentions during his two tenures as MP, pleaded the State's case before the Water Resources Commission and written various articles.

Mr. Brar described the development as "historic" and said it was a different issue to analyse the impact the legislation could have. He however regretted that the Chief Minister did not discuss the matter at the party

level or take any senior leaders into confidence about the imminent step. Similarly, a Rajya Sabha member, Ashwani Kumar, said that like all other MPs from Punjab, he too endorsed the stance adopted by the State Government and ruled out any fissures on the issue.

A Minister from Punjab, who preferred anonymity, said that Capt. Singh had done something that none of the previous Chief Ministers could even dare of contemplating. He claimed that for a while Capt. Singh had stolen the thunder from the Akalis, especially Mr. Badal, who had been claiming to be the messiah of Punjabi farmers.

Political sources further indicated that Capt. Singh has so far withstood all pressures from the Congress leadership to effect a turn around, especially in light of the forthcoming elections to the Haryana Assembly. Some even indicated that the Chief Minister may prefer to quit but not succumb to any attempts to dilute Punjab's stance on the issue.

Meanwhile, Capt. Singh has got immense support from a quarter he least expected. The Shiromani Akali Dal, while continuing with the unconditional support on defending the State's claim on river waters, had in June gone to the extent of threatening to walk out of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), in case any of its constituents acted against Punjab's position. The Akali stand comes in reaction to the statement by the former Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani on Tuesday.

## A black law, says Haryana

By Our Special Correspondent

**CHANDIGARH, JULY 14.** The Haryana Cabinet, which met here this evening under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister, Om Prakash Chautala, took a serious note of the Punjab Termination of Agreements Act-2004 and described it as "a black law marking the nadir of legislative impropriety".

A resolution adopted by the Council of Ministers, has urged the Union Government to ensure that swift and firm executive, legislative and constitutional action is taken to prevent the "recurrence of such maverick attempts to subvert the Constitution and the economic and social fabric of the country".

Later talking to media persons, Mr. Chautala demanded that all nine Congress MPs of Haryana including the two Union Ministers hailing from the State -- Selja and Inderjit Singh -- should impress upon the Congress-led UPA Government at the Centre to get the verdict of the Supreme Court implemented and in case the Centre did not pay any heed to them, they should quit.

He further said that Ms. Selja and Mr. Inderjit Singh should be the first to quit their offices and fight for the protection of the interests of the State.

He also called upon all political parties to rise above petty politics and fight for safeguarding the interests of the

State. He asserted that the issue of construction of SYL canal was not confined to Haryana but was a national issue. He said that the Centre should direct the Punjab Government to follow the directions of the Supreme Court or take action against it. It was for the Governments to honour the commitments of their predecessor Governments.

When his attention was drawn towards some unpleasant incidents in some parts of the State in reaction to the Act, he said it was but natural for the people to react in such a situation.

He has appealed to the people not to be misled by the political gimmicks of the vested interests.



See also *Shiromani*

*J. Centre State*

## Captain as Terminator

Only one word to describe the Punjab Termination of Agreements Bill: Preposterous

THERE can be no two ways about it: the Punjab Termination of Agreement Bill, 2004, has to go. Not only is it bad in law, it is a betrayal of the Constitution since it disturbs the fine balance of power between the Centre and the states and undermines the vital unifying principles that keep this country together. The chief minister of Punjab, Captain Amarinder Singh, has long exhibited a disturbing streak of self-righteous arrogance and this move testifies to this. It is, in fact, a response to Supreme Court's directive to the Centre last month to ensure the completion of the Sutlej-Yamuna Link canal meant to carry the waters of the Sutlej to Haryana.

Since the court had based its decision on the 1981 agreement between the states of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan — on the sharing of the waters of the Sutlej, Beas and Ravi — Punjab's Congress government thought it best to terminate that agreement. In doing so, the chief minister was apparently oblivious of the fact that a unilateral response of this kind to what was essentially a tripartite agreement, with the Centre having played a facilitating role, is legally untenable. Or perhaps he knew this all right but didn't care because his intention was not so much to win the legal argument as to make a political point and to emerge as a champion of Punjab's interests. So politically shrewd was the move that even his bitter opponents — from the Shiromani

Akali Dal — have walked shoulder-to-shoulder with him on the issue. The Punjab chief minister's argument is that the SYL canal would adversely affect the population of the basin area within his state and render nine lakh acres of farmland barren — although how he has arrived at this projection remains uncertain. Also, he doesn't seem to care that he would, by threatening to keep captive for Punjab's use all the rivers that flow through the state, which is what the new Bill is about, be threatening devastation on large swathes of Haryana — which was once a part of Punjab, let it not be forgotten — as well as Rajasthan. *J. Centre State*

National resources like rivers cannot be the booty of any captain. If states have the constitutional right to use the waters of a river flowing through their territory, the Constitution also allows for the Centre to regulate the development and regulation of river waters in the public interest. Indeed, given the highly uneven spread of water resources in the country, it is incumbent upon the Centre to play this role. The National Water Policy recognises that managing this important resource — upon which hinges the right to life — in a sustainable manner has to be guided by a national perspective. It is this spirit that Chief Minister Amarinder Singh's latest piece of legislation so rudely destroys. The Bill is an affront to the nation and must find its way to the nearest dustbin.

# Punjab's chequered history of river waters dispute

By Sarabjit Pandher

**CHANDIGARH, JULY 13.** With the Punjab Assembly unanimously passing the Punjab Termination of Agreements Bill, 2004, the inter-State river waters sharing dispute, which has a chequered history, has once again assumed centre-stage. The recent judgement by the Supreme Court, directing the Union Government to complete the portion of the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal in the State, also contributed in focussing the spotlight on the issue.

While the development could pose some tough moments for the Congress, which controls power both at the Centre and in Punjab, while the party eyes a comeback in Haryana, where Assembly polls are round the corner. But the Chief Minister, Amarinder Singh, has hijacked an agenda of different shades of the Akali leadership.

Punjab has all along maintained that "justice" should be

done as per the recognised international riparian laws. Interestingly, none of the States that have been a party to the unresolved issue is a riparian State, except Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir. The other non-riparian States are Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi.

Going into the archives, reveals that the Indus Waters Treaty was signed between India and Pakistan in 1960, under which water of the Ravi, the Beas and the Sutlej were reserved for exclusive use by India after transition period. But the roots of the inter-State dispute began in 1966, when the Indian Punjab was reorganised. The Reorganisation Act, Section 78, provides for the apportioning of rights and liabilities of the existing State of Punjab among the successor States in relation to the Bhakra-Nangal project and the Beas project, by agreement entered into by States after consultation with the Centre.

In April 1976, the Centre

through a notification ruled that of available 15.2 million acre feet (MAF) of the water of the Sutlej, the Ravi and the Beas, Punjab and Haryana would be allocated 3.5 MAF each. Punjab filed a suit in the Supreme Court against the decision as well as challenged the validity of Section 78 of the Reorganisation Act.

In 1981, while the suit was still pending, the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, convened a meeting of the Chief Ministers of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan, on December 31. They inked an agreement according to which the flow series were changed from 1921-45 to 1921-60, resulting in an increase of the available of the Ravi and Beas waters from 15.85 MAF to 17.17 MAF. Punjab withdrew its suit.

On April 8, 1982, Ms. Gandhi broke the ground near Kapuri village of Patiala district to mark the beginning of construction of the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal. On the same day the Shlro-

mani Akali Dal (SAD) along with the State unit of the CPI(M) launched a Morcha against the canal. This metamorphosed into the "Dharam Yudh Morcha" of the SAD from the Akal Takhat in the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar. The agitation assumed violent proportions and Punjab suffered terrorism for almost a decade.

On July 24, 1985 the then Prime Ministers, Rajiv Gandhi, and the SAD chief, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, signed the Punjab Accord, whose Clause (9) pertained to sharing of river waters.

It was decided to constitute a tribunal headed by a Supreme Court judge. The settlement also stipulated completion of SYL by August 15, 1986.

Later the SAD Ministry in Punjab, headed by the Chief Minister, S.S. Barnala, initiated the construction of SYL. More than Rs. 800 crores was said to have been spent on the project. But no

a brick has moved since 1992, when terrorists shot dead two top Engineers and nearly two dozen labourers working on the project.

In 1986, the Union Government set up a tribunal to adjudicate the waters of Ravi and Beas rivers. The Eradi Tribunal, which was constituted in its report of January 30, 1987, made an allocation of water granting the non-riparian States, Rajasthan 8.60 MAF, Haryana 3.83 MAF, Delhi 0.20 MAF. The riparian Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir got 5.00 MAF and 0.65 MAF, respectively.

This was followed by Punjab filing a review application before the Tribunal on August 9, 1987, against the award given by it under Section 5(3) of the Inter-State Water Disputes Act. Interestingly, that application, seeking review, is still pending before the tribunal and the Centre, all these years, as the mandatory technical member on the tribunal could not be appointed.

While the groundwater in the State is fast receding, any transfer of water to Haryana would render nine lakh acres of irrigated land in Ferozepur, Bathinda, Muktsar, Moga, Mansa and Ferozepur districts as barren.

In 1999, Haryana moved the Supreme Court seeking construction of the SYL canal. Though the court had asked the Centre to intervene between the two States, it did not help.

A judgment that was kept pending was pronounced last year directing Punjab to complete the SYL canal within one year. Punjab filed a review petition, which was finally rejected, as the apex court directed the Union Government to undertake the construction through its agencies.

Punjab argued that while 17.17 MAF was earlier believed to have been available in the Ravi-Beas systems, the 1981-2002 data depicted the flow to be only 14.37 MAF.

While the groundwater in the State is fast receding, any transfer of water to Haryana would render nine lakh acres of irrigated land in Ferozepur, Bathinda, Muktsar, Moga, Mansa and Ferozepur districts as barren.

# 'Reluctant' Kalam sacks NDA Governors

## Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, July 2. — The simmering controversy over Governors with alleged RSS links reached boil-over point today with the President ordering the dismissal of the Governors of Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Goa and Haryana.

An indication of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam's reluctance to take that extreme measure was the home minister having to meet him three times within a single week to secure his signature on the order.

Former chief justice of Kerala High Court and now Governor of Punjab and administrator of Chandigarh, Mr. Om Prakash Verma, was today sworn in as Haryana Governor replacing

Mr B Parmanand. Also today, Dr Balram Jakhar was sworn in as the acting Governor of Gujarat. He took the oath in Sanskrit. Dr Jakhar was received at Ahmedabad airport by Gujarat chief minister Mr Narendra Modi.

However, the Governors of Rajasthan and Bihar, Mr Madan Lal Khurana and Mr Rama Jois were spared the axe.

It is understood that an exit route which the President preferred was not taken because the Centre had not taken a firm decision on the replacements.

Exercising the powers flowing from Article 156 of the Constitution, the Presidential warrant issued today said: "The following Governors shall cease to hold office of Governor of their

dismissal could have been avoided, officials opined, had the government followed the reasoning advanced by the President that it would be more dignified if the government had recommended his appointing other persons as the Governors of those four states.

Since Article 156 provides that "The Governor shall hold office during the pleasure of the President", the experts said that all that Dr Kalam would have been required to do was sign fresh warrants of appointment. The dismissal of the incumbents would have been automatic, yet unstated.

It is understood that Dr Kalam did some plain speaking when the Prime Minister and the home minister called on

him a few days ago to apprise him of the urgency to change the Governors of six states. The President reportedly told them that it would be best to avoid outright dismissal. The proper course, he reportedly felt, was to make fresh appointments.

But the home minister, sources said, did not have the alternative names ready since the Congress leadership was still undecided on the replacements. Political observers, therefore question the urgency of the Centre pressing the President on dismissals.

Mr Sudarshan Agarwal, Governor of Uttaranchal, will hold the dual charge of UP. Md Fazal, Governor of Maharashtra, has additional charge of Goa.

More reports on page 4



The President and the sacked four:

(Clockwise from top left): Mr KN Sahni, Mr Parmanand, Mr Kailashpati Mishra and Mr Vishnu Kant Shastri

respective States". They are: Mr Mr Babu Parmanand (Haryana), Mr Kedar Nath Sahani (Goa), Mr Vishnu Kant Shastri (Uttar Pradesh), Mr Kailashpati Mishra (Gujarat), and Mr Vishnu Kant Shastri (Uttar Pradesh). Direct

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THURSDAY, JULY 1, 2004

Centre's  
6/2/04

## RESPECT FEDERALISM

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THE CENTRE'S PROPOSAL for direct allocation of grants to districts for use in rural development programmes violates a basic principle of federalism and has justly been criticised by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa as a suggestion that "denigrates" the role of the States. There is much that is wrong with the present design and implementation of anti-poverty programmes but the solution does not lie in the Centre bypassing the State Governments and dealing with the local bodies. In India's federal structure, there is a division of responsibilities between the Centre and the State, and, as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar pointed out in the Constituent Assembly debate, each is sovereign in its own realm under the Constitution. Following the enactment of the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution, rural and urban local bodies have well-defined domains of governance. Owing to the mismatch between the powers of taxation and responsibilities in the three tiers, the Constitution calls for the Centre to transfer resources to the administration at the lower levels. The path for the devolution of funds has been clearly laid out: it is from the Centre to the States, and from the States to the rural panchayats and urban *nagar-palikas*. In this federal structure, there is no room for the Centre to deal in any manner — be it in design of programmes, fund allocation or monitoring — directly with the third-tier bodies.

The idea that the Centre should make block grants to the districts and for the panchayats to implement rural development schemes is not a new one. A similar proposal was made in 1989 by the then Congress Government to fund a new employment programme, the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana. The Centre was forced to abandon that idea when it was criticised by a number of State Governments for attempting to bypass them. The situation today calls for more, not less, respect for federalism. When the Centre holds the

purse strings and proposes direct funding of local bodies, it sends out the message that it is attempting to further centralisation. This is the very opposite of the spirit of *panchayati raj* that the United Progressive Alliance Government says it is committed to. The proposal for making block grants to the districts also creates the unhealthy impression, as the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister has pointed out, that it is the Government of India that is concerned about local governance while the State Governments are not. Several State Governments are on occasion guilty of delaying the transfer of Central Government funds to the panchayats and are also known to divert resources meant for one anti-poverty programme to another. Effective monitoring devices can be set up to check these abuses but a political consensus must be evolved on this issue.

The ill-advised suggestion that the Prime Minister made at the conference of Chief Ministers on *panchayati raj* has unfortunately blurred the agenda for reform of rural anti-poverty programmes. There is widespread replication and compartmentalisation in the design of the schemes, which reduces their efficacy. There are leakages at all levels, with just a fraction of the funds ultimately reaching the beneficiaries. And there is inadequate monitoring, which increases the possibility of corruption. The Prime Minister was entitled to ask the States to reflect on whether they were making the best use of the Rs.17,000 crores spent annually on various rural development schemes funded by the Centre. But he must give up any idea of bypassing State Governments and releasing funds directly to panchayats. Chief Minister Jayalalithaa's opposition to a plan that suggests the "takeover of the functions of the States by the Centre" will be widely shared by State Governments across the political spectrum.

THE PIN

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## 'Centre will ensure fiscal federalism'

By Gargi Parsai

*Centre's men 110-11 1/7*

**NEW DELHI, JUNE 30.** The Union Minister for Panchayati Raj, Mani Shanker Aiyar, today assured the State Governments opposed to direct funding of panchayats by the Centre that there was absolutely no basis for any fear.

"We are doing nothing to diminish the powers of the State Legislatures. The principle of fiscal federalism will be followed in the transfer of funds to PRIs as outlined by the Prime Minister in his inaugural ad-

dress," he said.

Addressing a joint press conference with the Union Rural Development Minister, Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, after the second day of the Chief Ministers' Conference on Rural Development through Panchayati Raj here, Mr. Aiyar said the Ministry would formulate a draft Action Plan towards the end of the year for consideration of the Chief Ministers towards achieving the vision of Panchayati Raj through seven round-table consultations with the States in the next six months in five regions

of the country on all aspects of devolution of power and funds to panchayats.

Mr. Singh said the two-day interaction during which most States sought more funds for development projects had convinced the Ministry that more allocation should be sought to augment the Rs. 17,000-crore annual budget of the Rural Development Ministry.

He said there was need for strict monitoring of the use of funds and favoured regular meetings of the gram sabhas at least four times a year.

# States oppose direct funding of panchayats

By Gargi Parsai

NEW DELHI, JUNE 30. Several States, including Bihar, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, today opposed the idea of direct funding of the Panchayati Raj institutions by the Centre for rural development schemes, prompting the Minister for Panchayati Raj, Mani Shanker Aiyar, to say that the States should not fear any transgression of the federal system. Instead, they should work in tandem with the Centre to strengthen the panchayats.

On the second day of the Chief Ministers' Conference on Rural Development through the Panchayati Raj today, most States expressed their reservations about the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh's proposal mooted on Tuesday for block funding of districts by the Centre on the incidence of poverty. Although the Prime Minister did not clarify whether the funds would be routed through the District Rural Development

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J. Centre State  
Agencies (DRDAs) or through the panchayats, the States wanted the funds to be routed through them.

Opposing the idea of direct funding, the Tamil Nadu Finance Minister, C. Ponnaiyan, said that if there were apprehensions about some States diverting rural funds, the Centre had the power to take "due action," but it could not take away the constitutional federal powers of the States. Mr. Ponnaiyan also sought a two-tier system of the Panchayati Raj saying the district panchayat level could be eliminated as it was "redundant" involving extra manpower.

The West Bengal Minister-in-Charge of Panchayat and Rural Development, Surjya Kanta Mishra, said the proposal to directly channel funds to the panchayats was "unacceptable." The State Government should be allowed to play their role. At the same time, the States should not hold on to the funds but re-

lease them to panchayats which could be monitored by the Centre.

The Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, also expressed reservations over "block funds to the districts" on the ground that putting all funds in one basket would be problematic. "Let there be a holistic evaluation on the basis of specific needs," he suggested.

Andhra Pradesh sought a "substantial allocation at the discretion of the State Government for utilisation depending upon the specific need of an area."

Later addressing a joint press conference with the Union Rural Development Minister, Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, Mr. Aiyar allayed the fears expressed by some States covered under Schedule VI Areas about disturbing the local bodies arrangement. He said the Centre would not disturb the existing arrangement in such areas.

Editorial on Page 10

# CMs want more funds

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, June 29. — While the Prime Minister lamented the non-utilisation of Central funds for rural development by the states, most chief ministers who attended the two-day conference today asked for more money.

Mr Mulayam Singh Yadav took the lead in asking the Centre to grant a special package for states — to the tune of Rs 18,250 crore — for development of rural areas. The BJP chief minister of Rajasthan had something else in mind. Mrs Vasundhara Raje said funds should not be sent to the Panchayati Raj institutions since they lacked infrastructure and manpower to spend the money. Instead, the funds should be sent to state governments.

Miss J Jayalalitha wanted more allocation for cooperative sectors while Mr Virbhadra Singh of Himachal Pradesh wanted more money to develop infrastructure in rural areas and provide drinking water to the people.

55-4 20/6  
**Buddha skips meet**

NEW DELHI, June 29. — The chief minister of West Bengal, Mr Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, skipped the two-day chief ministers' conference on rural development and panchayati raj. Though this was the first conference of the chief ministers called by the UPA government to which the Left Front is extending support, Mr Bhattacharjee was absent. The state was represented by its minister for panchayati raj. — SNS

Mr YSR Reddy, the new Andhra Pradesh chief minister, sought the Centre's permission to raise Rs 1,250 crore for the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana and demanded uniform a lending rate of 8.0 per cent for its bank-linkage programme.

Bihar chief minister Mrs Rabri Devi too asked for more funds.

# Are States making best use of funds for rural schemes?

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J. Centre  
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30/6

## ● Manmohan calls for 'honest appraisal'

By Gargi Parsai

**NEW DELHI, JUNE 29.** The Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, today asked the States to do an "honest appraisal" of their efforts to develop the rural areas and transform rural governance through Panchayati Raj.

Inaugurating a two-day Chief Ministers conference on 'Poverty Alleviation and Rural Prosperity through Panchayati Raj,' Dr. Singh asked the States to introspect whether they were making the best use of the Rs. 17,000 crores spent annually on various schemes under the rural development programme funded by the Centre. The conference should consider whether the compartmentalisation of efforts at the Centre and the States, without a core vision, made this investment sub-optimal and suggested that a uniform vision be evolved.

He said the variety of rural development programmes needed to be examined afresh and asked the conference to consider the adoption of a system of providing block grants to districts based on their incidence of poverty to do their own

planning and implementation.

The Prime Minister asked the Chief Ministers to become champions of decentralisation in their States. They should review the areas where panchayats were bypassed and take corrective measures. "Panchayati Raj is the medium to transform rural India into 700 million opportunities — the key instrument for integrating economic reforms with institutional reforms in villages and achieving Gandhiji's goal of purna swaraj through gram swaraj."

"An agreed vision" would enable the polity to address several pressing challenges such as that of rural employment. "We would then be able to combine the short-term needs of people for employment with a medium-term objective of improving their land and water resources to make agriculture productive. Targeted employment programmes that address the geography of poverty of environmentally degraded land can quickly restore their productive capacity, even as immediate livelihood security through wage employment

happens. They provide food security in the short term."

The strategy for rural development must unleash the productive potential of agriculture. New ground must be broken to increase the productive capacity of the small farms and businesses. "This can happen only if planning from below becomes a reality and developmental activities are based on local resource availability, potential and felt needs of people."

The conference was attended by several Chief Ministers including Dharam Singh (Karnataka), Rajasekhara Reddy (Andhra Pradesh), Narendra Modi (Gujarat), Uma Bharti (Madhya Pradesh), Amarinder Singh (Punjab), Om Prakash Chautala (Haryana), Naveen Patnaik (Orissa), Raman Singh (Chhattisgarh), Pawan Chamling (Sikkim), D.D. Lapand (Meghalaya), Tarun Gogoi (Assam), O. Ibobi Singh (Manipur) and N. Rangaswamy (Pondicherry). The Tamil Nadu Finance Minister, C. Ponnaiyan, represented his State and others by their Rural Development Ministers.

North-East plea: Page 12

# Centre calls CMs' meet to give rural India a new deal

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** The symbolism is too obvious to be missed. Sticking to its vow of putting the spotlight on rural India, the UPA government's first meeting of CMs and state ministers will be on the theme of poverty alleviation and rural prosperity through panchayati raj.

The Prime Minister will not just inaugurate the two-day conference on Tuesday but will stay on to exchange views with chief ministers to get a better idea of what needs to be done to fulfil the promises on a "new deal" for rural India.

It's no small task. Rural development minister Raghuvansh Prasad Singh says that even if existing government targets are met, 2012 will still see more than 11% people below the poverty line. That is 130 million people.

As the government moves to give shape to its new deal, the conference theme highlights, at one level, the absurdity of hiving off panchayati raj from the rural ministry. It's the first time this has happened.

And, on Saturday, the two ministers, armed



with separate agenda papers, shared a dais in a show of unity. Panchayati raj minister Mani Shankar Aiyar and Raghuvansh Prasad Singh held a joint news conference as a curtain raiser for the two-day event starting on Tuesday.

If there is some discomfort between them, they didn't make it obvious. So, what if Singh and his ministerial team had informally conveyed their unhappiness at the split? Aiyar, who focused on what needs to be done to make grassroot democracy a reality in every state, reflected his own reality at one point: We're linked to the structures, the organisations (sansthan), the money (dhanrashi) is with Raghuvanshji.

The two ministries have prepared separate agendas detailing the issues which need to be discussed. Much of this reflects the thrust of the common minimum programme: Pumping life into panchayati raj institutions, pushing employment opportunities, housing, rural infrastructure, watershed and wasteland development. Perhaps merging, and consolidating, development schemes.

মোদীকে

## বরখাস্ত করতে নারাজ কেন্দ্র

স্টাফ স্পোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ১৬  
জুন— এক দিকে যখন নরেন্দ্র মোদীর  
অপসারণ চাইছে রাষ্ট্রীয় স্বয়ং সেবক  
সঙ্ঘের একাংশ, কেন্দ্রের কংগ্রেস-শাসিত  
সরকার তখন সিদ্ধান্ত নিল মোদীকে  
বরখাস্ত না-করার। সুপ্রিম কোর্ট  
ইতিমধ্যেই নরেন্দ্র মোদীকে একাধিক  
বার ভর্ৎসনা করেছে। এই নির্দেশের  
ভিত্তিতে রাজ্য ৩৫৬ ধারা জারি করার  
দাবি তুলেছিলেন বেশ কিছু কেন্দ্রীয়  
মন্ত্রী। কিন্তু দলনেত্রী সনিয়া গান্ধী  
প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহের সঙ্গে  
বিষয়টি নিয়ে আলোচনা করেছেন। ঠিক  
হয়েছে, কংগ্রেস দলের পক্ষ থেকে  
মুখ্যমন্ত্রীর অপসারণের দাবি তোল  
হবে। কিন্তু এটি বিজেপি'র অভ্যন্তরীণ  
ব্যাপার। সংবিধানের অঙ্গ প্রয়োগ ন  
করে রাজনৈতিক স্তরে দাবি রাখা হবে  
প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সচিবালয়ের রাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী  
পৃথ্বীরাজ চহ্লান নিজেই সরকারের এই  
সিদ্ধান্তের কথা জানিয়েছেন। কংগ্রেসে  
পাশাপাশি লালুপ্রসাদ যাদব বা মুসলিম  
লীগ নেতা ই আহমেদ রাজ্যে ৩৫৬ ধার  
জারি করার দাবি জানান। কিন্তু বর্ষীয়ান  
কংগ্রেস নেতা প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় বলেন,  
বিজেপি'র অভ্যন্তরীণ কলহ এখন তুঙ্গে।  
এ অবস্থায় কংগ্রেস সরকার যদি চূপ করে  
থাকে ওদের ঝগড়া বাড়বে। কংগ্রেস  
বেশি কথা বললেই বিজেপি ঐক্যবদ্ধ  
হবে। আগামী ২২ ও ২৩ জুন মুম্বইতে  
বিজেপি'র কর্মসমিতির বৈঠক। তার  
আগে কংগ্রেস গুজরাত নিয়ে নীরবতার  
কৌশল নিয়েছে। কংগ্রেসের অধিবেশন  
অন্ধপ্রদেশে হবে জুলাই মাসে। ওই  
অধিবেশনে মোদী ও গুজরাত নিয়ে  
রণকৌশল চূড়ান্ত করা হবে।

এ দিকে বিজেপি'র মধ্যে মোদী  
বিতর্ক যখন চরমে, ঠিক তখন আর এস  
এস নেতৃত্বের একাংশও মোদীকে  
অপসারণের পক্ষে রায় দিয়েছেন।  
লালকৃষ্ণ আডবানী'র সঙ্গে আজ  
আরএসএসের দুই নেতা মদন দাস দেবী  
এবং রাম মাধব বৈঠক করেন। বৈঠকে  
আডবানী তাঁদের জানিয়ে দেন, মোদীকে  
সরানোর প্রকল্পে বাজপেয়ীর সঙ্গে তাঁর  
কোনও মত পার্থক্য নেই। কিন্তু  
আকস্মিক যেভাবে বাজপেয়ী মোদীকে  
সরানোর কথা বলে দেন তার সঙ্গে তিনি  
একমত নন। এই মন্তব্যের জন্য এখন  
মোদীকে সরানো কঠিন হয়ে পড়েছে।  
অন্য দিকে আরএসএস নেতৃত্ব  
আডবানীকে জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন, মুখ্যমন্ত্রী  
বদল নিয়ে তাঁদের কোনও অভিমত  
নেই। “ওটা বিজেপি'র অভ্যন্তরীণ  
ব্যাপার। কিন্তু লোকসভা নির্বাচনে  
বিপর্যয়ের কারণ হিসাবে গুজরাত ও  
মোদীকে দেখাতে আমরা রাজি নই।”

বস্তুত আরএসএস নেতৃত্বের  
একাংশও মোদীকে সরাতে তৎপর।  
গুজরাতে আরএসএসের কয়েকটি  
সংগঠনের উপর প্রাক্তন মুখ্যমন্ত্রী  
কেশুভাই পটেলের নিয়ন্ত্রণ অনেক  
বেশি। ভোটের আগে মোদী রাজ্যে  
গুজরাতের কৃষক সংগঠনের অফিসে  
তল্লাশি চালানোর নির্দেশ দেন। সেই  
ঘটনায় আরএসএসের একাংশ ক্ষুব্ধ।  
তবে এখন যে দলের বৈঠকের আগে  
মোদীকে সরানো সম্ভব হবে না, তা  
আডবানী আরএসএস নেতাদের জানিয়ে  
দিয়েছেন। কিন্তু এই বৈঠকের পর  
যথাসময় মোদীকে সরানো হবে।

# Jharkhand seal on CIL, DVC shift

SNS & PTI

RANCHI/KOLKATA, June 4. — The Jharkhand Assembly today passed a unanimous resolution to propose to the Centre to shift the headquarters of Coal India and Damodar Valley Corporation from Kolkata to Ranchi. The energy minister, Mr Lalchand Mahto, proposed the resolution which was adopted unanimously.

In Kolkata, West Bengal Congress sources said the Centre will eventually re-

ject Mr Shibu Soren's demand as he is trying to project himself as a chief ministerial candidate, prior to the Jharkhand Assembly polls next year. Mr Manas Bhunia, PCC general secretary, said: "Without being parochial, we must say that the shifting has no logic and it will be detrimental to the interest of West Bengal. But the Centre hasn't taken any decision," Mr Bhunia said.

The Left Front chairman, Mr Biman Bose, said: "Such demands are unjustified." Mr Shyamal

Chakrabarty, the West Bengal CITU president, said: "We are against this... such a move will create a split between the people of the two states... we will appeal to the Centre."

Mr Nirbed Roy, Trinamul MLA and party spokesman, said that any decision in favour of the shifting would be viewed as the UPA government's first step to deprive Bengal.

**Support from CPI-ML (Liberation):** The CPI-ML (Liberation) legislator, Mr Mahendra Prasad Singh, justified the

demand for shifting of the headquarters of the DVC and the CIL to Ranchi as Jharkhand produces more coal and energy than any other states. But in the case of shifting of SAIL, as it is spread over many states, it should not be included in the resolution, Mr Singh said. When water resources minister Mr Ram Chandra Kesri insisted to include the third proposal, newly-elected Speaker, Mr Inder Singh Namdhari, rejecting his contention, said: "I agree with Mr Singh."



# কোল ইন্ডিয়া-ডিভিসি ঝাড়খণ্ডে সরিয়ে আনায় সায় বিধানসভার

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, রাঁচি, ৪ জুন: সি আই এল ও ডি ভি সি-র সদর দফতর পশ্চিমবঙ্গ থেকে ঝাড়খণ্ডে সরিয়ে আনার একটি প্রস্তাব আজ সর্বসম্মত ভাবে বিধানসভায় পাশ হয়। রাজ্যের বিদ্যুৎমন্ত্রী লালচাঁদ মাহাতো ওই প্রস্তাব আনেন। সেই প্রস্তাবে সায় দিয়ে সমস্ত বিধায়কেরা হাত তুলে ও টেবিল চাপড়ে সমর্থন জানান। ওই দুই সংস্থার সঙ্গে সেইল-এর সদর দফতরও ঝাড়খণ্ডে নিয়ে আসার দাবি জানান কেউ কেউ। কিন্তু সেই দাবি শেষ পর্যন্ত গ্রাহ্য হয়নি। সরকারি সূত্রের খবর, ওই প্রস্তাব সামনে রেখে কেন্দ্রের কাছে সি আই এল ও ডি ভি সি-র সদর দফতর এই রাজ্যে স্থানান্তরিত করার দাবি জানাবে ঝাড়খণ্ডের বি জে পি সরকার।

কয়লামন্ত্রী হওয়ার পরে জে এম এম সুপ্রিমো শিবু সোরেন সি আই এল ও ডি ভি সি-র মূল দফতর পশ্চিমবঙ্গ থেকে ঝাড়খণ্ডে সরিয়ে আনার কথা বলেন। সেই নিয়ে হইচই পড়ে যায়। ওই প্রস্তাবের প্রতিবাদে তৃণমূল কংগ্রেস কলকাতায় আন্দোলনে নামার হুমকি দেয়। আপত্তি জানায় কংগ্রেস। কিন্তু খনিমন্ত্রী নিজে বক্তব্যে অটল থাকায় প্রস্তাবটি নতুন মাত্রা পায়। জনমত গড়ে ওঠে ঝাড়খণ্ডে। জে এম

এম সুপ্রিমোর ওই প্রস্তাবে ঝাড়খণ্ডের আর এক মন্ত্রী কংগ্রেসের সুবোধকান্ত সহায় ছাড়াও সাধারণ মানুষ কয়লামন্ত্রীকে সমর্থন জানান। রাজনৈতিক মহলের বক্তব্য, এতে প্রমাদ গোনেন ঝাড়খণ্ডের বি জে পি নেতৃত্ব। জনসমর্থন বিরোধী শিবিরের দিকে চলে যাওয়ার শঙ্কায় পাল্টা চাল দেন মুখ্যমন্ত্রী অর্জুন মুণ্ডা। সমর্থন জানান শিবু সোরেনকে। এর পরে গত কাল রাতে মুখ্যমন্ত্রীর বাড়িতে বি জে পি এবং জে ডি ইউ নেতারা বৈঠকে বসেন। সেখানে বিরোধীদের কোনঠাসা করা ছাড়া সি আই এল, ডি ভি সি-র সদর দফতর ঝাড়খণ্ডে আনার বিষয়টি বিরোধীদের হাত থেকে কেড়ে নেওয়ার সিদ্ধান্ত হয়। এবং তার প্রথম ধাপ হিসাবে বিধানসভায় ওই প্রস্তাব পাশ করিয়ে নেয় শাসক দল।

ঝাড়খণ্ডের বিদ্যুৎমন্ত্রী লালচাঁদ মাহাতো আজ বিধানসভায় ওই প্রস্তাব আনেন। তাতে সর্বসম্মত ভাবে সকলে সায় দেন। এর পরে স্টিল অথরিটি অব ইন্ডিয়া'র সদর দফতরও এই রাজ্যে সরিয়ে আনার প্রসঙ্গ তোলেন কয়েক জন বিধায়ক। কিন্তু সেই প্রস্তাব নাকচ হয়ে যায়। ভাকপা (মালে)-র বিধায়ক মহেন্দ্র সিংহ যুক্তি দেন, সি আই এল এবং ডি ভি সি-তে এই

রাজ্যের বহু লোক কাজ করলেও ঝাড়খণ্ডে সেইল-এর অধীন বোকারো ছানা আর কোনও কারখানা নেই। সুতরাং সেইল-এর সদর কার্যালয় ঝাড়খণ্ডে স্থানান্তর করার যৌক্তিকতা নেই। প্রতিবাদে জলসম্পদমন্ত্রী রামচন্দ্র কেশরী 'এই দাবি আমাদের অনেক দিনের' বলে সমর্থন আদায়ের চেষ্টা করলেও তা ধোপে টেকেনি।

# Centre-State financial ties

By Abhijit Sen

W HATEVER SPIN different commentators may put on the electoral verdict, one aspect is crystal clear. The electorate has rejected resoundingly the claim that a general "feel-good" has followed the economic "reforms," which have delivered to the rich by reigning in taxes and government discretion.

Every Central Government that "reformed" in this manner since 1991 has lost the subsequent election. And, in keeping with this trend, the party political message from the present verdict is also rather fractured. While the National Democratic Alliance is the big loser overall in these elections, the Congress too has not been spared. Its Vidhan Sabha defeats in the Legislative Assembly elections of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan have been repeated and not only has it suffered further losses in Assam, Karnataka, Kerala and Punjab, its Maharashtra performance, though better than 1999, still augurs poorly for the Vidhan Sabha prospects.

Nonetheless, the just concluded elections have demonstrated more clearly than in the past that claims of development, however hyped, are meaningless without results at the grassroots. And, in particular, that if "reforms" and less government mean poorer infrastructure, collapsing systems of education, health and food security, and withdrawal of support to agriculture, voters will have none of it. As the new dispensation takes office on its promise of delivering to the "common people," it is necessary

to bear in mind that none of these concerns can be delivered upon unless finances of State Governments are sound. Most election manifestos have missed this.

This has the implication that efforts to arrive at a common minimum programme (CMP) may fail on the essential concerns of voters if the economic content of this remains limited to broad statements on specific areas of Central Government competence. With the nation's popu-

lates any change in the TFC's terms of reference or on parameters that might affect its assumptions as quickly as possible.

As to the terms of reference, the potentially controversial area is grants linked to reward of "performance." Since this is an area that gives the Centre discretion on what constitutes "performance," the new government should indicate where it stands and the matter discussed with at least those who are party to the

## *The new government should indicate immediately its position on the two issues that have virtually bankrupted all State Governments: the impact of Pay Commission awards and the overhang of high-cost debt.*

lation now split roughly evenly among the States where the Congress, its allies (both pre-and post-poll) and the NDA rule, Centre-State financial relations are probably the most important economic issue that needs to be addressed — differently from the atrocious and partisan discretion shown by the NDA on this matter.

Many of the issues involved fall properly in the domain of the Twelfth Finance Commission (TFC), which should not be interfered with. But this Commission is bound not only by its terms of reference but also by current fiscal practices which it must assume while making its awards. The Central Government must make clear whether it contem-

stantially improve overall State finances.

On this, a recent concept note from the Planning Commission has suggested that all State debt to the Centre (but not to the NSSF) be written off and that there be no further loans from the Centre to the States. According to this, all future Centre to State transfers would take only the form of grants and all borrowings would only be from the market but subject to Reserve Bank discipline under Article 293 of the Constitution.

Although this suggestion of complete write-off may attract criticism, the idea is bold. It can help to clear the logjam that currently results in much higher than market interest rates paid by the States, with the Centre receiving more from these interest payments (including to the NSSF) than it collects from income tax. A decision on this is necessary and it must also extend to Small Sav-

ings. If not a complete debt write-off, at least the State debts should be quickly restructured to ensure that interest liabilities are at no more than the market rates at which the Centre itself borrows. For State finances to be viable, the long-run requirement is that the average rate of interest must be substantially less than the medium-run rate of growth of nominal GDP. This at least must be assured if States can begin delivering on what voters clearly want.

(The author is Professor at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.)

# Centre goes soft on Hurriyat's demand

Press Trust of India  
New Delhi, March 26

A DAY before the second round of talks between Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani and the Hurriyat Conference delegation led by chairman Maulana Abbas Ansari, the decks are understood to have been cleared for the release of about 10 more detainees.

The second round of meeting will be held at the North Block, where Advani will be assisted by Union Home Secretary Anil Baijal and the Centre's interlocutor on Kashmir, N.N. Vohra. Besides Ansari, the Hurriyat delegation would comprise former chairmen Abdul Gani Bhat, Mirwaiz Umer Farooq and Bilal Lone.

The Hurriyat delegation will stress the release of detainees from prisons, bringing back all Kashmiri prisoners lodged in various jails in the country into the state, reduction of paramilitary personnel within the Valley and a complete end to the human rights violations in the state.

The Centre is likely to assure the Hurriyat leadership that releasing of detainees will be a gradual process. However, the delegation would be asked not to make requests for release of specific persons who had been booked under various provisions of the IPC or Pota, since these cases were



AFP  
Women watch the funeral procession of a former militant who was killed by unidentified gunmen in Srinagar on Friday.

pending trial in the courts. The issue of human rights violations would come up for discussion at the meeting, where the Hurriyat is likely to stress effective steps to check this. The Centre has already stated its serious intentions to ensure that no reports of such violations took place and has conveyed to the Hurriyat the steps taken by the Army and paramilitary forces.

The issue of human rights violations had virtually taken the entire process of talks into rough weather when the Hurriyat threatened to pull out following allegations that the security forces had used

civilians as shields in Bandipora last month.

However, the issue was brought under control after Advani convened a high-level meeting in which he asked the Army and paramilitary forces to maintain the utmost restraint. The Hurriyat's demand for reduction of the security forces in the city areas of the Valley is not likely to be agreed to in view the forthcoming parliamentary polls.

Before the meeting on Saturday, Vohra is likely to brief Advani on the developments since the first round of talks and the strategy to be adopted by the Centre.

# Hurriyat deadline to Centre

*Handwritten: Hurriyat deadline to Centre*  
JAMMU, Feb. 25. — The All Party Hurriyat Conference (Ansari faction) today accused the Centre of breach of trust and issued a one-month ultimatum to it to bring a perceptible change on ground, failing which it would not join the second round of talks with Mr LK Advani scheduled in the later half of March.

Addressing a news conference in Srinagar today, Hurriyat chairman Moulvi Mohammed Abbas Ansari said the Centre had failed to fulfil the promises made during the first round of talks in New Delhi on 22 January. "We had given them ample time to bring perceptible change on ground. Instead, there is an increase in human rights violations. Chattibandi, Naristan Trail and Yaripora incidents are glaring examples of the breach of trust and promises. We feel talks and human rights violations cannot go together. And it will be a meaningless exercise," Mr Ansari said.

Issuing an ultimatum to the government,

he said the Hurriyat was giving one month's time to the Centre. During this period the government should take steps and fulfil the promises made to the Hurriyat. "We can't hold the second round of talks with the Centre unless human rights violations are stopped. We'll wait for one more month and if the change is not visible on ground we'll pull out of the process," he said.

Accusing the Centre of breach of trust, Mr Ansari said since the Hurriyat had entered into negotiations there had been reports of 18 custodial deaths and 15 custodial disappearance in Kashmir. "This is against the principles of dialogue. Even Mr Advani's directive to security forces on 15 February has not been honoured."

**Fernandes downplays threat:** Defence minister Mr George Fernandes today sought to downplay the Hurriyat threat to walk out of talks, saying these were "small issues" which would be "definitely solved", PTI adds from New Delhi. — SNS

# Jogi back, Cong says he won't be another DP



NEW DELHI, Feb. 25. — The Congress says it won't be a "DP Yadav event" for it. But party leaders admit that Mr Ajit Jogi's virtual re-induction into the party has happened because of the ex-chief minister's "pressure tactics".

Mr Jogi, who was suspended following the cash-for-MLAs scam after the Chhattisgarh polls, was today allowed by the Congress to campaign in the North-east. The decision is being seen as a precursor to the formal withdrawal of his suspension. The party's disciplinary committee has reportedly recommended lifting the suspension and an announcement could come "sooner rather than later", a leader said.

Around 30 Congress MLAs from Raipur had written to the high command urging withdrawal of Mr Jogi's suspension. Mr Jogi had also been dropping hints about forming a regional party if the Congress didn't take him back. His supporters had questioned the wisdom of punishing him when the BJP didn't take any action against Mr Dilip Singh Judeo. — SNS