

# Manmohan hints at tax, labour reforms

“We are on the threshold of the Asian Century”

Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Saturday nudged India Inc. to adopt a forward-looking approach in preparing for global competition and leverage opportunities for targeting a 25-35 per cent share of manufacturing sector in national income as he promised a new surge in investment, improvement in tax administration and labour reforms for grater flexibility.

He was speaking at the 78th Annual General Meeting of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry here.

“We will continue to do whatever is needed to remove the constraints of domestic enterprise. We are in exciting times. We are on the threshold of the Asian Century. We will work with you and walk with you in this journey of creativity and enterprise,” Dr. Singh said.

With “very positive” business confidence being reposed in the economy, he said the decade ahead must be turned into one of investment to convert the nation into a first rate agricultural, industrial and service economy.

The Prime Minister said the Government would be mindful of the interests of domestic industry even as the economy integrated with global business. And while encouraging enterprise and creativity and reforming the public sector, modifications would be made in the labour policies, if required, through consensus generated by stakeholders, he said.

Social welfare legislation must go hand in hand with labour market flexibility, he said. “This will help increase employment while taking care of employees’ concerns.”

Referring to concerns voiced by outgoing FICCI chief O. S.

Kanwar about tax laws and tax system, he said the country had moved towards lower tariffs, uniform tax rates and easier procedures. Over the next year tax administration would be improved, making interface with the tax system as pleasant, smooth, problem-free and conducive to easy tax compliance.

Expressing satisfaction over the progress of the VAT system, Dr. Singh said revenues had been buoyant setting at rest worries about its feasibility.

“We need to move towards greater rationalisation of VAT and CENVAT rates, and most importantly, towards a common goods and services tax. This would enable, in the final analysis, India into becoming a genuine common market, a dream of the founding fathers of our Republic”, he said, hoping that it would happen in the next 3-4 years.

# PARLIAMENT ■ Left, BJP, Sena protest, PM concedes little ground Walkout in LS over EPF rate

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 22

**T**HE Left, Samajwadi Party and the Shiv Sena today staged a walk out from the Lok Sabha after the government failed to give a firm commitment on restoring the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) rate to 9.5 per cent from the 8.5 that it was brought down to on December 7.

During a call attention motion on the issue, Left MPs warned the government of "serious consequences" if they did not "see the writing on wall". Suresh Kurup of the CPI(M) pointed out that the same fate awaited the incumbent government as the NDA, which, he said, ousted from power after it decreased the interest rate.

Labour Minister Chandrasekhar Rao, however, did not answer today call attention motion. The task was left to Minister of State for Rural Development A Narendra. In his statement, Narendra said that in the December 7 meeting, "the board authorised the chairman, CBT, to take a decision in the matter" and, "EPF has accordingly declared the rate of interest for the financial year 2005-6 at 8.5 per cent". Thereafter, the minister also acknowledged that the Central trade unions and others have demanded that the rate of interest should not be reduced to 8.5 cent. He said the matter "is under consideration in the ministry at present".

Responding to this statement, Rupchand Pal of the CPI(M) said that this cut was against the interest of employees since it constituted their only means of social security.

## EPFO to discuss investing part of corpus in shares

ANANDA MAJUMDAR  
NEW DELHI, DEC 22

THE Central Board of Trustees of the EPF Organisation will in January consider a proposal to invest a portion of EPF money in shares and private sector debt instruments. The proposal, put forward by the government, would help it earn enough to maintain a 9.5 per cent interest rate on EPF deposits.

According to the proposal, five per cent of Rs 40,000 crore which is added annually to the fund would be invested in companies that have an investment grade debt rating from at least two credit rating agencies. The suggestion has not been accepted by the Finance and Investment Committee of the EPFO, but making a major concession, a Left member on the

Board of Trustees of EPFO said the Left trade unions would not object to the proposal if the money was invested only in PSU shares.

"We do have a problem about investing this money, which comes to about Rs 2,000 crore, in shares. But we will have no objection if it is invested in PSU shares like those of oil companies and IFFCO," said D L Sachdeva, who attends meetings of the EPFO trustees on behalf of the AITUC. The concession reflects a change from the Left's earlier opposition to any plan to link EPF to the share market.

Sachdeva explained that investment in PSU shares would keep the money secure while helping it grow.

The other proposal before the EPFO trustees would be to invest up to 10 per cent of the corpus in private sector

debt instruments and an equity-linked mutual fund scheme regulated by SEBI. The Finance and Investment Committee makes a pitch for this proposal saying, "Keeping in view the safety aspects in mind, the investment up to 10 per cent can be restricted only to private sector bank debt instrument, which have an investment grade rating for at least two credit rating agencies."

Later, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who met 50 MPs, on the issue conceded little ground and in fact suggested to the MPs that with the inflation rate holding true the rate of interest was adequate. The MPs from the Left parties, the SP and RJD met him in Parliament House today where the PM only said he would take up the matter with the Labour Minister and the Finance Minister.

Then Kurup pointed out that it was the NDA government that first decreased the interest rate from 12 per cent and as a result was voted out of power. The UPA ran the risk of a similar fate, he said, while asking the government why it could not find the necessary funds to support the 9.5 per cent rate.

Gurudas Dasgupta of the CPI, while echoing similar sentiments, also added that the minister's statement was

"untrue" and that the trade unions had opposed a cut in the EPF rate. He stated that

this cut would effect 15 crore people (assuming five crore people have EPF accounts

and each person has three dependents) and, therefore, needed a commitment from the government, not a statement that the "matter is under consideration", which, he said, amounted to "parliamentary evasion".

His party colleague, C K Chandrappan, said the UPA government should "see the writing on the wall".

Other MPs also wanted to raise issues concerning the rate cut, but Speaker Somnath Chatterjee disallowed them. At one point, the Speaker got Dasgupta to apologise before the minister replied to the issues raised by the Left parties. However, expressing dissatisfaction with Narendra's attempts to answer their queries, they staged a walk-out along with MPs from SP and Shiv Sena.



# Work on separation of nuclear facilities at advanced stage

A question of affordability for EPF: Manmohan

Amit Baruah

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Sunday said the exercise of separating India's civilian and military nuclear facilities was at "a fairly advanced stage."

Two groups were set up — one in India and the other in the United States — to discuss the implementation of the July 18 civilian nuclear deal with the U.S. The groups were "interacting."

The Prime Minister was answering questions from presspersons on board a special aircraft on his way to Kuala Lumpur.

Asked whether he was satisfied with the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) Board fixing an 8.5 per cent interest rate for the current year, Dr. Singh said it was not a question of his being satisfied or dissatisfied.

"It is a question of what the EPF Organisation can afford. We need the organisation to be strong financially. They should declare interest rates they can sustain. If they can sustain a higher rate [of interest], I will be very happy."

To a query whether there would be any political intervention to settle the issue, he said that even last year the government said there was no scope for budgetary support for EPF rate. "Any rate that has to be paid has to come out of the resources of the EPF Organisation."

On the terms of reference of the R.S. Pathak Inquiry Authority, appointed to look into the allegations contained in the Volcker Committee Report, Dr. Singh said these were spelt out in the notification on the setting up of the panel. "We have no proposal to tinker with that."

Asked whether the government would place the documents obtained by special envoy Virendra Dayal from the United



**LOOKING EAST:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who arrived in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday for the ASEAN Summit is seen at the airport with Malaysian Minister for Youth and Sports Azalina Othman. — PHOTO: REUTERS

- EPF: No scope for budgetary support
- No change in Pathak terms of reference

Nations in Parliament, he said these papers were the property of the Pathak Inquiry Authority.

The Prime Minister promised that the Pathak panel report and the action taken report of the government would be made available to Parliament. "We are not going to keep anything hidden from Parliament."

PTI reports

Dr. Singh parried a question about assigning the External Affairs Ministry portfolio ahead of the upcoming visits by two key heads of states, including possibly United States President

George W. Bush. "The decision will be known when it comes," Dr. Singh said to a question when he would name a new External Affairs Minister.

French President Jacques Chirac is expected in February next and Mr. Bush is expected to visit the country soon after. Dr. Singh has retained the charge of the External Affairs Ministry with him after Natwar Singh was relieved of his charge. — PTI

Another report on Page 12

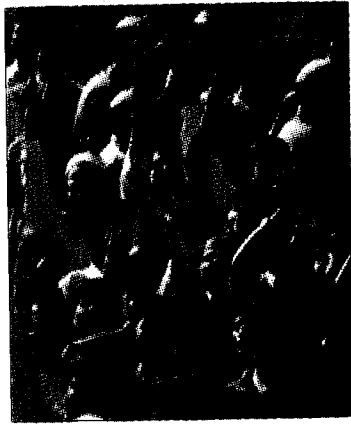
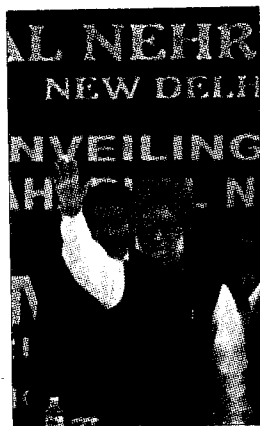
# Go, PM, go: JNU Left tells Manmohan 'foe'

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Nov. 14. — Students of Jawaharlal Nehru University today played ungracious hosts. Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh was shown black flags and his half-hour speech, after he unveiled a statue of Pandit Nehru on the campus, was punctuated by slogan-shouting.

Students affiliated to the All India Students' Association, Democratic Students' Association and Progressive Students' Association led the protest. "The students were vociferous against Dr Singh's visit primarily on two counts: that he was the architect of the new economic policy and secondly and most importantly, India's vote against Iran at the International Atomic Energy Agency on the nuclear issue," one of the students said.

Even before Dr Singh rose to speak, the Union human resources development minister, Mr Arjun Singh, was shouted down by the students. When Dr



Dr Manmohan Singh at JNU. (Right) Students shout slogans as the Prime Minister begins his speech there. On Monday. — The Statesman

Singh started his speech, the slogans grew all the more strident. As the Prime Minister continued speaking, a scuffle between policemen and students gave way to fisticuffs between the Leftist students and their anti-Left colleagues, mainly members of the NSUI and the JNU Patriotic Front. Three Leftist students were injured.

It was only after Dr Singh had left the dais that policemen succeeded in hemming in the two warring factions. Dr Singh later sought an explanation from

the vice-chancellor, Prof. BB Bhattacharya, and told him that he wanted to meet the protesters. "Dr Singh waited for the students, but they did not turn up," Prof. Bhattacharya said.

Meanwhile, CPI-M leader Mr Sitaram Yechury said India should abstain from voting in the IAEA meet. In Thiruvananthapuram, finance minister Mr P Chidambaram today dismissed suggestions that the Left parties were trying to stonewall economic reforms.

**Bengal against FDI in retail, page 9**

# Natwar gets PM's backing

20/10  
Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 30 OCTOBER

As expected, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Sunday defended his UN probe report-tainted external affairs minister and Gandhi family loyalist Natwar Singh. Dr Singh rejected the demand for his resignation.

However, a significant section of the government conceded that the UN indictment of Mr Singh as a lobbyist for an unwholesome Saddam regime has damaged his ability to handle New Delhi's relationship with the outside world.

The Prime Minister's defence of the minister is not surprising as dropping him from the Cabinet would tantamount to accepting the panel's other key finding — that Saddam paid money for buying support of the Congress.

More than 24 hours after the full implications of the committee's revelations hit the Manmohan Singh government in its face, the Prime Minister's office came out with a statement rejecting the Opposition's demand for dropping Mr Singh from the Union Cabinet.

Immediately after he returned to the Capital from Moscow, Mr Natwar Singh

drove to Congress president Sonia Gandhi's and the Prime Minister's residences to clarify his position, and denied having played any role in the transactions conducted under the oil-for-food programme.

"The Prime Minister agreed that the facts mentioned in Table-3 of the report of the Independent Inquiry Committee are insufficient to arrive at any adverse conclusion against the external affairs minister and stands by him," a PMO statement said.

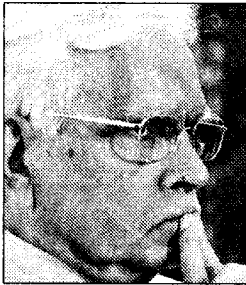
The minister may have succeeded in "convincing" Dr Singh and his party about his innocence, but is unlikely to cut any ice with others. His conduct and utterances during the period under spotlight, in which he worked with a missionary zeal to mobilise support for the Iraqi despot, Saddam Hussain, militate against his protestations.

Fresh disclosures about the role of his son Jagat Singh, who's the Congress MLA from Lachhmangarh in Rajasthan, are certain to add to the embarrassment of the Congress establishment and nail Mr Singh's lie.

## Party to hear his side of story

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 30 OCTOBER

NOTWITHSTANDING Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's decision to 'stand by' his external affairs minister Natwar Singh,



there is fear that the political fallout could be damning for the Congress and the Centre.

While rejecting the UN commission charges against it, the Congress had left it to the minister to explain his role. This gave, quite rightly, the impression that he may be in for trouble. But Dr Singh's defence of his tainted minister has put to rest, at least for the time being, speculation of his immediate ouster. Dr Singh's stand also indicates that Sonia Gandhi, his main support, has decided to shield him.

Some said, since the nature

of charges levelled against both the Congress and Dr Singh are the same, the leadership would have found it difficult to defend just the party. After he explained "his side of the story" to the leadership, Dr Singh issued a statement defending his minister. The minister also got comfort from the Left, the cold warrior's ideological friends.

Dr Singh and his camp have already begun a counter-propaganda saying that the UN report was part of an attempt by certain forces (read the US and West) to target people like him and parties like the Congress for their defence of the Saddam Hussein regime. But this effort to project themselves as "victims of imperialist designs" can only suit the Left.

For, Dr Singh is supposed to be the Centre's pointsman in foreign policy and is expected to play a key role in cementing India's relations with the US. Taking this stand will diminish Dr Singh's credibility to deal with the US.

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The Economic Times

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# Bihar Governor to stay, for now

9/10

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*No wrong if Gov has political background: PM*

**VINOD Sharma & SAROJ Nagi**  
Chandigarh, October 8

BUTA SINGH stays as Bihar Governor at least for now till the Supreme Court delivers a detailed judgment stating the reasons for holding the May 23 dissolution of the Assembly "unconstitutional." This was made clear by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at a joint Press conference he addressed with Congress president Sonia Gandhi here on Saturday.

While Singh made it clear that he doesn't see any wrong in appointing persons with political background as Governors, Sonia ruled out charges that Raj Bhawan played a major role in dissolution of Bihar Assembly. Singh said, "The Governor made a recommendation. The Union Cabinet acted on that. The Supreme Court, by a majority judgment, declared the dissolution unconstitutional. We don't know the reasons. We'll wait for the final judgment."

From available indications, the detailed judgement might come after the court resumes sittings from October 18. But why are Raj Bhawans being used to meet political ends? To that, Sonia quipped: "I don't think politics Raj Bhawan se hua hai." In the context of the Sarkaria Commission's recommendation against appointing active politicians as Governors, the PM argued: "Various elements go into the question of (appointing) Governors. Being active in politics isn't nec-

## I'm not disowning role: Manmohan

MANMOHAN SINGH on Saturday said that he did not disown his responsibility in regard to the dissolution of the Bihar Assembly which he defended as the only "practical course" open.

When told that the Presidential order was based on his Cabinet's recommendation, Singh said, "I don't disown my responsibility as PM. There were special circumstances brought to our notice. It was our assessment at that time that it (dissolution) was the only approach. I will not be able to comment further without seeing the detailed judgement." He was asked whether his government was not morally responsible for the dissolution of the Assembly since the Court had described the dissolution as "unconstitutional".

essarily a bad qualification for being a Governor."

Sources said contrary to earlier plans, the party's core group did not meet after the PM's arrival here on Friday night. But on Saturday morning Singh talked to Sonia at the CMs' conclave before the two arrived together for the 30-minute interaction with the media.

They did not hedge any question, barring the one on Singh's meeting with the President in Delhi. "It will be a bad precedent to disclose in public what transpired be-

tween me and the President," the PM said.

As the party's top leadership watched from the sidelines, Sonia denied contemplating a change of guard in any of the 15 Congress-ruled states. But she hasn't yet arrived on a decision on Jammu & Kashmir where it's the Congress' turn now to take the mantle of chief minister-ship from the PDP.

Scotching speculations that elected Congress Working Committee seats could be filled with nominees, she reiterated her preference for the electoral route.

Among the questions the PM fielded were those relating to India's vote in the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Left's pressure tactics. "This isn't a vote against Iran. We'd like the issue (of Tehran's alleged non-compliance with NPT safeguards) to be resolved within the IAEA (instead of being referred to the UNSC)," he explained, adding.

"Diplomacy has to be given a chance to arrive at a viable solution. And the resolution for which India voted is meant to give diplomacy a greater chance."

However, the PM was non-committal about the way India would vote at the IAEA in November: "We'll cross that bridge when we come to it." On the differences with the Left, he struck a cordial note, pointing out that there haven't been any major hiccups in the 16 months of the rule by the Congress-led UPA government at the Centre.

# No compromise with terror, says Manmohan Singh

Emphasis on a humane police force

Vinay Kumar

**NEW DELHI:** Asserting that there was no question of any compromise with terror anywhere be it Jammu and Kashmir or any other part of the country, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Thursday emphasised the need to have competent, just, accountable and humane police force.

He proposed to establish a "Police Mission", intended to give the police a new outlook, a new sense of purpose and create a new vision for it. "The Mission will seek to transform the police forces in the country into effective instruments for maintenance of internal security and facing the challenges of the next century by equipping them with the necessary material, intellectual and organisational resources," Dr. Singh announced addressing the conference of the Directors General of Police and Heads of Central Police Organisations here.

In his view, the proposed "Police Mission" would pay special attention to empowering the police force at all levels; to appropriate decentralisation and delegation of powers; to the promotion of a culture of excellence in police organisation; to enhance accountability to the people and to make them skilled, competent, just and humane.

The Prime Minister saw new challenges for the police in the form of new trends in urban unrest and disorder and new forms of social unrest. "Police should enjoy the respect and the trust of the common citizens. Otherwise, the entire police delivery system would suffer. At the same time, it will not be possible to deal with the complex problems that the nation faces without keeping the morale of the police force high," he said.



Manmohan Singh

Acknowledging that police and security forces faced multi-dimensional security challenges in different regions of the country, including Jammu and Kashmir, the North East and in a large swathe of the hinterland which was affected by the problem of Left wing extremism, Dr. Singh said several noteworthy steps by way of conflict resolution have been taken with regard to Jammu and Kashmir and the North East. "Notwithstanding these peace initiatives, the police and security machinery of the country cannot afford to lower their guard. No group or organisation can be allowed to take the law of the land in their own hands and indulge in violence," he told the top police and intelligence officials of the country.

Asking the police leadership to begin to "think big and think out-of-the-box", the Prime Minister said it was important if crucial changes in police attitudes were to be effected. "There should be a system of internal checks and balances to minimise the scope of excess or omission. Prompt corrective and penal action is necessary. This is especially so in relation to the functioning of the police. The

powers of arrest, search, seizure, institution of a criminal case in courts, and so on afford vast scope for misconduct by police personnel and officers. This can and does harm and harass innocent citizens also. There must be zero tolerance for extra-judicial killings," Dr. Singh said.

While the Prime Minister stressed upon a new outlook and vision for the police to change their work culture and improve image among the public, it was left to the Director, Intelligence Bureau, E.S.L. Narasimhan, to flag trouble spots in the country's internal security scenario. According to Mr. Narasimhan, the overall level of violence in Jammu and Kashmir and the North East came down in comparison to last year but there was a new security concern which directly affected India: criminal elements and miscreants taking the route through Bangladesh to enter Delhi and other parts. His concern also emanated from the rise of the Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen in Bangladesh which was involved in August 17 blasts in Bangladesh's 63 districts.

The IB chief said the probe into the recent terror strike in Ayodhya showed that terrorists got directions and arms from across the border. Illegal migration into India, use of modern technology by miscreants that also posed threat to the economic security and helped funding of terrorism, fake Indian currency and cyber-crimes remained pockets of persistent concern, Mr. Narasimhan said.

Calling for providing quality service at the police station at the lowest level of a constable, the IB chief said the policeman should always be a friend of the public. "A policeman should be able to find the missing cattle of a farmer, that should be his friendly nature."

# I propose to engage Musharraf, says Manmohan Singh

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## Possible to inject a "movement forward"

Harish Khare

**NEW YORK:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has asserted that he proposed to remain "engaged" with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, and if he "delivered" on his promise to control terror flow into Jammu and Kashmir then it would be possible to inject a "movement forward" in bilateral relationship.

Answering questions in a formal press conference on Friday on his last day of engagements here in New York, the Prime Minister disagreed with the suggestion that his dialogue on Wednesday night with President Musharraf was "a backward movement."

Nor was it a "reversal" of the peace process, he added. The joint statement reflected a commitment to search for a "pragmatic solution" to all issues between the two countries.

### "Surprised"

Dr. Singh, however, said he was "surprised" by Gen. Musharraf's invocation of the Security Council's resolutions on Kashmir and that the reference was "at divergence with the tone and tenor of his speech at the United Nations last year."

The Prime Minister added that his initial thinking was that if that was going to be Pakistan's attitude, "there was no point in talking."

But Dr. Singh said that when the matter was brought up with the Pakistan leader over dinner,

he clarified that it was not his "intention" to muddy the peace process waters. The Prime Minister also suggested that it was unrealistic to expect "major dramatic pronouncements" from what was essentially a "side-show". He added that his dinner dialogue was marked by frankness and the two leaders tried to understand their respective compulsions (back home). It was, according to the Prime Minister, a very constructive "essay in mutual comprehension."

In reply to another question, the Prime Minister added that "I was very impressed by his [General's] unambiguous assurance that he had put in place systems" that would ensure an end of cross-border export of terror.

### Troop reduction

Dr. Singh hoped that "the general was right" and that the situation improved. He also recalled that he had told the All Parties Hurriyat Conference leadership only a few days ago that if the infiltration and violence stopped New Delhi could consider troops reduction in the Valley.

The Prime Minister also added that "it was our obligation and that we owe it to ourselves to protect the dignity and human rights" of all citizens of Jammu and Kashmir and that India was prepared to review all cases of detainees.

At the same time, the Prime

Minister made it categorical clear that "our stand has not changed" that there would be no re-drawing of borders.

But he added that it would require human ingenuity to reconcile the three positions: (a) the Indian position that the border will be re-drawn; (b) the Pakistani position that status quo was unacceptable; and, (c) his own formulation that while the border would not be re-drawn it was possible to make the border irrelevant.

### Position on Iran

The Prime Minister also answered a number of questions on the American irritation with Indian position on Iran and whether this irritation was going to jeopardise the July 18 India-U.S. agreement on civilian nuclear energy. Dr. Singh clarified that India did not hold a "brief" or offered an "alibi" for Teheran's nuclear programme and that India continued to believe that Iran was under an obligation to fulfill all international commitments. It was also India's view that "another nuclear state in our neighborhood was not desirable."

Conceding that both President Bush and Secretary of State Rice did bring up the matter of Iran, the Prime Minister asserted that "I do not see a crisis in our relationship" and that differences between New Delhi and Washington were only on tactics, not on objectives.

17 SEP 2005

THE HINDU



# AICC defends PMO remarks, but meekly

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 14 SEPTEMBER

**T**HE AICC on Wednesday appeared, if not preferred, to be confused and defensive in wholeheartedly defending Prime Minister Manmohan Singh from the BJP attack. The main Opposition party had attacked Dr Singh's reference to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's opposition to the recent Indo-US energy pact, during his meeting with US President George Bush.

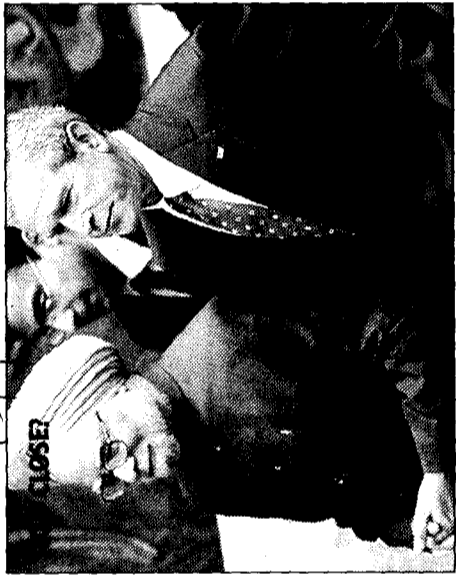
AICC spokesperson Jayantini Natarajan on Wednesday laboured hard to strike a technical distinction between the PM's press advisor's statement on Mr Vajpayee's remarks, in his New York briefing, and the foreign secretary's official statement, which skipped the issue. Ms Natarajan dismissed the BJP charges that the PM had departed from

the convention of not taking up domestic political issues at a foreign trip. Labelling them as "a diversionary tactics of the BJP to cover up its internal mess," she said: "We all know what the BJP and Mr Vajpayee had stated about the Indo-US defence pact. It is no secret and the whole world knows about it."

The spokesperson chose to project a rehearsed confusion of the AICC. "We have to wait and find out what was said by the PM's spokesman (regarding Mr conversation the Prime Minister had

with the President, or not. We would rather focus now on the statement issued by the foreign secretary," she said.

Faced with a volley of questions on how the Congress leadership could overlook the briefing done by a senior PMO official, who is the spokesman of the Prime Minister, Ms Natarajan said: "There is no question of distancing from the Prime Minister or the PMO spokesman. We know that the Prime Minister's spokesman knows his job. I only said we would like to verify the facts, reported by the TV, before commenting. At the moment we are not privy to what had transpired between the PM and the US President during their talks." She skipped the questions on how the AICC could not be sure whether the talks between the Dr Singh and President Bush were "private", even after the PMO gave an official briefing about it.



**CPM takes it lightly**  
THOUGH the CPI frowned on Prime Minister Manmohan Singh raising India's internal matters with US President George Bush, regarding the recently signed Indo-US nuclear deal, the CPM chose to treat it lightly.

However, the party reiterated that it had serious differences with the government over several aspects in the Indo-US joint statement, signed by Dr Singh in Washington in July.

"The Prime Minister cannot be faulted for telling the truth. Not only the BJP but the Left has serious differences on the issue," CPI(M) politbureau member Sitaram Yechury said. He said to state there were differences in India on the Indo-US relations is stating a fact.

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'MANY POSSIBILITIES ON J&K'

# Violence must end first: PM

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**Indo-Asian News Service**

PARIS, Sept. 11. — The Prime Minister has once again ruled out any redrawing of borders in J&K but said he was ready to look at various possibilities of a solution and he had many things to discuss with the Pakistan President when they meet later this week in New York.

Dr Manmohan Singh, who arrived here today on a three-day visit to France, told journalists accompanying him that Pakistan must destroy the "terrorist infrastructure" targeted at J&K to enable the peace process to forge ahead.

Asked if he stood by his earlier observation that Gen. Pervez Musharraf

was a man to be trusted, Dr Singh said with a smile: "I have not changed my views."

Dr Singh said the two countries should work "to make these boundaries (J&K border) irrelevant" and added that "there are many possibilities (of solution) and many things to discuss".

The Prime Minister said Pakistan had taken "some steps" since his meeting with Gen. Musharraf in New Delhi in April to check anti-India terrorism from its soil, but much more was needed to be done. "For anything to happen violence has to cease," he said.

The Prime Minister will hold talks with French leaders, including President Mr Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Mr Dominique de Villepin.

Earlier in New Delhi, he promised to convey India's commitment to further strengthen the strategic partnership with France, adds SNS. "It's our intention to further expand cooperation in the fields of trade and investment, defence, space, civilian nuclear energy, advanced science and technology as well as cultural and civilisational ties," he said.

He will also interact with French businessmen and seek ways to promote bilateral trade. He will leave for New York on Tuesday to attend the UN General Assembly session and return to India on 17 September.



Dr Singh addresses the media before his departure. — AFP

# Think big, don't worry about reforms, says PM

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 1 SEPTEMBER

**A**t a time when West Bengal chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee has forced a debate within the Left leadership on the rationale of continuing with its dogmatic opposition to the reform agenda, the Prime Minister on Thursday said fears about reforms, including FDI in retail, were overstated and merely reflected lack of self-confidence, even as he exhorted Indians to start thinking big.

"Many of our apprehensions about liberalisation are often overstated. We often lack the self-confidence required to deal with new opportunities," Dr Manmohan Singh said in his speech at the golden jubilee celebrations of LIC at Lucknow.

On the retail sector, Dr Singh said fears were being expressed about opening it up to foreign investment. "I am reminded about the kind of apprehensions that were expressed when we first

proposed foreign investment in insurance.... We worry far too much about the risks and do not grasp adequately, power of our own capabilities" the Prime Minister said. Incidentally the prime minister had discussed the issue of FDI in retail with the West Bengal chief minister when they met last night. The chief minister has reportedly told Dr Singh that his government could prepare a policy document on FDI on retail and that Left will be prepared to examine it.

Pitching for fast-track reforms, Dr Singh said: "I urge all Indians to think big. I urge them to unleash their creative potential...we can take on the competition and make good use of new opportunities at home and abroad."

Presenting an example, the prime minister said LIC had proved all doubters of liberalisation wrong and surged ahead, creating new records in a more competitive market after the sector was opened up to FDI. "Once again we find such apprehen-

enter into a sustained phase of 7-8 per cent growth, breaking away from trends of the recent past. He said the Indian economy had already demonstrated the capability to move on to higher growth path with manufacturing sector showing tremendous dynamism and services sector being key driver of growth.

Hopefully, with focus on agriculture and irrigation, the primary sectors too would show faster growth, the prime minister said, adding that infrastructure was a constraint and the country required huge investments in roads, railways, ports, power, civil aviation and telecom to ensure that growth process was not throttled.

While expressing serious concern about the country's financial health, Dr Singh warned that economic progress could be hindered if the mounting fiscal deficit of 9-10% of the national income was not contained. "I feel concerned about the financial health of the country. The collective fiscal deficit of the Centre and

states is 9-10% of our national income," he said. If the deficit was not contained, "the economic progress of the country could be impaired," the PM said and asked the state governments to discharge their obligations in this regard as also strive to improve education and health services.

He was also worried about the mounting losses in some state electricity boards, which could trigger an economic crisis and asked all political parties to think of ways and means to meet the rising power demand of the nation. "The electricity boards in some states are not working properly. Every year there is a loss of Rs 25,000 to 30,000 crore. Power has not reached the rural areas and the farmers are not able to make full use of it," Dr Singh said.

The Prime Minister said if the country had to progress, the functioning of state electricity boards would have to be improved and transmission and distribution losses be checked. "We might have to provide free power

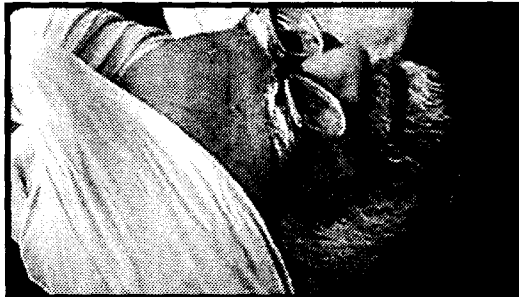
to poor farmers, but if the losses continued to mount there could be a crisis," Dr Singh said.

Asking public sector power utilities to learn to succeed in the era of competition and globalisation. Laying stress on savings, the Prime Minister said money from savings could be used to fund infrastructure development.

In this context, he pointed out that the government's 'Bharat Nirman' rural infrastructure development programme entailed an expenditure of Rs 1,74,000 crore in the next four years.

"If we have to arrange the fund without bringing inflation (into the picture), we will have to prepare the people to save more," he said.

Here he underlined the importance for improved efficiency of public sector enterprises which were set up with the idea of using the profits for development. "If public sector enterprises were not able to make profits, Jawaharlal Nehru's dreams could not be fulfilled", he said.



sions are being expressed today when we look at new market opportunities. There is excessive anxiety with change," he said, perhaps with an eye on the Left. Turning to the economy, he said India was at the cusp of a historic change and it was possible to

# বুদ্ধের পথে দেশ হাটলে আপত্তি কেন,

## বামেদের কটাক্ষ করলেন মনমোহন

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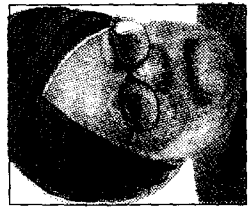
স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২৫ অগস্ট: সংস্কারের চাকা ঘুরা করে দেওয়ার আনন্দ সবে উপভোগ করতে শুরু করেছিল বাম। ঠিক তখনই যুরোপীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ। খুচরো ব্যবসায়ী বিদেশি লম্বি থেকে শ্রম সংস্কার, যাবতীয় বিতর্কিত কাজই তিনি যে আবার শুরু করতে চলেছেন তা 'ম্যাকিনজে কোয়ার্টারলি' পত্রিকাকে দেওয়া সাক্ষাৎকারে স্পষ্ট করে দিয়েছেন মনমোহন। খোলাখুলি জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন, অনেক বেশি সংস্কারের পথে হাটীর প্রয়োজন থাকলেও জেট সরকারের বাধাবাধকতার জন্যই তিনি তা করতে পারছেন না। সেই সঙ্গে বিশ্বায়নের এই যুগে সংস্কারের লক্ষ্যে পশ্চিমবঙ্গের কাজকর্মের প্রসংসা করে প্রশ্ন তুলেছেন, পশ্চিমবঙ্গের জন্য যা ভাল, তা সারা দেশের জন্য ভাল নয় কেন।

সহজ করে বললে প্রশ্নটা এই যে, বুদ্ধদেব উদ্ভাচার্য যা করছেন, সেই কাজটাই তিনি করতে গেলে কেন বাধা দেবেন প্রকাশ্যে কারাটি!

কাল রাজ্যসভায় দিল্লির বাম নেতৃত্বকে কটাক্ষের পরে আজ এই সরাসরি আক্রমণ। ফলে ক্ষুব্ধ বামেরাও আজ প্রত্যাখ্যাত করেছেন। সীতারাম ইয়েচুরির চ্যালেঞ্জ, সরকারকে এই নিয়ে বিতর্কে নামুক। তাঁর বক্তব্য, পশ্চিমবঙ্গকে অনুসরণ করতে হলে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারকে ভূমি অধিকার সংস্কার করতে হবে এবং ভূমিহীন চাষির ক্ষমতায়ন করতে হবে। সিপিআই নেতা গুরুদাস দাশগুপ্ত শ্রম সংস্কারের প্রশ্নে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর বিরুদ্ধে আক্রমণ শানিয়ে বলেছেন, কী ভাবে শ্রমিক অধিকার হারাচ্ছে এবং দরিদ্রতার হেজু তা জেনেও প্রধানমন্ত্রী একপেশে কথা বলছেন।

এই প্রত্যাখ্যাতটাও স্বাভাবিক। কারণ 'শ্রমিক জোঁড়ার পাঁচ' কে নিয়ে প্রধানমন্ত্রী প্রশ্ন তুলেছেন একেবারে শ্রম সংস্কারের বিষয়টিতেই। পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকার শ্রম সংস্কারের গুরুত্ব বুঝতে

পারছে এবং বেসরকারিকরণের পথেও এগোচ্ছে, এই কথা জানিয়ে তিনি বলেছেন, বাম দলগুলিকে এ কথা বোঝাতে হবে যে, যা পশ্চিমবঙ্গের জন্য ভাল, তা সারা দেশের ক্ষেত্রেও ভাল। "আমি আশা ছাড়িনি," এই মন্তব্য করে মনমোহন বলেছেন, "বামপন্থীদের দেশপ্রেমে আমার পূর্ণ আস্থা আছে বলেই আমি মনে করি, যা সারা দেশের জন্য ভাল সেই সব বিষয়ে জেরাও আমাদের সঙ্গে আসবেন। তাঁর বক্তব্য, এ ভাবে ধীরে ধীরে যে মতক্য গড়ে উঠবে তা অনেক বেশি স্থায়ী হবে।" এই মন্তব্যের উদ্দেশ্য বামেদের দেশপ্রেম নিয়ে প্রশ্ন তোলা হয়তো নয়, কিন্তু আমেরিকার সঙ্গে সম্পর্ক প্রসঙ্গে কারাটি যে ভাবে তাঁকে দেশের স্বার্থের কথা স্মরণ করান, হয়তো তারই জবাব।



গত কুড়ি বছরে (অর্থাৎ রাজীব গান্ধীর প্রধানমন্ত্রিত্বের সময় থেকে) পশ্চিমবঙ্গের মতো ভূমি সংস্কার তো কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার করেইনি, উপরন্তু গরিবদের জন্য সব ভর্তুকি তুলে দিয়ে উণ্ডায় ধনীদের জন্য 'ভর্তুকি' দেওয়ার ব্যবস্থা করছে। পশ্চিমবঙ্গের মতো করে বিদেশি বিনিয়োগ আনার চেষ্টা করলে তাঁদের আপত্তি নেই বলেও ইয়েচুরি জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন। কারণ সেখানে উৎপাদনশীলতা বাড়ানো, কর্মসংস্থান এবং উন্নততর প্রযুক্তি দেওয়ার শর্তের ভিত্তিতে বিদেশি বিনিয়োগ টানা হচ্ছে। ইয়েচুরির এই বক্তব্যে অবশ্য বিস্ময় প্রকাশ করেছেন আরএসপি-র অবনী রায়। সালিম গোষ্ঠীর বিনিয়োগ বা নতুন বিমানবন্দর পুরো বিদেশি লায়ের ক্ষেত্রে কী ভাবে এই তিন শর্ত পূরণ করা হবে, তা নিয়ে প্রশ্ন তুলেছেন তিনি।

অন্য দিকে, গুরুদাস দাশগুপ্ত পশ্চিমবঙ্গকে আক্রমণ করাটা অর্থোক্তিক বলে মনে করেছেন। কিন্তু প্রধানমন্ত্রীর বিরুদ্ধে আক্রমণ শানিয়ে তিনি বলেছেন, "পশ্চিমবঙ্গ-সহ সব জায়গায় মানুষ ন্যূনতম মজুরির চেয়ে কম পারিশ্রমিকে কাজ করছেন। পাঁচ শিল্পেও এই ঘটনা ঘটছে। মানুষকে অনেক বেশি সময় কাজ করতে হচ্ছে। সংস্কার-পর্বে মজুরি কমেছে এবং মালিকদের মুনাফা বেড়েছে। সব প্রধানমন্ত্রী জানানো। তা সত্ত্বেও তিনি বাণিজ্যিক সংস্থাগুলির স্বার্থে একপেশে কথা বলছেন। আমরা এতে শঙ্কিত।"

দেশ অনেক এগিয়েছে বলে মনে করেন মনমোহন। কিন্তু যতটা এগোতে পারত ততটা হয়নি। এখন চিনের মতো মাত্রা বিদেশি বিনিয়োগ টানতে না-পারায় এবং শ্রম আইনের প্রচণ্ড কড়াকড়িতে দেশ সমগ্রের সঙ্গে তাল মিলিয়ে ততটা দ্রুত এগোতে পারছে না বলে তিনি মনে করেন। জেট সরকারের তাঁর সীমাবদ্ধতা স্বীকার করে তিনি বলেন, যতটা একমত থাকলে তিনি নিজের মতামত প্রতিষ্ঠা করে 'বিরাট ভাবে এগোতে' পারতেন, তা সম্ভব হচ্ছে না।

শ্রম সংস্কারের প্রশ্নে তাঁর সরকার 'বিশ্বসংযোগ্য পদক্ষেপ' করতে চলেছে এবং খুচরো ব্যবসায় বিদেশি বিনিয়োগের দরজা খুলতে আগামী চার-পাঁচ মাস তিনি নিজেকে বাস্তব রাখবেন বলেও প্রধানমন্ত্রী জানিয়েছেন। তবে শ্রম ক্ষেত্রে সরাসরি পশ্চিমী ধাঁচের 'হায়ার আন্ড ফায়ার' মডেল অনুসরণ করা সম্ভব নয় বলেও তিনি জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন। তাঁর বক্তব্য, দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব এশিয়া এবং বিশেষ ভাবে এর পর সাতের পাতায়

## বুদ্ধের পথে

প্রথম পাতার পর  
জাপানকেই তিনি অনুসরণ করবেন। তবে শ্রম আইনের কড়াকড়ি শুধু দশ শতাংশ মানুষের জন্যই, এ কথা জানিয়ে তিনি বলেছেন, অসংগঠিত ক্ষেত্রের নব্বই শতাংশ মানুষের জন্য পরিস্থিতিটা পুরোপুরি শিথিল। এ ছাড়া সরকার অতিরিক্ত খাদ্য আইন চালু করতে চলেছে বলে মনমোহন জানান।

কাল রাজ্যসভায় তিনি যে ভাবে বুদ্ধদেব উদ্ভাচার্যের ভূমিকার প্রশংসা করেছিলেন এবং আজ প্রকাশিত সাক্ষাৎকারে যা তিনি বলেছেন, তাতে যথেষ্টই চটেছেন বামেরা। সিপিএম 'নরমপন্থী' অংশের প্রবক্তা সীতারাম ইয়েচুরিই আজ এই সব প্রশ্নে বিতর্কের জন্য সরকারকে চ্যালেঞ্জ জানিয়েছেন। তাঁর বক্তব্য, পশ্চিমবঙ্গের মতো ভূমি সংস্কার তো কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার করেইনি, উপরন্তু গরিবদের জন্য সব ভর্তুকি তুলে দিয়ে উণ্ডায় ধনীদের জন্য 'ভর্তুকি' দেওয়ার ব্যবস্থা করছে।

পশ্চিমবঙ্গের মতো করে বিদেশি বিনিয়োগ আনার চেষ্টা করলে তাঁদের আপত্তি নেই বলেও ইয়েচুরি জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন। কারণ সেখানে উৎপাদনশীলতা বাড়ানো, কর্মসংস্থান এবং উন্নততর প্রযুক্তি দেওয়ার শর্তের ভিত্তিতে বিদেশি বিনিয়োগ টানা হচ্ছে। ইয়েচুরির এই বক্তব্যে অবশ্য বিস্ময় প্রকাশ করেছেন আরএসপি-র অবনী রায়। সালিম গোষ্ঠীর বিনিয়োগ বা নতুন বিমানবন্দর পুরো বিদেশি লায়ের ক্ষেত্রে কী ভাবে এই তিন শর্ত পূরণ করা হবে, তা নিয়ে প্রশ্ন তুলেছেন তিনি।

অন্য দিকে, গুরুদাস দাশগুপ্ত পশ্চিমবঙ্গকে আক্রমণ করাটা অর্থোক্তিক বলে মনে করেছেন। কিন্তু প্রধানমন্ত্রীর বিরুদ্ধে আক্রমণ শানিয়ে তিনি বলেছেন, "পশ্চিমবঙ্গ-সহ সব জায়গায় মানুষ ন্যূনতম মজুরির চেয়ে কম পারিশ্রমিকে কাজ করছেন। পাঁচ শিল্পেও এই ঘটনা ঘটছে। মানুষকে অনেক বেশি সময় কাজ করতে হচ্ছে। সংস্কার-পর্বে মজুরি কমেছে এবং মালিকদের মুনাফা বেড়েছে। সব প্রধানমন্ত্রী জানানো। তা সত্ত্বেও তিনি বাণিজ্যিক সংস্থাগুলির স্বার্থে একপেশে কথা বলছেন। আমরা এতে শঙ্কিত।"

# Singh googly to Left

Role model tag on Buddhadeb <sup>25/8</sup> My line is party <sup>9-PM</sup> line, says CM

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi, Aug. 24: If Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee said yesterday he supported what Manmohan Singh was trying to do in Delhi, it was the Prime Minister's turn today to return the compliment.

"Every chief minister should learn from Buddhadeb's role model," Singh told Parliament amid enthusiastic thumping of desks.

The glee in Congress ranks was the most palpable because they thought the Prime Minister, an economist by training, had made a clever political turn by exploiting an apparent contradiction in the CPM.

Travelling in Singapore yesterday, Bhattacharjee had said he favoured "100 per cent privatisation", presumably including foreign investment, of new ports and airports.

It seemed his statement was in conflict with the party's position, which is not comfortable with fully private-owned ports and airports.

Of late, however, it appears to have come round to the view that though existing ports and airports cannot be privatised, new projects can come up with private investment.

There was little obvious reason for the Prime Minister to comment on Bhattacharjee's trip since he was speaking in the Rajya Sabha on the employment guarantee bill.

Yet, he chose to digress.



PM PRAISES...

"He is doing what we should all be doing," Singh said, referring to Bhattacharjee's efforts to attract foreign investment.

CPM politburo members Sitaram Yechury and Brinda Karat were in the House when Singh made his comments. In Delhi, the CPM has been opposing nearly every reform measure.

On the contrary, Bhattacharjee said: "Our Prime Minister is working very hard to take India forward and he has a vision for it."

A prime ministerial aide said Singh had read today **The Telegraph** report on Bhattacharjee's statements.

If Singh caused consternation in the CPM, other Left parties were vocal. "We are opposed to giving foreign investors control over such sensitive areas as airports and telecom. The CPM must resolve its own contradictions," said Abani Roy of the RSP.

ASHIS CHAKRABARTI

Singapore, Aug. 24: Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee is confident the CPM stands by his reform agenda — even on controversial issues such as private, including foreign, investment in new ports and airports.

Away from home, he knew his views on private investment in new ports and airports could raise questions within the party. Singapore-based investors and fund managers too confronted him with the question whether he had his party behind him — in Bengal and Delhi.

Asked if his views on private investment in new ports and airports had his party's approval, he said: "It (the party's view) is what I say. I consciously said what I had said about airport privatisation yesterday."

He sought to clarify, however, that he — and his party — wanted the modernisation of existing ports and airports to be carried out under a "public-private partnership". But the private sector, domestic and foreign, can "build, run and manage greenfield projects, on a 100 per cent equity basis".

That means he has no problem with a second airport in Calcutta coming up entirely in the private sector.

Even Singapore's foreign minister, George Yeo, quizzed him on his "communist government". The minister told



...KARAT CRINGES?

him that his government had "reservations" about Bengal because of its Left rulers.

"We are staunch capitalists and you are communists. So how can we invest in your state?" he asked Bhattacharjee. But he had been hearing "good things" about the Bengal government and the chief minister. "I'd like to come and see things for myself," he assured Bhattacharjee.

The chief minister sought to downplay reports about differences with the party, but added that the CPM had been debating some issues and trying to reach a "consensus".

"All political parties in the world are debating new issues," he added.

"Believe in Bengal," he said and cited cases where it has shown the way in reforms. Bengal was the first state to get into a public-private partnership in housing.

■ See Page 8

# Give up arms and fight polls, PM tells naxalites

22/8 HD-1 9-PM

There is no grievance that cannot be solved by democratic means



**PRESS FREEDOM:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh receives a caricature of himself from Koratala Satyanarayana, Chairman of the Prajasakti Sahitee Samastha at the Silver Jubilee celebrations of Prajasakti in Hyderabad on Sunday. Mr. Singh was inaugurating a national seminar on "Press and the Nation." At right is Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy. - PHOTO: P.V. SIVAKUMAR

THE HINDU

# FM halts PSUs' <sup>HT-1</sup> sell-off <sup>17/8</sup>

HT Corporate Bureau  
New Delhi, August 16 <sup>9 PM</sup>

STRATEGIC SALE or privatisation is dead. The epitaph has thus been written for the NDA government's successful divestment programme. Finance minister P. Chidambaram said on Tuesday that the Centre was abandoning its plans to sell stakes in state-run units to strategic investors as the process was not transparent.

Asked if it was being done at the behest of the Left, he denied it, saying the decision was taken almost a month ago. This is in any case in consonance with the common minimum programme of the UPA, he said.

Earlier in the day in Parliament, minister of state for finance S.S. Palanimanickam said the government was calling off its disinvestment drive in 13 state-run companies. The firms include aluminium-maker Nalco, oil refiner Hindustan Petrochemicals Ltd, Engineers India Limited, Shipping Corporation of India, National Fertilisers Limited and Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertiliser.

The decision, which comes just 10 days after the government put on hold its plans to sell a stake in engineering firm Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd and its residual stake in car-maker Maruti Udyog Ltd, will be a blow to its plans to fund projects for the rural poor through asset sales. The cash-strapped government plans to set up an investment fund with the proceeds of asset sales to pay for infrastructure projects for the rural poor and to revive weak state-run firms.

The Left, which is backing the Congress-led government, has been threatening to launch a nationwide protest if the Centre steps up sales in profit-making firms. The government had chosen to look at the offloading of minority shareholding in the capital markets, but the Left opposed such a move and even threatened to launch a mass movement.



## Shelved

- Plans to sell stakes in state run companies abandoned
- Centre blames process, calling it not transparent

17 AUG 2004

17 AUG 2004

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# Half-hearted steps by Pak. won't do: Manmohan Singh

Our vision is growth that would improve the life of common man



**CALL TO THE NATION:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh ending his Independence Day address, saying 'Jai Hind' from the ramparts of the Red Fort in Delhi on Monday. — PHOTO: AFP

Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI:** Firmly identifying his Government with the *aam aadmi* (common man), Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on Independence Day that India's future was "extremely bright" but the focus would need to be on economic growth and social justice.

Using the nation's grandest pulpit, the Prime Minister invoked the Mahatma's definition of swaraj and said his Government's National Common Minimum Programme had the same goal. "The benefits of [this] progress and growth must reach all sections of society in a fair manner. Our vision is not just of economic growth, but also of a growth which would improve the life of the *aam aadmi*."

Dr. Singh used the occasion to send out a message to Pakistan as also to the terrorist groups in Jammu and Kashmir that "as long as they continue their terrorist attacks, our armed forces will be alert and given them a fitting response." He acknowledged that the Pakistan Govern-

- Golden Quadrilateral to be six-laned
- Corruption in government not to be tolerated
- Pay reasonable price for electricity
- No child to be deprived of primary education
- Medicines to be made available at reasonable prices
- All help to Mumbai and other rain or flood-hit states

ment had put some checks on the "activities of terrorists from its soil." However, these were "half-hearted efforts" and "it is necessary that the entire infrastructure of terrorism is totally dismantled."

#### "Door open for talks"

Arguing that no problem was beyond "discussion and dialogue," the Prime Minister said the Government's door was open and invited "everyone to join us to discuss the problems of the State of Jammu and Kashmir so that its people can lead a life of peace and dignity." But "if violence continues, then our response too will be hard."

Dr. Singh regretted that "complete peace and tranquillity" eluded regions such as Jammu and Kashmir and the northeast. The armed forces were called upon to deal with a difficult situation. For them, he announced a Prime Minister's Scholarship Scheme, under which each year scholarship would be awarded to 5,000 children of those soldiers who "laid down their lives in the service of the nation."

Conceding that "accidents do happen once in a while," the Prime Minister mentioned about the committee to review the provisions of the controversial Armed Forces Special Powers Act. In a clear message to the

people in the northeast, he said the "Report of this Committee is being examined in detail and we will take all necessary steps so that there are no violations of human rights under this Act."

On terrorism and extremism, he said: "a democratic government should be able to differentiate between the genuine problems of people and the designs of terrorists." In any case, extremism was a challenge that not only required "a united response from all of us" but also called for "a political resolution of this problem."

The "composite dialogue" with Pakistan was continuing, the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad highway had been reopened and "discussions are also going on on a gas pipeline from Iran to India via Pakistan." He made a specific mention of the project in the context of the controversy over his remarks on the pipeline project during his recent visit to the United States.

Text of Manmohan's speech on  
[www.hinduonnet.com](http://www.hinduonnet.com)



# The Prime Minister in the Rajya Sabha on August 11, about the Nanavati Commission Report on the 1984 Sikh massacres

## 'A great national shame, a great national tragedy'

**M**R. CHAIRMAN, Sir, I must confess to you, at the very outset, that speaking on this occasion has meant a great emotional strain for me. We are discussing the issues which have grave implications not only on the future of a brave community but also on the future of our nation. Four thousand people were killed in this great national tragedy that took place in 1984. This should be an occasion for introspection, how working together as a united nation, we can find new pathways to ensure that such ghastly tragedies never again take place in our country.

I respectfully submit that this is not achieved by pursuing partisan goals, apportioning blame. And I, as the Prime Minister of this country, have no hesitation in saying that what happened — the death of a great Prime Minister who had served our country with the greatest distinction in peace and war, who brought victory to this country in the eventful days of the Bangladesh War; her death at the hands of her own bodyguards — was a great national tragedy.

What happened subsequently was equally shameful. I know for certain, having worked with Indira Gandhi, she would have never approved of any harm coming to a single individual on account of anything that was done to her. We all know the events of 1984, the tragic events in the Golden Temple. There was top-level demands on the Prime Minister to change her Sikh bodyguards and she said, "I would not be worthy of being the daughter of Indian revolution if I were to start suspecting people on the basis of their religion or community."

**Sir, I have no hesitation in saying that what took place after Indira Gandhi's death was a great national shame, a great national tragedy. I have seen public statements of the honorable leaders of the opposition saying that I should ask the forgiveness of the country. I accompanied the Congress President to Harmandir Sahib some five or six years ago, when we together prayed, "God give us the strength, show us the way that such things never again take place in our country."**

**I have no hesitation in apologising not only to the Sikh community but the whole Indian nation because what took place in 1984 is the negation of the concept of nationhood and what enshrined in our Constitution. So, I am not standing on any false prestige. On behalf of our Government, on behalf of the entire people of this country, I bow my head in shame that such thing took place.**

But, Sir, there are ebbs, there are tides in the affairs of nations. The past is with us. We cannot rewrite the past. But as human beings, we have the willpower and we have the ability to write better future for all of us. This debate serves to focus attention on the quest for that better future, that all our citizens to

whichever community they may belong, that they should feel honourable members of our nation, that they have every right and ability to lead a life of dignity and self-respect as equal citizens of this ancient land of ours with glorious traditions of over 5000 years.

If the debate had turned on these events it would have served its purpose. But reading out extracts sometimes out of context, sometimes in context does not lead us to those pathways. I started by saying, Sir, that we are discussing the future, the conduct, the aspirations, emotions, fears of a brave community which has played a glowing role in India's history. Ahluwaliaji quoted Guru Nanak but I also know what significant, social economic and societal changes came to this blessed land of Punjab after the advent of our Gurus.

Our Gurus gave us a message of an inclusive society, secularism in practice and also subsequently, the Sikh history saw difficult periods and we saw examples of great valour. Guru Gobind Singh after he lost all his four sons, his mother and his father did not lose heart. This is our legacy. This, Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is the legacy of this brave community. After a great deal of struggle for the first time, it came to Maharaja Ranjit Singh to expand our frontiers and to prove to us and to show to us that our frontiers do not lie in traditional manners where we define that India's defence lies as far as what happened in Afghanistan.

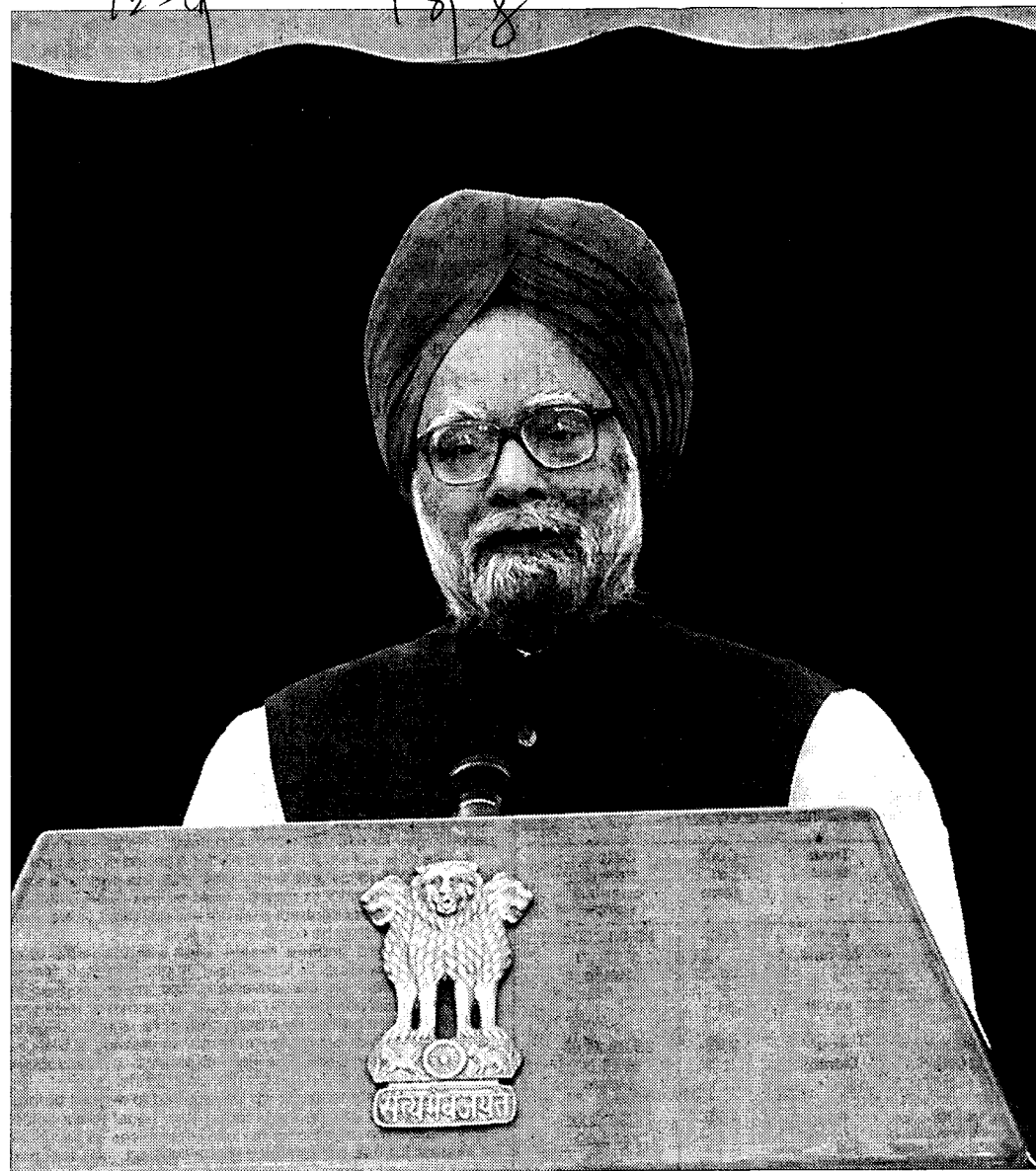
This is the proud history of this community. During the British times, it was the brave Sikh community which developed the canal colonies of the erstwhile united Punjab which made Punjab the granary of India. With Partition the Sikhs suffered the grievous loss. Our community was divided into two parts. All of them were forced to migrate to this part of the Punjab; and I know hundreds of cases where people came to India with their clothes. They had nothing else to fall back upon.

But, they converted that adversity into an opportunity to reconstruct, to rebuild their lives and rebuild the life of our nation. And, we all know how a very deficit, poor, East-Punjab state, once again emerged on the screen of India as number one state in terms of per capita income, as the state known for the start of the Green Revolution in our country.

I think, attempts have been made by the hon. Opposition Members and I don't want to quarrel with any one of them on this occasion to separate the Sikh community from the great traditions of the Congress Party.

**I respectfully say to our Opposition Members that post-Partition Punjab would not have been a prosperous state as it is today but for the visionary leadership and support that the people of Punjab received from Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India.**

There are no Akali Members sitting here and I do not want to score any point. But, it is also the fact that when that glorious chapter in the history of Punjab was being written, the Akali Dal was busy in dividing the people of Punjab on communal lines. I am not scoring any point. History is there. The



first Akali Government came to power in Punjab in 1967 and what result it produced, I am not going to talk about that.

**For the RECORD**

Therefore, we are discussing events. We must view them in a proper perspective. Then, came the events of late 70s. There was a nefarious design developed outside our country, as a part of the theory of inflicting on our country a thousand cuts. And, out of that, came the sad period in Punjab's history which lasted until the mid-1990s. The events of 1984 are all part of that great tragedy.

It took the nation great effort to get Punjab out of that sad chapter. The Sikh community had the vision to fight back the nefarious designs of the enemies of our country to create a situation where there would be a permanent strength between the Sikh community and the national mainstream. It took the Sikh community a lot of time to regain its self-confidence after the tragic events of 1984. I have interacted with hundreds and hundreds of Sikh young men who doubted, at that time, whether they had a place in building a prosperous united Indian nation. I went abroad and several young Sikh people — students and teachers — used to come to me with the same questions. And, I think, that would have been a great national tragedy had we allowed the enemies of our nation to bring about a permanent rift between the Sikh community and the national mainstream.

I think, it is a tribute to our national leadership of all shades — I am not finding fault with anyone — that defeated the nefarious designs

of forces inimical to our country. The Sikh community has regained its self-confidence. I think, today terrorist elements do not sway the minds of our people, the way it was feared in the 1980s. But someone said, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." And, I appeal to all the segments of this House, let us not create a situation; let us not use a language which will, once again, give handle to those forces who are inimical to our country's unity and integrity and who play upon the sentiments of innocent Sikh youths. It is no service to the Sikh community. It is no service to our nation. I say so with great respect that some of the things which have been said, they do not promote that objective.

**I started by saying that we cannot undo the past, but we have an option, today, to build a better future. Let us help the Sikh community to get out of that trauma of 1984. Valiant efforts have been made by all our national leadership to achieve that task, and we have succeeded. Let us not do anything which will reverse that process.**

You may not like the Congress Party, but who can deny India's history? I mention the role of Jawaharlal Nehru. After the tragic events of 1984, the uppermost thing that was in the mind of Rajiv Gandhiji, when he became the Prime Minister, was how to bring back the Punjab into the national mainstream. I recall the first thing that he said to me, when he appointed me the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission. He said, "This is my top priority." And, he worked assiduously to end that sad chapter.

I know he was asked in a meeting, where I was also present, that, in the process, he had harmed the

Congress Party; he had handed over the Government of Punjab to the Akali Dal. And, I still recall what Rajivji said on that occasion. He said, "It is immaterial whether the Congress Party wins or loses. What is really of substance is that India should prosper and India should develop." That's the legacy.

There were lapses in 1984. Several commissions have gone into this matter. We all know that we still do not know the truth, and the search must go on. This present commission is no exception to that. I said in the other House, and I think Nilotpalji also pointed out, that this Commission was not appointed by us.

The records of this august House would show how this Commission came to be appointed. A question was put to the then hon. Home Minister about the 1984 riots. A supplementary was, then, asked about setting up of a commission. And, there was some discussion. I was sitting on the other side, at that time, on the Chair where Shri Jaswant Singhji is seated. And, I thought that the Question Hour was not an occasion to discuss such serious issues. So, I did not rise from my seat. After the Question Hour, I walked out.

And, what did the then hon. Home Minister of State say when he went out? He said, "I was to appoint a Commission of Inquiry to go into the 1984 events, but Dr. Manmohan Singh prevented me from doing that." I protested that because that was not true. I speak from my memory, and I hope I am correct. Shri L.K. Advaniji then had to apologise to this House that what he had stated outside was not correct. The Commission was born in circumstances over which we had no control, we had no choice about its terms of reference and we had no choice about who will be heading this Commission. The Report is before us, and one thing it conclusively states is that there is no evidence, whatsoever, against the top leadership of the Congress Party. That lie, which has over the

last 21 years been used to poison the minds of the Sikh youth, stands nailed conclusively.

There are, of course, individuals mentioned. The Commission has not come forward with conclusive conclusions. These are in the realm of probabilities. And, I stated yesterday, in the other House, that there is such a thing as perception, there is such a thing as the sentiment of both the Houses of Parliament, and respecting that sentiment, whosoever figures in the Nanavati Report — and the Commission has in its wisdom found it necessary to draw an adverse inference about their conduct or behaviour — we will reopen those cases. So, that commitment I have given.

One of my colleagues, a valued colleague, has tendered his resignation. That resignation has been accepted. Questions have been raised about the rehabilitation of the affected families. I recognise that there may have been shortcomings. I have committed our Government to do all that we can to ensure that these widows, children and other relatives who did suffer in the wake of the 1984 riots, whether in Delhi or outside — we have a solemn obligation to help them to forget that sad chapter — lead, once again, a life of dignity and self-respect.

There are some police officers against whom the ATR has made a mention. There is a normal rule that you can take action against Government officers four years

tired many, many years ago. But within the ambit of law, whatever action we can take, we will reopen those cases also if the law of the land permits that. So, Sir, you have my assurance that our Government stands committed to do all that we can humanly do to go to the root of the problem, that all those individuals about whom the Commission has drawn adverse inferences, suggestions, and recommendations, we will have another look at them, and that we will provide effective assistance to all the widows, children and the affected families so that they can lead a life of dignity and self-respect. Those police officers, whose conduct the Commission has adversely commented, we will see what can be done, we will have a relook at those cases within the ambit of law.

In conclusion, Sir, I would, once again, say what I started by saying at the beginning, we are dealing with the past, the present and the future of a very brave community which has bold traditions, which has been a part of our national mainstream, which has contributed far above its proportionate share in our population, in the national freedom struggle, which has contributed, admirably, to the processes of social and economic development in our country, which have, as a result, made Punjab one of the most prosperous States of our country. Let us do nothing to weaken its spirit of self-confidence and its legacy through its history to be the sword arm of Punjab.

**I was pained yesterday when one hon. Member in the other House brought up instances where Sikh personnel of the Armed Forces suffered in 1984. Shri Rajnath Singh brought up that sad chapter again. I respectfully submit to you, that was the most painful chapter in the**

**history of our country. By re-living that, by reminding us again and again you do not promote the cause of national integration, of strengthening our nation of sense of security. Please do not play politics with the sentiments of a brave community like the Sikhs.**

Sir, with these words, I once again, appeal to this House that these events of 1984 should be viewed from a wider perspective, that the past cannot be brought back, cannot be undone, but let us, as a united nation, find new pathways to ensure that our nation will never again go through such traumas, whether they are in Delhi or in Gujarat or in any other part of the country.

**Our minorities, religious, cultural and social, have an honoured place in our Constitution. The founding fathers of our Republic gave us a Constitution of which we can be legitimately proud. And as I said, participating in the debate on my visit to the United States some days ago, wherever I go, people marvel about the polity that India is a country destiny, seeking its salvation, in the framework of an open society, an open economy and deep and abiding commitment to the dignity of individuals and respect for all fundamental human freedoms.**

There have been aberrations. To err is human. I can only conclude by saying that all of us should ask forgiveness of those who have suffered in this tragedy. Yesterday, in the other House, I quoted a sentence from *Gurbani*, and my friend, Sardar Balwant Singh, who was the Finance Minister of the Akali Government, a friend of 35 years' standing, who studied with me in college, narrated to me how that period of sadness, of turmoil, ended when Rajiv Gandhi signed the Accord with Sant Harchand Singh Longowal. Santji was of two minds. And, then Sardar Balwant Singh told me that Santji said, "Let me seek guidance from *Guru Granth Sahib*." And, both of them went to the upper storey of Sardar Balwant Singh's house and they opened up the page from the *Guru Granth Sahib*, and the first stanza that was on that page was like this: "*Hoye ikkattar, milo mere bhai/davidha chhad, karam liv layee*." It means, "Come and gather together, O my brothers/Dispel your dilemma, and give yourself to the task at hand!"

I conclude my speech by appealing to this august House, let the spirit of working steadfastly for national reconciliation, for wiping out tears from the eyes of each and every one of citizens be our guiding principle. It was the firm belief of the Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, to wipe every tear from every eye as mortals, human beings. That goal may be not attainable, but that is the inspiration which should inspire us in what we discuss and what we do in this august House.

I thank you, Sir.

# “ On behalf of the govt, I bow my head in shame ”



FILE PHOTOS

## PM's apology to Sikhs and nation

HT Political Bureau  
New Delhi, August 11

PRIME MINISTER Manmohan Singh on Thursday apologised to the nation for the 1984 anti-Sikh riots that took place after Indira Gandhi's assassination, saying he was not standing on any "false prestige" and bowed his head in shame.

Indira's assassination was a "great national tragedy" and "what happened subsequently was equally shameful", Singh said, assuring action against those named in the Justice Nanavati Commission report.

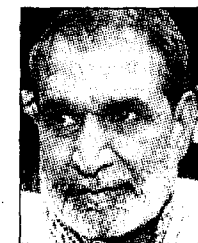
"I am not standing on any false prestige. On behalf of our government, on behalf of the entire people of this country, I bow my head in shame that such a thing took place," he said while intervening in the discussion on the Opposition-sponsored motion in Rajya Sabha. Home minister Shivraj Patil replied to the discussion and the motion moved by Rajnath Singh was rejected by the House.

The Prime Minister said he had seen statements by Opposition leaders that he should seek the country's forgiveness. "I have no hesitation in apologising to the Sikh community," he said. "I apologise not only to the Sikh community but to the whole Indian nation because what took place in 1984 is the negation of the concept of nationhood enshrined in our Constitution."

Continued on P4

## Riot ripples

■ MP SAJJAN Kumar sent in his resignation to Delhi CM Sheila Dixit. He had been indicted by the Jain Banerjee Commission set up to look into 1984 riot cases that were not registered or not probed



■ The government will set up two committees to ensure compensation to the riot victims. Union home minister Shivraj Patil said in the Rajya Sabha that the committees would sort out all relevant issues "within one or two months". The government would also ensure that adequate compensation would be provided this time. Patil gave the House details of what has been paid so far

■ Shiromani Akali Dal activists burnt a common effigy of Jagdish Tytler, H.K.L. Bhagat and Sajjan Kumar. Other organisations, such as Jharkhand Sikh Vikash Manch, also burnt effigies of Tytler and Sajjan, both of whom have quit from their positions

P.M.  
H.F.I.  
12/8

PM Cites Moral Pressure To Deliver Justice To Victims, Cong Faces Communal Slur

# Doc promises to reopen '84 riots case

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 10 AUGUST

**P**RIME Minister Manmohan Singh on Wednesday promised to reopen the 1984 riot cases after the action taken report (ATR) on the Nanavati Commission report precipitated a first-rate political crisis for his government. The Prime Minister, who acknowledged moral pressure on his regime to deliver justice to the riot victims in the Lok Sabha, said his government "respects and bows to that sentiment". The Prime Minister made this statement after the Opposition successfully rammed in its point that the Manmohan dispensation lacked moral rigour and ethical vision.

Efforts were on to get Union minister Jagdish Tytler to resign from the government. A reluctant Mr Tytler met the Prime Minister on Wednesday afternoon and was persuaded to step down, much against his own inclination. The Congress leadership, which persisted with a defiant approach till late Tuesday evening, changed tack after Left parties — the moral guardians of the regime — made it plain to government managers that their support to the government in the voting on the Opposition-sponsored adjournment motion was contingent upon the acceptance of their demand to sack Mr Tytler.

The government's interlocutors conveyed this message to the Prime Minister and the Congress leadership. The sober elements in the party concluded that a promise to reopen the cases alone can counter the embarrassment to the regime caused to a ruling establishment that wears its commitment to secularism on its sleeve. The speeches made by Congress made it clear that the party has rejected the arguments of a section within the party that the government should fight it out.

The Prime Minister, in his intervention, said his government would take note of the sentiments expressed in the House. "Our government assures the House that wherever the commission has named any specific individuals as needing further examination, the government will take all possible steps to do so within the ambit of law. This is a solemn promise and a solemn commitment to this House."

In his address, the Prime Minister also promised fresh measures to rehabilitate the families of those affected by the riots. "If there has been any shortcoming in this regard, it is our solemn assurance that we will make sincere efforts to redress these shortcomings. We will ensure that widows and children of those who suffered in this tragedy are enabled to lead a life of dignity and self respect".

W.S. 9/84  
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## Oppn blasts GOP in LS on Nanavati report

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 10 AUGUST

**T**HE Manmohan Singh government on Wednesday was put on the mat in the Lok Sabha when a determined Opposition, while ripping apart its response to the recommendations of the Nanavati Commission, managed to place under scrutiny the Congress' claims of being a secular party. The Congress leaders, in fact, were behind the massacre, the BJP and its allies alleged — a charge which the Congress members found hard to repudiate.

Reeling under the combined assault of the Opposition and even its own allies, the Congress found itself on a defensive and, for a large part of the debate on the adjournment motion, suffered the mortification of being equated with the "communal" BJP as far as its commitment to secularism was concerned.

The leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, L.K Advani quoted exten-

sively from the Commission's report to place the needle of suspicion for the "organised carnage" of the Sikhs towards the Congress leadership of the time.

"Taking advantage of the anger of the public, other forces had moved in to exploit the situation. Large number of affidavits indicate that local Congress leaders and workers had either incited or helped the mobs in attacking the Sikhs,"

he said, quoting excerpts from the report. "But for the backing and help of influential and resourceful persons, killing of Sikhs so swiftly and in large numbers could have happened," he said, and then proceeded to read out from another portion to highlight the manner in which the carnage was orchestrated.

"The attacks were made in a systematic manner and without much fear of the police, almost suggesting that they were assured that they would not be harmed while committing those acts and even thereafter."

### HOT SEAT

# No secret accord with U.S.: Manmohan

“Not ganging up with U.S. against China”

Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told the Lok Sabha on Wednesday that the Indo-U.S. joint statement was not a departure from the basic tenets of the country's foreign policy. He denied there was any secret accord with the U.S. and said all that had been agreed to was included in the joint statement.

The Government had not made any commitment on the ongoing negotiations on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty other than what had been made by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) regime.

Responding to a discussion on his recent visit to Washington, the Prime Minister said while the U.S. had a different view on supporting India's claim for a seat in the United Nations Security Council, “when the time

comes, I have reason to believe that we will not be ignored.”

Addressing himself primarily to the observations made by the NDA and Left members, Dr. Singh sought to allay Communist Party of India (Marxist) member Rupchand Pal's fear that the U.S. had agreed to accommodate India's interests to contain China. “I want to dispel the ‘illusion’ of any military alliance. We are not ganging up with the U.S. against China.”

Of the view that a strategic engagement with the U.S. was important in the “world we live in,” Dr. Singh maintained that his objective was to widen India's developmental options. “As Minister for Atomic Energy, I know that our atomic energy programme has lagged behind.” Arguing that India was too dependent on hydrocarbon imports, he said his endeavour was

to persuade the U.S. to lift the restrictions that hampered India's quest for faster access to nuclear energy.

On the oft-repeated apprehension whether separation of the civilian and military components of India's nuclear programme was feasible, Dr. Singh answered in the affirmative. “I had the advice of the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC).” Also, he revealed that negotiations had been held up for close to 14 hours because of his insistence that the final draft would have to have the approval of the AEC Chairman. Further, separation would not be imposed but would be “decided voluntarily and solely on our own judgment.” It would be a phased identification, and it “will be so phased that our strategic programme is safeguarded.”

# PM launches 6-page defence of N-deal

**New Delhi:** Dismissing opposition criticism of a 'sell-out' to the US on the nuclear issue, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Friday asserted in Parliament that there was no compromise on India's fundamental and strategic needs and that "autonomous" control of its nuclear weapons programme would be retained.

India's nuclear commitments in the recent Indo-US joint statement would be "conditional upon, and reciprocal to, the US fulfilling its side" of the understanding, he said, seeking to allay fears by Left parties and other allies.

Making identical statements in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, the Prime Minister said "reciprocity" was the key to the imple-

mentation of all steps enumerated in the joint statement reached in Washington after his talks with US President George W Bush.

"There is nothing in this joint statement that amounts to limiting or inhibiting our strategic nuclear weapons programme over which we will retain unrestricted and autonomous control," Singh said.

"We expect a close co-relation between the actions to be taken by the US and by India. Indian actions will be contingent on actions taken by the other side. Should we not be satisfied that our interests are fully secured, we shall not feel pressed to move ahead in a pre-determined manner," he said.

UPA chief Sonia Gandhi, leader of the Lok Sabha Pranab Mukher-

jee, leader of the opposition L K Advani and former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee were among those present when Singh read out the six-page statement.

The Prime Minister said full civilian nuclear energy cooperation would include, but not limit itself, to the expeditious consideration of fuel supplies for Tarapur.

Speaking about India's decision to demarcate military and civilian nuclear facilities and place the latter under international safeguards, he said India would never accept discrimination. "Hence, the phased action... of identification and separation of civilian nuclear facilities based on our own calibrated national decisions will be taken at appropriate points..."

## এই সাহসই চাই

ভারতকে অসামরিক ক্ষেত্রে পরমাণবিক শক্তি উৎপাদনের জন্য ইউরেনিয়াম সরবরাহ-সহ অন্য কারিগরি সহায়তার আশ্বাস দিলেন মার্কিন রাষ্ট্রপতি জর্জ ডব্লিউ বুশ। প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহের যুক্তরাষ্ট্র সফরের এই সাফল্য ভারত-মার্কিন সম্পর্কে একটি মাইলফলক। যদিও দেশের বামপন্থী নেতারা কড়া ভাষায় বলিয়াছিলেন যে আমেরিকার সহিত এই গা ঘেঁষাঘেঁষি তাঁহারা ভাল চোখে দেখিতেছেন না, তবুও মনমোহন আমেরিকার সহিত সহযোগিতার সিদ্ধান্ত লইতে ভয় পান নাই। এই বলিষ্ঠতা বিরল বলিয়াই বিশেষ মূল্যবান। প্রধানমন্ত্রিত্বের চৌদ্দ মাসে মনমোহন সিংহের আচরণে এমন নির্ভীকতার উদাহরণ কম। বরং বামপন্থীদের ভয়ে সঙ্কুচিত প্রধানমন্ত্রীকে দেখিতেই দেশবাসী অভ্যস্ত হইয়াছেন। তাঁহার যে কোনও পদক্ষেপেই বামপন্থীরা প্রশ্ন তোলেন এবং মনমোহন পিছাইয়া আসিয়া তাঁহাদের তুষ্ট করেন। এই আচরণ আর যাহাই হউক, সাহসের পরিচায়ক নয়।

যেমন, প্রধানমন্ত্রী যত বার অর্থনৈতিক ক্ষেত্রে সংস্কারের চেষ্টা করিয়াছেন, বামপন্থীদের ভয়ে পিছাইয়া আসিতে হইয়াছে। বেশ কয়েকটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ক্ষেত্র বিদেশি বিনিয়োগের জন্য উন্মুক্ত করা যায় নাই, রাষ্ট্রায়ত্ত্ব শিল্পে বিলম্বিতকরণ হয় নাই। সর্বশেষ দৃষ্টান্ত ভেল। সংস্থাটির স্বার্থে যে দশ শতাংশ বিলম্বিতকরণের প্রস্তাব কেন্দ্র দিয়াছিল, বাম নেতাদের বিরোধিতায় প্রধানমন্ত্রী তাহা ফিরাইয়া লইতে বাধ্য হন। শ্রমিক আইন সংশোধনের প্রস্তুতিতে বাম-আপত্তি যতই অযৌক্তিক হউক, প্রধানমন্ত্রী তাহা মানিয়া শ্রম আইন সংশোধনের প্রস্তুতিকে হিমঘরে পাঠাইয়াছেন। পেনশন বিলের ক্ষেত্রেও বাম বিরোধিতার কাছ মনমোহন সিংহ মাথা নোওয়ান, যদিও পেনশনের ক্রমবর্ধমান বোঝার দায়টি কে লইবে, সে প্রশ্নের মীমাংসা হয় নাই। ভর্তুকি কমাইবার সম্ভব প্রস্তাবটিও মনমোহন বামপন্থীদের ভয়ে তেমন করিয়া পেশ করিতে পারেন নাই। বাম-বিরোধিতার ফলে প্রধানমন্ত্রী বেসরকারি ব্যাঙ্কের ক্ষেত্রে বিদেশি বিনিয়োগ বৃদ্ধি বা পেট্রোপণ্যের প্রকৃত মূল্য নির্ধারণের প্রস্তুতি এড়াইয়া চলিয়াছেন। ইহা ইতিমধ্যেই প্রতিষ্ঠিত সত্য যে বামপন্থীরা অর্থনৈতিক সংস্কারের ক্ষেত্রে বিরোধিতা করিতেই থাকিবেন। দুঃখের বিষয়, প্রধানমন্ত্রী যে তাঁহাদের অন্যায় দাবি মানিতেই থাকিবেন, এই সত্যটিও প্রায় একই মানের প্রতিষ্ঠা পাইতেছে।

উনিশশো একানব্বই সালের অর্থমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ এবং ভারতের বর্তমান প্রধানমন্ত্রী ব্যক্তি এক হইতে পারেন, কিন্তু পরিস্থিতিটি ভিন্ন। এখন তাঁহাকে একটি শরিক সরকার চালাইতে হয়, সরকারের স্থায়িত্ব বহুলাংশে নির্ভর করে বামপন্থীদের উপর, যাহারা সরকারের সমর্থক হইয়াও ক্ষেত্রবিশেষে বিরোধী অধিক। সুতরাং, তাঁহাদের লইয়া চলিতে গেলে সমঝোতা আবশ্যিক। ইহাও সত্য যে রাজনীতি সম্ভাব্যতার শিল্প। কিন্তু বামপন্থীরা যাহা দাবি করিবেন, প্রধানমন্ত্রী গলবস্ত্র হইয়া তাহাই মানিয়া লইবেন, ইহা চলিতে পারে না। এই প্রসঙ্গে মনমোহন সিংহ পূর্বসূরী অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ীর উদাহরণ হইতে শিক্ষা লইতে পারেন। তিনিও শরিক সরকার চালাইয়াছিলেন এবং তাঁহাকেও বামপন্থীদের মতো কিছু চঞ্চলমতি শরিক সামলাইতে হইয়াছিল। কিন্তু তাহা সত্ত্বেও বাজপেয়ী অর্থনৈতিক সংস্কারের ক্ষেত্রে প্রয়োজনের বেশি আপস করেন নাই, এবং তাহার সুফলও পাইয়াছেন। দ্বিতীয়ত, প্রধানমন্ত্রী নিশ্চিত থাকিতে পারেন, বামপন্থীরা অল্পে এই সরকার ত্যাগ করিবেন না। বামপন্থীরা মনমোহনকে যত না কংগ্রেসপ্রীতির জন্য সমর্থন করিয়াছিলেন, তাহা হইতে বি জে পি ভীতি অধিকতর ছিল। এই সরকার ফেলিয়া দিলে যদি বি জে পি পুনরায় ক্ষমতায় আসে, তাহার নৈতিক তথা রাজনৈতিক দায় বামপন্থীদের উপর বর্তাইবে। নেহাত দলীয় স্বার্থেই নিতান্ত বাধ্য না হইলে বামপন্থীরা সমর্থন প্রত্যাহার করিবেন না। ভারতের অর্থনৈতিক উদারীকরণ ও বিশ্বায়ন মনমোহন সিংহের দৃঢ়তার ফলেই সম্ভব হইয়াছে। তিনি নিজেকে আবার প্রমাণ করুন এবং ভারতীয় অর্থনীতিকে বিশ্বের প্রথম সারিতে লইয়া যাওয়ার প্রয়োজনীয় পদক্ষেপ নিশ্চিত করুন। আমেরিকার সহিত বর্তমান চুক্তি-স্বাক্ষরের মাধ্যমে প্রক্রিয়াটির শুভসূচনা হইয়াছে। মনমোহন সিংহের কর্তব্য, বাম-বিরোধিতায় ভীত না হইয়া দৃঢ়তার সঙ্গে সংস্কারের কাজ চালাইয়া যাওয়া।

# PM pitches India as global player

**BHARAT BHUSHAN**

Washington, July 19: After scoring a major achievement in getting America's stamp on India's nuclear weapons status and President George W. Bush's commitment on civilian nuclear co-operation, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today sought the help of the US Congress to underwrite the agreement.

Congressional support is needed to change nuclear non-proliferation laws to ensure that such co-operation becomes functional. In his address to the joint session of Congress, Singh was at pains

to argue: "We have never been, and will never be, a source of proliferation of sensitive technologies."

Citing an impeccable record, he said: "We have adhered scrupulously to every rule and canon in this area."

He contrasted this with the proliferation activities of Pakistan. "We have done so, even though we have witnessed unchecked nuclear proliferation in our own neighbourhood."

India was fully aware, he told them, of the immense responsibilities that came with the possession of nuclear capability. The Prime Minister hoped that "with the support and understanding of Con-

gress, the full benefits of our partnership will be realised in the months and years to come". But he was not referring to only nuclear co-operation but a more broad-based partnership.

Singh was making India's case for a role in global governance as the world's largest functioning democracy. His message was that America should work together with institutionalised democracies and open societies to guarantee global stability and prosperity.

To evolve a system of global governance "that carries credibility and commands legitimacy", Singh argued that

finding "a reasonable and balanced outcome" of the Doha round of world trade negotiations and sought its support for Security Council membership.

"You would agree that the voice of the world's largest democracy surely cannot be left unheard on the Security Council when the United Nations is being restructured."

The Prime Minister spent considerable time impressing upon Congress members the deeply institutionalised nature of Indian democracy and its relevance within the country and outside. His two-fold attempt seemed to be to show how deep-rooted Indian demo-

cracy was and how this offered an opportunity to the US and India to forge close economic ties — 400 of the Fortune 500 US companies are already in India — and promote democratic institutions in other countries.

The concomitant of valuing democracy, Singh argued, was to protect it against terrorism and an obligation to help others who "aspire for the fruits of democracy".

Thus, he offered to work together with the US to fight terrorism in all its forms as well as partner it in "a global initiative to help build democratic capacities in all societies that seek such assistance".

"Partnerships can be of two kinds. There are partnerships based on principle and there are partnerships based on pragmatism. I believe we are at a juncture where we can embark on a partnership that can draw both on principle as well as pragmatism," he said.

The previous night at a banquet hosted by Bush, the Prime Minister had emphasised the same theme. "We have all grown up learning the story of the unfinished voyage of Christopher Columbus. Setting sail to reach India, he discovered America. I now invite the people of America to complete the voyage of that great explorer." (See Page 6)

## PMS THEME

- **Nuclear:** See our record and Pakistan's
- **Global governance:** We too should have a role
- **Security Council:** We can't be left unheard
- **Democracy:** Protect it from terrorism
- **Duration:** 40 minutes
- **Applause:** 32 times

two conditions had to be met — the system must be participative and should reflect "contemporary reality".

He assured the US of co-operation to strengthen the system of global governance by

WY 5-1

9-PM

# PM's US visit a real sell-out

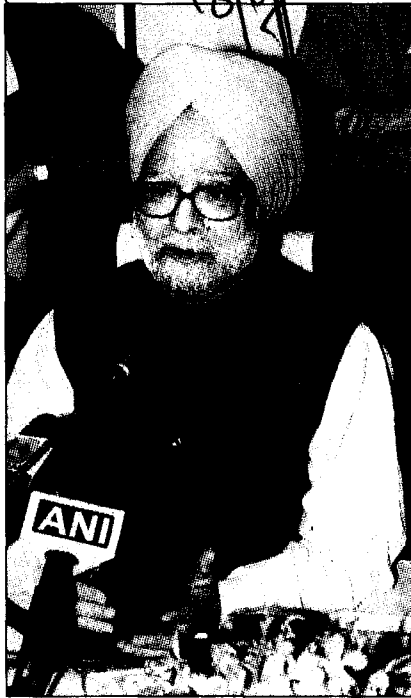
By Chidanand Rajghatta/TNN

**Washington:** Its nothing like the Harry Potter mania, but Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to the US is a sell-out. Not the kind the Left parties are cautioning about. Tickets, passes, and invitations for the Prime Minister's public events can't be had now for money or influence.

The National Press Club has sold out its July 20 luncheon (\$16 for members, \$32 for guests) and late hopefuls are now being put on a wait-list. Passes for the PM's address to the Joint Session of Congress have also been exhausted, with Congressional aides now turning away constituents.

Its another matter that many of those who collect the passes do not show up. Many law-makers, too, stayed away from Prime Minister Vajpayee's address to the joint session on September 14, 2000, although if they had cared to hear or even read him, they might have recognised his foresight on an issue that was to stun the world a year later, almost to the day.

"Indeed, in our neighbourhood, religious war has not just been fashioned into, it has been proclaimed to be, an instrument of State policy," Vajpayee had said, warning, "Distance offers no insulation. It should not cause complacency."



Manmohan Singh addresses the media in the special Air-India flight on his way to Frankfurt on Saturday

Manmohan Singh, who speaks in a dry professorial style of someone delivering a post-lunch lecture, may be less

eloquent than Vajpayee, but evidently, he commands a deep respect on account of his background as an international civil servant and an economist.

But the most coveted event of the visit is the White House dinner banquet for which only around 150 people are said to be invited. It's part of the ritual associated with a State visit, a 128-year-old White House tradition meant to honour a visiting dignitary and bestow prestige on the nation he represents.

The Bush White House is not exactly big on state visits, having hosted just five such events in the five years it has been in office. Those honoured include leaders from Mexico, Philippines, Poland and Kenya. Leaders of China, Russia, Britain, Israel and Saudi Arabia, with whom Washington conducts serious business, haven't made the cut.

But either because pomp and pageantry is music to Indian ears, or because (recognizing that) the Bush administration has decided to give the Indian Prime Minister the royal treatment, the White House is rolling out the red carpet, complete with guard of honour, and all the bells and whistles associated with the State visit.

For the record, the first State visit to the US was by King Kalakaua of Hawaii, who came to the White House in 1874 when the island was still an independent nation.

8 JUL 2

THE TIMES OF INDIA



'From the open shores of India's immense humanity...' Quoting Gandhi, Nehru and Tagore in Oxford, the PM recalls the Raj, the National Movement, his own student days, and other aspects of India and Britain's long history of 'give and take'

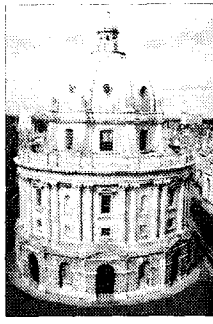
# The Good Doctor returns to the Dreaming Spires

Mr Chancellor, Mr Vice-Chancellor, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I MUST, at the outset, express my deep sense of shock and anger at the terrorist attacks in London yesterday. I convey sincere condolences to the families and friends of the deceased and those who have been injured. I also extend the sympathy and solidarity of the people of India with the people of the United Kingdom, in particular the citizens of London.

I arrived here in the United Kingdom after dealing with the aftermath of yet another terrorist attack in India. It is clear once again that terrorism is a global threat. Terrorism anywhere is a threat to peace, freedom, human dignity and civilisation everywhere. Terrorism is cowardice aimed at innocent people. It is fed on hatred and cynicism. Every time terrorists strike anywhere, all of us who believe in democracy and the rule of law must stand together and affirm our commitment to fight this scourge resolutely and unitedly.

I sincerely hope that all those who cherish and value open and free societies will join hands in the war against terrorism, wherever it is fought. I wish the people of London well. I pray that their lives will soon return to normalcy and they can resume their celebrations for having London chosen as the venue



**'India's share of world income collapsed from 22.6 per cent in the year 1700, almost equal to Europe's share of 23.3 per cent at that time, to as low as 3.8 per cent in 1952. Indeed, at the beginning of the 20th century, 'the brightest jewel in the British Crown' was the poorest country in the world in terms of per capita income. However, what is significant about the Indo-British relationship is the fact that despite the economic impact of colonial rule, the relationship between individual Indians and Britons, even at the time of our Independence, was relaxed and... benign'**

for the 2012 Olympics.

Today is a very emotional day for me. Oxford brings back many fond memories that I cherish. For this reason, as much as for the intrinsic value of the honour you bestow upon me, I am truly overwhelmed. I am grateful to you, Mr Chancellor, and to your colleagues, for this honour. I have had the good fortune of receiving several honorary degrees. However, there can be nothing more valuable or precious than receiving an honorary degree from one's own *alma mater*. To be so honoured by a university where one has burnt the proverbial midnight oil to earn a regular degree, is a truly most fulfilling experience. I thank you for it. This is a day I will truly cherish.

The world has changed beyond recognition since I was a student here. Yet, some age-old problems endure. Developing countries have found a new voice, a new status and have ac-

**'The idea of India as enshrined in our Constitution, with its emphasis on the principles of secularism, democracy, the rule of law and... the equality of all human beings irrespective of caste, community, language or ethnicity, has deep roots in India's ancient culture and civilisation. However, it is undeniable that the founding fathers of our Republic were also greatly influenced by the ideas associated with the age of Enlightenment in Europe'**

quired a new sense of confidence over the last few decades. As an Indian, I see a renewed sense of hope and purpose. This new optimism gives us Indians a sense of self-confidence. It shapes our world view. It would be no exaggeration to suggest that the success of young Indian students and professionals in places like Oxford, and across the world, has

contributed a great deal to this renewed self-confidence of a resurgent India.

The economics we learnt at Oxford in the 1950s was also marked by optimism about the economic prospects for the post-War and post-colonial world. But in the 1960s and 1970s, much of the focus of development economics shifted to concerns about the limits to growth. There was considerable doubt about the benefits of international trade for developing countries. I must confess that when I returned home to India, I was struck by the deep distrust of the world displayed by many of my countrymen. We were influenced by the legacy of our immediate past. Not just by the perceived negative consequences of British imperial rule, but also by the sense that we were left out in the cold by the Cold War.

There is no doubt that our grievance against the British Empire had a sound basis. As the painstaking statistical work of the Cambridge historian Angus Maddison has shown, India's share of world income collapsed from 22.6 per cent in the year 1700, almost equal to Europe's share of 23.3 per cent at that time, to as low as 3.8 per cent in 1952. Indeed, at the beginning of the 20th Century, "the brightest jewel in the British Crown" was the poorest country in the world in terms of per capita income. However, what is significant about

We reproduce here the address by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, delivered at Oxford on July 8, in acceptance of an honorary degree. Dr. Singh already holds a D.Phil. in Economics from Oxford University (1962). Accepting his degree the day after the 7/7 attack in London, he begins on a sombre note, condemning terrorism. In this speech the PM reflects in a nostalgic and laudatory vein on both Indo-British ties as well as his own relationship with his *alma mater*



**'What impelled the Mahatma to take such a positive view of Britain and the British people even as he challenged the Empire...? I believe it was his recognition of the elements of fair play that characterised... the ways of the British in India's struggle for freedom was 'Self-government is more precious than good government'. But the slogan suggests that even at the height of our campaign for freedom from colonial rule, we did not entirely reject the British claim to good governance. We merely asserted our natural right to self-governance.'**

Commonwealth. Nehru set the tone for independent India's relations with its former master when he intervened in the Constituent Assembly's debate on India joining the Commonwealth, and said:

"I wanted the world to see that India did not lack faith in herself, and that India was prepared to co-operate even with those with whom she had been fighting in the past provided the basis of the co-operation today was honourable, that it was a free basis, a basis which would lead to the good not only of ourselves, but of the whole world. That is to say, we would not deny that co-operation simply because in the past we had fought and thus carry on the trail of our past *karma* along with us. We have to wash out the past with all its evil."

Thus spoke the first Prime Minister of India.

India and Britain set an example to the rest of the world in the way they sought to relate to each other, thanks to the wisdom and foresight of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. When I became the Finance Minister of India in 1991, our Government launched the Indo-British Partnership Initiative. Our relationship had by then evolved to a stage where we had come to regard each other as genuine partners. Today, there is no doubt in my mind that Britain and India are indeed partners and have much in common in their approach to a wide range of global issues.

What impelled the Mahatma to take such a positive

view of Britain and the British people even as he challenged the Empire and colonial rule? I believe it was, undoubtedly, his recognition of the elements of fair play that characterized so much of the ways of the British in India. Consider the fact that an important slogan of India's struggle for freedom was that "Self-government is more precious than good government". That, of course, is the essence of de-

view of Britain and the British people even as he challenged the Empire and colonial rule.

Today, with the balance and perspective offered by the passage of time and the benefit of hindsight, it is possible for an Indian Prime Minister to assert that India's experience with Britain had its beneficial consequences too. Our notions of the rule of law, of a Constitutional government, of a free press, of a professional civil service, of modern universities

and cherish. Our judiciary, our legal system, our bureaucracy and our police are all great institutions, derived from British-Indian administration and they have served our country exceedingly well.

The idea of India as enshrined in our Constitution, with its emphasis on the principles of secularism, democracy, the rule of law and, above all, the equality of all human beings irrespective of

also greatly influenced by the ideas associated with the age of Enlightenment in Europe. Our Constitution remains a testimony to the enduring interplay between what is essentially Indian and what is very British in our intellectual heritage.

The idea of India as an inclusive and plural society, draws on both these traditions. The success of our experiment of building a democracy within the framework of a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious society will encourage I believe all societies to walk the path we have trodden. In this journey, and this is an exciting journey, both Britain and India have learnt from each other and have much to teach the world. This is perhaps the most enduring aspect of the Indo-British encounter.

It used to be said that the sun never sets on the British Empire. I am afraid we were partly responsible for sending that adage out of fashion! But, if there is one phenomenon on which the sun cannot set, it is the world of the English speaking people, in which the people of Indian origin are the single largest component.

Of all the legacies of the Raj, none is more important than the English language and the modern school system. That is, of course, if you leave out cricket! Of course, people here may not recognise the language we speak, but let me assure you that it is English! In indigenising English, as so many people have done in so many nations across the world, we have made the language our own. Our choice of prepositions may not always be the Queen's English; we might occasionally split the infinitive; and we may drop an article here and add an extra one there. I am sure everyone will agree. Nevertheless, English has been enriched by Indian creativity as well and we have given you back R.K. Narayan and Salman Rushdie. Today, English in India is seen as just another Indian language.

No Indian has paid a more poetic and generous tribute to Britain for the totality of this inheritance than Rabindranath Tagore. In the



opening lines of his world-famous, Nobel Prize winning epic *Gitanjali*, Gurudev says:

*The West has today opened its door! There are measures for us to take! We will take and we will also give! From the open shores of India's immense humanity*

To see the Indo-British relationship as one of 'give and take', at the time when he first

dependent and globalised world that we live in.

I wish to end by returning to my *alma mater*. Oxford, since the 19th century, has been a centre for Sanskrit learning and the study of Indian culture. The Chancellor has recalled numerous instances of that. The Boden professorship in Sanskrit, and the Spalding professorship in Eastern Religions and Ethics, stand testimony to this university's commitment to India and Indian culture. I recall with pride the fact that the Spalding professorship was

**'Today, with the balance and perspective offered by the passage of time and the benefit of hindsight, it is possible for an Indian Prime Minister to assert that India's experience with Britain had its beneficial consequences too. Our notions of the rule of law, of a Constitutional government, of a free press, of a professional civil service, of modern universities and research laboratories have all been fashioned in the crucible where an age old civilisation... met the dominant empire of the day. (...) Our judiciary, our legal system, our bureaucracy and our police are all great institutions, derived from British-Indian administration and they have served us exceedingly well'**

held by two very distinguished Indians: Dr S. Radhakrishnan, who later became the President of India, and by Dr. Bimal Krishna Malil.

In the context of the study and preservation of Indian culture, I also wish to recall the contribution of another great Oxonian, Lord Curzon, about whose project to preserve and restore Indian monuments, Jawaharlal Nehru himself said, "After every other Viceroy has been forgotten, Curzon will be remembered because he restored all that was beautiful in India."

Many of those who were to rule India set course from Oxford. Some stayed behind to become India's friends, Men like Edward Thompson, Verrier Elwin and many others are remembered in India for their contribution to the enrichment of our life and society.

**'It used to be said that the sun never sets on the British Empire. I am afraid we were partly responsible for sending that adage out of fashion! But, if there is one phenomenon on which the sun cannot set, it is the world of the English speaking people, in which the people of Indian origin are the single largest component. Of all the legacies of the Raj, none is more important than the English language... That is, of course, if you leave out cricket! Of course, people here may not recognise the language we speak, but let me assure you that it is English'**

did so, was an act of courage and statesmanship. It was, however, also an act of great foresight. As we look back and also look ahead, it is clear that the Indo-British relationship is one of 'give and take'. The challenge before us today is to see how we can take this mutually beneficial relationship forward in an increasingly inter-

I always come back to the city of dreaming spires and of lost causes as a student. Mr Chancellor, I am here this time in all humility as the representative of a great nation and a great people. I am beholden to you and to my old university for the honour that I have received today.  
Thank you.

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mocracy. But the slogan suggests that even at the height of our campaign for freedom from colonial rule, we did not entirely reject the British claim to good governance.

and research laboratories have all been fashioned in the crucible where an age old civilization of India met the dominant empire of the day. These are all elements which we still value

caste, community, language or ethnicity, has deep roots in India's ancient culture and civilisation. However, it is undeniable that the founding fathers of our Republic were

GREATER N-COOPERATION WITH USA LIKELY

# Strike at terror collectively: PM

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI/LONDON, July 9. — Observing that the London blasts amply demonstrated terrorism as a global phenomenon, Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh tonight sought evolving of a collective strategy to free the world from the menace.

“This is a vivid demonstration that terrorism is a global phenomenon. We have suffered from this scourge for nearly 20-25 years.

The London blasts “have demonstratively made it evident that all of us should work together to evolve a collective strategy to free the world from this scourge,” Singh said on arrival here from a three-day visit to the United Kingdom.

The Prime Minister said he attended a meeting of Group of Five countries — India, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa and China — in Scotland where a consensus emerged on working towards reforming the international trading system, transfer of resources to developing countries

## Teacher's praise

LONDON, July 9. — Dr Manmohan Singh was hailed during his student days as one having “a good head for theory but keeps his feet on the ground...” by one of his teachers and renowned economists late Joan Robinson. “He has great strength of mind and determined resistance to bunkum of all kinds”, Robinson had written in one of the college files during Dr Singh's Cambridge student days. Robinson's praise for Singh was narrated by one of the professors while speaking at a luncheon yesterday in Nuffield College in Oxford. **PTI**

and transfer of technology from the rich to poor nations.

He said during his meeting with G-8 leaders he expressed concern on “why the international system was paying inadequate attention to needs of poor countries.” The Prime Minister expressed the hope that the upcoming Doha round of trade talks would ensure that all countries work together to find credible ways to protect and preserve the environment and the life support system of the planet.

“This must be done mindful of developmental imperatives of poor nations,” Singh said adding the problem of environmental manage-

ment cannot be resolved without removing poverty.

He also favoured that development be sustainable and a fair trading system ensured by transferring capital to developing countries and transferring technology to them at affordable costs.

Earlier, on board the special aircraft while returning, Dr Singh said that President Mr George W Bush appeared to be inclined to forge a co-operation with India on nuclear energy and “this is expected to figure prominently” when the two leaders meet in Washington next week.

The Prime Minister also indicated the possibility of a Cabinet reshuffle in the near future.

10 JUL 2005

THE STATESMAN

# Terrorism a global threat: Manmohan

“Shock and anger over blasts”

Hasan Suroor

**OXFORD:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Friday reached out to the victims of Thursday's bomb blasts in London and called for a united fight against terrorism.

Speaking at Oxford University, Dr. Singh deviated from the text of his speech to express his “deep sense of shock and anger” at the terrorist incidents.

“It is clear once again that terrorism is a global threat. Terrorism anywhere is a threat to peace, freedom, human dignity and civilisation everywhere. Terrorism is cowardice aimed at the innocent people. It is fed on hatred and cynicism.” Calling on the international community to “stand together” against terrorists, Dr. Singh said: “I sincerely hope that all of those who cherish and value open and free societies will join hands in the war against terrorism wherever it is fought. I wish the people of London well. I pray that their lives will soon return to normal and they can resume their celebrations for having been chosen the venue for the 2012 Olympics.”

## Colonial legacy

Dr. Singh may have inadvertently set the tone for a brave re-assessment of Britain's colonial legacy in India when he acknowledged the “beneficial consequences” of the Raj, saying that there were elements of the “British-Indian administration” such as the rule of law and free

press which India still valued and cherished.

Speaking after receiving an honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law, he said: “Today, with the balance and perspective offered by the passage of time and the benefit of hindsight, it is possible for an Indian Prime Minister to assert that India's experience with Britain had its beneficial consequences too. Our notions of the rule of law, of a constitutional government, of a free press, of a professional civil service, of modern universities and research laboratories have all been fashioned in the crucible where an age-old civilisation met the dominant Empire of the day.”

In a candid review of Indo-British relations, Dr. Singh said India's struggle for Independence was more an assertion by Indians of their “natural right to self-governance” than an outright rejection of the “British claim to good governance.”

He told an engaged gathering of academics, diplomats, civil servants and mediapersons that the principles of secularism, democracy and equality of all, enshrined in the Indian Constitution, had deep roots in India's ancient civilisation but were also influenced by the ideas of European enlightenment.

“Our constitution remains a testimony to the enduring interplay between what is essentially Indian and what is very British intellectual heritage.”

9 JUL 2005

THE HINDU

## PM leaves for G8 meet

NEW DELHI, July 5. — Relaxation of IPR regimes for clean technology, more transfer of clean technologies that are also more affordable, and increased financial assistance will be the main 'suggestions' to be put forward by India before the G8 countries on the discussion for arresting climate change.

India will also iterate that the primary responsibility for cleaning up the environment is on the developed countries as the dominant polluters.

That will be the message conveyed by Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and the four other heads of developing countries in Gleneagles on Thursday. The PM will be leaving tomorrow for Scotland and

returning on 9 July.

Briefing reporters on the eve of the PM's departure, the foreign secretary, Mr Shyam Saran, said after arriving in Scotland tomorrow, the PM will be meeting the heads of government of China, Mexico, Brazil and South Africa, to coordinate their positions on the issue of global economy and sustainable development, prior to their meeting with the G-8 chiefs. "This will help in putting forward the view of the developing countries," he said.

The 'eight plus five' meeting will take place on Thursday, as an outreach session, including a working lunch. An action plan on climate change is being drafted for adoption by the G8 leaders. — SNS

06 JUL 2005 THE S...

# Farm sector growth disturbing: Manmohan

HW-1  
2876  
9 PM

'Steps needed to tackle problems which go beyond weather'

Ashok Dasgupta

**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Monday projected a growth rate of seven and eight per cent for the rest of the Tenth Plan and exhorted the National Development Council (NDC) to approve and implement the correctives enunciated in the Planning Commission's Mid-Term Appraisal (MTA) with special emphasis on agricultural reforms.

Addressing the Chief Ministers and Lieutenant Governors while inaugurating the two-day 51st meeting of the Council, Dr. Singh conceded that the original Tenth Plan growth target of 8.1 per cent cannot be achieved, mainly on account of the sagging farm sector growth which is perceived to have deprived the rural poor of substantial attendant benefits.

"We cannot achieve the original Tenth Plan target of eight per cent growth over the Plan period as a whole ... The Mid-Term Appraisal shows that performance thus far is well below this target, averaging 6.5 per cent in the past three years," he said.

This was perceived as a dig at the performance of the previous BJP-led National Democratic Alliance regime.

Dr. Singh said: "Our Government set a target of taking growth to somewhere between 7 to 8 per cent and this is what we



• **Cannot achieve Tenth Plan target of 8.1 per cent growth**

• **Chief Ministers urged to double agricultural output in 10 years**

• **Overcome electricity shortage by attracting public and private sector investment**

• **Financial health of the electricity agencies in the States has to be restored**

should aim for in the last two years of the Tenth Plan." Clearly, the cornerstone of the Tenth Plan strategy was a reversal of the declining trend in the farm growth rate by setting a target of four per cent.

However, "unfortunately, the actual performance of agriculture appears to have deteriorat-

ed even further and will possibly not exceed 1.5 per cent growth during the first three years of the Plan," he said. Hence the need for corrective steps to tackle the problems that "go beyond weather" and "must be accorded the highest priority."

While stressing the need to act on several fronts as also on public-private partnership to better infrastructure and remove financial constraints, the Prime Minister asked the Chief Ministers to explore the possibility of doubling agricultural output in 10 years.

He suggested the formation of an NDC sub-committee "to work out the necessary steps for concrete action."

Turning to infrastructure development, Dr. Singh picked up two specific areas.

One was the dire need to overcome the problem of power shortage, and the other the need to create an environment to attract both public and private funds into the sector.

"For this, the financial health of the electricity agencies in the States has to be restored, which cannot be accomplished without reduction of AT&C [average transmission & commercial] losses 10 percentage points in two years with your support and commitment" and "focus on providing quality power at appropriate prices," he said.

## Minimum security tenure

On improving the quality of the administration in districts the Prime Minister said the civil servants should be given the "minimum security of tenure" as changes without notice and short tenures did not produce accountable results.

In his presentation, the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, outlined the positive aspects of the economy while giving an overview of the corrective action required to bring the economy back on track in line with the targets of the Tenth Plan.

Dr. Ahluwalia said that inflation, a major concern in mid-2004, was under check while industrial growth had picked up. The savings rate was high and the fiscal deficit had been contained. On the weaknesses that were thwarting higher growth and, therefore, required "urgent corrective action," he picked on the deceleration in agriculture, the inadequacies in infrastructure, the regional imbalances, the growing level of unemployment as also the shortfalls in meeting the social sector targets.

More reports on Page 12  
More photographs on Back Page

# Manmohan rejects Atal charge

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, June 21. — The political consensus over the India-Pakistan peace process seems to have come under strain as a war of words has broken out over it between Dr Manmohan Singh and the BJP, after Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee's criticism of the Centre's Kashmir policy and its silence over the Hurriyat leaders' visit to Pakistan.

AICC spokesman Mr Anand Sharma said: "The BJP leaders are simply playing politics, breaching the consensus that sensitive foreign policy matters will be kept out of partisan politics."

Dr Singh today rejected Mr Vajpayee's charge that the government had mishan-

dled the peace process and the Hurriyat leaders' visit to Pakistan. He asserted India's opposition to a redrawing of the borders and the involvement of a third party while resolving the Kashmir problem. India was committed to taking the dialogue process forward and safeguarding the nation's vital interests, he said.

Dr Singh stressed that there was no room for ambiguity on Delhi's position on Kashmir. "I have reiterated on every possible occasion that there can be no redrawing of boundaries. We have also ruled out any role for a third party — either through intervention or as a guarantor or as a mediator — in any form," he said in his letter to Mr Vajpayee dated 20 June. On the Hurriyat leaders' visit, Dr Singh dismissed the criticism that it

had been mishandled by Delhi. He claimed that by allowing Hurriyat leaders to travel beyond PoK, Islamabad had violated the understanding on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service.

Joining issue, BJP leader, Mr Jaswant Singh, accused the Centre of "transfering initiatives" to Islamabad and wondered what it did on Pakistan's violation of the agreement in allowing Hurriyat leaders to travel beyond PoK. "I want the government to state if it knows that Pakistan violated the understanding and what has it done or what it intends to do now," Mr Singh said. The BJP also questioned Dr Singh's suggestion to convert Siachen into a "peace mountain".

**After bus bonhomie, now it's scholarship diplomacy: page 4**

22 THE STATESMAN

# A new debate in Sangh Parivar

Who was the best Prime Minister: Indira Gandhi or Vajpayee?

2/6 2 P.M. HD-1

Neena Vyas

**NEW DELHI:** A new 'debate' has started in the Sangh Parivar. Was the Indira Gandhi government or the Vajpayee regime the best the country has had? Or was the Nehru government, or even the Narasimha Rao government better than the one Atal Bihari Vajpayee led?

Bharatiya Janata Party spokesperson Prakash Javadekar was asked on Monday what he had to say about the remarks of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief, K.S. Sudarshan, extolling in Lucknow on Sunday the Indira Gandhi government. His answer was a terse "no

comment."

However, when asked whether the BJP thought the Indira Gandhi or the Vajpayee government had performed better, he did not think twice. "The Vajpayee government was the best India has had since Independence. Lakhs of party workers firmly believe this."

A few weeks earlier, in an interview to a television channel, Mr. Sudarshan had stated that even the Narasimha Rao government had performed better than the Vajpayee government.

And, even when pressed he had refused to rate the Vajpayee government among the better performers.

Instead, Mr. Sudarshan had talked about Mr. Vajpayee's "foster family" interfering in the day-to-day running of the government, and had conceded, almost reluctantly, that in some areas the Vajpayee government had "done work."

## VHP too praises Indira

Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader Giriraj Kishore on Monday, taking the cue from Mr. Sudarshan, praised the Indira Gandhi government for having the courage to break Pakistan into two in 1971 by helping carve out Bangladesh.

The RSS affiliates have maintained a silence on the Vajpayee

government, sore as they were for not being allowed to go through with the planned 'shila puja' and other programmes in Ayodhya during the six years from 1998 to 2004 when the National Democratic Alliance government was in power.

While Mr. Javadekar made it clear on Monday that he was not joining issue with the RSS chief ("there is no link between my praise of Vajpayee government and what Sudarshanji has said," he insisted), the fact is that the wide differences between the RSS and the BJP perceptions on the performance of the Vajpayee government have come out in the open.

3/2/11 THE HINDU

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# PM to Governors: Rise above partisan politics

New Delhi, June 15

ECHOING PRESIDENT APJ Abdul Kalam's views, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Wednesday asked Governors to rise above "partisan controversy" in discharging their Constitutional obligations. "In our evolving polity, where political patterns have changed substantially over the last 50 years, there is bound to be some partisan controversy or the other challenging the authority and dignity of this high office.

"This places an added burden on your shoulders to rise above partisan politics while discharging your Constitutional obligations," he said in his address to the Governors conference on the second and last day. Singh said there was perhaps no other Constitutional office that enjoyed the autonomy and carried the attendant responsibility, as did the post of Governor.

"In these turbulent times we are living in, people have great expectations

from this office.... The greater the responsibilities attached to an office, the greater will be public scrutiny in a democracy," he said.

Opening the conference on Tuesday, President Kalam had asked the governors to rise above day-to-day politics and not nurture political affiliations, warning such a tendency would lead to their isolation. The PM said in discharging their Constitutional obligations the Governors were the sole judges of what is right and wrong, of what is mandated for them under the Constitution and what is not and what people perceive their actions to be. He said Governors could also act as watchdogs and alert the state and central governments on security threats.

Removed from the hustle and bustle of day-to-day activities, Governors were extremely well placed to assess the long-term trends in many matters and utilise their wisdom to aid governments in their actions, he said.

PTI

1 JUN 2005 THE HINDUSTAN TIMES



# Make Siachen a peace mountain: Manmohan

“Existing boundaries cannot be changed because these are for our protection”

VK  
P.M.  
18/6  
10-1



**SHOWING SOLIDARITY:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, flanked by Army Chief General J.J. Singh, greets a soldier at the Army's Siachen Glacier Camp on Sunday. — PHOTO: AP

Shujaat Bukhari

**SRINAGAR:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Sunday suggested that the Siachen Glacier, the world's highest battlefield, be converted into a "peace mountain." But he asserted that there could be "no redrawing of boundaries," saying that these were related to "our protection and prestige."

Addressing Army jawans at the Siachen base camp in the Ladakh region of Kashmir, Dr. Singh lauded them for their courage and dedication in serving the country. "Siachen is called the highest battlefield, where living is very difficult. Now the time has come that we make efforts that this is converted from a point of conflict to the symbol of peace."

## Talks with Pakistan

Talks were on with Pakistan in this regard. The objective of these talks, he said, was to ensure that both countries lived in peace and "patriots like you also live and serve in peace."

"In these talks your well-being and the security of our nation would be kept in mind," Dr. Singh told the jawans. Efforts

should be made to create such an atmosphere of peace wherein "nobody fears any threat, there is no scope for any conflict and this place becomes an example of a peaceful environment."

However, there was no question of "redrawing the borders. In search of peace, existing boundaries cannot be changed because these are for our protection and are related to our honour."

The Prime Minister was all praise for the soldiers. "Words fail to express gratitude to you for the service you are doing for the nation at this most inhospitable place. I want to extend to you the gratitude of a nation. Nothing survives here, yet you serve." No effort would be spared to meet their requirements. He announced that two home theatres and a CT scan would soon be provided in Siachen.

On his arrival, Dr. Singh was briefed by senior Army officers about the situation prevailing in the area.

The Prime Minister was accompanied by the Chief of the Army Staff, Gen. J.J. Singh, the Commander of the Leh-based 14 Corps, Lt. Gen. M. Naidu.

## Manmohan makes history

**SIACHEN:** Manmohan Singh created history on Sunday by becoming the first Prime Minister to visit Siachen.

The 73-year-old Prime Minister, who had undergone a cardiac by-pass surgery, undertook the trip to the glacier, situated at more than 12,000 ft above sea level, for a first-hand account of the conditions in which the troops were deployed. "I wanted to see for myself what your living conditions and arrangements are and what are your problems and what the Government can do to address those," he told soldiers at the

base camp, situated at an altitude of 11,118 ft.

Later, he made an aerial survey of the forward areas, where the oxygen level is substantially low. As a result of this, breathing becomes very difficult. Soldiers have to undergo acclimatisation before being posted here as the mercury does not rise above five degrees Celsius even in peak summer.

Dr. Singh underwent a medical examination before going to Siachen. Even at the base camp, top military officers advised him against going to the forward areas. — PTI

# Manmohan on peace mountain

## Calls for farewell to arms in Siachen

Press Trust of India

SIACHEN, June 12.— In the midst of the peace process with Pakistan, Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh today favoured conversion of the Siachen Glacier, the highest battlefield in the world, into a "peace mountain". However, Dr Singh ruled out any changes in the "established" boundaries of the country, saying it is related to the nation's "honour" and "security".

The first Prime Minister to visit the Siachen sector situated at an altitude of over 12,000 feet, Dr Singh said efforts should be made to create an atmosphere of peace here where "nobody fears any threat, there is no scope for any conflict and the place becomes an example of peaceful environment."

The Prime Minister, who was briefed by top Army officers about the prevailing situation, said in his address to the jawans that the conditions in Siachen were extremely difficult.

"How long shall we allow such conditions to prevail? Now the time has come for us to make efforts to convert this battlefield into a peace mountain." He added that talks were going on with Pakistan in this regard. Emphasising that India wanted peaceful relations with Pakistan, Dr Singh, however, asserted that in pursuit of this "we are not ready to accept any changes in the drawn and established boundaries of the country."

"We feel, these boundaries are important not only for our security but also for the country's honour. Our soldiers are

happily bearing difficulties here." Praising their contributions towards national integrity, Dr Singh assured them that all their needs would be met.

Besides a CT Scan facility which would be made available here, two theatres would also be provided to the soldiers in Siachen for their entertainment.

He said he was "very happy" to meet the troops deployed here and proud of the determination and patriotism displayed by the soldiers.

Noting that government was concerned about the well-being of the forces, Dr Singh said he had decided on visiting Siachen to see for himself the conditions in which the troops were living here. "I wanted to see for myself as to what your living conditions and arrangements are, what are your problems and what the government can do to address those," he told the soldiers.

### Pak on Singh's statement

Pakistan has welcomed Dr Singh's remarks on Siachen glacier, adds PTI from Islamabad. Terming Siachen as world's most expensive war theatre, information minister Shiekh Rashid said: "India has realised that dialogue and not war is the solution to all issues, be it Kashmir or Baglihar."

Regarding China, Dr Singh said Delhi would take up with Beijing the issue of opening up of the route to Kailash-Mansarovar through Ladakh. "We will make an effort," he told reporters at Leh Airport when asked whether there was any hope of the Ladakh route opening up for the *vatra*.



**I wanted to see for myself as to what your living conditions and arrangements are, what are your problems and what the government can do to address those**  
— PM to jawans



A GENTLEMAN AND AN OFFICER: Dr Manmohan Singh with jawans at Siachen on Sunday. Army chief General JJ Singh looks on. — PTI

## Resolution phase reached: Mirwaiz

Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD, June 12.— The Kashmir issue has "now reached the resolution phase" and the next year or so will be "very crucial" in the context of resolving the problem, moderate Hurriyat faction chairman Mr Mirwaiz Umar Farooq said. Pakistan-based Hizbul Mujahideen, however, said the situation in the Valley warranted militancy to continue.

The Mirwaiz also supported President Pervez Musharraf's proposal on involvement of the interna-

tional community as guarantor in any agreement that would be reached with India to resolve the vexed issue. "Now we have reached the resolution phase and we are talking on different options. The next year or so is very crucial in the context of resolving the Kashmir issue," he said in an interview to the *Dawn* published today.

"I think that whenever such a situation will arise, the international community will automatically be involved in the matter, and we think that it should be involved in any such agreement on Kashmir," he

said replying to whether China or the USA should be involved as international guarantors.

"There are three nuclear powers in our neighbourhood — India, Pakistan and China. If India and Pakistan reach an agreement, China too will be interested in that because it also has a role and influence," the Mirwaiz said, adding "the US also desires that Pakistan and India should move ahead in the context of Kashmir." He said their visit reflected the change in India's stance.

**BJP attacks Pakistan over Hurriyat, page 5**

# Talks for opening Kargil, Skardu road: Manmohan

Issue of Kailash-Mansarovar road to get further push



**IN HAPPY COMPANY:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh with Army and Air Force personnel in Leh on Saturday. - PHOTO: AFP

Shujaat Bukhari

**SRINAGAR:** The opening of the Kargil-Skardu road is under consideration and talks are on with Pakistan, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said on Saturday.

The issue of re-opening of the trade route as also the Kailash-Mansarovar road would be taken up with China.

Complimenting the people on the courage they exhibited during external aggression, Dr.

Singh said at a function in Kargil: "Everybody from every part of the country has eulogised the spirit and determination you have shown while fighting the enemy and restoring normalcy. Our endeavour is to protect you from such dangers in future." The peace process with Pakistan was initiated to end the conflicts once and for all and provide a conducive atmosphere to the people to live peacefully.

A step in this direction was

the opening of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road. "I have been told that the people of Kargil are keen on having the links restored with Gilgit and Baltistan [under Pakistan occupation] and opening of the Kargil-Skardu road is under consideration."

At Leh, Dr. Singh said: "Since our relations with China are improving" re-opening of the old trade would be taken up with the Chinese Government.

"The issue of Kailash-Mansa-

rovav road for pilgrimage to Tibet has already been taken up and it will be further pushed," he said in response to a demand by Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed.

Dr. Singh said a big part of Ladakh, Aksai Chin, was under foreign occupation.

The same way, Gilgit and Baltistan (in the Northern Areas under Pakistani occupation) were under the control of foreign troops.

12 JUN 2005

THE HINDU

# Willing to consider 'greater autonomy' for J&K: Manmohan

31/5 2005 2 Prime Minister  
'No mandate to negotiate to redraw boundaries'

**NEW DELHI:** Ruling out further division of the country on religious lines, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Monday said the Government was willing to consider "greater autonomy" for Jammu and Kashmir. He asked Pakistan to ensure dismantling of the terrorist training camps on its soil to enable peaceful resolution of all outstanding issues between the two countries.

"India will never accept anything that leads to further division of India on religious lines. I have no mandate to negotiate to redraw our boundaries," Dr. Singh said during his first interaction with members of the Foreign Correspondents Club, after assuming office a year ago.

At the same time, Pakistan had not done "enough" to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure on its soil, which was "by and large intact," the Prime Minister said. "We expect Pakistan to honour the promises made to then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and reiterated in the recent joint statement issued at the end of Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's visit here."

Expressing his conviction that the two countries "must move forward and can move forward" in resolving their disputes, he, however, said "I do not want to minimise the problems that lie ahead."

Any major terrorist attack, similar to the one on Parliament or the RSS headquarters, could

"greatly upset the whole process," Dr Singh said and expressed the hope that the Pakistan Government would do everything to ensure the dismantling of the terrorist infrastructure.

Pointing out that Jammu and Kashmir had a unique place in "our polity" and has a Constitution of its own, he said India took pride in the fact that elections had been held in the State which had been recognised by the "most competent international observers." This process would be carried forward to the lower rung. "If needed, we can look at greater autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir," he said and hastened to add that "Pakistan can also take similar steps. It will bring about a great degree of complimentaries."

## Decries discrimination

On India's bid for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council with veto power, the Prime Minister said there could be "no discrimination" between the old and the new members of the Council. This was, however, not entirely in India's hands and "we will see as we go along," he told the foreign correspondents.

## Pipeline project

On the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline Dr. Singh expressed the hope that it would become a reality as both Islamabad and New Delhi needed more

energy supplies to meet the growing demand. "It is my hope that all the parties concerned can work together to make this pipeline a reality."

## Sri Lankan problem

Dr. Singh said India had a "very vital stake" in the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka and expressed the hope that the ethnic problem would be resolved peacefully. "We are not indifferent" to what was happening in Sri Lanka, the Prime Minister told the correspondents who wanted his response to the "dangerous" security problem arising from the LTTE setting up naval and air bases.

## No interference

Dr. Singh brushed aside a suggestion that UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi was interfering in the functioning of the Government. "When it comes to the functioning of the Government, I do not think there is any interference of any kind," Dr. Singh said.

As the UPA chairperson, Ms. Gandhi "has an important role, together with other members of the coordination committee of the UPA allies. That does not in any way interfere with the working of our Government." When it came to implementing the government's National Common Minimum Programme, he said he did have discussions with Ms. Gandhi and other allies of the UPA. — UNI

30 MAY 2005

THE HINDU

# PM defends govt stand on Bihar

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 24 MAY

**T**HE Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday stepped forward to defend his government's midnight coup by saying that the decision to dissolve the Bihar assembly was aimed at preventing "subversion of the Constitution." The NDA retaliated by saying that it was "a fraud on the Constitution that he seek to defend" and a politically motivated move to appease a demanding Laloo Yadav.



Citing Governor Buta Singh's report, Mr Singh claimed that the NDA indulged in horse trading. "In this situation, it was the constitutional duty of the government to see that such nefarious practices did not spoil the good name of the country. Three months have passed since the elections were held. No government has been formed in the state."

The NDA, which contested this stand of the Prime Minister said the LJP legislators rebelled against the "no popular government stand" of their leader.

"A realignment was taking

place in Bihar. After the election threw up a fractured verdict, 17 independents offered their support to NDA for forming a government in the state. A sizeable section of the LJP MLAs decided to back the NDA and this was pure and simple political realignment," Nitish Kumar said.

The NDA leadership said that Buta Singh and his "handlers" at the Centre knew that by next morning, the figure would have crossed 130.

"It was this that prompted them to convene a Cabinet meeting at midnight. They knew that the President would be out of the country. If that was not politically motivated, why didn't the Prime Minister get the House dissolved while the President was in Delhi. In any case, he has been claiming that there have been more than one report from the Governor on horse trading in the state".

To drive home this point further, the NDA asked the government on the quid pro quo involved in the support of the BSP and SP to the UPA regime at the Centre.

# PM unveils bold steps

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, May 22. — Looking back at their government's one-year rule with "some satisfaction", the Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, and the Congress president, Mrs Sonia Gandhi, today echoed the defining features of the government's National Common Minimum Programme — a "new deal" for rural India, the interests of common people, economic growth with social equity, and the values of pluralism and secularism.

Seeking "out-of-box" initiatives to boost economic growth, Dr Singh today promised "bold" initiatives to restructure public finances, including subsidies, and reform the functioning of various ministries to unleash entrepreneur skills and push up investment.

At a simple function at his residence, Dr Singh said: "We cannot be satisfied with the second best...We need the very best in meeting the future challenges and demand of the next decade." Dr Singh and

Mrs Gandhi released a "progress report" on the government's performance.

Besides a slew of Cabinet ministers, the leaders of the Congress' allies were present, but the Left leaders chose to stay away from the function despite an invitation from the Prime Minister.

Mrs Gandhi, who is the UPA chairperson, said: "We set out to repair India's secular fabric and restore harmony in our diverse society; to bring the fruits of economic growth directly to our people, especially the weaker sections; and to provide security to the vulnerable."

"We have begun well, and are on our way to redeeming the pledges outlined in the NCMP," she added.

Responding to questions on the refusal of the Left parties to attend today's function, Congress leader and minister of state in Prime Minister's Office Mr Prithviraj Chauhan said: "They are playing the role of a very constructive supporting party and, I think, they have a point of view", adds PTL.

More reports on page 5

23 MAY 2005

THE STATESMAN

# প্রকল্প ধরে ধরে ত্রুটি দেখালেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী দেরি কেন, জবাব দেবেন মন্ত্রীরা

পার্শ্বসারথি সেনগুপ্ত • নয়াদিল্লি

১৩ মে: এক বছর পরেও প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা কোষ তৈরি হয়নি কেন?

জাতীয় সংহতি পরিষদের একটাও বৈঠক হল না কেন?

গ্রামীণ ঋণের অগ্রগতির রিপোর্ট নেই কেন?

এ রকম অনেক 'কেন'-র তালিকা তৈরি করে মন্ত্রিসভার সদস্যদের ধরিয়ে দিচ্ছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। প্রথম প্রশ্নটির উত্তর দিতে হবে মানবসম্পদ উন্নয়নমন্ত্রী অর্জুন সিংহকে, দ্বিতীয়টি স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী শিবরাজ পাটিলকে, তৃতীয়টি অর্থমন্ত্রী পি চিদম্বরমকে। অভিন্ন ন্যূনতম কর্মসূচি কতটা রূপায়িত হয়েছে, সরকারের প্রথম বর্ষপূর্তির আগে এ ভাবেই তার হিসাব নিতে শুরু করেছে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সচিবালয়।

কর্পোরেট দুনিয়ার ঢঙে এই বার দেশের প্রধানমন্ত্রী মন্ত্রিসভার সদস্যদের বুঝিয়ে দিয়েছেন, মন দিয়ে কাজ করেই অস্তিত্ব রক্ষা করতে হবে। বস্তুত, আগামী দিনে মন্ত্রিসভার রদবদলে ২৪ পাতার এই 'রিপোর্ট কার্ড'ই হবে মনমোহনের তুরূপের তাস।

কড়া মাস্টারমশাইয়ের মতোই প্রধানমন্ত্রী প্রকল্প ধরে ধরে বাধা বাধা মন্ত্রীদের কাছে জানতে চেয়েছেন, কেন কাজ আশানুরূপ হয়নি। গড়িমসিতে কেন প্রকল্পের সমন্বয়মীমা পেরিয়ে যাচ্ছে। আর যাঁদের কপালে তির্যক্যর ছুঁতেই সেই তালিকায় রয়েছে বেশ কিছু নাম।

কিছু জাঁদরেল নাম। যেমন, অর্জুন সিংহ, শিবরাজ পাটিল, শরদ পওয়ার।

কোন কোন ক্ষেত্রে মন্ত্রীদের কাজে চিহ্নিত মনমোহন?

● মোট অভ্যন্তরীণ উৎপাদনের ৬ শতাংশ প্রাথমিক ও মাধ্যমিক শিক্ষাখাতে ব্যয়ের ক্ষেত্রে কেন গড়িমসি হচ্ছে, অর্জুন সিংহের কাছে তার জবাবদিহি চেয়েছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। কৃষি সমবায়ের কাজকর্ম আরও পেশাদার ও গণতান্ত্রিক করে তোলার প্রয়োজনীয় আইনি কাঠামো বানাতে শরদ পওয়ারের গড়িমসিতেও চিহ্নিত তিনি।

● ন্যূনতম অভিন্ন কর্মসূচি অনুযায়ী শিক্ষাখাতে সম্পদ বণ্টন ও উন্নয়নের খতিয়ান নিতে একটি জাতীয় কমিশন তৈরি করা জরুরি। উচ্চশিক্ষার বিভিন্ন প্রতিষ্ঠান যাতে স্বাতন্ত্র্য বজায় রাখতে পারে, তা-ও দেখবে কমিশন। অর্জুন সিংহের মন্ত্রককে গত বছরের সেপ্টেম্বরের মধ্যে কমিশন তৈরি করতে গত অগস্টে নির্দেশ দিয়েছিলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। রিপোর্টে বলা হয়েছে, "৩০ সেপ্টেম্বর ও ১৫ জানুয়ারির সময়সীমা অতিক্রান্ত। বিভাগীয় মন্ত্রী আবার সময় চেয়েছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কাছে।"

● চিদম্বরমের অর্থ মন্ত্রকের কাছে মনমোহনের প্রশ্ন, জাতীয় উন্নয়ন পর্ষদের বৈঠক প্রথম বছরে এক বারও কেন ডাকু হল না। বছরে অন্তত দু'বার তা

টিমেতালে চলছে কেন?

● চিদম্বরমের জন্য প্রধানমন্ত্রীর চ্যালেঞ্জ, আর্থিক সংস্কারে সমর্থন জোগাড় করার জন্য বামেদের বুঝিয়ে-সুঝিয়ে নরম করতে হবে। রিপোর্টে স্পষ্টই বলা হয়েছে, "রাষ্ট্রায়ত্ত্ব ব্যাঙ্কগুলির পরিচালনার ক্ষেত্রে পূর্ণাঙ্গ স্বায়ত্তশাসন এবং আর্থিক নীতিতে প্রতিযোগিতার পথ আরও উন্মুক্ত করতে বামেদের সঙ্গে আলাপ-আলোচনা করে ঐকমত্যে উপনীত হওয়া প্রয়োজন।" এক কথায়, চিদম্বরমকে গজদস্ত মিনার থেকে নেমে বামেদের সঙ্গে অন্তত কার্যকরী সম্পর্ক তৈরি করার মতো জরুরি রাজনৈতিক বিষয়ে মন দিতে বলেছেন মনমোহন।

● সময়ের রিপোর্ট সময়ে জমা দেন না চিদম্বরম। গ্রামীণ ঋণের ক্ষেত্রে সময়সীমার এক মাস পরেও প্রধানমন্ত্রী কেন রিপোর্ট পাননি, প্রশ্ন উঠেছে।

● কেন্দ্র-রাজ্য সম্পর্কের মূল্যায়নে সারকারিয়া কমিশনের আদলে নতুন কমিশন গড়তে চায় কেন্দ্র। প্রয়োজনীয় বিধি মেনে কাজ কিছুটা এগোলেও কমিশনের চেয়ারম্যান ও অন্যান্য সদস্য বাছাইয়ের কাজ শুরু করতে শিবরাজ পাটিলের দফতরকে নির্দেশ দিয়েছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী।

● অর্জুন সিংহের শিরঃপীড়ার আরও কারণ থাকছে। ঘরে মহিলাদের উপরে নির্বাতন ঠেকানো তথা লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য রোধে আইন বা ভূসম্পত্তিতে

এর পর পাঁচের পাতায়

## জবাব দেবেন মন্ত্রীরা

প্রথম পাতার পর

মহিলাদের সমানারিকার সংক্রান্ত আইন করা— প্রতিটিতেই রিপোর্টে খেদ প্রকাশ করা হয়েছে, "পূর্ববর্তী সময়সীমা পেরিয়ে গিয়েছে।"

● শরদ পওয়ারের জন্য আরও প্রশ্ন। গ্রামীণ পরিকাঠামো উন্নয়ন নিয়ে রিপোর্টে মন্তব্য, "অক্টোবর, নভেম্বর, জানুয়ারি— কোনও সময়েই কোনও অগ্রগতির হাদিস মিলছে না।"

● আইনমন্ত্রী এইচ আর ভরদ্বাজকেও বলা হয়েছে, "ঐকমত্য গড়তে সক্রিয় হন।" লোকসভা ও বিধানসভায় মোট আসনের এক তৃতীয়াংশ মহিলাদের জন্য সংরক্ষণের ক্ষেত্রে ইউপিএ-র মধ্যে মতৈক্য গড়ে তোলার কথাই বলা হয়েছে ভরদ্বাজকে।

● বেসরকারি চাকরিতে সংরক্ষণের কাজে শিল্পবাণিজ্য সংস্থাগুলিকে বোঝানোর কাজটি কেন ভাল ভাবে এগোয়নি, সেই প্রশ্ন রাখা হয়েছে সামাজিক উন্নয়নমন্ত্রী মীরা কুমারের কাছে।

● বিদ্যুৎ আইন, ২০০৩-এর পুনর্বিবেচনার ক্ষেত্রে সংশ্লিষ্ট মন্ত্রী পি এম সঈদের কাজ আরও দ্রুত হয়নি কেন, সেই প্রশ্ন উঠেছে। বামেদের আপত্তি দূর করে ঐকমত্যে আসতেও তাঁর বিলম্ব হচ্ছে বলে ইঙ্গিত রয়েছে।

সব মিলিয়ে, কোথাও ফাঁক রাখতে চাননি মনমোহন।

India's image at stake in poll panel row

# PM tells both sides to lay off

**BHARAT BHUSHAN**

**New Delhi, May 10: Nothing should be done to weaken democratic institutions like the Election Commission that have earned India international respect and admiration because of their "impeccable record", Prime Minister Manmohan Singh warned today.**

Singh did not spare anyone in his criticism — neither his own cabinet minister and ally, Laloo Prasad Yadav, nor the IAS officer who attacked the poll panel in a letter, nor even the election commissioners — saying that this "responsibility vests both in those within the institutions and in those outside".

The Prime Minister situated the controversy in a broader perspective, arguing that if allowed to grow, it could adversely impact India's image, especially at a time when many view it as a "role model" for managing the dual processes of economic development and democratic governance.

"It is incumbent on all to ensure that the essential institutions of a democratic framework are respected, their sanctity maintained and their autonomy preserved in a manner which will ensure that they continue to contribute to our democratic life," he said.

On one side, Laloo Prasad



The responsibility  
(to maintain sanctity)  
vests both in those  
within the institutions  
and in those outside

— Manmohan Singh

has demanded the removal of two election commissioners, B.B. Tandon and N. Gopalaswamy, after an IAS officer, L.V. Saptharishi, accused them of making casteist remarks during the Bihar polls a year ago.

On the other, the election commissioners themselves have gone and met the President.

Seeking to cap the controversy, the Prime Minister iterated that the letter to the law minister, written by Saptharishi, had not been received by H.R. Bhardwaj, who had said

the same thing yesterday.

Reading out a statement to reporters on the flight back from Moscow, Singh argued that such controversies were counter-productive.

Singh felt India was emerging on the global scene as "a confident, progressive and rapidly growing economy, which has managed to build a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious society within a democratic framework".

The entire nation, the Prime Minister advised, should understand the importance of the contribution of constitutional bodies like the Election Commission to earning India the world's respect and admiration.

Reacting to another controversy — the boycott of Parliament by the National Democratic Alliance — Singh declared that to say he was disappointed was to put it mildly. He explained the boycott as a sign of the NDA's failure to reconcile to being out of power.

Singh said his government was prepared for any discussion — "whether it is the issue of tainted ministers or anything else" — in Parliament. On the NDA's charge that his government was "vindictive", the Prime Minister smiled wryly and said: "Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder."

■ See Pages 6 and 8

11 MAY 2005

THE TELEGRAPH



# Soft borders will help create climate for Kashmir settlement: Manmohan

9-PM HD-1 28/4  
 'Willing to talk to any group which wants to talk to me and abjures violence'

Siddharth Varadarajan

**ON BOARD PM'S AIRCRAFT:** In clear and direct language, the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, said on Friday that if the process of allowing increased interaction between the people of Jammu and Kashmir was to continue, it would "create a climate conducive to the final settlement" of the "territorial dispute" in the divided State.

Speaking to reporters en route to Jakarta, where he will attend the Asian-African Summit 2005 on Saturday, Dr. Singh said his Government had a "hectic last week" as far as diplomacy was concerned. The visits of both the Chinese Premier, Wen Jiabao, and the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, had yielded "solid results," he said and now there was the prospect of strengthening economic and political ties with South-east Asia as well as with West Asia and Africa, regions with extensive energy resources.

Dr. Singh said he was looking forward to meeting King Gyanendra on the sidelines of the summit in what will be the first meeting between the two leaders since the Nepalese monarch seized direct control of the Government in Kathmandu on February 1.

## 'Different perspective'

Asked for his opinion on Gen. Musharraf's call for soft borders in Jammu and Kashmir, Dr. Singh said he himself had been

• Visits of Wen, Musharraf yielded 'solid results'

• People's participation essential to solve Kashmir issue

• Ties with South-east Asia, West Asia, Africa to grow

• Non-committal on meeting with Gyanendra

saying that India and Pakistan have to look at the Kashmir problem in a "different perspective."

He said: "Territorial disputes are never easy to resolve overnight. They take time. But there is a lot we can do together, focussing on the interests of the people, creating an environment where the people of Jammu and Kashmir on both sides of the Line of Control can lead a life of dignity and self-respect. And we can create an environment of freer trade, freer movement."

In saying that a soft border would help India and Pakistan move towards a final settlement of the Kashmir dispute — rather than representing a final settlement by itself — Dr. Singh would appear to have opened the door to alternatives which satisfy both the Pakistani position that the LoC cannot be made permanent and the Indian position



**SOLIDARITY OF THE SOUTH:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh being greeted by Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono on his arrival for the Asia-African Summit in Jakarta on Friday. — PHOTO: AP

that the line cannot be redrawn. It was the people of the State who stood to gain the most from

this opening up, he said. "I really believe that if this process is allowed to go forward, it will cre-

ate a climate conducive to the final settlement. But I really do not know today, it is a process, I

cannot lay down a timetable — where will it lead us, when will it — but I am convinced that this is a way of looking at the problem which creates a situation where there are no losers or winners. The only gainers are the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and the prospects of reconciliation between the people of India and the people of Pakistan."

Dr. Singh said the "improvement in Pakistan-India relations is uppermost in my mind, and I am glad that this desire has been reciprocated by President Musharraf." He added that it was his "sincere desire to work with the President of Pakistan to carry forward this process in the months that lie ahead."

As for the Hurriyat, Dr. Singh said he had stated on many occasions that he was willing to talk to "any group which wants to talk to me and abjures violence."

"We will be very happy to talk to the Hurriyat if they feel that there are some concerns they have which they would like us to reflect on," he said.

## Stand on Nepal

Though India had preferred to postpone the SAARC summit scheduled for early February rather than share a platform with King Gyanendra, the Prime Minister said that the bilateral meeting set for noon on Saturday did not mean there was any change in India's perspective on the recent developments in Nepal.

# Partition a settled fact: Manmohan

Statesman News Service

CHANDIGARH, April 13. — Describing Partition of India and Pakistan as a “settled fact”, the Prime Minister said today that it cannot and should not be undone. He, however, added that centuries’ old ties of culture, religion and kinship between the two countries cannot be ignored and emphasised the need of good relations between the neighbours.

During his first visit to Chandigarh after becoming the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh said poverty, illiteracy and ignorance are the biggest enemies of South Asian countries.

He said that countries in

the sub-continent have to realise their potential as only then these problems could be dealt with.

In reply to a question regarding the emergence of bipolar world as a result of closer ties between India and China, the Prime minister said that this “does not solely depends on us”.

He said that there is great imbalance in the world and countries like India, China and Brazil will definitely be forces to reckon with in the near future.

Regarding China’s stand on India’s demand for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, Dr Singh said China had welcomed mobilisation for the permanent seat in the

Security Council, which was an “improvement”.

The Prime Minister expressed his disappointment with America’s decision to give F-16 to Pakistan. “I share the perception about reducing the defence budget.” That is why, he said, “we are giving importance to improved relations between the neighbouring countries to fight the common scourges of ignorance, illiteracy and poverty”.

On a question of inviting Hurriyat leaders for talks, Dr Singh said that there is an elected government in Jammu and Kashmir and “I also recognise that there are people outside the political system and if they are willing to talk then we are available”.

14 APR 2005

THE STATESMAN

WARM WELCOME AWAITS MUSHARRAF

9-  
PM

# Our people want us to move forward: Manmohan

10/7

3/12  
By K. Venugopal

**PORT LOUIS, MARCH 30.** "When politicians meet they cannot confine their discussions to the state of the weather."

This was the response of the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, to a question from a mediaperson on whether he would discuss the Kashmir issue with the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, when he comes to New Delhi next month to watch the one-day cricket match.

The Prime Minister said the meeting would help the two leaders understand better each other's point of view and would carry forward the dialogue they had on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly meet in New York.

"I believe the people of the two countries want us to move forward. They want the bitterness of the past to give way to a new phase of brotherhood."

"A warm welcome awaits him," he said.

Dr. Singh was speaking to the media on board the chartered Air India flight that took him on the seven-hour flight to Mauritius.

Noting that the U.S. decision to sell the F-16 aircraft to Pakistan had come at a time when the two countries were engaged in the peace process, he reiter-

ated that it was a disappointment for him.

Yet, he said, India had to move forward. The U.S. had shown a willingness to engage the country on matters relating to energy, both nuclear and non-nuclear. "We would have to explore what exactly they have in mind," he said.

Dr. Singh emphasised that India's development efforts needed the strong support of the world community. "We need a congenial atmosphere for development and must engage in a purposeful dialogue with all the countries, including the U.S."

On the coming visit of the Chinese Premier, Wen Jiabao, Dr. Singh noted that the two countries were host to a third of the world's population and had made tremendous strides in economic development in recent years. He recalled the Premier's statement that the world would be watching when the two leaders shook hands.

Dr. Singh, accompanied by the Minister for Communications and Information Technology, Dayanidhi Maran, arrived here in the afternoon on a four-day visit that will include the signing of a few bilateral agreements with the Mauritius Prime Minister, Paul Berenger, and discussions with other political leaders in the island.

THE HINDU

31 MAR 2005

# Manmohan did not call up Modi: PMO

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 25.** The Prime Minister's Office today publicly questioned the version put out by the Gujarat Chief Minister's office on Thursday night on the sequence of events leading to the cancellation of Narendra Modi's trip to the United Kingdom.

According to the Prime Minister's media adviser, Sanjaya Baru, contrary to the claims made by the Chief Minister's office, Dr. Singh did not call up Mr. Modi. He also denied that the Centre had any information on any kind of terrorist threat to Mr. Modi. This too was at variance with the claim made by Mr. Modi's office.

It was the Union Home Min-

ister, Shivraj Patil, according to Mr. Baru, who had telephoned Mr. Modi to inform the Chief Minister that since he was going on a private visit, the U.K. Government was not in a position to provide him any kind of security. Mr. Patil told Mr. Modi the apprehension was that there could be a law and order problem and that it would be advisable for him to reconsider his decision to visit London.

The decision to cancel the trip was Mr. Modi's. Thereafter, the Chief Minister rang up the Prime Minister to inform him that he had decided to cancel his trip, Mr. Baru maintained.

That the Prime Minister's Office joined issue with Mr. Modi's office reflects the unease in the Congress over the Modi is-

sue. Ambika Soni, chairperson of the All-India Congress Committee's media department, objected to Mr. Modi using the Prime Minister's name wrongly and said the BJP was politicising the issue. She said the Home Ministry was duty-bound to advise a citizen on the potential security hazards in undertaking a journey to a foreign country just as the Government had issued an "advisory" to all citizens to stay away from Iraq during the American invasion.

Ms. Soni described the Prime Minister's statement of March 19 as correct (whereby he criticised the United States for denying visa to an elected Chief Minister of an Indian State) but she insisted that in no way was

that statement an endorsement of Mr. Modi's actions. It were Mr. Modi's words, actions and behaviour that had made the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, confess that he was "ashamed" [about Gujarat]. She added that during his visit to the United Kingdom, the then Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, publicly apologised for the "Gujarat" riots.

Accusing the BJP of politicising Mr. Modi's visa, Ms. Soni asserted that the BJP leaders should ponder the fact that the Chief Minister had caused so much international embarrassment to the country. The Congress had no reason to revise its views on Mr. Modi and it would continue to find fault with him.

**Campaigners happy: Page 11**

# Pressured PMO clears air on Modi

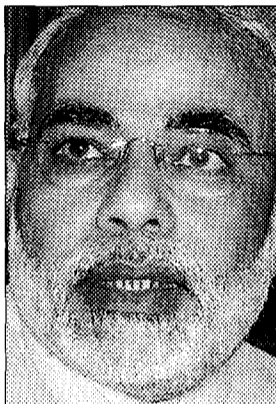
Agencies  
New Delhi, March 24

THE PRIME Minister does not stand by what Modi did in Gujarat, his office clarified on Thursday. He was merely being critical of the US for not allowing an Indian constitutional authority access to the country, the PMO said.

The Prime Minister's criticism of the US for denying Modi a visa had led to Gujarat Congress leaders distancing themselves from the Centre's official position and the PMO made the clarification under pressure.

"The Prime Minister's criticism of Modi's handling of the situation in Gujarat is well known. The country knows Dr Manmohan Singh's secular credentials and his commitment to all sections of our society," said Sanjay Baru, media advisor to the PM. "Therefore, his statement in Parliament cannot be taken as condoning the action and non-action of the Modi government in Gujarat," Baru added.

The Prime Minister's statement in Parliament has already opened up divisions within the Congress. CWC member Was-eem Ahmed demanded that a CWC meeting be called to clarify the party's stand on Modi. "My view is that the government's statement should be discussed among UPA members and a consensus



Narendra Modi

should be arrived at on the issue," Ahmed said.

"There are a number of BJP chief ministers. But the US is not denying a visa to everyone. Only Modi is being denied a visa. The party and the government have different views on the matter," said Shanker Singh Vaghela, Union textile minister. Some groups working in Gujarat have sent a strongly worded letter to the Prime Minister saying that he had failed the spirit of secularism.

"Despite a secular UPA government at the Centre, no action has been taken against Modi," said Shabnam Hashmi of ANHAD.

Congress and the government feel they've done enough to dispel the impression that they were not strong enough on Modi. But sections within the party demanded a CWC meeting on this controversy.

The BJP, meanwhile, has taken strong exception to Congress' description of the visa denial as a "national embarrassment", the BJP said on Thursday that it did not require a certificate from Congress "whose hands are blood-stained".

"We are really surprised over the Congress reaction. We don't need any certificate from the Congress whose hands are blood-stained. The party was responsible for riots in various parts of the country including the anti-Sikh genocide in Delhi and those in Bhagalpur and Hyderabad", former BJP president M. Venkiah Naidu said.

Asserting the issue of visa refusal was a "national issue and an assault on our sovereignty", he said: "the government was duty bound to protect the Constitution and the rights and liberty of every citizen". He said the PM had done the "right thing" by taking up the issue with Washington "but unfortunately, the Congress is trying to politicise it. Before criticising us, they would do well to recall their past," the senior BJP leader said.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee accused the US of playing politics by denying a visa to Modi and hailed the UPA government's stand on the issue. Asked whether he was satisfied with the Centre's response, he said: "Bharat sarkar ka ravaiyya theek hai."

# Singh delinks visa protest from Godhra



Manmohan Singh

**RADHIKARAMESHAN**  
**New Delhi, March 23:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today set the record straight on Narendra Modi.

He made it clear that his statement in the Rajya Sabha protesting against America's denial of visa to the Gujarat chief minister was not tantamount to defending Modi's role in the 2002 post-Godhra violence.

Issuing the clarification on Singh's behalf, his media adviser Sanjaya Baru said: "The Prime Minister as Prime Minister made a statement as far as the sovereignty of the country is concerned on a question of principle and it is a criticism of the US government's decision. But it in no way con-

done Modi or what happened in Gujarat. The PM does not have to prove his secular or nationalistic credentials because his whole life has been spent defending these principles and values. For anyone to question his secular credentials is uncalled for."

Congress spokesperson Anand Sharma, who was initially non-committal on Modi's role in the Gujarat riots, made his feelings clear today.

"The Congress never diluted its stand as far as Modi and his regime are concerned. It is for the BJP to see why this (the visa denial) happened to Modi, it has to do self-inspection. Modi may be a hero for the BJP, but their hero has become a cause of national

embarrassment," Sharma told reporters.

He questioned L.K. Advani's presence at a *swabhiman* (self-respect) rally in Ahmedabad on Sunday saying the BJP chief had to virtually tender an apology when he visited the US and the UK after the riots.

The Prime Minister's Office decided to clear air after a section of the Congress privately voiced reservations about Singh's statement.

Although nobody was willing to criticise it on record, some senior leaders were displeased with the part of the statement that accused the US government of reaching a "subjective judgement" based on "allegations".

They felt the Prime Minister

should have stuck to the "diplomatically correct" position of the Indian government going through the motion of protesting to the US authorities against revoking tourist and business visas and refusing a diplomatic visa to Modi.

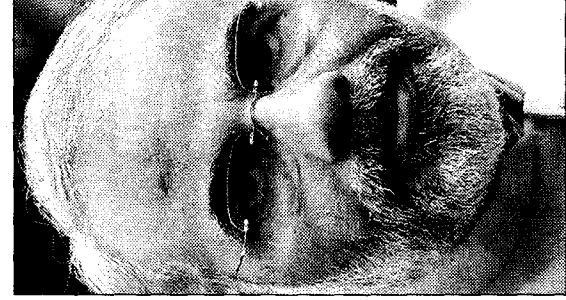
Sources said the Congress, while campaigning for the Lok Sabha elections, had made Gujarat a major plank. It had cited the National Human Rights Commission's observations and the Supreme Court's repeated indictments of the Modi government to buttress its attack.

Sources said the use of the term "allegations" literally washed the campaign away as it amounted to a "denial" of the murder and mayhem that

had rocked Gujarat. Ambika Soni tried to temper Sharma's comments by saying that if the US has refused to reconsider the visa denial, there were "serious" reasons behind the decision.

Sources close to Singh said his statement had been prepared after consultations with Congress president Sonia Gandhi and external affairs minister K. Natwar Singh. The trio had agreed it was a "statement of principle" that criticised the US decision but in no way defended Modi and the BJP and legitimised the Gujarat riots.

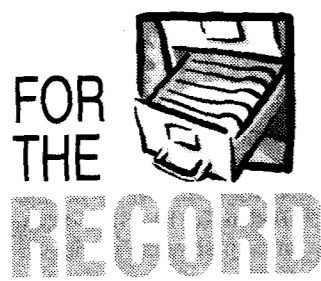
But the BJP hijacked the statement as a "good conduct" certificate for its chief minister from none other than the Prime Minister.



Narendra Modi

THE test of the vibrancy and resilience of a democracy is not just the ability to conduct elections and convene legislatures. It lies in a society's ability to communicate with itself and with the outside world through civilised modes of interaction. We are, like any real democracy, an argumentative society. The right to disagree and the freedom to debate are the hallmarks of such societies.

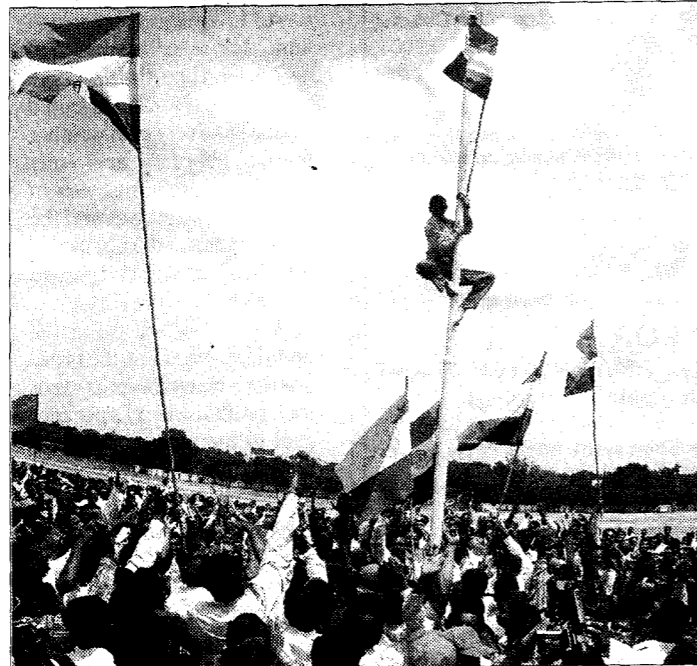
In the nine months that our Government has been in office, I have frequently spoken about our agenda and priorities in office. I sincerely believe that our people voted for the United Progressive Alliance because they wanted the Government to adhere more closely to the fundamental principles of our Republic. Our nation was built on the foundations of a deep and abiding commitment to the values of liberal,



Extracts from a speech delivered at the India Today Conclave, New Delhi, February 25

social democracy. Pluralism, secularism, multi-culturalism and the principles of equity, social justice and the rule of law are core values of our civilisation and the bedrock of our Republic.

Many in India and abroad who have admired this legacy of our freedom struggle were deeply concerned by the emergence in recent years of communalism and majoritarianism in our body politic. If these insidious trends had not been checked, India would not have been the India that our freedom fighters had sought to create. There are bound to be voices of intolerance and extremism at the margins of any free society, and a democracy must learn to deal with such fringe groups, albeit within the framework of the rule of law. However, the central tendency of any modern and civilised society today can only be towards pluralism. In an open, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual society, I believe that this is the dominant trend of political evolution of all societies in the 21st century.



Therefore, we have an obligation to history and mankind to show that pluralism works. India must show that democracy can deliver development and empower the marginalised. Liberal democracy is the natural order of political organisation today. All alternative systems, au-

# 'An open society and open economy are the pillars of our nationhood'

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's dream for India? A liberal, democratic caring society and an open confident economy where foreign policy moves country towards creating economic ties between pluralistic nations



**Globalisation is both an opportunity and a challenge. A decade ago, who could have imagined that India would be a major software services exporter and that a new process of "brain gain"—not "brain drain"—would be created by opportunities in these sectors. However, we must ask ourselves, are we doing enough to secure this edge?**

thoritarian and majoritarian in varying degrees, are an aberration. If our commitment to remain an open society is one of the pillars of our nationhood, the other is our commitment to remain an open society. We must ensure that our investment in social infrastructure and the development of human capabilities. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to suggest that these are the principles to which all countries will increasingly want to adhere. In

believe India's policies towards the world have been shaped by this commitment to the core values of our nationhood. We should be proud to identify with those who defend the values of liberal democracy and secularism across the world. The nature of our interaction with the world, with our wider Asian neighbourhood and with major powers has also been shaped by the sweeping changes in our economic policy. The initiatives we took in the early 1990s towards economic liberalisation have not only altered the nature of our interaction with the world but have also shaped global perceptions of India. They have also altered the manner in which other nations relate with us. Today, there is a greater

one. We do have a vast unfinished agenda of social and economic reform and development, as outlined in our National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP), and our Government's highest priority will be to implement this. I submit that our consideration has never been more conducive for India's economic development than it is today. The world wants India to do well. However, we recognise that our real challenges are at home. It is for this reason that the NCMP places such great emphasis on increasing investment in infrastructure, agriculture, health and education, urban renewal and the knowledge economy. Having ensured that there is today no external constraint on growth, we must now

committed to multilateralism in trade. But we will seek reform and democratisation of multilateral institutions. At the same time, India will strengthen South-South cooperation aimed at enabling all nations of the South to regain their rightful place in the comity of nations. We have imagined that India would be a major software services exporter and that a new process of "brain gain"—not "brain drain"—would be created by opportunities in these sectors. However, we must ask ourselves, are we doing enough to secure this edge?

strategic engagement. Similarly, business and commerce also underpin our strategic partnership with the European Union. It must be our endeavour to ensure that economic and commercial links contribute to adding a strong and new element in our traditionally friendly relations with Russia. Even our approach to the wider Asian neighbourhood has been so influenced by economic factors. The countries of East and South-East Asia have become important economic partners for us and this has encouraged them to be more welcoming of us. Renewed cooperation in the economic field is giving a new profile to our relations with Japan, which is now a major trading partner for us. Our concern for energy security has become an important element of our diplomacy and is shaping our relations with a range of countries across the globe, in West Asia, Africa and Latin America.

It is also interesting to note that the response of other countries to our national security concerns is being shaped by perceptions of business and economic opportunities. Countries that imposed sanctions on India when we declared ourselves a nuclear weapons power are building bridges with us, to utilise opportunities for mutual economic benefit. There is today growing recognition of India as a responsible nuclear power. We remain committed to our unilateral moratorium on testing, and our policy of no-first use. We reaffirm our willingness to work with the international community to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and to work towards the ultimate goal of universal nuclear disarmament. Regrettably, however, South Asia has been slow to recognise the win-win aspect of economic cooperation. While India has a set of bilateral relationships with its neighbours that vary in both political and economic intensity, mere lowering of tariffs and pruning of negative lists do not add up to creating rela-

**If there is an "idea of India", by which India should be defined, it is the idea of an inclusive, open, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual society. I believe that this is the dominant trend of political evolution in the 21st century. Therefore we have an obligation to history, mankind to show that pluralism works**

willingness to work with India and build relationships of mutual benefit and interdependence.

The steps that successive governments have taken since 1991 have helped finally remove what development planners used to refer to in the 1960s and 1970s as the "external constraint" on growth. Indian industry and our professionals have demonstrated to the world their ability to step out with confidence from a highly protected environment into a mercilessly competitive

ensure that there remain no internal constraints to development. That is what the NCMP aims to achieve.

To say, however, that the external constraint on growth is no longer binding is not to suggest that we are making full use of the new opportunities. As a developing economy we must draw on international resources to fuel our development. We should be more open to global capital flows and better prepared to take advantage of new markets for goods and services. India is wholly

tions of mutual benefit. Greater connectivity, both in transport and communication links, and through the opening up of transit routes can transform our subcontinent into a web of economic and commercial links. We can jointly create reciprocal dependencies for mutual benefit. So far this potentially benign process has been hobbled by narrow political calculations. We sincerely want to promote a sense of partnership and the vision of a common destiny in South Asia to realise the region's latent potential.

None of us in South Asia can underestimate the role of economic interdependence in international relations. The example of the European Union, ASEAN and APEC, NAFTA and other regional groups shows that the most dynamic economies of the world are creating such relationships for mutual benefit, regional security and peace. Indeed, we seek to be more closely engaged with such regional groups. Our links with each of these regions is both civilisational and contemporary, with people of Indian origin acting as a cultural bridge between our multi-cultural societies.

The idea that economic considerations play a role in shaping a nation's foreign policy is not new. We in India were alerted to this reality at our very birth as a Republic when Panditji first articulated his vision of Indian foreign policy in the Constituent Assembly legislature in December 1947. Our foreign policy is of course shaped by our civilisational values and our commitment to peace and freedom. But, as Panditji said, it is equally shaped by our commitment to our economic develop-

**Foreign policy is of course shaped by our civilisational values and commitment to peace and freedom. But, as Panditji said, it is equally shaped by our economic development and to the development of all developing economies, within the framework of an open society and economy**

ment and to the development of all developing economies, within the framework of an open society and an open economy. It is shaped by our yearning to recover our lost space in the global economy and our economic status in the comity of nations. It is shaped by our desire to build bridges with our neighbours and our economic partners. It is shaped by our firm and sincere commitment to a future of shared peace, freedom and development in our neighbourhood.

Such are the principles on which we should engage the world and our partners. India is destined to recover its due status in the world, but this process will be speeded up if we do what we must at home and build bridges of mutual interdependence with the world.

## The curious relationship between Congress and Democracy

■ N K SINGH

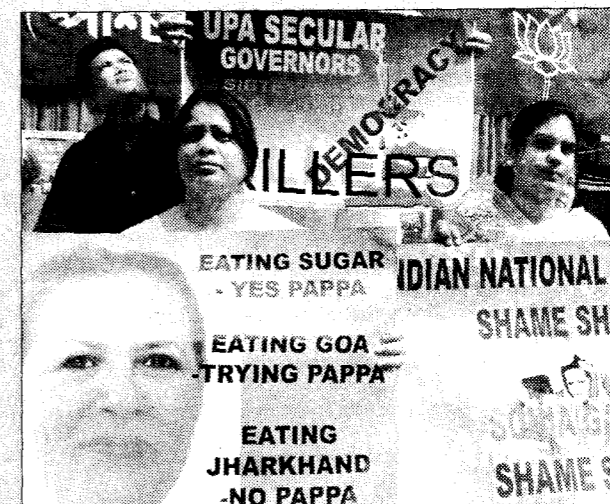
THE results of the last Lok Sabha elections in 2004 and elections to some of the state assemblies thereafter, including Haryana, showed emergence of a resurgent Congress, under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi. Her refusal to become prime minister added to her stature. This was a welcome development because, as political scientist Harold J Laski has said, a healthy party system is the flesh and bone of democracy. Sadly, first the developments in Goa, then in Jharkhand,

and finally in Bihar have found acceptance in principle, one of which is clearly that a die-hard politician or active one should not be appointed to this high constitutional post. This does not rule out the appointment of distinguished politicians, not so active, known for their integrity. After all C Subramaniam and K M Munshi were also politicians. The mandate in Jharkhand admittedly was fractured one, but not an unsurmountable one, not one which necessarily prevented the installation of a popular government. Both the govern-

nor at Jharkhand and the Congress spokesmen are not tired of citing one aspect of the Supreme Court verdict in the Bommai case and that is that the trial of strength should take place on the floor of the House and not in Raj Bhavan. True, but there are other well-established conventions which ought to be followed prior to that. The trial of strength on the floor of the House is ratification or rejection of a decision already taken. The earlier decision of swearing-in of a new government after general election is an all-important step. We are

today living in a coalition-era and, therefore, either a party or a pre-poll alliance front having a larger number of seats should be called. Of course, the Governor should and has the right to satisfy whether the claim was legitimate. In Jharkhand the NDA clearly got a larger number of seats (36) than the Congress-JMM-RJD combine (33). Over and above, the NDA claimed support of five Independents, whom they produced physically before Governor Syed Sibtey Razi. But by logic beyond comprehension, Razi invited JMM leader

Shibu Soren to take oath. Bihar is already set to be placed under presidential rule. Yes, the verdict there was also a fractured one, but the people clearly voted against Laloo Yadav's mis-rule, reducing his strength in the House to 75. In fact, the Congress's debacle was mainly because the people



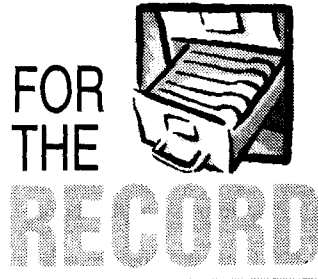
thought that after elections the party would align with the RJD. The apprehensions of the people were proved correct when the party extended written support to the RJD. By the same logic, Ram Vilas Paswan succeeded in securing 30 seats largely because of his anti-Laloo plank. Yes he

also spoke about keeping distance from the BJP. But issues before the voters were surely not Hindutva or secularism. These were development, complete lack of security and chaotic law and order situation, and growing unemployment. A vote in favour of Paswan's IJP was, therefore, also against Laloo. The people of Bihar voted a majority of members against Laloo Prasad so that they could be provided with an alternative government. The chief ministership of Bihar was within the reach of Paswan. But he had to make choice between commitment to the people of Bihar and ministership at the Centre. Unfortunately, he perhaps wanted both, an impossibility.

The writer is a former CBI officer and is at present chairman of the parliamentary board of the Samata Party

# 'Our govt is committed to creating an investment-friendly India... Left supports us'

In a judicious choice of venue, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh chose Left Front-ruled West Bengal for a seminal statement on the economic goals of his government. Addressing the CII partnership summit 2005, in Kolkata on January 12, the PM not only announced the scrapping of Press Note 18 but also stated that there was agreement between the Left and Centre on attracting FDI into India. Excerpts:



THE past two decades have been for us a period of change and adaptation to a new world. Despite many changes in government at the Centre, the economic and foreign policies that were initiated in the early 1990s have stood the test of time and there is today a broad national consensus around them. I must compliment CII for playing a pro-active role in building this consensus at home and in projecting the change abroad.

any longer true with other States moving ahead in the race for development and modernisation. With Buddhadeb babu at the helm of affairs it appears Bengal is once again forging ahead.

During my visit to New York, when some foreign investors raised some doubts with me about the influence of the Left parties on our government's economic policies, it was Shri Purendu Chatterjee who came to our defence, re-assuring them that if Buddhadeb's Bengal is investment-friendly, can't the same be true of the government in Delhi? With certificates like these from Premji and Purendu, I do not have to re-assure this audience that not only is our government committed to providing an investment-friendly environment but also has the full support of our Left allies in doing so. We have committed in the NCMP to boost private investment and encourage FDI, partic-

**We must become not merely a knowledge-producing society but a knowledge-sharing and knowledge-consuming society. We must re-invigorate knowledge-sharing units like public libraries and create knowledge hubs in villages. Knowledge must be used to empower**

tween government and business is exemplified by the fact that Shri Ratan Tata heads the Investment Commission our government has set up to step up the rate of investment. I have great expectations from the initiatives this Commission will take because we cannot step up the rate of economic growth and of employment generation without increasing the rate of investment. India needs investment — in infrastructure, manufacturing industry, services sector, education and healthcare and most importantly, in agriculture and agro-processing. Stepping up the rate of investment is receiving our government's highest priority.

It used to be said in the 19th century that "what Bengal thinks today, India thinks tomorrow". In more recent times doubts began to be raised whether this was

ularly in areas of infrastructure, high-technology and exports.

If Communist China can be the top investment destination in the world and if a Left Government in West Bengal woos FDI aggressively, I see no reason why the UPA government cannot make India an equally important FDI destination.

When I look back at our efforts to change the direction of economic policy since the early 1990s, I am convinced that our most difficult challenge and, hence, our biggest achievement, was to change people's "mindset". Karl Marx had once said, "when ideas capture the minds of men, they become a material force in society". If today there is a meeting of minds between Delhi and Kolkata, it is because the ideas that I and Buddhadebji represent have captured the

minds of the people of India. This is the idea of growth with equity and social justice. The idea that economic liberalisation and modernisation have to be mindful of the needs of the poor and the marginalised.

There is no doubt that the idea of economic openness and social democracy have captured the minds of our people. These ideas have become a material force and, indeed, a motive force of change. India today is willing to be more closely integrated with the world. I do believe that those who may have been skeptical about this at the 1st Partnership Summit in 1995 are today convinced that we are today more willingly engaged with the world than ever before in history.

I am aware that at times some of the views expressed by our alliance partners on the Left may have raised some doubts in your minds. But I am sure you will leave this summit re-assured and convinced that there is today a wide-ranging consensus on the necessity for India to be actively engaged with the world economy. Our government has already taken several steps towards this end. I have repeatedly reaffirmed our commitment to the successful functioning of the multilateral trading system and to broadening the agenda of the World Trade Organisation with an increasingly liberal flow of goods, services and labour. We are committed to lowering our tariffs at least to ASEAN levels. This is a policy priority for us.

You are also aware that we are negotiating Free Trade Agreements with Singapore and ASEAN. I have stated my commitment to the idea of creating an Asian Economic Community, an arc of prosperity across Asia, in which there are no barriers to trade and investment flows and to the movement of people. India is moving quickly to re-discover its historic and organic links with Asia. The India-ASEAN car rally, sponsored by CII, was a resounding success because it generated enormous popular enthusiasm all along the route, bringing the people of our neighbourhood closer to us. I

want to see more such people-to-people and business-to-business interaction across our entire Asian neighbourhood.

As the response to the recent tsunami tragedy showed us and the whole world, the destinies of India and Asia are increasingly bound together, in good times and bad times, in joy and sorrow, in prosperity and pain.

THE time has come for India to make bold and rapid strides. I urge you to think big. At the recent meetings of the Council on Trade and Industry and of the Manufacturing Competitiveness Council, I was heartened to see many of our business leaders share this sense of urgency and of the necessity to think big and think boldly. The era of incrementalism is over. We cannot afford to just do things better. We must do them differently. The

icy-making institutions. I have decided to create a National Knowledge Commission to strengthen the roots and sinews of our capacity and capability building so that we are better prepared for the challenges of the 21st century. This Commission would be a catalyst in setting ambitious knowledge targets and enabling agencies to attain them. The agenda of the National Knowledge Commission will be shaped by a knowledge pentagon with five areas for action namely: to increase access to knowledge for public benefit; develop new concepts of higher education; rejuvenate Science & Technology institutions; enable application of knowledge by industry to enhance manufacturing competitiveness; encourage intensive use of knowledge-based services by government to empower citizens.

ties and women. Access to knowledge will strengthen liberal democracy at the grassroots. I want business leaders as well as our political and intellectual leaders to work with the Knowledge Commission so that we can build a more open society and a more open economy. Building a knowledge economy and a knowledge society is the only way in which we can meet the challenge of globalisation.

I am convinced that India has to be a more open economy and must derive the benefits of globalisation, even as we equip ourselves to deal with its challenges. This is a course which we have set and we shall stay this course. I commit our government to an open, caring economy, an economy where the marginalised are empowered so that they become partners in development and share the benefits of growth. We have been taking firm steps in this direction, systematically and steadily. We have begun the process of rationalising our indirect tax structures with a movement towards a VAT system and a common goods and services tax. We have opened up international markets to our airlines so that they become global players. Policy measures are being taken to make a quantum leap in infrastructure sectors such as airports, roads, power, ports and railways. At the same time, we are increasing the emphasis on education, health and employment. The education cess, the rural health mission, the food-for-work programme to be followed by an employment guarantee are all major initiatives to make our economy a caring one.

I am happy to inform you that we will be doing away with the restrictive provisions of Press Note 18 for all future joint ventures with foreign partners. This is a regulatory provision that has been a source of some discomfort to investors. As I listened to tales of success of Indian firms in the global marketplace and the words of optimism at a recent meeting of the Manufacturing Competitiveness Council, I was convinced that measures like Press Note 18 are anachronisms today, having outlived their purpose. In the new dispensation, while existing joint ventures will continue to be protected by a few provisions of Press Note 18, new joint ventures and collaborations will have to be shaped by commercial contractual agreements based on the free will of partners without government interfer-

ence. For existing joint ventures, the protection will be restricted to the same — and not allied — field and not for defunct or sick joint ventures.

THE Partnership Summit has been a forum where you have debated India's economic and strategic relations with the world. In this too, we must move away from "incrementalism" to seeking "out-of-the-box" solutions to the challenges we face. Whether it is the challenge of development and political and social stability within South Asia; or the challenge of stabilising our relations with Pakistan and China; or the challenge of improving our relations with major powers; or even the challenge of increasing our share of world trade and investment flows.

We must have the courage to question our assumptions and challenge pre-conceived notions. We must show a willingness to listen to others, even as we articulate our own concerns in a reasonable and convincing manner. We cannot compromise on our core national security concerns, nor indeed can we compromise on the values that define our Nationhood. In dealing with the outside world, every nation draws a bottomline defined both by the values and principles of its nationhood and by the concerns of its national security. However, once we have drawn this bottomline we must have the imagination and courage to engage the world, to strike deals, to win friends and influence people.

THE national response to the tsunami tragedy was not only heartening but also showed that in the face of a crisis we have the national will and resources to meet the challenge head on. The people of India have shown their generosity in a time of distress. They have also shown their determination to be self-reliant, even while being gracious in responding to offers of assistance. Our response was not shaped by false pride or by chauvinism. We are happy to be part of a global community and to work with it. We will seek international assistance for our reconstruction effort. I submit to you that the "do-it-yourself" mood of the nation is not an index of our isolationism. Far from it, it is an index of our resolve to turn an adversity into an opportunity. I hope we can all join hands to do just that and give the nation a new sense of hope and direction.

Manmohan, Buddhadeb at the CII summit in Kolkata on Wednesday



**If Communist China can be the top investment destination in the world and if a Left Govt in Bengal woos FDI aggressively, I see no reason why the UPA Govt cannot make India an equally important FDI destination**

challenge before us — in economic policy, social policy, education policy, foreign policy — is to "think out of the box". We must think anew, afresh, ahead.

An important step we must take to enable this change of mindset is to innovate and rejuvenate our "knowledge institutions". Our schools and colleges, universities and research laboratories, our think-tanks and pol-

We must become not merely a knowledge-producing society but a knowledge-sharing and knowledge-consuming society. We must re-invigorate knowledge-sharing units like public libraries and create knowledge hubs in every village. Knowledge must be used to empower the disempowered, like scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, other backward classes, minori-

Corporate houses can buy directly from farmers and eliminate middlemen

## Those dazzling shopfronts of cumin and sesame

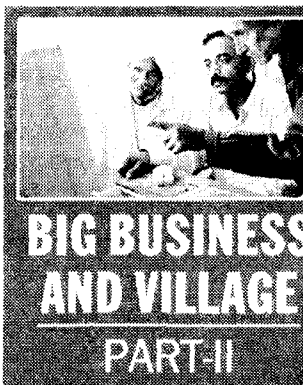
■ RASHID K KIDWAI

THE corporate sector has been active in developing the hinterland surrounding their factories. A number have established schools, hospitals, places of worship and instituted water management measures. Apart from altruistic motives, it is sound business sense that propels them to undertake development projects in the vicinity of their enterprises.

To expect corporations to provide funds for "charity" whenever they are approached by a "worthy cause" is unrealistic for a number of reasons. First, different corporations do in fact support any number of good causes such as cancer, HIV Aids, spastics, education, health, sports, art, music, dance, cultural events, and the like. Second, suppose a corporation is doing yeoman service in the field of adult literacy and it is approached for a donation for another worthy cause. If that corporation refuses to contribute, it is likely to be branded as callous for not being willing

to help patients dying of cancer, despite being such a "huge" company and making such large profits.

Successful corporations focus on business areas they know best and where they have built up the necessary expertise. When this modus operandi is applied to social services, it is the particularised focus they bring to bear that enables them to be successful in assisting the people they work with. Gov-



ernments on the other hand have the much larger mandate of addressing or meeting needs across all sectors. To expect corporations to mimic the government is surely unrealistic.

Clearly however, it is desirable to elicit as much support and funding from corporations as possible in the interests of improving the lives of millions of our population. To obtain sustainable support from the corporate sector, the business interests of this community must be met. Without this, one can expect sporadic support, or contributions given under pressure, which is unsustainable in the long term. Identification of a business benefit is not as difficult as it may sound and efforts are already underway.

For example, ITC is working with Sewa Gram Mahila Haat (SGMH — the agricultural and marketing arm of SEWA) to trace sesame seed back to the field on which it was grown — traceability is mandatory for exports. Produce bought from mandis cannot be traced, but working with grassroots agricultural workers, SGMH can provide the required documentation at the field level. In addition to traceability, because the value added process of sorting and

grading is also done by SGMH, ITC buys the product at much higher prices than the farmer could get from village middlemen.

Piloted in 2003, this initiative enabled 1,450 farmers from whom SGMH procured the sesame seed to get an average of Rs 29 per kg as against the Rs 18 they were paid in 2002 from other sources. ITC is now in its second year of procurement from SEWA and, because of the success of the market-driven initiative, is considering procuring other commodities such as cumin seed, groundnuts and amla. It is also considering support for growing organic sesame, for which they plan to train farmers.

This model can be adopted by other corporations whose focus is agriculture such as pharmaceuticals who could procure isabgol, and other commodities. Another possibility is to train NGOs to grow medicinal plants. India is blessed with practically every type of agro climatic zone where almost any plant could conceivably be grown. We have the



added strength of a number of credible NGOs active in different parts of the country. Building on these precious assets, partnerships like the SEWA-ITC one could be established to the benefit of all.

Another very exciting initiative is the SEWA-HLL RUDI Bazar project. The pilot in 90 villages was launched in early December 2004. SGMH will buy all agricultural produce from its farmer members (over 80,000), giving them better

returns than their village middlemen. The product range includes dal, turmeric, chillies (whole and powdered), cumin seed, maize, sugar, jaggery, salt, tea, to name a few. These goods are processed and packed in 20 gm to 500 gm packs. HLL trained 20 SEWA members employed by SGMH at its Sangam factory in Mumbai to expose them to the requirements of a national operation. HLL also helped SGMH set up their process-

ing facility in Aniyor, a village in Sabarkanta District.

RUDI, the brand, meaning pure and beautiful, is owned by SGMH. Ninety SGMH members have been engaged as sales agents in 90 villages and been trained, with help from HLL, to sell these goods in a direct-to-home model, in view of the low literacy levels. Some members have been hired to communicate the message in villages through skits and folk songs, while others have been employed to undertake wall paintings, poster and banner advertising. To facilitate distribution, three sales hubs have been established in addition to the processing facility. The value proposition to the consumer? RUDI is pure, processed and packed hygienically, and is not adulterated (does not have the stem of the chilly ground into the powder to increase weight). RUDI is packed with the proper weight, at the same price or lower than what the village retailer is charging. With small packs, the consumer is also exposed to a weight-to-price ratio, instead of getting the masalas etc. in a paper packet.

With 53,000 women members in Gujarat, spending Rs 120 per month on these everyday consumption items, (very conservative figure), the annual turnover would work out at Rs 76 crores, employing over 10,000 women, once the pro-

ject is fully implemented in the 14 districts where SEWA operates. In addition to agro products, SGMH is procuring items in demand from its member producer groups; for example, washing powder, agarbati, pickles, candles and papads. It also procures goods from its members in handicrafts, handlooms, and textiles.

Extensive research had been carried out prior to the launch of the 28 items short-listed. Now the sales agents are in the process of identifying other items in demand in villages, e.g. torches, batteries, biscuits etc., which will also be procured. Because the entire operation is within the ambit of the SEWA family (with its known track record), chances of success are good, especially since HLL is providing support in training, logistics, distribution and marketing. The potential for expanding sales to the larger rural population is enormous. When the benefit accruing to SEWA members becomes more obvious, why would the rest of the village not be eager to participate?

Grassroots Trading Network for Women initiated these entrepreneurial projects. Fortunately, other such types of initiatives are also emerging that will greatly benefit the rural community through employment and enterprise.

The writer is chief executive officer, Grassroots Trading Network for Women



# India should be more open to global capital flows: Manmohan Singh

By Amit Baruah

**NEW DELHI, FEB. 25.** "Countries that imposed sanctions on us when we declared ourselves a nuclear weapons' power have come to live with the reality of our nuclear capability because they wish to build bridges of mutual economic benefit," the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, said tonight.

"There is today global recognition of the reality of our nuclear capability and faith in our commitment to a policy of no-first-use and the ultimate goal of universal nuclear disarmament. India is a responsible nuclear power and will work with the international community to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction," he said.

Providing a broad policy sweep, Dr. Singh said at the *India Today* conclave that the objective of India's foreign policy was shaped by the yearning to recover its lost space in the global economy. "It is [also] shaped by our firm and sincere commitment to a future of shared peace, freedom and development in our neighbourhood."

## 'Natural order'

Stressing that a liberal democracy was the "natural order" of social and political organisations in today's world, the Prime Minister said that all other regimes, authoritarian and majoritarian in varying degrees, were an aberration. "It is precisely this understanding that shaped our response to recent developments in Nepal."

Authoritarian responses could not solve the real problems of the people. "They merely contain the fallout, often for very limited periods of time; and, with possible negative consequences that make the remedy worse than the disease."

## Praise for Karzai

Dr. Singh said India felt proud to host the President of the youngest democracy in the region — Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan. "He has shown courage in sowing the seeds of democracy." He said the global environment had never been more conducive to India's economic development than it was today. "The world wants India to do well. Our real challenges lie at home."

"It is for this reason that the NCMP [National Common Minimum Programme] places such great emphasis on increasing investment in infrastructure, in agriculture, in health and education, in urban renewal and in the knowledge economy. Having ensured that there is today no external constraint on growth, we must now ensure that there remain no internal constraints to development. That is what the NCMP aims to achieve," he said.

Suggesting that India should be more open to global capital flows and take greater advantage of new markets, Dr. Singh maintained that India was wholly committed to multilateralism in trade. "But we will seek the reform and democratisation of multilateral institutions. At the same time, India will

strengthen South-South co-operation and help all developing countries regain their rightful place in the comity of nations."

## China factor

India's relations with major

powers, especially the United States, and more recently China, had been shaped by economic factors. "Who could have imagined a decade ago that China would emerge as our second largest trading partner," he asked.

# We don't favour cross-border terrorism: Shaukat Aziz

By Amit Baruah

**NEW DELHI, FEB. 25.** Islamabad does not favour cross-border terrorism and has taken "all the necessary steps" to contain the problem, the Pakistan Prime Minister, Shaukat Aziz, said in a live video address from Islamabad to the *India Today* conclave here today.

Stressing that progress on the Kashmir issue would influence movement in other areas of bilateral relationship, Mr. Aziz said Pakistan's diplomatic and political support to the Kashmiri people had nothing to do with cross-border terrorism. Asked to comment on the "fact" that two alleged terrorists killed recently in Kashmir were from Gujranwala, Pakistan, he said he was not aware of the facts. The root causes of terrorism were issues like economic deprivation, which had to be addressed.

Pointing to the "internal" dimension of the Kashmir issue, Mr. Aziz said that it would be an "over simplification" to dismiss the entire struggle as cross-border terror-

ism. There were "local" reactions in Kashmir to the "situation" and India's "liberal conscience" knew it had a case to answer on Kashmir.

Describing the recent decision to start a Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service as "historic," he said this had been a long-standing demand of the Kashmiri people. The gas pipeline was a huge confidence-building measure. He hoped that India would "appreciate" Pakistan's gesture in deciding to go ahead with this "stand alone," trilateral project. The pipeline "will be one of the turning points" in the India-Pakistan relationship. This cost-effective project would benefit the entire region and "doing it together" was much more efficient.

## 'Let's walk before we run'

The environment was not right for joint investment projects between Indian and Pakistani companies "at this moment." He hinted that Pakistan was looking at the information technology sector as a "pilot" for such investments. "We'll have to walk before we can run."

THE HINDU

26 FEB 2005

# PM sets reform course

OUR SPECIAL  
CORRESPONDENT

**New Delhi, Feb. 9:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today set the economic agenda for the next six months by directing his ministers to slash subsidies, prepare a white paper on divestment, push labour reforms and initiate infrastructure projects to spur growth.

The agenda indicated the government's resolve to push reforms despite pressure from its Left allies.

All the measures the Left sees as red rags were on the agenda: divestment, labour law reforms and privatisation of airports at Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Hyderabad (though the words Singh used were "restructure or develop").

The biggest worry for the government has been the ballooning subsidies that have gone way past the estimate of

Rs 43,516 crore this year.

Singh directed the department of economic affairs to prepare a policy on subsidies that would identify target groups, goods and services and devise an exit strategy to weed out those that are inconsistent with the policy.

The experts have speculated that these would cover some subsidies on petroleum, especially on cooking gas, and some on food. The department of fertilisers has also been asked to rationalise subsidies.

Singh emphasised the need to revamp the public distribution system. In his last budget, finance minister P. Chidambaram spoke of the introduction of food stamps — a concept followed in the US — to ensure supplies through ration shops reach the poor.

The department of disinvestment has been asked to prepare a white paper on divesting a part of the government's stake in public sector

companies, an issue over which differences with the Left are the most contentious.

A statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office said the finance ministry had been asked to develop a comprehensive policy on foreign direct investment (FDI). The government has been keen to ratchet up FDI inflows to around \$10 billion a year from a little over \$4 billion now.

There are other issues that the detractors of reforms will be uncomfortable with. Singh has asked the department of mines to implement steps aimed at attracting private investment — domestic and foreign — in mining.

He asked the commerce ministry to devise a policy on special economic zones that will include a hassle-free regulatory regime for labour, among other things. A hire-and-fire labour policy could be tested out in these zones.

■ See Page 8

# Manmohan announces Knowledge Commission

By Our Special Correspondent

KOLKATA, JAN. 12. The Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, today announced the setting up of a National Knowledge Commission so that India becomes not only a knowledge-producing society but also a knowledge-sharing and knowledge-consuming society.

Delivering his inaugural address at the CII Partnership Summit here, Dr. Singh said this was the only way to meet the challenges of globalisation. The Commission's agenda would be shaped by a "knowledge pentagon with five action areas." These included increasing access to knowledge for public benefit, developing higher education concepts, rejuvenating science and technology institutions, enabling application of knowledge by industry to enhance manufacturing competitiveness and encouraging intensive use of knowledge-based services by government

for citizens' empowerment.

The Prime Minister also told the over 1,200 delegates from within the country and abroad that the Government had the full support of the Left allies in providing an investment-friendly environment.

## 'Look at China'

"We have committed in the NCMP (National Common Minimum Programme) to boost private investment and encourage FDI particularly in infrastructure, high technology and exports. If communist China can be the top investment destination in the world and if a Left Government in West Bengal woos FDI aggressively, I see no reason why the UPA Government cannot make India an important FDI destination," he said amid applause.

Admitting that at times some of the views expressed by the alliance partners on the Left might have raised doubts in the minds of prospective investors, Dr.

Singh said that he was sure the delegates would leave the summit re-assured and convinced "that there is today a wide-ranging consensus on the necessity for India to be actively engaged with the world economy."

Noting that India was moving quickly to rediscover its historic and organic links with Asia, Dr. Singh said the recent tsunami tragedy "showed us and the whole world that the destinies of India and Asia are increasingly bound together in good times and bad times, in prosperity and pain.

In this context, he said that India's response to offers of assistance was not shaped by false pride or chauvinism. "We are happy to be part of a global community and will seek international assistance for our reconstruction effort." The do-it-yourself mood of the nation was not an index of its isolationism. Rather, it reflected the country's resolve to turn an adversity into an opportunity.

# Manmohan shoots, ball in Mamata's court



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh kicks off the National Football League at the Salt Lake Stadium on Wednesday. (Match report in HT Sport)

SUBHANKAR CHAKRABORTY/HT



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## Didi offered Cabinet berth

HT Correspondent  
Kolkata, January 12

THE PRIME Minister today invited Mamata Banerjee to join hands with the Congress and offered her a Cabinet berth, thus making official what the state Congress had been hinting at for some time.

"We do miss you," a smiling Manmohan Singh told the Trinamool Congress chief during a 15-minute meeting at Raj Bhavan where she handed him a cheque toward the Prime Minister's Relief Fund for tsunami victims. "Come, help us by taking charge (as a minister)."

As she emerged from the meeting, Mamata side-stepped reporters' questions on whether she would accept the invitation. "Yes, the Prime Minister did say 'we miss you'. But that's because he has known me for such a long time and is fond of me. It's a good gesture, but nothing more than that," she said.

Political observers say that no matter how many invitations Mamata receives from the Congress high command, she will never join the Congress as long as it has an alliance with the CPI(M) at the Centre.

Besides, Mamata is yet to get over the blow she suffered in the 2001 Assembly elections when her party had a seat arrangement with the Congress.

The state Congress, however, is eager to ally with the Trinamool before the 2006 Assembly elections to ensure that the anti-Left vote is not divided. PCC chief Pranab Mukherjee has repeatedly dropped the hint that his party is open to an alliance with Mamata.

At the Raj Bhavan meeting, Mamata handed the Prime Minister a cheque for Rs 3.2 lakh on behalf of her party. Of this, she had raised nearly Rs 1 lakh by selling her paintings. See also Kolkata Live

# PM deflects Left attack on CMP

## Manmohan Blames West Bengal's Inability To Gather Momentum On CPM

Our Kolkata Bureau  
11 JANUARY

**T**HE UPA government at the Centre was giving highest priority to strengthening public sector undertakings and reviving loss-making ones, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said here on Tuesday. Brushing aside criticism from the Left which provides crucial support to the UPA government, Prime Minister Singh said that his government was adhering to the common minimum programme (CMP) and was committed to check rising prices.

Addressing a rally of Congress workers at Rabindra Sarovar stadium, soon after arriving in the city, the Prime Minister said: "My government is running in accordance with the CMP and 80% of the pledges made in the Congress manifesto have been incorporated in the CMP."

These comments are significant coming in wake of the Left launching an attack on the Manmohan Singh government charging it

for deviating from the CMP and laying down economic policies, bypassing the Parliament. "The previous government had not done anything to strengthen PSUs and did not pay attention to their modernisation. My government is fully committed to doing this," Dr Singh said.

Outlining the success of the UPA government, the Prime Minister said that in the last seven and a half months, the economy had been strengthened, industrial production augmented, record export achieved and the country's foreign exchange reserves had gone up by another \$ 10 billion.

"Our main task is to fight poverty and solve unemployment problems, and for that agriculture and industrial production would have to be augmented. Our target is also to raise the GDP growth rate to 7-8%, achieve a growth of 4% in agricultural production, 10% in industrial output and 15-20% growth in export," he said.

Turning to communalism, the Prime Minister said: "Those bent upon dividing the

country on lines of religion, are obstacles to national development."

The Prime Minister also made a veiled criticism of the Left Front government and said that the state had lagged behind in development during its rule. "West Bengal had achieved development during the time of former chief minister B.C Roy. But the state had lagged behind in development since the time Congress had gone out of power in the state," Mr Singh told the Congress workers' rally. "We have to work to restore the past glory of the state," he said.

West Bengal chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee also called on the Prime Minister at Raj Bhavan and discussed issues concerning state's development, officials said.

Dr Singh also inaugurated the diamond jubilee celebrations of Kolkata Press Club. He complimented the media for playing the role of an "early warning system" during the tsunami disaster and said that it was the media first which brought the world's attention to the disaster.

## Disaster A National Tragedy, Says Manmohan

# PM visits tsunami-hit Andaman & Nicobar

Port Blair  
8 JANUARY

**D**ESCRIBING the tsunami disaster as a "national tragedy", Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, on Saturday, assured the people of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, one of the worst-hit, of all possible central assistance to restart their lives. On a day's visit, Dr Singh went to relief camps in Campell Bay and Nicobar promising a healing touch to victims who have lost their near and dear ones and found their sources of livelihood wiped out.

"We will help to the maximum extent possible. We want to ensure that each affected family gets assistance from the Centre in terms of employment, education, housing and other basic necessities," he said.

According to official estimates, 1,205 people have lost their lives in the Andaman and Nicobar region in 192 affected

villages. A population of over 42,000 have been hit and 5,740 are reported missing. As many as 30 relief camps have been set up housing 11,239 victims.

Smashed boats, upturned and twisted rooftops and dazed looks of the affected people bore testimony to nature's wrath that has left many without houses, jobs and other means of livelihood.

In Kakana village in Car Nicobar, Prime Minister Singh said freeze on government jobs could be waived for Andaman and Nicobar Islands to provide succour to educated unemployed tribals in tsunami affected areas.

The Prime Minister said free rations to the affected tribals would be continued till required. Restoration of telecommunication links would be undertaken at a fast pace, he said. All help would be provided to ensure a new beginning for those affected by the tidal wave.

The Prime Minister was accompanied by deputy chairman

of Planning Commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Lt governor of Andaman and Nicobar, Ram Kapse, minister of state in the Prime Minister's Office, Prithviraj Chauhan, AICC leaders Mukul Wasnik, Shakeel Ahmed, Prime Minister's principal secretary, T.K.A. Nair and special secretary M.K. Narayanan.

At a relief camp in Campbell Bay, a distraught Moses Isaac of Pilo Millow Island told the Prime Minister about the problem of the fishing community hit by the tidal wave. "We will make sincere efforts to see that you get new boats," the Prime Minister told fishermen whose vessels had been badly damaged.

A sobbing Gurnam Kaur from Punjab told the Prime Minister how she, from a well settled family, had lost everything. With tears welling in his eyes, an emotional Prime Minister said: "We will make available all possible amenities." — PTI