

ROYAL HARBINGER

Reporting Fact of the Matter

Weekly



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Democratic spirit within the Congress is what the Udaipur conclave signifies

The 'Chintan Shivir' being organised by the Indian National Congress (INC) at Udaipur between May 13 and May 15, 2022 has generated much enthusiasm within the party.

In the past such conclaves have been useful in assessing our strength and weaknesses, address new challenges and in coming up with fresh strategies. Conclaves at Panchmarhi and Shimla paved the way for the formation of the UPA, which won the general elections in 2004 and 2009.

The party has had a long tradition of holding such special conclaves involving leaders and workers besides the usual meetings of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) and the All India Congress Committee (AICC) to discuss organisational issues.

A special session of select leaders was first held in 1956 at Narora in UP. This was presided over by U.N. Dhebar. The then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru attended it for two full days to brief party leaders and address apprehensions and misunderstandings over government policies and burning issues of the day.

Results of elections held for the five state assemblies in March this year were disappointing for the party. Discussions and post-mortems have already taken place within the party about our failure in effectively communicating the misgovernance by BJP-led state governments of UP,

Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur. In Punjab the party's decision to change the leader failed to counter the strong anti-incumbency. The session at Udaipur is meant to carry forward the discussions and evolve by consensus a strategy for the elections to be held between now and 2024.

The Congress President has formed six coordination panels. The panel on political affairs is headed by me. Shri Salman Khurshid heads the panel on social justice and empowerment while Shri P. Chidambaram heads the panel on economic affairs. The panel on agriculture and farmers is headed by Shri Bhupinder Hooda, former chief minister of Haryana, while the panel on the organisation is headed by Shri Mukul Wasnik. The panel on Youth Empowerment is headed by our young colleague Amrinder Singh Warring. Each of these panels comprises nine members. The panels are expected to come up with a set of recommendations. A summary of these recommendations will be presented at Udaipur. We are all hopeful that the three-day session will not only deliberate on the various social and political challenges facing the country but also help come up with ideas to strengthen the party organisation.

BJP Government at the Centre headed by Narendra Modi is about to complete three years of its second term in office. By now the glaring failures of this government in dealing with the economy and

the pandemic are internationally known. But despite its fail-

change in the political, economic and social realities on



ures on multiple fronts, BJP has been winning elections by polarising voters and dividing the polity on religious and communal lines. The ruling party has done nothing to curb the increasing crescendo of hate speech—which should have been a priority of any responsible government—but has been lending its tacit support to hate mongers. Creating tension in society, promoting communal dog whistles and fear-mongering have helped them reap political dividend.

While the Congress has been raising people's issues, about rising prices and poor remuneration to farmers, they seem to resonate with the people less. Large sections of our population appear to have succumbed to majoritarianism and communal rhetoric. It is a dangerous trend and it has become necessary to stop this madness spreading like a plague. There has also been a sea

change since the previous Congress sessions at Panchmarhi, Shimla and Jaipur. The role of fake news, propaganda and massive use of social media and WhatsApp are more pronounced than ever. Relentless spread of false information that pass for news is used to influence public opinion. The false propaganda against the Congress continues. We need to respond effectively to such campaigns.

Right from the first Congress session in Mumbai in 1885, there were conflicts of ideas and ideology and sharp differences of opinion. The party encouraged leaders to articulate their differences and consciously took their views into account.

It was this democratic spirit that enabled the party to remain united and emerge stronger. Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, Congress also became a platform to fight

social evils.

Remarkably, even when all the top leaders of the Congress were jailed, movements were sustained by party workers and the people. Congress has always been a party of the people and has sought to carry everyone along, being secular and democratic.

History is witness to initiatives by the Congress that range from unifying the princely states, abolition of zamindari and setting up of PSUs in the core sector to land reforms, bank nationalisation the Green Revolution. The long list of pioneering work ranging from space research and setting up IITs and IIMs to empowering people through MGNREGA, RTI and Right to Education can scarcely be denied.

Time and again Congress has proved the prophets of doom to be wrong. Each time they predicted the imminent demise of the Congress, the party bounced back with renewed vigour. Congress went through a serious political crisis after losing the general election in 1996.

But once Smt Sonia Gandhi took over the reins of the party in 1998, things fell into place. A lot of hard work went into instilling confidence in the workers. The result was formation of a winning coalition to take on the NDA and successive victories in 2004 and 2009 general elections.

That the party consistently fought for upholding the interests of the poor, Dalits and Adivasis is also undeniable. It

fought against communalism, fought for land rights of the people and agriculture credit for farmers and villagers. The UPA introduced rights-based legislations and implemented the Common Minimum Programme strictly.

The party has been ably led by Smt Sonia Gandhi. With remarkable clarity of mind, she has been consistent in her political beliefs and remained steadfast to the core values of the party and secularism. Winning or losing elections was of less concern to her than upholding the integrity of public life and service.

Some Congressmen did oppose coalitions and felt the Congress must contest elections alone. But a consensus in favour of a rainbow coalition emerged in the Bangalore session of the Congress and was endorsed at the party conclaves at Panchgarhi and Shimla. The Congress willingly ceded political space to forge a coalition to take on the NDA and its 'India Shining' campaign.

The country is witnessing a fresh phase of communal frenzy and hatred. The ruling BJP and the Sangh Parivar are deliberately creating fissures on questions of food, faith, festivals, on clothes people wear, languages they speak or the people they love.

Use of provocative language and violence have increased with the ruling establishment looking away.

Fringe elements, petty and desperate leaders are being encouraged to spread com-

munalism, fear and hatred. Provocative speeches and slogans before festivals have become commonplace with the police looking on as spectators. What is alarming is the conspicuous silence of the Prime Minister. While he loves to speak and does speak endlessly, he has spared no word yet to condemn the bizarre public threats of killing, rape and genocide. His sustained silence has emboldened these fringe elements.

Inflation has meanwhile crippled the poor. The steep rise in prices of fuel and cereal, vegetables, fruits and edible oil etc. have broken the people's back. But the BJP Government does not want to address these concerns.

It has taken recourse to diversionary tactics, headline management and browbeating the opposition.

It has been busy promoting one emotional and divisive agenda after another.

The Government has also avoided discussions in parliament. Legislations are passed with little deliberation. The government has forced several legislations in great haste, overruling Opposition demands to send the Bills for scrutiny to Parliamentary Committees. We wanted a discussion on the withdrawal of the three farm Acts which the government had imposed through ordinances in the first place. But the legislation withdrawing the farm laws took three minutes in the Lok Sabha and four minutes in the Rajya Sabha to pass.

Ruling this country through ordinances, in the seven years since 2014, on an average 11 ordinances were promulgated by the Union Government each year. Over 80 ordinances have been promulgated since 2014. While 70% of the Bills during UPA's time were referred to Parliamentary committees for scrutiny, the percentage since 2014 is less than 10%.

The government is defying parliamentary norms and conventions. The number of sittings of both Houses has declined sharply and during the last eight years the average number of sittings has been just 63 days annually.

The Indian National Congress has seen several ups and downs in its glorious and long history. But whenever it was down, dedicated Congress supporters worked tirelessly and revived the party. These are undoubtedly trying times and the challenges are many.

But there is no substitute to unity and discipline. We must go to the people with a record of our past and a convincing blueprint for the future to win their confidence.

INC is still a central force in Indian politics, the only party which has a presence in every corner of the country. It still has a connect with all sections of the people; and that is why it is my firm belief that the Udaipur conclave will prove to be a turning point and show us the way forward.

-Malikarjun Kharge
Courtesy national herald

Congress's Chintan Shivir Ends With 'Bharat Jodo' Call, Declaration Covers Large Ground

Udaipur: Recalling the contributions of the Congress in independent India, from facilitating public infrastructure to ensuring basic facilities for the people of India, and sacrifices made by various leaders, all the way from Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel to Sonia Gandhi who rejected the prime minister's position in 2004, the grand old party ended its three-day Chintan Shivir with the call of "Bharat Jodo" on Sunday. "Exactly 80 years ago, in the year 1942, Mahatma Gandhi gave the call of 'Bharat Choro (Quit India)'. In the year 2022, the country's slogan will be 'Bharat Jodo'. This is the 'nav sankalp' of Udaipur," CWC member Ajay Maken declared in a reference to the party's proposed "Bharat Jodi Yatra" scheduled to begin on Gandhi Jayanti (October 2, 2022). The three-day event was proposed by Rahul Gandhi after being handed a humiliating defeat in the assembly

elections in five states by the Bharatiya Janata Party earlier this year. The defeat only helped the dissenting senior leaders raise the banner against the Gandhi family's leadership and demand a rare internal election for the post of party president. Following the debacle, the Congress Working Committee, the highest decision making body, accepted Rahul Gandhi's proposal for a brainstorming camp.

At the end of it, while most dissenting leaders' viewpoints were accommodated in the declaration, it appeared that a majority of the participants still pitched for Rahul to take over the party's leadership. However, most said that since the elections will happen, Rahul should contest and that they were certain of his victory. However, the Chintan Shivir represented most dissenting leaders. Barring Kapil Sibal, most of them were not only invited to the shivir but were given impor-

tant convenorships of discussion panels. Bhupinder Singh Hooda was made a convenor of the panel related to farmers and agriculture while others like Manish Tewari, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma and others were represented in other such panels. The declaration eventually accommodated most of the proposals, considered to be the ideas of dissenting leaders. Ideas like "One Family, One Person", having a dedicated election management committee, better representation of young leaders in committees, democratising party committees – right from the booth level – by nominating workers from different backgrounds, better representation of caste groups, a public insight committee to get feedback from the ground through the year, and making position-holders accountable, restricting terms for party posts, all found a place in the Udaipur declaration.

Gehlot, Rahul lay foundation of bridge at Beneshwar Dham in Rajasthan



Banswara: Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday laid the foundation of a bridge at Beneshwar Dham, the confluence of Mahi, Jakham and Som rivers which is also known as the "Prayag of tribals".

The chief minister had announced the construction of the bridge at a cost of Rs 132 crore in the budget for 2021-22.

Once completed, it will help devotees reach Beneshwar Dham directly from the Dungarpur-Banswara road.

Before the foundation stone laying ceremony, Gandhi and Gehlot visited Valmiki Temple, Beneshwar Pagoda, Radha Krishna Temple and Brahma Temple in the Beneshwar Dham complex. They prayed for the prosperity of the country. At the ceremony, officials of the Public Works Department apprised Gandhi

and Gehlot of structural details of the bridge through a model. According to an official statement, the length of the bridge from Sabala to Beneshwar will be 1,731.50 metres.

It will be built on 36 pillars at a height of 18.50 metres from the surface of the river and its width will be 16 metres. Beneshwar Dham is situated at the confluence of Mahi, Jakham and Som rivers and is known for a five-day fair famous for religious, social and cultural activities. In monsoon, the roads leading to the dham get submerged due to the rise in water levels of the rivers, turning the religious site into an island.

Talk on Proutist Philosophy and its Dimensions



Udaipur: Renaissance Universal club (RU), Udaipur, Rajasthan, India organized "A Virtual Talk on Proutist Philosophy and its Dimensions" on the Zoom platform which was streamed live on Youtube. Seminar was started with Prabhat Samgiita No. 4795 'E Ga'n Thambe Na..'

In the beginning, RU, Udaipur, President Dr. S. K. Verma welcomed all the participants and introduced about the Keynote speaker Acharya Vimalananda Avadhuta who has been working on PROUT since last so many years in different continents.

Dr Verma told that PROUT is a God-centered, socio-economic theory first propounded by Shrii P R Sarkar in 1959 and since last six decades, Proutists are working hard to establish PROUT's principles on the planet earth. Keynote Speaker of the program, Acharya Vimalananda Avadhuta introduced about PROUT theory and its five fundamental principles which are to provide minimum guarantee for food, cloth, education, medicine and shelter.

He gave the broader understanding of its principles such as removal of income tax, giving status of industry to agriculture sector etc.

He told that PROUT tells that we should separate the two powers that is political power which should be in the

hands of benevolent, service minded people called as Sadvipras and Economic power whose charge should be given to producers. This is unlike communism and capitalism where both the powers are interconnected and ultimately helps in corruption and exploitation.

He told that PROUT is a nuclear arrangement with compression and expansion in a system rather than bipolar arrangement of present day systems which have destructing mentalities and both poles keep fighting with each other.

PROUT is the theory of synthesis rather than antithesis or thesis theories of communism and capitalism respectively and PROUT believes in economic democracy by increasing purchasing power and living standard of people in progressive manner.

He further told that PROUT is not a self-centered or mat-

ter centered philosophy in which to actualize such goals money, power or even culture is employed to gain the material wealth. He emphasized that it is the right time to make people aware about this economic system and start implementing it in practical fields.

Acharya ji informed that they have started this on a small scale in Bihar, where farmers have been given the rights to sell produces rather than raw materials and have full worth of their hard work.

More than 50 participants attended the Seminar from various parts of the country. Queries of all the participants were also resolved by Acharya Vimalananda ji in the question and answer session. In the end, Dr Verma extended heartfelt thanks to Acharya ji for delivering an excellent talk on Proutist philosophy in a very simple language for benefit of all.

Rajasthan's First Dedicated Bird Park in Udaipur Inaugurated by CM Ashok Gehlot



Udaipur: On Thursday, May 12, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot inaugurated the Bird Park at Gulab Bagh in Udaipur, officially making it the first dedicated bird park in the desert state.

During the inaugural ceremony, Gehlot unveiled the stone plaque and then took a tour of the park to look at colourful birds from twenty species kept here. Forest official Dr DN Pandey and other Forest Department officials informed the Chief Minister about the birds and their characteristics. The Chief Minister, Forest Minister and other public representatives also planted saplings of five species to develop the Panchavati garden within the park premises.

This bird park has been constructed in 3.85 hectares of Gulab Bagh, which spreads over an area of about 5.11 hectares. Tourism Department has given Rs 8 crore, the Municipal Corporation Rs 1.75 crore, and UIT Rs 1.74 crores for its development. In his address after the inauguration of the bird park, Gehlot announced the setting up of a Panther Rescue Center in view of the number of panthers in the district. He also noted that 31 per cent area of the district is forest area and during the summer season, forest workers will be given training and provided modern equipment to deal with incidents of fire.