

# BEHAR HERALD

SECULARISM  
AND  
DEMOCRACY  
OUR MOTTO

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## Was It A 'Minority' Convention At Patna ?

What actually the word "minority" connotes in political parlance? Does it by any stretch of imagination mean the religious minority, albeit the Muslim minority? Muslims in Bihar or for that matter in India, are a religious minority. In the name of religion and religious minority's rights and privileges, the country had witnessed a holocaust and a blood bath in the forties till the independence was won. The "Bihar State Minority Convention" just concluded its two-day session at Patna in which top leaders of government, including West Bengal's Chief Minister, Mr. Siddhartha Shankar Ray, Bihar's Chief Minister, Dr. Jagannath Mishra, B. P. C. C. President, Mr. Sitaram Kesari and many others participated. It is however baffling why the organisers of the convention called it "Bihar State Minority Convention"? If the intention was for safeguarding Islam and Urdu then in all fairness the convention should have been named as "Bihar State Muslim Convention". But this was not done. If it meant to safeguard the interests of all minorities—religious or linguistic in Bihar, it should have been jointly organised by the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Christians, the Buddhists, the Adibasis, the Maithils, the Oriyas and also the Bengalis—who are all either religious or linguistic minorities in Bihar and all have their own special difficulties in matters of education, service, trade or profession. That step would have given a new dignity and prestige to the Muslim organisers of the convention, who wrongly used the terminology of a "Minority Convention" to misguide the people. The convention was attended only by the vocal and prosperous section of the Muslims. Where were the Momins, the Dhanuks, the Kasais and such other classes of poor and downtrodden Muslims? They were conspicuous by their absence. Excepting the upper caste Muslims who attended the convention, no other minority community in the State put forward so far any demand to the government for "substantial representation in services, trade and profession in government and semi-government undertakings at par with other sections of the people in the country". The above demand of the Muslim Convention is absurd on the face of it. Maithili speaking people in Bihar constitute the single largest minority in the State with perhaps more than 35 per cent of the population. And in keeping with the demand of the Muslim Convention, it would only be fair then to give the Maithils their share in services and profession according to the strength of their population. If government turns down this proposal on the ground that it is based on linguistic consider-

ation then what might be the justification to concede the same demand on religious consideration?

We do not conceal our deepest concern over such a malevolent trend in the thought process of a section of our countrymen. In free and secular India all citizens are same with equal rights and privileges, excepting those who really belong to the weaker sections of the community, namely the Harijans and the Adibasis. If any particular community prefers to forget its patriotic national position to follow undeviatingly the principles and policy of secularism and democratic traditions of independent India, and tries overtly or covertly to take the country to the dark era of hatred and fanaticism preached and practised by the late Mr Jinnah and his Muslim League, surely it would help in the creation of counter forces as a reaction. Even without such demands voiced by any Muslim Convention during the past 28 years of independence, the Muslims had two Presidents of India. In Bihar, the key position of the Inspector-General of Police was till recently held by a Muslim. The post of the Principal Secretary of Finance was held by yet another most able and efficient IAS Muslim officer. Another key post in the government, namely the post of Additional Chief Secretary is now held by another extremely competent Muslim officer. We need not make the list longer. If these officers were selected to the above posts it was not because they were Muslims, but because they were found to be able, efficient and honest. That alone should be the criteria for appointment and never it should degenerate to the level of caste, creed or religion. The attitude taken by the Muslim Convention at Patna is utterly erroneous and it will do tremendous harm to the supreme and larger interests of the Muslims themselves in tackling the task of economic and social reconstruction and progress. The interests of the Muslims consist in working for progress and elimination of illiteracy. For removal of illiteracy among the Muslim community, we agree with the demands for appointing Urdu knowing scholars to the Secondary School Board and such other educational bodies. Linguistic minorities have been given certain constitutional guarantee regarding imparting education through mother tongues. The Bihar Government have also accepted those principles. But unfortunately, the implementation machinery is slow moving. To remedy the evil, the Bihar Government have appointed a Religious and Linguistic Minorities' Commission which is currently touring all important towns in the State to find out to what extent the linguistic

minority students are suffering for non-implementation of the directives of the Bihar Government. Thus it is apparent that government machinery is working for removal of the difficulties of religious and linguistic minorities in matters of education. The

Muslim Convention at Patna tried to inject a new virus (religious virus) in the body politic of Bihar by introducing the question of religious minority which must be discouraged at the initial stage both by the government and the public.

## Normalising Relationship With China

Mrs. Indira Gandhi's decision to normalise India's relationship with China and Pakistan is in pursuance of her peace programme with a view to consolidate peace and security in Asia and the world. Over the past many years several local wars or military conflicts either with China or Pakistan had shaken the very foundation of peace in Asia. Fortunately for India she is now in a position to speak from strength. The entire world knows what tremendous strength India has gathered during the short period of a few years since Mrs. Indira Gandhi took over as Prime Minister of India. If China was sought to be befriended by the United States it was simply because the USA found that China had emerged as a powerful country with her atom and hydrogen bombs. Similarly, if China and the United States are now trying to improve relationships with India it is because of the fact that both the countries have realised that India is strong enough both economically and militarily. So long India was weak these countries, except the Soviet Union, never cared to look to us unless we agreed to tow their line. These powers tried always to create and perpetuate new seats of tensions in the region for their own selfish interests. China openly approves the building-up of military power in the world, and Washington also wants to consolidate its "Positions-of-strength" ideology to safeguard its own interests.

Viewed from the above points of view, it is now no wonder if the American Press have "greeted

enthusiastically" and welcomed the turn in India's foreign policy. This new foreign policy of India emerges out of strength. The western powers as also China now know very well that nuclear blackmail will not work with India, because nuclear power is waiting in the corridors of our atomic scientist's laboratories. China gained the respect of America only when she exploded the atomic bomb. Similarly, situation started changing when India made the explosion of atomic power in the Rajasthan desert last year.

The Western countries, particularly the United States always accused India that her foreign and domestic policies were both tilted heavily towards Soviet Russia. In all our difficulties—both internal and external, India always received wholehearted support from Russia. But in return, excepting a tremendous fund of goodwill, we have not been able to repay anything tangible in Russia.

One therefore should analyse and find out that those of our countrymen who tried to disrupt our economy, our industrial production and intended to destroy our communication systems were just playing into the hands of enemies of India who wanted India to remain perpetually weak. Mrs. Gandhi understood their game well in advance and started her work steadfastly with determination to make the country strong—economically, industrially and militarily. Many of the big powers in West and North did not perhaps like this, and in order to thwart the efforts of Mrs. Gandhi

set up their stooges in this sub-continent to start a movement of "total revolution". But this was effectively stopped by the timely action of the Prime Minister. The movement for "total revolution" was crushed totally not by police and military but by the threat that country's normal laws would be effectively and ruthlessly applied against the disruptionists. This threat and warning alone worked miracle and the entire country heaved a sigh of relief with the return of normalcy.

Our foreign policy remained always non-aligned, and we never wanted to be involved in big power politics. Perhaps, this non-aligned foreign policy of India incidentally suited Russia and other non-aligned nations of the world. If it had suited Russia, we could not be blamed for it; and for that reason it is a blasphemy to term our foreign policy as pro-Soviet or pro-any country.

That India prefers to pursue her own independent foreign policy is demonstrated once again by India's Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi by deciding to exchange Ambassadors with Mao's China. We don't know the Russian reaction to this new shift of our foreign policy. It may not be to the liking of our Russian friends because of her strained relationship with China for over a decade. But that consideration has deterred Mrs. Indira Gandhi to pursue her own independent foreign policy. Soviet Russia as a friend of India will understand realistically India's need to seek a wider variety of friendly nations throughout the world. India basically is believer in peace, and who knows that ultimately India may serve as a link between Soviet Russia and China to bring them to a peace table to ensure world peace. But these are tasks beset with tremendous odds, particularly when we remember that over forty thousand square miles of Indian territory is still under illegal occupation of China which swears in the name of Marx and Lenin.

# Assam's Biggest Cultural Festival—Bihu

Hiteswar Saikia

*Minister for Home, Information & Public Relations and Cultural Affairs, Assam*

The origin of the national festival—Bihu in Assam is shrouded in mystery. Of the three Bihu celebrations during the year, the Bihu in the spring season is all pervading. No other festival in the country has such a secular appeal as the Bihu. We reproduce below an article from Mr. Hiteswar Saikia, Assam's Home Minister, who has explained in great details the significance of Bihu. This writing of Mr. Saikia will also provide an opportunity to know and understand the customs and usages of our people in Eastern India.

While many of the communities in this country and elsewhere have more or less similar types of festivals like our Magh Bihu celebrated just after the harvest the other two Bihus of the Assamese people are, however, unique in more than one sense. They are the Kati Bihu, celebrated in the month of Kartik i. e. October-November at a time when the paddy plants start flowering, and the Rongali Bihu—the greatest of all festivals in Assam, celebrated at a time when nature plays majestic drama in the woods and hills and farmlands endowing gorgeous colouring to the entire surroundings.

Bihu is so old that there is no such authentic records or relics to help man unravel the riddle of its antiquity. Whatever may be the arguments about the etymological interpretation of the word "Bihu" there is very little doubt that Bihu is older than the Assamese people themselves. Strange although it may sound, but it is a fact. The numerous races and tribes that came in their hordes to Assam in the earliest days, had carried with them their distinct cultural traits, faiths and festivals and peculiar ways of life. They were not one people, but many.

Those earliest settlers, however, had one thing in common. They loved the land they came to live in. They saw the luscious green of the valley and the bewitching blue of the hills and were enthralled and captivated. Few areas in the world held for them so much charm as Assam did. Otherwise why they should decide to stay here and not proceed further in their quest for better habitation? In Assam they found the final answer to their ever continuing quest.

## Expression of joy

Long long ago, perhaps on a fine morning, one of those earliest people heard a Cuckoo in its gay mood. He perhaps felt a new warmth in the atmosphere around. He was not the kind of a person called poet. But he knew not why the sight of green creepers and orchids and majestic trees laden with green foliage filled his mind with unbounded joy. He also did not know why the myriad coloured flowers around him cast spell and delighted him to a state of enchantment and ecstasy. He was thrilled and his mind craved to dance in joy when the soft breeze played gently over the small boughs wavering the twigs and

stirring the flowers in full bloom. There was joy all around and the man naturally felt horripilated. He noticed the marked change in the environment. He discovered that it is spring which cast its spell on nature.

It did not take long for the news of this great discovery to spread far and wide across the hills and dales. Overjoyed, men rushed wildly in their merry moods and abandoned themselves to the nature's revelrous festivities. They copied the tune of the Cuckoo, imitated the rhythmic movements of the multi-coloured birds, tried to adorn themselves in the pattern of the myriad coloured flowers and sang rejoicingly in the way the birds do while flying back to their nests afar. Our forefathers did not like to rejoice alone. The warmth of their joy drew more people to join the company. They also rejoiced at the time when spring was fully established. The beauty of nature made them gay and thrilled them to sing and dance. They had surely a great feeling of happiness and inexplicable contentment when they discovered that behind all these beauty and colour of nature there must be a certain directing hand which conducted this entire show on earth. They realized that nature was only manifesting outwardly the joyous mood of that Almighty who is the reservoir of all the beauty and joy and from whom life originates. The more they looked at nature, the more they were overwhelmed with the profound thought of the greatness and kindness of the creator.

## Birth story of the Assamese people

Man began to celebrate the advent of spring which was the joyous expression of nature in its romantic splendour. He also worshipped the creator by way of his merry making. He felt that the best way to worship God was to love the beauty. He was moving all around. And in this process one day the idea of Bihu was given a formal expression. The annual celebration of Bihu like a few other socio-economic factors made the disorganized communities to

feel like one. A sense of oneness developed in the hordes of those communities when they continued to celebrate the Bihu. In course of time the people who joined in the Bihu and forgot their separate identities in the Bihu field, made up one community which through a historical process came to be known as the Assamese people.

We know how the Bihu has passed through a great metamorphosis and has accommodated in its wide canvas the contributions of the Austriacs, Mongoloids, Negrito, Tibeto-Burmese, Indo-Mongoloids and the Aryans. We also know how the Bihu came out of the pastoral surroundings into the courtyard of the Ahom royalty and their nobles and settled again in the cottages of the common men and the hearts of the common masses. Bihu has always been a people's festival without being exclusive to any community or to a single religious group.

#### A bond of unity

We are aware of the fact that no other festival in the country has such a secular appeal as the Bihu. Its deep underlying national significance becomes clearly manifest when we realise the fact that through its conveyance of the hopes and sentiments of the Assamese people and through its expression of the physical exuberance of the youths and the finer sentiments of old and young alike, the Bihu has verily been working as a great integrating factor.

Bihu's appeal is truly universal. Transcending the artificial barriers of caste, creed, race, religion, language or sex the Bihu stands out prominently among those ingredients that went into the making of the great Indian nation. Bihu awakens us to distinguish good from evil and inspires us to

look to the beauty around which we are born to love and worship but have no right to destroy. Bihu makes us feel like one in a family of Indian and sublimates our thoughts and feelings so that we

might be able to contribute our mite towards the making of a richer and mightier Indian nation in a happy world.

[Purva Bharat Sanskriti Sammelan Souvenir]

## Country Saved From Disaster

"Daily Telegraph" Correspondent's Tour  
Impressions of India

Mr. Amit Roy, the Staff Correspondent of the "Daily Telegraph", London came to India recently on a special assignment to report about the happenings in India since the promulgation of emergency. On his return to London Mr. Roy published the following report in his paper which we reproduce below.

(People of Bihar will be proud about Amit Roy, who spent his younger days at Patna with his father Mr. Benoy Roy, the former Editor of the "Indian Nation". When Mr. Benoy Roy migrated to London as BBC's Programme Director for Bengali, young Amit, as also the entire family, migrated to London. Amit proved to be a first rated student in the London Grammar School. He competed for a scholarship after his London School Final to prosecute his studies in Electrical Engineering in the Cambridge University, and to the surprise of many he secured high position to secure a scholarship. He graduated in Electrical Engineering from the Cambridge University after a rigorous course of five years, and served as an Electrical Engineer for the stipulated period in London Electricity Board. But from his student days he dreamt to become a journalist like his father, and ultimately gave up his job as an Electrical Engineer to become a staff member with the prestigious "Daily Telegraph" of London.)

Amit Roy in his despatch to the "Sunday Telegraph" (the Sunday edition of the "Daily Telegraph") published on April 25 last said

that the tribute that Mahatma Gandhi had once betowed on Jawaharlal Nehru could well be applied to his daughter, Mrs Indira Gandhi. "The nation is safe in her hands". Amit Roy continues in his despatch that the emergency had produced an effect which appeared particularly striking to someone like him returning to the country after a year (in 1974-75, Amit Roy was sent by his paper to cover Vietnam war and on his way back he had halted at Calcutta for a few days to stay with his father, who is now working as Asst. Editor, Amrita Bazar Patrika).

Amit Roy says at that time "the crusade against Mrs. Indira Gandhi's ruling party, seemed to have set the nation firmly on the road to disaster. Now the entire land is wallowing in calm that I at least have not known before."

He said he would need more time to understand the long term implications of the emergency. But in retrospect a chance remark made by an Indian might yet turn out to be the most perceptive. History will have to admit that

(Contd. on page 16)

Saratchandra's own life had a great impact on the literature created by him. Every great writing is autobiographical. This is more so in the case of Saratchandra. It may not be far wrong to say that all the writings put together constitute his extended memoirs. Most of the incidents and characters in his novels and stories are drawn from life. There are many parallels in his own life. When questioned, he himself admitted the identity of certain events and personalities in real life with his fictional creations. Thus his novel *Pallee Samaj* (The village community) published in 1916 depicted the narrow-mindedness of the conservative village heads who tried the weapon of excommunication to vanquish the idealist young man Ramesh. At about the same time as the story was published Saratchandra himself was excommunicated by the local clique in Howrah. As in the story, in real life also the dispute included the disposition of a bund on a river. Such a parallel is to be found in most of his writings.

In his real life Saratchandra has been more daring than in his writings. He lived with a woman as man and wife for more than a quarter of a century without ever formally marrying her. He gave her all the respect and authority due to a lawfully married wife and made her the principal beneficiary as wife in the will made by him. He had to face a lot of criticism from the public on many counts. The conservative section denounced him as the wrecker of moral values since in his novels and stories he did not stick to the prevalent moral codes. On the other hand, the progressives denounced him as being too timid. Particular mention was made of the fact that in none of his stories a widow was shown being married again, although much earlier Bankimchandra Chatterjee had accomplished that in his novel "Bishabriksha" (The poisoned tree). Saratchandra had his own explanation for that. In short, his standpoint was that all that he wanted to do was to draw attention of the society to the existence of a

## Sarat Chandra Chatterjee—A Tribute (2)

### Subhash Chandra Sarker

problem which, once recognised by all, could be solved. In real life, however, he had no difficulty in championing widow remarriage.

#### Widow Remarriage And Radharani Devi

The well-known writer Radharani Devi has herself recorded how she had received encouragement from Saratchandra Chatterjee to make up her mind to remarry after she had become a widow at the age of 13 or 14. In a letter written in May 1930 advising her to make up her mind on marrying the poet Narendra Deva, Saratchandra said, "The true love, viewed in the light of well-meaning intellect, sometimes finds fulfilment in life-long separation; while at other times its fulfilment comes only through union. Where separation makes love great, a forced union brings disaster in its wake. On the other hand, when love's fulfilment lies in union, if separation comes about through lack of courage it again brings disaster. In genuine love the most important thing needed is the strength of mind. Self-control and firmness of mind are needed in both union and separation. In love the choice has to be made where one has to opt for union and where separation is the course to be taken. Herein lies the real test of love. Love derives fulfilment not only in self-sacrifice but also in self-control."

He then proceeded to write with an autobiographical allusion, "Whatever you find in the literature created by me would not have been possible if I had not experienced the same in my own life. So I am not altogether devoid of the competence to give you some advice, you can believe me." His

final advice was, "Make up your mind."

Radharani Devi has further mentioned how Saratchandra was intimately concerned with the details of the manner in which the marriage function should be organised, and who should be invited to attend. It is an irony of life that through a quirk of fate Saratchandra could not be present at the marriage.

#### Vilification by Middle Class

Saratchandra delved deep into the innermost recesses of the Bengali middle-class mind and made the middle-class Bengalis face up to it. It was not always a healthy mind that the middle-class Bengalis saw they were having—afflicted as it was by blind prejudice, superstition, narrow selfishness and even cruelty. For bringing out these dark aspects of their mind the Bengali middle-class was furious not only about his writings but also about him personally. Few writers of comparable calibre in Bengal had to put up with so much of calumny, personal vilification and hostility as he did. But being a very deliberate writer he was undaunted. Finally, the Bengali middle-class saw its mistake in attacking him for showing it for what it was and recognised the need for self-correction. But for the merciless attacks made by Saratchandra on the weakness of the Bengali middle-class, the Bengali society would have remained much less developed and much worse off today. He pointed to the Bengalis the universal element in human beings and the need for acting on that principle irrespective of religion, caste, sex or the conventional codes of morality. Personally he was a lovable man. Those who have known him

personally have borne testimony to his utter selflessness and courage—physical and moral. Such a larger than life personality cannot be fitted into the straitjacket of conventional thinking about art and life. Saratchandra was very fond of reading again and again Rabindranath Tagore's poem, "Shahjahan". Saratchandra could be described in the language of Tagore in that poem.

You are greater than your  
creation

So the chariot of your life  
moves ahead

Leaving behind your creations.

So the signs of your presence  
are there

You are not to be seen.

#### Books written by Saratchandra Chatterjee (1876-1938)

*Badadidi* (The Elder Sister) A Novel September 1913, *Biraj Bau* (Biraj, the Bahu) May, 1914, *Bindur Chhele O Anyanya Galpa* (Bindu's son and other stories) July 1914, *Parineeta* (Married) A story August 1914, *Panditmashai* (The Teacher) A Novel September 1914, *Mejdidi O Anyanya Galpa* (The elder sister & other stories) Stories December 1915, *Pallee Samaj* (The village community) A novel January 1916, *Chandranath* A Novel, March 1916, *Baikunther Will* (The will of Baikuntha) Story June 1916, *Arakshaneea* (One who could no longer be protected) Story November 1916, *Shreekanta* (1st Part) A novel February 1917, *Devadas* A novel June 1917, *Niskriti* (Deliverance) A story July 1917, *Kashinath* A collection of Stories September 1917, *Charitraheen* (one without character) A Novel November, 1917, *Swami* (Husband) A collection of stories, February 1918, *Datta* (The betrothed one) A Novel 2 September 1918, *Shreekanta* (Part II) A Novel 24 September 1918, *Chhabi* (A portrait) A collection of Stories January 1920, *Grihadaha* (The burning of the house) A novel March 1920, *Bamuner Meye* (Brahmins daughter) A novel October 1920, *Narir Mulya* (Price of woman) Essay April 1923, *Dena Paona*

(Debits and Credits) A novel August 1923, *Nababidhan* (New dispensation) A Novel October 1924, *Harilakshmi* A collection of stories March 1926, *Pather Dabi* (The Call of Duty) A novel August 1926, *Shreekanta* (Part III) A novel April 1927, *Shorashee* (Sixteen-year-old girl) Dramatic version of the novel *Dena Paona* published in 1923 August 1927, *Rama* Dramatic version of *Pallee Samaj* published in 1916 August 1928, *Taruner Bidroha* (The revolt of the youth) Essay April 1929, *Shesh Prashna* (The final question) A novel May 1931.

*Swadesh O Sahitya* (Nation and the Literature)—Collection of Essays April 1932, *Shreekanta* (Part IV)—A novel March 1933, *Anuradha, Sati O Paresh*—A collection of stories March 1934, *Bijaya*—Dramatic version of *Datta* published in 1918 December 1934, *Bipradas*—A Novel February 1935.

#### Published after his death in January 1938

*Saratchandra O Chhatra Samaj* (Saratchandra and Students)—Collection of addresses edited by Murali Dey March 1938, *Chhelebelar Galpa* (Stories of Childhood) — A collection of stories

for the young) April 1938, *Shubhada*—A Novel June 1938, *Shesher Parichay* (knowing at the end)—A novel half-written by Saratchandra and completed by Radharani Devi June 1939, *Saratchandrer Patrabali* (letters of Saratchandra) edited by Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay Feb. 1948, *Saratchandrer Pustakakare Aprakashita Rachanavali* Saratchandra's writings hitherto unpublished in books) edited by Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay July 1951, *Saratchandrer Chithipatra* (Letters of Saratchandra) edited by Gopal Chandra Roy. Nov. 1954, do—Enlarged edition July 1969.

#### Translation of Saratchandra's works in other Indian Languages

Gujarati	—73
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## HOW GANDHI BEGGED FOR BHAGAT SINGH'S LIFE

Lord Irwin Discloses Secret Talks  
Lord Halifax

Mahatma Gandhi's three movements — the Non Co-operation Movement of 1921, the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-31 and finally the Quit India Movement of 1942, were the three main pillars of India's Independence movement. The final blow to British Imperialism was however administered by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's Azad Hind Fouz which attacked India from Burma side in 1944-45, coupled with revolt in the Indian Army and Navy towards close of the second world war. During the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-31 Lord

Irwin was the Viceroy of India. There was a temporary truce then at the initiative of Lord Irwin, and the agreement that was signed came to be known as Gandhi-Irwin Pact. During that period Bhagat Singh, the great revolutionary hero of Punjab was to be hanged in British Jail. Gandhiji begged for the life of Bhagat Singh from Lord Irwin, but could not succeed, and Bhagat Singh died on the scaffold on the appointed day. In the following article Lord Halifax (who was Lord Irwin when he was Viceroy of India) depicts Mahatma Gandhi's idealism, sense of honour

and dignity and courage, which he found in him during the course of negotiations in those days. This article is taken from Lord Halifax's memoirs.

"Mr. Gandhi cared little for constitution and constitutional forms. What he was concerned with was human problem of how the Indian poor lived. Constitutional reform was important and necessary for the development of India's personality and self-respect, but what really mattered were the things that affected the daily lives of the millions of his fellow countrymen—salt, opium, cottage industries and the like.

"I have no doubt this was true, and though it was easy to smile at the devotion of Mr. Gandhi to the spinning wheel, while Congress was largely dependent for its funds upon the generosity of wealthy Indian millowners, the wheel nonetheless stood for something very fundamental in his philosophy of life.

"He was the natural knight-errant fighting always the battle of the weak against suffering and what he judged injustice.

As I took back upon the talks that I had with him in Delhi in the spring of 1931, two conversations stand out in my recollection. They have always seemed to me a better interpretation of his mind and method than anything else, as showing the way that an idealist and realist could meet.

#### Enquiry Into Police Excesses

"The first related to his demand, as part of the arrangement to be made on the cessation of Civil Disobedience, for an enquiry into the actions of the Police of the last twelve months. I resisted this on various grounds, pointing out to him among other agreements that I had no doubt the Police, like everybody else, had made mistakes; but that it was quite futile to attempt to get accurate information of what might have passed in some local brawl or minor riot. All that we should achieve would be to exacerbate tempers on both sides. This did not satisfy him at all, and we

argued the point for two or three days. Finally, I said that I would tell him the main reason why I could not give him what he wanted. I had no guarantee that he might not start Civil Disobedience again one of these days, and if and when he did, I wanted the Police to have their tails up and not down. Where-upon his face lit up and he said: "Ah now Your Excellency treats me like General Smuts treated me in South Africa. You do not deny that I have an equitable claim, but you advance unanswerable reasons from the point of view of Government why you cannot meet it. I drop the demand."

#### Prayed For Bhagat Singh's Life

"The other incident illustrates, if I was correctly informed, both of the quality of Mr. Gandhi's courage and sense of honour. After we had made our so-called Irwin-Gandhi Pact, he came to me the next morning and said that he wished to talk about another matter. He was just going off to the meeting of the Congress at Karachi, which he hoped would ratify our agreement, and he wished to appeal for the life of a young man called Bhagat Singh, who had been recently condemned to death for various terrorist crimes. He was himself opposed to capital punishment, but that was not now in debate. If the youngman was hung, said Mr. Gandhi, there was a likelihood that he would become a national martyr and the general atmosphere would be seriously prejudiced. I told him that, while I quite appreciated his feelings in the matter, I also was not concerned with the merits or demerits of capital punishment, since my only duty was to work law as I understood it. On that basis, I could not concieve anyone who had more thoroughly deserved capital punishment than Bhagat Singh. Moreover, Mr Gandhi's plea for him was made at a particularly unfortunate moment. For it so happened that on the previous evening, I had received his appeal for a reprieve which I had felt bound to reject, and he was accordingly due to be hung on Saturday morning (the day of

our conversasion being, if I remember rightly, Thursday). Mr. Gandhi would be going to Karachi for the meeting of Congress in the afternoon or evening of Saturday after the news would have come through, and the coincidence of date from his point of view could therefore hardly be more difficult.

#### Gandhiji's Fear

"Mr. Gandhi said that he greatly feared, unless I could do something about it, that the effect would be to destroy our party."

"I said that it would be clear to him that there were only three possible courses. The first was to do nothing and let the execution proceed, the second was to change the order and grant Bhagat Singh a reprieve; the third was to hold up any decision till after the Congress meeting was well over. I told him that I thought he would agree that it was impossible for me from my point of view to grant him reprieve and that merely to postpone decision and encourage people to think that there was such a chance of remission, was not straight-forward or honest. The first course alone, therefore, was possible in spite of all its attendant difficulties. Mr. Gandhi thought for a moment and then said: "Would Your Excellency see any objection to my saying that I pleaded for the young man's life?" I said that I saw none, if he would also add that from my point of view, I did not see what other course I could have taken. He thought for a moment, then finally agreed, and on that basis went off to Karachi. There it happened much as anticipated, the news had come through, many of the crowd were in a highly emotional state, and I was told afterwards that he (Gandhi) was quite roughly received. But when he had opportunity, he spoke in the sense agreed between us.

"The two episodes will suffice to show on the personal side what reason I had to value his friendship, and I can think of no person whose undertaking to respect a confidence I should ever have been more ready to take than his."

# Oil Development Of India

Indo Soviet Co-operation Yields Good Dividend

N. B. Prasad

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The Annual Report of the Ministry of Petroleum for the year 1975-76 released recently show how India is making rapid strides in all aspects of the oil industry to make India self-sufficient in oil products. In the following article Dr. N. B. Prasad, Chairman, Oil and Natural Gas Commission relates the exciting story of Indo-Soviet co-operation in oil development.

Development of oil exploration and petroleum technology in India is, to a large extent, due to the Soviet cooperation. It dates back to September, 1955 when a delegation led by Mr. Keshav Dev Malaviya, the then Minister of Natural Resources, visited the Soviet Union for exploring the possibilities of co-operation in establishing petroleum industry in India. Soviet Union readily extended its help and in December, 1955 a team of oil experts under the leadership of Professor N. A. Kalinin came to study the oil prospects in India. After five months of exhaustive study of available data and on spot studies of prospective areas, the Soviet team along with their Indian counterparts, came to the conclusion that India did possess "prospecting area for the availability of oil and natural gas to the tune of one million sq. kms."

## Industrial Policy

Fortunately, Kalinin report came about the same time when the Government of India's policy towards oil prospecting industry also took a concrete shape. The industrial policy resolution of April 30, 1956, put development of mineral oil in schedule 'A' and laid down that "its future development will be exclusive responsibility of the State". Recommendations of the Soviet team were immediately accepted by the Government. A comprehensive exploration programme involving an outlay

of Rs. 30 crores during the second Five-Year Plan 1956-61 was chalked out. Under this programme areas in Punjab, Gujarat and Assam were marked for immediate exploration. To implement this programme the requisite organisational machinery was also brought into being in 1956 by creating a separate directorate under the Ministry of Natural Resources known as the Oil and Natural Gas Commission.

In 1956, India's indigenous production was barely 3,76,000 tonnes. The exploration was confined to only selected areas in Assam through a private oil company. With the Soviet co-operation, ONGC brought new areas under exploration not only in Assam but also in Gujarat, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. In 1958, oil was struck in Cambay and in May 1960, Ankleshwar was discovered. This was followed by new discoveries of Rudrasagar field (Assam) in January and Kalol field (Gujarat) in June, 1961. These discoveries in succession provided great encouragement to young Indian oil technicians and the indigenous production went up to 510,000 tonnes in 1961. It increased to 4.6 million tonnes by 1966 and 8.3 million tonnes in 1975. Indigenous production has, however, been about only one-third of the total requirement of the country for the last few years.

## USSR Supplies Equipments

As the exploration activity of

ONGC increased, its material needs also went up. The first set of drilling equipment of three deep drilling rigs and two structural rigs were received from the Soviet Union in 1956. Out of the ONGC's present strength of 59 deep drilling, 4 structural and 20 workover rigs were obtained from the Soviet Union under various credit arrangements. In addition to this, other equipment like seismic units, logging equipment, geophysical tools' production equipment, cementing units, tubulars and spare parts were imported under these credit agreements reached in 1959, 1961 and 1966 between the Soviet Union and the Government of India. The first credit allocation was of the order of Rs. 33 crores, the second 18.21 crores and the third 25.71 crores. The credit granted under these agreements included payment towards consultancy and provided for services of the Soviet specialists and training of Indian personnel in the Soviet Union.

Apart from assisting India in creating the production potential for oil, and providing equipment under various credit and trade plans, Soviet Union provided training to 260 Indian scientists and technicians in various disciplines of oil exploration particularly in petroleum geology, seismic surveys, electro-logging, perforation operations, drilling and production techniques, and reservoir engineering, etc. About 1015 Soviet experts have visited India from time to time to impart training and provide technical guidance to Indian technicians at work sites and laboratories. They have also helped to build palaeontology, petrology, palynology and chemical laboratories for carrying out systematic studies and supplying scientific information on related disciplines. These laboratories helped in applied research on problems connected with petroleum exploration and development. Apart from this, Soviet technical assistance was also made available to ONGC for development of seismic amplifiers and electro-logging instruments besides guidance on geophysical



interpretation and field techniques. Specialised technical consultancy service was rendered by them on several occasions. Special studies on the development of Ankleshwar oilfield were undertaken by Soviet experts. They also helped to establish a Design Institute at Dehra Dun. Designing and fabrication of ONGC's first fixed platform for drilling in Aliabet in the shallow waters of Gulf of Cambay, was done in collaboration with Soviet experts.

### Offshore Surveys

Soviet Union assisted India in carrying out offshore seismic surveys in the Indian continental shelf with the help of fully equipped and fully manned survey ship "ARKHANGELSKI" under two contracts from August 1964 to January 1967. It made surveys along continental shelf areas in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. As a result, Bombay High, Tapti, Dahanu, Diu, Tarapur Bassein and other structures were discovered. The Russian seismic offshore expedition indicated several other important areas deserving further seismic investigations such as south of Bombay High, Palk Straits, Coromandal coast, Bengal and Mahanadi delta. Detailed seismic surveys of these areas are now being carried out by ONGC's own survey ship—'ANWESHAK'.

In late sixties, the Indo-Soviet co-operation broke new grounds. The two countries agreed to share the knowledge and experience by undertaking joint scientific studies of great significance and relevance to India's oil exploration programme.

A techno-economic survey on the development of petroleum industry in the public sector in India for the period 1971 to 1975 and forecast for the period of 1976 to 1980 was undertaken. The report was submitted in August 1971 jointly by the Soviet techno-economic team and the ONGC specialists. Under this report main indices for the development of petroleum industry were examined according to two variants. The first variant reflected

the view point of the Soviet specialists and the second was compiled by the specialists of the ONGC.

Analysing the data relevant to the problem, it was concluded that there were good possibilities of discovering new fields, new petroliferous regions and a further increase in commercial reserves of oil. While studying the sedimentary basins of the country, attention was focussed on their potential hydrocarbon bearing aspects and taking into account this particular factor, recommendations were made regarding the order of priority in exploration work and the volumes of work required. The report also indicated the necessity of increasing volume of exploratory drilling in priority areas in which oilfields had not been discovered, and it was hoped that commercial reserves would be discovered. The report was accepted by the Government and its recommendations formed an integral part of ONGC's Fifth Five-Year Plan.

### Prognostic Assessment

Another contract for a large scientific project was signed in October 1973 with the Soviet Union which dealt with prognostic assessment of oil and gas prospects of India and formulation of guidelines for conducting future exploration work. The joint report of the Soviet experts and the specialists of the ONGC was submitted

in January, 1976. The report gives the prognostic evaluation of the hydrocarbon prospects of the sedimentary basins of India on the basis of available geological data. It indicates quantitative evaluation of the potential hydrocarbon prospects of the 13 main and most prospective sedimentary basins of India. It also analyses the explored and prospective oil and gas reserves and their real distribution on land and offshore. The report among other things recommends direction of future exploration work for oil and gas and identifies main regions for exploration and volume of geological, geophysical and drilling work required to be undertaken for the delineation of potential hydrocarbon bearing areas.

Another major opportunity for Indo-Soviet co-operation is round the corner. It is proposed to establish an Institute of Drilling Technology in India on the pattern of a similar institute in the Soviet Union. Soviet authorities have agreed to extend facilities to Indian experts to study the set-up and work out inputs for establishment of the institute in India.

With rapid developments in oil technology and science, it is not difficult to predict that there will be many more opportunities available for fruitful co-operation between India and the Soviet Union.

## National Population Policy

### Forced Sterilisation Measures Left with States 25-Year Freeze On Number Of Seats In Legislatures

The Government of India's national population policy statement was released to the Press by Dr. Karan Singh, Union Health Minister on April 16 last. The Plan frame provides among other things, freezing of the population base at 1971 level for determining Central Plan allocations and representation in Lok Sabha. The States will be required to earmark eight per cent of Central assistance to State Plans for Family Planning

work. The policy frame is expected to be a "direct assault" on population growth, and has been approved by the Union Cabinet and endorsed by Chief Ministers of different States.

Under the plan frame, the marriageable ages of boys and girls will be raised to 21 and 18 respectively. Higher graded monetary compensations will be provided to individuals volunteering for vasectomy or tubectomy. Dr.

Karan Singh stated that no Central legislation was proposed for compulsory sterilisation. This was because the administrative and medical infra-structure were still not adequate to implement such a measure. In view of the great importance of this National Population Policy statement, we publish below the full text of Dr. Karan Singh's statement on the subject which he released on April 16 last :

"With 2.4 per cent of the world's land area, India has about 15 per cent of the world's people. It is estimated that our population as on January 1, 1976, has crossed the 600 million mark, and is now rising at the rate of well over one million a month. Since Independence 250 millions have been added, equivalent to the entire population of the Soviet Union with six times the land area of India. The increase every year is now equal to the entire population of Australia which is 2.5 times the size of our country. If the present rate of increase continues unchecked our population at the turn of the century may well reach the staggering figure of one billion. Indisputably we are facing a population explosion of crisis dimensions which has largely diluted the fruits of the remarkable economic progress that we have made over the last two decades. If the future of the nation is to be secured, and the goal of removing poverty to be attained, the population problems will have to be treated as a top national priority and commitment.

Our real enemy is poverty, and it is as a frontal assault on the citadels of poverty that the fifth five-year Plan has included the minimum needs programme. One of its five items is integrated package of health, family planning and nutrition. Far reaching steps have been initiated to re-orient the thirst of medical education so as to strengthen the community medicine and rural health aspects, and to restructure the health care delivery system on a three-tier basis going down to the most far-flung rural areas where the

majority of our people reside and where child mortality and morbidity are the highest. Similarly, ignorance, illiteracy and superstition have got to be fought and eliminated. In the ultimate analysis it is only when the underlying causes of poverty and disease are eliminated that the nation will be able to move forward to its desired ideals.

#### Practical solution

"Nonetheless it is clear that simply to wait for education and economic development to bring about a drop in fertility is not a practical solution. The very increase in population makes economic development slow and more difficult of achievement. The time factor is so pressing, and the population growth so formidable, that we have to get out of the vicious circle through a direct assault upon this problem as a national commitment. The President in his address to the joint session of Parliament this year reiterated the importance of stepping up family planning efforts, and the Prime Minister has on several occasions laid stress upon the crucial role that population control has to play in the movement towards economic independence and social transformation specially in the light of the 20-point economic programme."

"Considerable work has been done in our country in the field of family planning, but clearly only the fringe of the problem has so far been touched. In this context, after a thorough and careful consideration of all the factors involved as well as the expression of a wide spectrum of public opinion, the Government has decided on a series of fundamental measures detailed below which, it is hoped, will enable us to achieve the planned target of reducing the birth rate from an estimated 35 per thousand in the beginning of the fifth Plan to 25 per thousand at the end of the sixth. Allowing for the steady decline in the death rate that will continue due to the improvement in our medical and public health services and the living standards of our people, this is expected to bring down the

growth rate of population in our country to 1.4 per cent by 1984."

#### Marriage age

"Raising the age of marriage will not only have a demonstrable demographic impact, but will also lead to more responsible parenthood and help to safeguard the health of the mother and the child. It is well known that very early pregnancy leads to higher material and infant mortality. Also, if the women of our country are to play their rightful role in its economic, social and intellectual life, the practice of early marriage will have to be severely discouraged. The present law has not been effectively or uniformly enforced. It has, therefore, been decided that the minimum age of marriage should be raised to 18 for girls and 21 for boys, and suitable legislation to this effect will be passed. Offences under this law will be cognizable by an officer not below the rank of a Sub-Divisional Magistrate. The question of making registration of marriages compulsory is under active consideration."

"It has been represented by some states that while on the one hand we are urging them to limit their population, those states which do well in this field face reduction of representation in Parliament while those with weak performance in family planning tend to get increasing representation. It is obviously necessary to remedy this situation. It has, therefore, been decided that the representation in the Lok Sabha and State legislatures will be frozen on the basis of the 1971 census until the year 2001. This means in effect that the census counts of 1981 and 1991 will not be considered for purposes of adjustment of Lok Sabha legislative seats. Necessary constitutional amendment will be brought forward during the current year. Appropriate legislation for other elective bodies will also be undertaken."

#### Central resources

"In a federal system, the sharing of Central resources with

states is a matter of considerable importance. In all cases where population is a factor, as in the allocation of Central assistance to state plans, devolution of taxes and duties and grants-in-aid, the population figures of 1971 will continue to be followed till the year 2001. In the matter of Central assistance to state plans, eight per cent will be specially earmarked against performance in family planning. The detailed procedures in this regard will be worked out by the Planning Commission."

"While there is a direct correlation between illiteracy and fertility, this is particularly marked in the case of girls' education. Wherever female literacy improves, it has been seen that fertility drops almost automatically. It is, therefore, necessary that special measures be taken to raise the levels of female education, particularly above the middle level for girls as well as non-formal education plans for young women especially in certain backward states where the family planning performance so far has been unimpressive. The same is true with regard to child nutrition programmes, as high infant mortality and morbidity have a direct impact on fertility. The Ministry of Education is urging upon the state governments the necessity to give these matters higher priority than has been accorded so far and fully earmarking adequate outlays both for girls education up to the middle level and child nutrition".

"My Ministry is also in close touch with the Education Ministry with regard to the introduction of population values in the educational system, and the NCERT has already made a beginning in bringing out some text books on these lines. It is essential that the younger generations should grow up with an adequate awareness of the population problem and a realisation of their national responsibility in this regard. Indeed, if I may venture to say so, exhortations to plan families are more important for the younger generations than for those who have already made their contribution to our demographic profile.

"The adoption of a small family norm is too important a matter to be considered the responsibility of only one Ministry. It is essential that all ministries, all departments of the Central Government as well as States should take up as an integral part of their normal programme and budgets the motivation of citizens to adopt responsible reproductive behaviour both in their own as well as the national interest. A directive to this effect is being issued by the Prime Minister to all ministries, and a letter will also be addressed by her to all Chief Ministers. The performance of family planning in States will be more carefully and intensively monitored than in the past, and the Union Cabinet will review the situation in depth at least once a year".

Experience over the last 20 years has shown that monetary compensation does have a significant impact upon the acceptance of family planning, particularly among the poorer sections of society. In view of the desirability of limiting the family size to two or three it has been decided that monetary compensation for sterilisation (both male and female) will be raised to Rs. 150 if performed with two living children or less, Rs. 100 if performed with three living children and Rs. 70 if performed with four or more children. These amounts will include the money payable to individual acceptors as well as other charges such as drugs and dressings, etc., and will take effect from May 1, 1976. Facilities for sterilisation and MTP are being increasingly extended to cover rural areas.

"In addition to individual compensation, the Government is of the view that group incentives should now be introduced in a bold and imaginative manner so as to make family planning a mass movement with greater community involvement. It has, therefore, been decided that suitable group incentives will be introduced for the medical profession, for zila and panchayat samitis, for teachers at various levels, for co-operative societies and for labour in the organised sector through their

respective representative national organisations. Details of these group incentives are being worked out in consultation with the concerned organisations".

"Despite governmental efforts at Union, State and municipal level, family planning cannot succeed unless voluntary organisations are drawn into its promotion in an increasing measure, particularly youth and women's organisations. There is already a scheme for aiding voluntary organisations, and it has been decided that this will be expanded. Also, full rebate will be allowed in the income-tax assessment for amounts given as donations for family planning purposes to the government, local bodies or any registered voluntary organisation approved for this purpose by the Union Ministry of Health".

#### Forced Sterilisation

"Research in reproductive biology and contraception is under way in several of our scientific institutions, and there are some very promising developments which, we hope, will lead to a major breakthrough before too long. This is a great challenge to our scientists, and efforts in this direction will receive special attention so that necessary research inputs are ensured on a long range and continuing basis".

"The question of compulsory sterilisation has been the subject of lively public debate over the last few months. It is clear that public opinion is now ready to accept much more stringent measures for family planning than before. However, the administrative and medical infrastructure in many parts of the country is still not adequate to cope with the vast implications of nation-wide compulsory sterilisation. We do not, therefore, intend to bring in Central legislation for this purpose, at least for the time being. Some states feel that the facilities available with them are adequate to meet the requirements of compulsory sterilisation. We are of the view that where a State legislature, in the exercise of its own

powers, decides that the time is ripe and it is necessary to pass legislation for compulsory sterilisation, it may do so. Our advice to states in such cases will be to bring in the limitation after three children, and to make it uniformly applicable to all Indian citizens resident in that State without distinction of caste, creed or community."

"Some states have also introduced a series of measures directed towards their employees and other citizens in the matter of preferential allotment of houses, loans, etc. for those who have accepted family planning. In this sphere also we have decided to leave it to each individual State to introduce such measures as they consider necessary and desirable. Employees of the Union Government will be expected to adopt the small family norm and necessary changes will be made in their service conduct rules to ensure this."

#### New strategy

"In order to spread the message of family planning throughout the nation, a new multi-media motivational strategy is being evolved

which will utilise all the available media channels including the radio, television (specially programmes aimed directly at rural audiences), the press, films, visual displays and also include traditional folk media such as the jatra, puppet shows, folk songs and folk dances. The attempt is to move from the somewhat urban-elitist approaches of the past into a much more imaginative and vigorous rural-oriented approach. In this context my Ministry is working in close co-ordination with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and is also trying to draw the best media talent available in the country into the structuring of the new programme."

This package of measures will succeed in its objective only if it receives the full and active co-operation of the people at large. It is my sincere hope that the entire nation will strongly endorse the new population policy which as part of a multifaceted strategy for economic development and social emancipation, is directed towards building a strong and prosperous India in the years and decades to come.

three blocks in Purnea district—Kasba, Forbesganj and Thakurganj were selected. It was also decided to curb incidents of lawlessness arising out of crop harvesting. Steps have been taken to fix up prices of all commodities after meeting with different section of businessmen, tailors, grocery shopkeepers, hotelowners, druggists, vegetable, meat, fish dealers and others in presence of SDO, and other officers of the concerned Dept. Mr. Jha stated that he intended to take follow-up actions also. He conferred with the representatives of the State Bank and other nationalised Banks a few days back and discussed threadbare with them about effective execution of the economic programmes. Two blocks have been put under supervision of one Bank which was requested to advance loan to the landless persons to purchase cows, buffaloes, chicken, pigs etc. At panchayat level business loan was proposed to be sanctioned to unemployed educated youths and all gobar gas plants were to be financed by Banks. The committee with bank agents and Govt. officers of industries, agriculture, labour and development department will meet on April 25 next to finalise this project.

Besides this, large cases and disputes over payment of wages and settlement of government land were also initiated. Ways and means are being devised to settle nearly 6000 pending cases for which more officers are to be posted.

#### PURNEA NEWSLETTER

## Drive For Implementing Prime Minister's 20—Point Programme

### Kamal Nath Jha's Impressive Initiative

Ashish Kumar De

( Our Special Representative )

Purnea—"Willing co-operation of the masses and efficient response of the government machinery—these are the two vital points on which depend the success of the Prime Minister's 20-point economic programme," said Mr. Kamal Nath Jha MP, Chairman, 20-point economic programme implementation Committee for Purnea dis-

trict, set up by the Bihar government. Mr. Jha told this correspondent that the committee had resolved at its meeting on April 7 last to bifurcate landowners into two classes—landholders having land beyond and below 200 acres. The verification on surplus land of small landowners would be made at block level for which

## Glories of Purnea District

The present system of administration of the district of Purnea was set up in 1774 with Mr. Ducarel, ICS as the first District Magistrate. Thus this district has already covered a double century in 1974.

From the economic and political points of view this border district of Bihar is till too backward. As regards the climatic condition its reputation is not upto the mark. Once upon a time it was notorious for diseases like Kala-azar and Malaria. But so far as its historic and cultural aspects are concerned, its heritage is quite praise-worthy and significant. Towards natural beauty, it maintains a special position because of the several rivers like Kosi and Mahananda.

In ancient times this district belonged to Angavasis and Pandarees. Its importance is also observed in Mahabharat period when it remained under the influence of great fighters like Bhim and King Kichak. It may be recalled here that Pandavas also spent some of their exile period in Purnea. There still exists two tanks near Thakurganj in this district named "Bhatdhala" and "Sadhudhala." It is said that Bhim utilised the water of these ponds for the preparation of rice and saag. According to legend Bhim served as a cook during the period of their exile in the house of King Birat, the place was named as Thakurganj.

### Muslim Rulers

In the seventh century, this district remained under the influence of great warriors, namely King Shasanka of Gaur and others. It came under the control of the Muslim rulers at the fag end of 12th century and Bakhtiar Khiljee was the first Muslim ruler. During Moghal era, Purnea was the military frontier province. Shaif Khan, Fakhruddin Husain Khan, Syed Ahmed Khan and Shaukat Jan may be named as its eminent rulers.

This district is an ideal treasure

ground for the archeologists. Due to lack of interest of the government and personnel of the Archeological department no intensive excavation work has been done. According to authoritative sources, if excavation work is undertaken at particular places, substantial ancient materials of historical importance can be found. An idol of Lord Vishnu was recovered at Bandar-Jhula on Indo-Nepal border situated about 24 miles north-east of Kishanganj due to excavation work done by the Archeologists. Because of financial stringency this project has been suspended. Several valuable coins and stones were also found near Badhangar village in Araria sub-division.

There are some old relics and monuments in this district at Jalalgarh, Barijangarh and Benoo-garh and called as forts. The Gurudwara at Karhagola has its special significance where in ancient times Teg Bahadur, father of Guru Govind Singh, spent some days. Albaloo, a place about 9 miles away from Purnea town was used as a battle field during the Sepoy Mutiny. This field was once used as a landing ground by Clydel's party which attempted to conquer the Mount Everest for the first time.

Raj Banaili, Khagra estate, Dharhara Kothi, Dharampur Pargana are wellknown estates of the district. According to legends the name of Purnea originated from the existence of age-old temple of Puran Devi at Mehdipur village near Purnea city. There is another theory that from Raja Pundara, the name 'Purnea' came into being. The name Madaneshwar-Sthan is from a Shiva temple at Madanpur village and the Kalibari (age-old temple of the Goddess "Kalimata") at Purnea city is of great attractions for the tourists.

It will not be exaggeration to say that Purnea is a district of fairs. Excepting rainy season Melas sit throughout the year.

Khagra Mela and Gulabgh Mela in Purnea district are placed second and third respectively in Bihar after Sonepur fair.

Due to plenty of jungles and rivers, the district became a paradise for the hunters. About a century back, wild elephants, rhinoceros, tigers, wild bears, deers, leopards, were found in abundance in these forests. The biggest rhino which is found in the Calcutta Museum was killed at Purnea by Mr. J. Shillingford, an eminent hunter.

Hindi is the principal language of this district. But there are other spoken languages and dialects which are Mathili, Bengalee, Santhali, Suryapuri. Though Urdu is prevalent it is more akin to Hindi of Bihar region. Muslims form a large population in Kishanganj and in part of Araria sub-division, but Hindus are in majority in the district.

Purnea district has the proud privilege of producing men of excellent calibres and talents in different fields who became famous in the whole of India. Late Dr. L. N. Sudhansu (eminent Hindi litterateur), late Mr. Satinath Bhaduri (noted Bengali writer and recipient of UNESCO award for his work "Jagari"), late Mr. Kedarnath Bandopadhyaya (famous Bengali novelist) alias Dadamashaya, late Mr. Abdus Samad (renowned footballer, known as football wizard), late Mr. Lawly Sen, late Raja P. C. Lal, C. B. E. of Nazargunj estate (a noted Zamindari) and dedicated member of Royal Calcutta Turf Club and late Raja Bahadur Kiryanand Singh of Banaili (famous hunter) were born in this district. Padmashree Phanishwar Nath Renu, and Mr. Bhola Paswan Sastri (former Union Minister) and Padmashri Kalawati Debi (a dedicated social worker) are still amongst us.

After the transfer of territories comprising Islampur, Chopra, Goalpokher and Karandighi of Purnea district to the West Bengal state with a population of about three lakhs on November 1, 1956 and despite upgradation of Katihar

Subdivision into a Civil district on 2.10. 1973, the district of Purnea has become much smaller consisting of three subdivisions—Purnea Sadar, Araria and Kishanganj. It comprises of

27 blocks, 29 police stations, 15 Assembly seats and three Lok Sabha constituencies with a population of about 28 lakhs as per 1971 census.

jute seeds in the state to a great extent.

### Zilla Parishad

Lift Irrigation Scheme started during 1975-76 is going to improve the agricultural lands of Chotanagpur where irrigation problem was a severe constraint. Zilla Parishad, Hazaribagh, took up ten such schemes costing average rupees one lakh each in the district out of which seven have already been completed. It is expected that the remaining three would be completed soon. It is learnt that each scheme would be able to irrigate for cultivation of about 200 acres for kharif crop and wheat in 100 acres. Government has a plan to start lift irrigation in each block of the district.

The Zilla Parishad has formulated a plan to construct a combined administrative building at a cost of 35 lakhs. It will install a new model automatically operated weighing machine to be placed near the Sales Tax outpost. This will fetch a daily revenue of Rs. 1000/- which would meet nearly 60% of the total monthly establishment cost of the entire Zilla Parishad.

### Voluntary Land Surrender

Hazaribagh district has so far secured the highest position in the entire Chotanagpur and a top position in the entire state in voluntary land surrender scheme in response to the appeal of the Bihar Chief Minister. Six landholders have surrendered 429.64 acres of land in the district.

It is expected that 3,80,000 acres of land owned by Raja of Ramgarh would be acquired by the state for settlement to the landless. The Deputy Commissioner, Hazaribagh actively initiated the work for collection of dues of Revenue, and the achievement is 95%. In the loan collection work it was also much higher. The Collectors had to face troubles in one or two blocks. Apart from legal steps, at one block the Deputy Commissioner himself persuaded to get back dues of Rs. 81,000/.

## CHOTANAGPUR NEWSLETTER

# Social Forestry Scheme Inaugurated

## Growing Of Jute Seeds In DVC Areas

( From Our Special Representative )

Some of the important decisions taken by State Forest Department at its conference held at Hazaribagh last week would benefit Chotanagpur to a great extent.

Social Forestry as a welfare scheme has been adopted by the Bihar Forest Department from this year. This scheme provides for preparation of sites for raising firewood, timber, trees of other economic values, including fruit trees on private wasteland of villagers. Thus in 700 hectares land of private people, trees are proposed to be planted in the coming rainy season. The scheme shall provide opportunity to the villagers to have firewood and timber from their own lands so that illegal felling of trees in the government's reserved forests may be eliminated. People being attracted to the scheme are coming forward to offer their lands for getting the technical assistance from the Forest Department officials. During the current year Rupees ten lakhs will be spent on Social Forestry scheme. This will go up to Rupees fifteen lakhs next year. One thousand acres of land are being prepared for raising timber trees, firewood and fodder species along with fruit trees on Paharia's lands in the rural areas.

The conference also decided to amend Indian Forest Act, mainly for forest land improvement and strictly to enforce the Wild Life Act. Such revisions would enable

the department to intensify afforestation work including wild life preservation, which is a burning problem today. Hazaribagh and Betla National Parks with the enforcement of this Act shall have scope to develop.

Eucalyptus and Acacia Moniliformis, plantations of quick growing species, have been raised in an extended area. Eucalyptus plantation is useful for paper industry and keeping this in view, plantation programme is carried on.

### Jute Seeds

Jute seeds were so long very rare in the state of Bihar and due to climatic conditions and other factors jute seeds even at the growing stage were destroyed whenever tried in low lands. Naturally such seeds were being imported from other places. Very recently two important varieties of Jute seeds JRO 878 and JRO 632 supplied by Agriculture Department (Jute Development wing) Government of Bihar were tried at three farms of the Soil Conservation Department of the DVC, Hazaribagh, and very good results have been achieved on three acres of land during the last Kharif season. The quality of seeds obtained are good and if the DVC continue the seed growing programme, Chotanagpur will achieve a key role in agriculture of Bihar and meet requirement of

## Bengali New Years Day

Bengali New Year's Day was observed on 1st Baisakh (April 14) at Hazaribagh under the auspices of Rabindra Patha Chakra. At Patratu Thermal Power Station, Patratu Branch of the Bengalee Association organized a cultural show followed by a get-together feast. Similarly, Kodarma branch of the Bengalee Association organized a cultural show on this occasion.

## New Year's Day Celebrations

(From Own Correspondent)

Satsang Nagar (Deoghar)—The New Year's Day festival commenced here at Satsang Ashram at dawn on April 14 with recitation of Vedic hymns and congregational prayers at Thakur Bunglow. Messages from Sree Sree Thakur Anukul Chandra's 'Ashirbani' for the peace and progress of the universe were read out. Over a lakh of people from all over the country and abroad attended the three-day celebrations.

Mr. J. Sen, Vice-Chairman of the Income-Tax Tribunal, Government of India, presiding over a public meeting, said that the welfare of the people ultimately consolidated in building up a welfare state, but the guiding moral force behind it should be the ideals as expounded by Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra.

Mr. Bhawani Mukherjee, the well-known litterateur of West Bengal said that the present education and literature have failed to give any solution to the countryman riddled with problems and tension. The ideal education and literature set forth by Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra no doubt, he said, had dynamic effect in forging corruptionless, progressive and healthy society. Among others who spoke on the occasion were Messrs N. B. Mishra, M.L. Dass, J. K. P. Singh and Smarajit Banerjee. Mr. N. C. Lahiri, Guest-in-Chief said, that Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra had stres-

sed character-building through the medium of an ideal education.

Earlier in the morning, the Satsang President, Sri Sarat Ch. Halder presided over the general meeting of Satsang in which various speakers said that in view of the present situation of the country the well-being of the nation was possible only by initiating the people to the all-fulfilling ideal of Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra. A Women's Conference was also held on the occasion in which duties and responsibilities of women in building up a developed nation were discussed. Thereafter thousands of Satsang workers and Ritwiks parti-

icipated in the 52nd session of the All-India Ritwik Conference, and finalised future programmes of establishing Satsang Bihar and Centres all over the country. Later, the workers assembled before Rev. Sri Sri Baroda, the Pradhan Acharya of Satsang and sought his holy guidance about their social welfare activities in the face of the fast changing condition of the country.

Mr. Nani Gopal Chakraverty, Secretary Satsang while declaring the conclusion of the three-day Nava-Varsha Utsav conveyed his hearty thanks and goodwishes to all who participated in it and made it a success.

## Lenin : The Guiding Star

Anand Gupta

"Religion would not save the Indian people. Tolstoy and others like him tried the same thing in Russia, but failed. Go back to India and preach class-struggle, and the road to freedom of India will be nearer."

This is what Lenin said to the Indian nationalists comprising of Raja Mahendra Pratap, Prof. M. Barkatullah, Shri Trimul Acharya and others who met him in Moscow in early 1920. Raja Mahendra Pratap went to him with his peculiar ideas of religion of love.

Lenin always stressed on the work among the workers and peasants, who formed the vast majority in India. This was appreciated by the leaders of the Indian national movement. The All-India Trade Union Congress was formed in October 1920 with Lala Lajpat Rai as its first President.

Lenin's concern for the condition of workers and peasants in India comes out clearly in his letter to Bhupendra Nath Dutta, who went to Moscow along with other Indian revolutionaries living

in exile in Germany, on the invitation of Rakosi, Secretary of the Comintern, for discussions on the situation about India's fight for liberation. In his letter Lenin wrote :

"...gather statistical facts about peasants' leagues if they exist in India."

Of course, involving the masses in the liberation struggle was far from the programme of the early leaders of the liberation struggle. This had to wait for Mahatma Gandhi.

At the AICC session at Belgaum on December 28, 1924, speaking on the Condolence Resolution on the death of V. I. Lenin, Mr. Jehangir Patel said : "Although they might not agree with the methods of Lenin they must respect the ideals which impelled him to fight the Czarist Government for the amelioration of the working classes and the peasants...we may not agree with his methods today but we may agree with them some day.."

### Progressive Character

Lenin pointed out the difference between the workers' and peasants' movements and the middle class leadership of India. However, as more and more of the common people got involved in the struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, the movement took on a progressive character.

In the meantime developments in the Soviet Union began to influence the thinking of many people in India. Already the working class had become a force by the turn of this century. They got a new impetus under the influence of Soviet developments. Many of the groups which were formed for giving a socialist content to the movement merged together to form the Communist Party of India, the party of workers and peasants.

Shri Singaravelu Chettiar in his presidential address to the inaugural conference of the Communist Party of India at Kanpur on December 26 1925 said: "And in the course of ages, there can be no doubt that the work begun by this man (Lenin) in Russia, will ultimately benefit mankind and shower happiness and contentment upon the human race."

Jawaharlal Nehru after visiting the USSR in 1927 extensively wrote on Lenin. He described Lenin as the guiding star of the millions of the oppressed peoples of the world. Nehru believed the revolution had engendered a new civilisation and new hope to mankind.

This hope of mankind has been fulfilled in the Soviet Union. The people of the Soviet Union are the masters of their labour and that is why they were able to defend their country against the fascist hordes and also save the world. The Soviet Union has always pursued a policy of peace and coexistence with other countries.

**Reactions of readers are very cordially invited to make them a regular feature of Behar Herald.**

Lenin had declared. He said: "Our Eastern policy remains diametrically opposite to that of the imperialist countries. In our Eastern policy, we strive to promote the independent economic and political development of the Eastern peoples and shall do everything in our power to support them in this. Our role and our mission is to be neutral and disinterested friends and allies of the peoples struggling for a completely independent economic and political development."

### Stood by India

The Soviet Union has always stood by India, whether it was the question of the defence of Indian independence or the need for Indian industrialisation. The Soviet Union has reaffirmed its policy towards India at the recent 25th Congress of the CPSU where L. I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, in his report said. "Close political and economic co-operation with the Republic of India is our constant policy. The Soviet people appreciate and, more, are in solidarity with India's peace-loving foreign policy and the courageous efforts of her progressive forces to solve her difficult socio-economic problems. We wish the people and Government of India complete success in these efforts." The Soviet Union is thus faithfully implementing the policy charted out by Lenin.

There is no doubt that Soviet assistance played a crucial role in charting India's development along progressive lines. The public sector, largely created through Soviet assistance, has become a major instrument for progressive socio-economic transformations.

In the international arena, India and the Soviet Union are marching shoulder to shoulder in the world-wide struggle for liberation of mankind from the remnants of colonialism, racism, hatred and economic exploitation and for the establishment of a world where people can live in peace with a new economic order.

### Country Saved..

(Contd. from page 4)

Mrs. Indira Gandhi saved democracy.

In his article in 'Sunday Telegraph' Mr. Roy said, "ten months ago when Mrs. Gandhi placed India under emergency, her numerous critics were all too ready to serve up hasty obituary notices on the death of the world's largest democracy. Yet now with a characteristic mixture of ruthlessness and a political flair, she seems to have pulled off the most spectacular gamble of her life."

"It is not easy to hold such a vast and diverse country like India together; but Mrs. Gandhi attracts mammoth crowds everywhere."

He said what was most hopeful about emergency was that it was making it possible for certain radical measures such as land reforms to be rammed through. Previous attempts to take away surplus lands from rich farmers and distribute it to the landless were held up by the interminable wrangles. He was convinced that the urban elite's opposition to Mrs. Gandhi was based less on honest, intellectual dissent than on a desire to prevent power slipping to villages where 80 per cent Indians lived.

In another contribution to the weekly "Spectator", My, Roy went into the background of the dismissal of the DMK ministry in Tamil Nadu and concluded: "Indira Gandhi should be criticised not because she dismissed the ministry in Madras, but because she did not do it earlier. But as Mr. V. P. V. Rajan, "Madras Mail" editor commented: "The fact that she allowed the government to continue for such a long time was because of her respect for democracy."

Mr. Roy said there was little doubt that the DMK had betrayed the trust that simple folk had placed in the party. He said when he followed the Tamil Nadu Governor, Mr. K. K. Shah, during one of his "meet the people" sessions, there appeared to be genuine public approval for the President's rule."

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