

# **Bharatiya Janata Party National Council Meeting**

**Late Suryabhan Vahadane Patil Parisar  
Nagpur (Maharashtra)**

**07th & 8th February, 2009**

**Address by Shri L.K. Advani  
Leader of the Opposition (Lok Sabha)**

## **Call of Nagpur: ONWARD TO VICTORY!**

***Shri Rajnath Singhji, President of the BJP, and my esteemed colleagues,***

It gives me great pleasure to be with you at this crucial meeting of the National Council of the Party.

At the outset, I join all of you in paying homage to two of the great sons of Bharat Mata ? Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar. Nagpur was the Karma Bhoomi for both of them.

Dr. Ambedkar was a scholar of the highest order. A proud patriot in whom the spirit of nationalism always burnt with incandescent brightness, his advocacy of equality, human dignity and social justice serves as a beacon even today. The best example of this is his address to the Constituent Assembly on 25 November 1949, a day before the Assembly formally adopted the Constitution. On that day he had warned:

**“On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril.”**

What can be a better enunciation of an **Inclusive Society, Inclusive Democracy** and **Inclusive Development**? The BJP is firmly committed to these three ideals, which also find an echo in Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's philosophy of Integral Humanism.

Nagpur is Dr. Ambedkar's Deeksha Bhoomi, the place where he embraced Buddhism. Mumbai is his Chaitya Bhoomi, where he ended his worldly life. Both places have fairly impressive memorials. However, his Janma Bhoomi, Mhow in

Madhya Pradesh, had remained without a suitable memorial during the decades-long rule of the Congress in the state. I was, therefore, happy and privileged when Shri Shivraj Singh Chauhan, our young and dynamic Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, invited me last year to unveil a magnificent memorial for Dr. Ambedkar at his place of birth.

Dr. Hedgewar is the founder of our ideological movement. The BJP was founded in 1980. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh was founded in 1951. However, the ideological movement of which the BJP is an integral part started its journey in 1925, when Dr. Hedgewar founded the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. In the nearly 80 years of its existence, the RSS and all the entities inspired by it have grown into what can be called, without the slightest fear of contradiction, the largest family of mass organizations dedicated to the service of the nation. This ideology can be summed up in just two words: Rashtra Sarvopari or Nation First.

It is precisely because of the massive, and steadily growing, collective strength of our ideological family that our adversaries have mounted the most vicious attack on us. To those who oppose us out of malice, we say, "Your motivated attacks will not deter us." However, to those who are aloof from us out of ignorance or due to the propaganda of our adversaries, we extend a hand of mutual understanding and say, "Come, let us work together despite our differences for the greater good of the nation." This is how the BJP has grown, remaining true to its core beliefs and winning allies in the democratic space.

### **Why Congress must be voted out**

Friends, the circumstance that invests this meeting of the National Council with crucial importance is well known to you. In less than ten weeks, India will go to the polls to elect the 15th Lok Sabha. In slightly over 15 or 16 weeks, the election process will have been over and a new government installed in New Delhi.

It is our resolve to make that new government, a BJP-led government of the National Democratic Alliance. We shall make it happen by seeking, and securing, a decisive mandate from the people of India.

Hence, the Call of Nagpur is: **Onward to Victory.**

In democracy, victory comes to those who can win the trust and confidence of the people. It comes to those who can convince the people that they are best suited to govern the nation at a time when it is facing multiple and mammoth challenges.

I have the good fortune of having participated in all the 14 general elections held so far, from 1952 to 2004. There is a simple and self-evident formula that determines the outcome of an election. If the people are happy with an incumbent government, they give it a renewed mandate. But change is not guaranteed if they are unhappy. For the desired change to come about, the people must see a clear and credible alternative.

What can be said about the national situation as we prepare ourselves for the electoral battle? Do the people want change? Most certainly, Yes. The UPA

Government's performance is so full of failures and betrayals that its continuation in office would constitute a vastly increased threat to the vital interests of the country and its people.

The Government's soft and compromising approach to cross-border terrorism, further weakened by the virus of votebank considerations, has endangered India's internal security like never before. Secure in the knowledge that the Government in New Delhi has neither the political will nor the clarity of policy to fight terrorism, the enemies of India have felt so emboldened that they mounted one barbaric attack after another, making the last five years witness the highest number of terrorist incidents and casualties since the onset of terrorism in India in the early 1980s.

On 26 November, they staged the most audacious assault till date in Mumbai. The revelations about how this attack took place can only lead to one conclusion: the Congress-led governments at the Centre and in Maharashtra were sleeping in spite of having full information that the terrorists could use the sea route. This was not so much a case of intelligence failure as of governance failure.

### **Six questions for Dr. Manmohan Singh and Sonia Gandhi**

I have six questions for the Prime Minister and the Congress president on internal security. The people of India deserve answers to these questions because accountability is the cornerstone of democratic governance.

- Although the Union Home Minister and Maharashtra's Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister were sacrificed after 26/11, why has no commission of inquiry been set up to probe all aspects of the Mumbai terror attacks? The BJP demands a high-level judicial inquiry that will not only unearth what went wrong but also recommend ways of preventing recurrence of such attacks.

- If the Union Home Minister was removed for incompetence, at whose behest was he retained in that crucial post for four and a half years?

- In the aftermath of 26/11, senior members of the UPA Governments made statements to the effect that "all options are open" in dealing with Pakistan. Why has the Government not used even the mildest of diplomatic options in the past two months to make Islamabad feel the heat for sponsoring terrorism? And why are senior representatives of the Government speaking in multiple voices on Pakistan?

- The UPA Government enacted two anti-terror laws in the wake of the Mumbai terror attacks. The BJP readily supported their passage in Parliament, even though the Congress had stoutly opposed the enactment of POTA in 2002. Will the Prime Minister show the honesty to admit to the nation that it was wrong on the part of his Government to have doggedly maintained for the first four and a half years that no special anti-terror laws were needed and that existing laws were adequate to deal with the menace? And will the Congress president have the honesty to accept that opposition to POTA in 2002 was wrong?

- Now that the term of the UPA Government is coming to an end, will the Prime Minister tell the nation why his Government chose not to implement the

Supreme Court's decision upholding the death sentence on Afzal Guru, the mastermind of the terrorist attack on Parliament? In this context, let me assure the people that a future NDA Government, if elected to power, will recommend Afzal Guru's execution to the President within the first 100 days. Here is our warning to the merchants of death and their sponsors: "We shall follow a zero-tolerance and zero-compromise approach to dealing with terrorism."

- Why did the UPA Government deliberately and contemptuously disregard the Supreme Court's directive with regard to enacting an effective law to curb the influx of Bangladeshis into Assam and other states, which the apex court described as "external aggression"? A future NDA Government will lose no time to implement the apex court's directive and thereby safeguard the unity and security of India on the eastern front.

### **Aam aadmi's livelihood security endangered**

Endangering India's internal security and the citizen's physical security is not the only reason why the UPA Government qualifies to be voted out. The Government has compounded its failure by also endangering the people's livelihood security. Unprecedented rise in prices of all the essential commodities and services during the past five years has been a source of daily torment for the aam aadmi. Now all sections of society are reeling under the effect of a graver economic crisis. Lakhs of people have lost jobs ? in construction, textiles, manufacturing, automobiles, tourism and hospitality, IT and IT-enabled services, etc ? and the sword of job-loss is hanging over the heads of many more.

**The Federation of Indian Export Organizations has forecast that there would be one crore job losses by March.** This comes on top of an already unacceptable level of unemployment. No government in the past has been as unfriendly to the youth, for whom opportunities in education have stagnated, openings in employment are shrinking, and the future is looking bleak.

The five years of the UPA Government have been the worse for the Indian kisan. During no comparable period in the past have so many farmers committed suicide, unable to bear the burden of debt and distress ? and their number runs into tens of thousands. The corruption-ridden implementation of the SEZ policy has resulted in farmers getting dispossessed of huge tracts of land. Migration of the rural poor to urban centres has accelerated.

The plight of the urban middle class has worsened. They have been badly hit not only by the price rise, economic recession and growing job losses, but also by the other manifestations of the mismanagement of the economy under the UPA rule. Housing loans, for example, have become costlier to service due to sharply risen interest rates.

### **Development programmes derailed**

How the UPA Government has betrayed the nation can be seen from the following startling facts:

- The Planning Commission itself has given very poor marks to implementation of the **National Highway Development Project**, the dream project launched

by the Vajpayee Government. Targets have been missed by a wide margin on all phases of the project, and **on some stretches the implementation is as low as 5%.**

- Similar is the fate of the **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana**. The Vajpayee Government, which launched it, had pledged to complete it by 2007. Under the UPA rule, it is nowhere near completion.

- When the Indo-US nuclear deal was signed last year, it was tomtommed as the UPA Government's greatest achievement. Its proponents promised 'nuclear bijlee for all'. While that promise remains a chimera, unlikely to be fulfilled for several decades, it is useful to know that **last year India added only 7,000 MW to the generating capacity. China added 100,000 MW in 2007.**

- The UPA Government seems more interested in advertising 'Bharat Nirman' than in implementing it. As against modest targets set for rural electrification, achievement is only 34%. **For officially determined BPL families, the achievement is an abysmal 6%.**

- Universal provision of safe drinking water and clean sanitation is one of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. A quarter of India's population lacks access to safe drinking water and 70% of it has no access to proper sanitation. About 21% of communicable diseases in India are related to unsafe water. Diarrhea alone accounts for more than 1,600 deaths daily — it is **equivalent to eight 200-person jumbo-jets crashing to the ground each day!**

How can we accept this reality? The BJP will not. What we accept is the challenge to change this sordid reality. I recently said ? and I would like to repeat it here so that it becomes the commitment of the Party as a whole ? that, **whereas India today is ranked at 128 in the United Nations Human Development Index, it should be our goal and resolve to elevate it to the Top Ten nations in the world in the next two decades.**

### **Congress proves again it's the fountainhead of corruption**

If the UPA Government has any "achievement" to its credit, it is in scaling new heights in corruption. The stench of corruption can be felt in almost single ministry. The highway project has stalled because of corruption. The ministry of communications is mired in a scandal over credible allegations that the exchequer has lost nearly Rs. **50,000 crore** in the fraudulent manner in which new telecom licenses have been given. The entire government machinery was misused for letting **Ottavio Quattrocchi**, the principal accused in the Bofors scam, off the hook. The Government has suppressed the truth about the **Food for Oil scandal** in Iraq and the **Scorpion submarine scandal**.

The year 2008 saw two more unprecedented scandals. In a desperate attempt to save itself in office, the UPA Government enacted the "**Cash for Votes**" scandal, a hideous case of political corruption in the history of Indian Parliament. More recently, the Rs. 7,000-crore scam in Satyam/Maytas has come to light. Revelations about this have exposed a massive fraud not only in corporate governance but also in Congress governance in Hyderabad and New

Delhi. The BJP demands a judicial inquiry to unearth, among other things, the political dimensions of the Satyam/Maytas scandal.

The five years of the UPA misrule will be remembered for the devaluation of the institutions of democracy on a scale never seen before, except during the Emergency. Even the Election Commission has been sought to be brought under the control of the Congress party by appointing a pliable and undeserving officer as an Election Commissioner.

I sometimes hear people say that corruption is no longer an election issue. The very fact that such comments are being made shows how rampant corruption has become. But we must not deduce from this that the people are no longer concerned about corruption. Experience has amply shown that the culture of corruption has stunted India's development, disfigured our democracy and infected the moral life of our society. **The BJP cannot and will not abandon the ideal of bharashthachar-mukt shaasan (corruption-free governance) because probity in public life is the very cornerstone of sushaasan (Good Governance), to which we are firmly committed.**

I have always believed that the fight against corruption must start from the top. The Ganga will certainly get polluted if Gangotri itself is polluted. Last week, the Prime Minister's Office announced, in response to an RTI application, that the Prime Minister, his ministerial colleagues and their relatives are exempt from disclosing their assets. This decision is retrograde and goes against the grain of transparency in governance. A future NDA Government, if elected to office, will reverse this decision. **The Prime Minister, his ministerial colleagues and their relatives will voluntarily declare their assets on an annual basis.**

Further, I wish to assure that we shall put in place an effective mechanism for fast-track disposal of cases involving major economic offences and major corruption cases against politicians and civil servants. This is necessary to strengthen people's faith in the political and judicial system.

### **Why BJP is the only alternative**

Friends, I said earlier that people's displeasure with the incumbent government alone cannot guarantee the desired change. What is required is the emergence of a clear alternative that can win the trust and confidence of the people. In today's situation, who can that alternative be? The answer is one, and only one: a BJP-led alliance.

Look at the opponents who are ranged against the BJP/NDA. The UPA is in disarray. The Congress Working Committee has recently announced that the Congress will not have any national alliance in the parliamentary elections. It will only forge state-specific alliances. This decision is nothing but a declaration of the impending burial of the UPA. The Congress is also unable to decide who to project as its leader in the coming elections. For the past five years, the real authority in the ruling dispensation has resided in 10 Janpath, which is not accountable to Parliament. The devaluation of the office of Prime Minister that this has brought about is an insult to the system of parliamentary democracy.

As a matter of fact, **one wonders if, right now, there is anyone in command of the government.** For the past over two months, we have no full-fledged finance minister. This, at a time when India has been facing one of the worst economic crises. Thus, here is a party that is without a track record of anything resembling good governance, without an alliance, and without a leader. Such a party and its government deserve to be shown the exit door.

### **The 1996 farce of unstable govts must not be repeated**

The disarray in the non-NDA and non-UPA ranks is far more marked. The so-called Third Front is nowhere to be seen.

What is disconcerting, however, is the thinking in many quarters to work for a repeat of the 1996 experiment, when the BJP, in spite of having emerged as the largest single party in the 11th Lok Sabha, was effectively isolated from forming a stable government. They are hoping for a badly fragmented outcome of the forthcoming elections. Those in the Congress and some other parties that are dreaming of this misadventure should know that 2009 is different from 1996. Both in 1998 and 1999, the isolators themselves were isolated. Further, in 1999, the destabilisers got a drubbing. Unlike in 1996, **the BJP has many stable allies today and we are confident of attracting more. Both our present and past allies are well aware that the BJP is sincere in its adherence to Coalition Dharma.**

The Indian voter is mature and enlightened enough to know that the two highly unstable, indeed farcical, Congress-supported United Front governments between 1996 and 1998 proved to be detrimental in every respect. It took an enormous effort on the part of the Vajpayee-led NDA government to put the nation back on track and take it forward along the path of all-round progress.

The BJP has already demonstrated its ability not only to run a stable coalition government, but also to run it well. Be it in the area of national security, development or good governance, the performance of the BJP-led NDA Government between 1998-2004 stands head and shoulder above that of the UPA Government.

When I say that the farce of 1996 must not be repeated, it casts a responsibility on all of us to ensure that the NDA wins a decisive mandate, with the BJP's tally constituting a robust and stabilizing core of that mandate.

**My appeal to the National Council, therefore, is: Let us make 2009 the highest watermark ever in the BJP's electoral performance. We can certainly do it. And WE SHALL DO IT!**

**Our priority: Remove despair, restore hope** What is the source of my optimism? It is simply this: people's memory is not so short as to forget that when the NDA Government demitted office in May 2004, it left behind a mood of hope, self-confidence and national pride. We also left behind a buoyant exchequer and an upbeat economy. When the UPA Government leaves office, which it surely will, it will have left behind a mood of despair, all-round insecurity, uncertainty about the future, and a badly mismanaged economy.

In recent months, I have often been asked how I would summarise the priorities of a future NDA Government. My answer is worth repeating here since repetition conveys the power of our conviction. Our priority would be to restore and further enhance the mood of optimism and self-confidence in every section of our society.

How will we do it? We will do it by vigorously implementing a positive agenda of **Good Governance, Development and Security**. Our commitment to these ideals has been demonstrated not only by the track record of the previous NDA Government at the Centre, but also by our governments in all the BJP-ruled states. The specific elements of the NDA's common agenda of governance are being worked out by our colleagues. We are also formulating a set of bold and important decisions our government will take within the first 100 days.

Suffice it to say that five major commitments will underpin our agenda.

1) We shall promote employment-oriented economic growth by promoting massive investments in agriculture, rural development, infrastructure development, and revival of the river-linking project. We shall provide unprecedented focus on education, healthcare, drinking water, sanitation and other areas of social infrastructure development. As was demonstrated by the National Highway Development Project launched by the Vajpayee Government, our ambition and resolve will match the magnitude of challenge. We shall complete the incomplete tasks in the road sector. ***Inbijlee, paani, swasthya and shiksha, we shall launch – and implement – programmes as grand as the Golden Quadrilateral.***

2) We shall take such bold steps for the revival of agriculture that not a single farmer will be pushed to commit suicide due to indebtedness.

3) We shall undertake far-reaching reforms to promote Good Governance, with focus on administrative, police, legal and electoral reforms, including State funding of elections.

4) As I said earlier, we shall pursue a no-compromise approach to dealing with threats to India's internal security.

5) We shall vigorously promote social-economic justice and political empowerment for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs and poorer sections of all other communities. Our commitment to gender justice and political empowerment of women will be unwavering. And although we shall be uncompromising in opposing minorityism, we shall protect their legitimate rights and promote their aspirations without discrimination.

I am happy to inform members of the National Council that the process of preparing this agenda has been far more participative and broad-based this time than ever before. Shri Rajnath Singhji and I, joined by several senior colleagues, have held a series of round-table meetings with experts on various issues ? ranging from national security, agriculture, economy and business, drinking water, etc. We have also used the Internet as a tool not only to communicate our vision and views to the rest of the world, but also as a platform to receive ideas and suggestions on diverse topics of development and governance.

## **Five tasks before the Party**

The situation today is such that the people want us to win. The BJP commands a lot of goodwill among the people, because they know that ours is the only party that can overcome the serious challenges before the nation. However, because of the unacceptable conduct of some of our colleagues, an image has been created of a party divided within. Some have left the Party. Moreover, we scored self-goals in the recent Assembly elections in Rajasthan and Delhi, both of which we could have won.

These developments in the past few months have pained Party workers and our supporters everywhere. We often take pride in proclaiming that the guiding principle for every BJP worker is: **Nation First, Party Next, Self Last**. A majority of our colleagues and workers indeed follow this principle with conviction and discipline. However, those who flout it not only harm the Party but also harm themselves. There is no place for them in the difficult battle ahead of us. Let me put it bluntly that the wrong conduct on by some of our own colleagues is the only thing that is acting against us.

Therefore, in the weeks ahead, the first and foremost task before the Party is to work with robust unity and unflinching resolve. The process of candidate selection has already begun and will be completed soon. Once the Party chooses a candidate, his or her victory becomes the responsibility of one and all within the organization. Therefore, our election management at the central, state and constituency levels should be such that the full force of the entire Party and the ideological Parivar is deployed for the success of the BJP and NDA candidates.

**Secondly**, there is absolutely no room for complacency and over-confidence of the kind that proved very costly to us in 2004. Indeed, it is the Congress which seems to be exhibiting overconfidence after its victory in Delhi and Rajasthan assembly elections. Let us exploit its weakness by working harder. It is of vital importance that we mobilize each and every potential voter to cast his/her vote on polling day. I want to congratulate Shri Ramlalji and all other colleagues down the line who have painstakingly to form booth-level committees of Party karyakartas. They are our frontline soldiers in this battle and they must receive every support they need.

**Thirdly**, let us conduct an aggressive, creative and self-confident mass-based campaign that focuses as much on our own positive agenda for the future as on the failures and betrayals of the UPA Government. This is an election in which issues will matter a lot. We indeed have an opportunity to turn this into one of the most educative election campaigns, in which the voter makes a rational and well- informed choice.

**Fourthly**, let us especially unleash the energy of the youth in our campaign. There will be as many ten crore first-time voters newly eligible to cast their votes in Elections 2009. For us, they are not only potential voters but also potential campaigners, who will bring vitality and vibrancy to the campaign. In this context, I want to congratulate the Yuva Morcha for reaching out to first-time voters on a big scale through its nationwide Pratham Matadata Samman Abhiyan.

**Fifthly**, let us ensure harmonious and mutually cooperative functioning between BJP workers and workers of our alliance partners.

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My valued Party Colleagues, this meeting of the National Council is an occasion for all of us to remind ourselves that history has placed an onerous responsibility on us. We are not fighting this battle because we are fascinated by power, not because we have been out of office for five years, and want to get it again by any means. **Power for the sake of power has never been the credo of the BJP. Our founder Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, and our ideological guru Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, have placed lofty ideals before us. These ideals have inspired us throughout our long and arduous political journey, giving us strength and showing us the path at the most trying times. We must not give up these ideals for any temptation of power and pelf. Political power for us is an instrument to serve the nation and build an India of our dreams.** And right now, it is an imperative need to halt India's downward slide which, if not reversed, can have cataclysmic consequences.

Therefore, as I said earlier, call of Nagpur is: ONWARD TO VICTORY.

Thank you.

Vande Mataram!