

## **Sonia asks party men to gear up for campaign**

**BS Reporter / New Delhi February 5, 2008**

With ten state assembly elections slated this year and Lok Sabha polls in 2009, Congress President Sonia Gandhi has asked her party to gear up its campaign machinery. Accordingly, the party leaders today have sent an aggressive campaign strategy plan for her approval. Instead of the usual election-oriented campaign plank, this time the campaign has been targeted as an issue-based one.

Rahul Gandhi too, had emphasised the need for early and focussed campaigns a few weeks back at an internal party meeting. Clearly, party veterans have taken a cue from the directions of Rahul Gandhi while sending new strategy proposals to the party president.

UPA government's three landmark pieces of legislation - Right to Information, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and the Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers Recognition of Forest Rights Act, pertaining to tribals - will be the three main areas of the new campaign plan of the party. The Indo- US civil nuclear deal, although inconclusive so far, also gets a special mention as a UPA effort to tackle the power crisis in various states.

"We will project the RTI Act as a power which was confined only to MPs and MLAs but has now been acquired by common people", said Digvijay Singh after the meeting of the newly-formed publicity and publication committee today. The Uttar Pradesh Congress, under the leadership of Reeta Bahuguna has already formed a task force to mobilise and educate common people on this issue.

The party has chalked out plans to start district level conventions on the Tribals Act. These conventions will be organized at selected districts in the tribal dominated areas, informed Singh. In the convention, the party will also facilitate distribution of patta (land-ownership) for the tribals under the new act.

The meetings will be attended by state and central level leaders. "There is a need for an aggressive campaign. We want to highlight that UPA government has something for every section of the society. We need to be focused and step up our propaganda machinery", said Veerappa Moily.

Sonia Gandhi has, on many occasions, expressed her displeasure with the party machinery in the states for not adequately tomtomming the achievements of the Central government. Party leaders have hinted that it is time to start the campaign."It is the duty of our organisation to showcase the achievements of our party and the government. If we haven't communicated, it is our own fault", said Digvijay Singh.