

# TIMES NATION

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## focus: Food security, tr

### Meet, Sonia-Led Group Decides To Go Beyond Prez

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The 14-member council called on the Prime Minister after its first meeting

context than just the Naxalism issue. Members, sources said, were unanimous that issues of tribals needed to be addressed as they were a 'disadvantaged group' and not because Naxalism was dominant in central tribal belts.

One member drew a parallel with the minority development agenda of the government, pointing that development and emancipation

of minorities needed to be undertaken as they were economically and socially disadvantaged.

While initially it was suggested that NAC draw its overall canvas of priorities from the President's address of June 4, 2009, it was decided after discussions that the think tank would work under a larger framework for reforms of

policy and legislations affecting social security issues. The group would also review and monitor the existing flagship schemes of the UPA government.

Sonia pointed out that the expectations from the group would be higher than before. The members had been asked to come with suggestions for inclusion in the priority list. Together,

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11 June 2010

# NAC meet: Govt faces fire on Maoist policy

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DELHI, JUNE 10

First meeting of the reconstituted National Advisory Council (NAC) on Thursday witnessed criticism of the government's "iron fist" policy against Maoism even as the high advisory body decided to focus on the Food Security Act as its top priority. "You are losing the war," said Munda, an NAC member, who had to have told Prime Minister Manmohan Singh when he was in Delhi called on him after the meeting.

Members were of the view that the government should focus on social welfare schemes, especially drinking water schemes, education and health. Mahatma Gandhi Rural



NAC members after the meeting on Thursday.

ANIL SHARMA

Employment Guarantee Scheme and food security. While most of the members were said to have emphasised on development aspects in the fight against Maoism, Munda, who was nominated to the Rajya Sabha recently, was said to be particularly

critical, pointing out that "combing operations" of the security forces had failed as they could not move beyond the roads into the jungles. Although the NAC members expressed reservation against the iron fist policy, there was no rejection of

the ongoing anti-Naxal operations. Munda was of the view that some force was necessary to bring Naxals to the negotiating table.

Although an official press release detailing the "focus" areas of the NAC as decided by members skipped any mention of Maoism or internal security, the background note presented by NAC Secretary Rita Sharma identified "internal security and preservation of communal harmony" as one of the issues the NAC would monitor. The suggested topics for consideration included "ensuring integrated development" in Maoist-hit districts.

Discussing the Food Security Bill, Harsh Mander was said to have suggested "leniency" in enumerating beneficiaries. Farah Naqvi was said to have dwelt at length over the plight of Muslim women in the context of the socio-economic back-

wardness of the community.

The terms of reference of the NAC include monitoring the progress of implementation of the UPA government's agenda outlined in the Presidential Address in June 2009 and providing inputs into the formulation of policies of the government and support to legislative business.

NAC Chairperson Sonia Gandhi acknowledged the contribution of the earlier NAC especially in the enactment of the RTI Act and MGNREGA. She added that it will be the firm endeavour of the current government to work sincerely. The PM expressed confidence that the NAC members will be able to assist the government in taking the fruits of development to the vulnerable sections of society.

Next NAC meeting will be held on July 1 to consider the issues related to the proposed Food Security



NEWS PAPER CLIPINGS

Name of News paper : The Hindu

Dated : 11.5.2010

# Manmohan acknowledges key role of

## PM, MNREGA have enhanced transparency and accountability in administration, says



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and members with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New Delhi at the first meeting of the newly constituted council. - PHOTO: PTI

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Thursday acknowledged the historical role of the National Advisory Council (NAC) in the last Progressive Alliance term in office by announcing the Right to Information Act and the Mandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. He was laying host to NAC chairperson Sonia Gandhi and members of her newly constituted council. In the course of the interaction over a

"sumptuous tea," Dr. Singh cautioned them about the need to maintain an overall high economic growth while speaking about the virtues of fiscal prudence, NAC sources told *The Hindu*. This assumes significance given that the Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM) has already diluted the Food Security Bill that was forwarded to by Ms. Gandhi's office.

The meeting with the Prime Minister followed a three-hour-long preliminary meeting of NAC 2 in the morning, where the council worked out its priorities. Pre-

dictably, the Food Security Bill tops the NAC's agenda and will be taken up at its next meeting on July 1, followed by the Communal Violence Bill either that day or on July 15.

At the meeting, Ms. Gandhi pointed out that the RTI Act and the MNREGA had enhanced transparency and accountability in administration and promoted the UPA government's agenda of "inclusive growth." She stressed that people had high expectations from the NAC.

Issues that will be subsequently taken up are natural resource management, in-

cluding revitalisation of agriculture, welfare of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and minorities, poverty elimination and employment generation, land rights and reforms, right to education, disadvantaged children, health security and medical insurance, social security and a safety net for the disadvantaged groups, urban poverty, development of the northeast and the Special Component Plan for the Scheduled Castes and the Tribal Sub-Plan for the Scheduled Tribes.

The NAC will focus on the broad priority areas outlined

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