

OFFICE OF THE LEADER OF OPPOSITION

Gujarat Vidhansabha, Gandhinagar.

Press Note

14th March, 2011

- Chief Minister who loves himself to be called RSS pracharak should stop his costly air travels.
- Information department only prints photographs of Chief Minister instead of giving people friendly information.
- Government is creating sources of corruption in the name of outsourcing.
- Gujarat has very good readers, but Chief Minister should start a Vanche Minister campaign.
- Honest and sincere officers have been sidelined while corrupt officers have plum postings.
- Lokayukta is not appointed just because corruption is rampant in government.
- State Election Commission is dancing to the tune of someone.

Speaking on the demands of General Administration Department, Leader of Opposition Shaktisinh Gohil today blasted the government for the use of the Information Department for the publicity of Chief Minister only. He said that over Rs five crore was spent on the magazine. Does it have anything for the common men, he asked. It is full of photographs of Chief Minister, Gohil said.

He said that it was not a right mindset in the democratic set up. Are we here to spend public money for this? Gohil said that though the department has qualified and competent staff, work is outsourced. This is just to breed another kind of corruption. He pointed out that DoorDarshan and AIR was giving ample to Chief Minister, but this was missing when it comes to the Gujarat government publication, Gujarat. It has no space for opposition.

He said that at the time when BJP leader Keshubhai Patel was leader of Opposition, Government used to provide government vehicle for his press conference. In case the timing of Keshubhai's conference clashed with that of any minister, the minister was asked to change his time giving importance to the leader of Opposition.

He pointed out that earlier media used to get vehicle for visiting Gandhinagar and ministers were ready to accept queries and criticisms from media in their interaction. But this vehicle facility has been stopped. Media is the fourth estate and it can ask questions in the public interest. Information department has been asked to sing praise of Chief Minister alone.

He said that the new session of the Assembly has started. Several persons of Information Department have been assigned the task of reporting what ministers speak in the budget session. Can we have such one sided

reporting on public expenses. A look at the press notes of the information department will give idea of this. You can give land to Satyam Computers to Tata Motors then what is the problem in giving land to journalists.

In the past government had made arrangements for the media and some cases it had given residential plots also. There should be some arrangement for them. Ultimately, they represent the voice of people. Even if they may sound critic, they are protectors of democracy. They may earn much more in corporate office, still they are in the media just for job satisfaction and to do something good for the society as we all are doing. We must not forget this.

Gohil said that GAD looks after the top bureaucracy like IAS and IPS. But what are we doing today? We are sidelining top IAS and IAS officers. There was a time when GAD used to tell candidly to the Chief Minister that a particular officer might sound critical and hostile, but he was a good officer and should not be punished. But today orders are fired from the Chief Minister's office and GAD behaves in a very erratic manner.

Gohil said that government claims that it is not corrupt and it is clean. If this is the case, then why government is not interest in setting up lokayukta? He said that law was clear Governor shall appoint, in consultation with the Chief Justice of High Court and the Leader of Opposition. Government has no role to play. Despite this, he said, government wanted to intervene in this. High Court judge is the best judge to decide who can be the Lokayukta and we should allow him to decide it. Without delay, we must appoint Lokayukta immediately, he demanded.

The general administration department makes appointments in GPSC and minor services department. In short they select the people who are the backbone of the administration. But are rules and regulations followed? The officer of the Gujarat Public Service Commission cannot be appointed elsewhere but do we follow this rule? We will have to see whether we compromise on eligibility for appointing a person of our ideology on the highest post? The Cabinet has a huge responsibility. It has to worry for every paisa which is spent.

Thanks to RTI act. Recently I got a note about the facilities to be given to Tata for Nano at Sanand plant which was very shocking. The note was distributed in cabinet meeting. A worker who invests Rs. One lakh in the state gets benefit upto Rs. One lakh from it and never Rs. 3.30 lakh. Investment in first phase Rs.2250 crore. Rs.650 crore would be the cost to shift the project from Singur and how much benefit would Tata get? On the investment of Rs.2700 crore Tata would be given a loan of Rs. 9750 and the interest rate only 0.1 percent. And when would the installment start? Tata will have to pay the first installment after 20 years. We talk about holy cow as our mother and it is so unfortunate that the land kept for animal husbandry has been given to Tata's. In the Cabinet note itself it is written that Tata had said that it will take benefits. There are many other benefits which have not been mentioned. The details were given to me by Honourable Arjunbhai Modhwadhia. Tata said that it will take all benefits but it is not ready to

accept the government policy of giving jobs to locals. How can such a note be put before the cabinet?

We talk of Mahatma Mandir. But Gandhiji used to travel in third class in train but we travel only in plane. We claim ourselves to be simple, religious and talk about quality of education but fly hours and hours and spend crores of rupees. What can one expect from a Chief Minister whose travel bill is in crores of rupees? There are many flights to Delhi. Many airlines operate flights from morning to evening. But they are for public and I am not public. I will travel only by chartered flights of industrialists.

I want to draw your attention to the fact that the responsibility of the ministers and officers is more than the GAD. A two line acknowledgement to any letter written by MLA of any party is not enough. The MLA represents his area and he brings the problems of his area to the government. What is your arrangement? Referring to the period when he was the minister Gohil said he used to call a weekly meeting and referred all the letters from any MLA and used to set a time frame for their reply. But today even the Collector does not respond to MLA's queries. It is the responsibility of the Cabinet to pull ears of such officers who neglect the elected representatives. But can we do that?

Honourable Speaker sitting in your place had given a very good order. Page no 279, judgement no.411 that in government functions all the MLA's or MPs should be given equal status irrespective of the party which they represent. But today what is happening? I am enjoying on people's money, use government funds for public functions and print even the name of BJP worker on the card and forget Congress MLA. After the Speakers' order if such a thing happens then is it not insult to the Chair of the Speaker and the House? The Speaker had ordered that the officers should also be given instructions that they should give due respect to all the MLA's irrespective of the party.

Recently the Chief Minister has launched Vanche Gujarat programme but Gujarat has good readers. The CM should start this programme for his ministers. I have recording of the Assembly proceedings and on 11th March 8.30 am State Urban Development Minister said that under the JnNURM project birth places of all the important leaders who took part in freedom struggle have been awarded funds. He said that a project for Gandhiji's birth place was given but the Centre had done injustice and forgotten Sardar Vallabhbhai's Patel birth place Karamsad. But my dear friend I want to tell you that Sardar was born in Nadiad at his maternal uncle's place.

To,
The Editor,

Hon'ble Leader of Opposition has requested to kindly publish this press note in your esteemed newspaper.

(J. J. Rasanja)
Personal Assistant