

Angry Modi takes potshots at NHRC
The Hindu
August 04 2003

Press Trust of India
(Ahmedabad, August 3)

Gujarat CM Narendra Modi on Sunday took potshots at NHRC for moving the Supreme Court for re-trial of Best Bakery case. He said he would soon write to President Kalam, requesting him to ask for details about the number of convictions in cases of communal riots registered across the country and make the same public.

"It is in the interest of public that they know how many persons have been punished and to what extent in all the incidents of communal riots across all states after Independence". He was talking at a function organised by Gandhinagar Nagrik Co-operative Bank to give financial assistance to victims of Akshardham attack.

In an apparent reference to NHRC, Modi asked, "Why are the so-called protectors of human rights not raising their voice against our enemy country at a time when people and media in countries plagued by the terrorism are wholeheartedly supporting all defence measures?"

Enough time to reply to NHRC plea: Modi
The Hindu
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By K. Subramanian

KANCHEEPURAM AUG. 2. "The Gujarat Government has enough time — about 30 days — to reply to the special leave petition (SLP) filed by the National Human Rights Commission in the Supreme Court seeking fresh investigation into the Best Bakery case," the Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, said here today.

Talking to mediapersons at Sankara Math here after meeting the Kanchi Sankaracharyas, Sri Jayendra Saraswati and Sri Vijayendra Saraswati, Mr. Modi said: "I respect the court verdict. As per the law, there is 60 days' time to file a reply and 30 days are over now and we have about 30 days for filing the reply for the SLP filed by the NHRC against the acquittal of all the 21 accused in the Best Bakery case. The Advocate-General of Gujarat is looking into the matter."

Asked if he had discussed Ayodhya with the Kanchi Acharya, Mr. Modi replied in the negative. He had requested the Acharya to establish Sankara Math branches in Ahmedabad, Somnath, Sakthi Peeth and Ambaji in Gujarat and extend his services for the development of tribals and for establishing schools for them. "I have requested the Acharya to visit Gujarat and he has agreed," he said. Asked about his opinion on the pledge by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, and the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, on Friday that a Ram temple would be built at Ayodhya, Mr. Modi justified it.

About the possibility of an alliance between the BJP and the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, he said the State BJP leadership was capable of handling the issue.

Sri Jayendra Saraswati said that they did not discuss the Ayodhya issue but spoke only about the development of Gujarat and some religious matters.

Later, Mr. Modi worshipped at the Kamakshi Amman temple and also attended the ongoing 12-day "Atirudra and Sahasra Chandi Homam and Rig Veda Samhita Homam" conducted at the temple for world peace and prosperity.

Earlier, the Kancheepuram Collector, R. Venkatesan, and representatives of Sankara Math received Mr. Modi, who arrived here by a helicopter.

Modi files appeal, in Rashtrapati Bhavan

The Indian Express

August 06 2003

Express News Service

Gandhinagar, August 5: In a highly unusual move that raises questions of constitutional propriety, Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi has sent a letter to President A P J Abdul Kalam complaining about the NHRC's intervention in the Best Bakery case. Although his letter (full text) doesn't mention NHRC by name, it reads: "It is more disturbing that some national-level institutions are also carried away by propaganda. This needs serious attention because Gujarat being a border state has a strategic importance for the nation's security."

Modi wants the President to "direct compilation of details" of all convictions and acquittals in communal riots since Independence. If this is made public, Modi writes, "people will be able to judge who's right."

Justice Khare's remarks irk Gujarat CM

The Times of India

04 May 2004

LUCKNOW : Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi reacted sharply when his attention was drawn to Justice VN Khare's critical remarks about Gujarat government.

He sarcastically said, "He can't distinguish between khare (just) and khote (unjust) but I would not like to make any statement against him." Modi was here on Monday to pay his condolences on the death of MP governor and former UP chief minister Ram Prakash Gupta.

In an interview after his retirement as Chief Justice of India, Justice Khare had said that the Gujarat government did not provide adequate protection to riot victims owing to complete collusion between rioters and the state machinery.

Modi said that Khare was no longer holding the high office and his statement should be seen in this light. On opposition leaders' criticism of his role during Gujarat riots, he said, "This had been answered by the people of the state." Modi said that he fought and won the elections in Gujarat on the issue of "swabhiman" (self-respect) and denied he was carrying any Hindutva agenda. "If a few leaders can think that they can wash their sins by launching a tirade against me instead of taking a dip in the holy Ganga then it is not my problem," Modi said

Blaming the media for his image, he said he was here to only talk about issues and "achievements of Atalji." Surprisingly, Modi also felt that there was no dispute over the appeals made by the prime minister to Muslims to vote for the party. But the mascot of virulent form of Hindutva said that in this context there were many issues which needed to be discussed. "Vajpayee's appeal is in itself so powerful that I cannot come between the Muslims and him," he said. On whether he would also urge Muslims to vote for BJP, he said "I will seek the support of 100 crore Indians and not a particular section of society."

Modi stays clear from Muslim bashing

The Daily Pioneer
May 04 2004

Pioneer News Service/ Lucknow

BJP's Hindu mascot Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi in his maiden visit to Uttar Pradesh after he donned his new role, stayed away from Muslim bashing and claimed that he would seek votes and support of 100 crore Indians rather than asking support of a particular section of society.

"I do not want to talk about a particular section of society. Instead I am seeking votes from 100 crore Indians," Modi told reporters in an informal chat here on Monday.

Modi, who addressed election meetings in many parts of the state, including Lakhimpur Kheri from where BJP state president Vinay Katiyar is contesting, was bit mellowed and refrained from speaking about Muslims. At least 13 per cent of UP's population comprises of Muslims.

When asked whether he would appeal to Muslims in Lucknow, the parliamentary constituency of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, to vote for the BJP, Modi quipped: "Who am I to ask people to vote for Vajpayeeji. He (Vajpayee) is much bigger person than me. His appeal carries more weight. He does not need my help."

"Why to talk about a section of society, I appeal to 100 crore Indians to vote for the BJP," the Gujarat Chief Minister said.

He said that even in the Gujarat elections, he spoke about five crore Gujaratis and their pride. "Similarly, in the Lok Sabha polls I am talking about the pride of 100 crore Indians," he said.

But he very grave when asked about Supreme Court's observations indicting his government's role in the recent communal riots. "Former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court VN Khare was particularly acrid in criticising the functioning of my government," he said, and added: "He may criticise as much he likes, he is free to do so because now he is not a Judge. I will not say a word against the Supreme Court."

Before leaving for Kheri Modi said that he will follow the "good" advise of the Supreme Court.

Modi said the performance of the former Congress and the NDA governments were before the people who could compare them before deciding to extend their support.

Later o Lakhimpur Modi accused the Congress of "poor performance" during its long rule at the Centre and said for the first time people in the country have been able to make a clear distinction between good governance and a bad one.

Addressing an election rally here, Modi alleged people were "totally disillusioned" with Congress rule. Governments supported by the Congress also clearly had the party's imprint, he said.

He said while the Congress governments were able to make only 11 km of road in a year, the NDA government had succeeded in constructing 11 km in a day.

NHRC move on Best Bakery case rattles Gujarat govt

Deccan Herald

August 03 2003

DH News Service AHMEDABAD, Aug 2

The National Human Rights Commission's move of filing a special leave petition in the Supreme Court demanding retrial of the controversial Best Bakery case of Vadodara, has created a flutter in the Sachivalaya in Gandhinagar, even as non-government organisations and social activists see in it a ray of hope.

The move has come at a time when the Gujarat government was pondering over whether to go in for appeal in the Best Bakery case.

The NHRC move of filing a separate application for transferring four other cases – Godhra carnage, Naroda Patiya, Gulberg Society and Sardarpura massacre – outside Gujarat is viewed as a step that would put a check on the way other post-Godhra cases in the state are handled. Right from the time post-Godhra riots broke out in the state last year, the NHRC had demanded a CBI inquiry into all these five cases. The Narendra Modi government had rejected the demand.

The Godhra carnage, Naroda Patiya, Gulberg Society, Best Bakery and Sardarpura massacres left nearly 200 people dead. In Godhra carnage 59 persons, majority of them kar sevaks returning from Ayodhya were burnt alive. The police have arrested 126 persons (all booked under POTA). None of the accused is out on bail and 62 others are absconding. The trial has begun and so far four hearings have taken place.

Eighty-three persons died in Naroda Patiya. So far 54 persons have been arrested, out of which 51 are out on bail and 14 others are absconding. The chargesheets have been filed and the trial is yet to begin.

In Gulberg Society, Ahmedabad, former Congress MP Ehsan Jafri and 38 others were killed. So far 28 persons have been arrested, out of which 21 are out on bail and 23 others are absconding. The chargesheets have been filed. The case has been committed for trial but the hearing is yet to begin.

Thirty-eight people died in Sardarpura incident. Police have arrested 38 persons, out of which 32 are out on bail. Chargesheets have been filed but the trial is yet to begin.

According to highly-placed sources, over 7,000 Hindus and more than 3,000 Muslims were picked up for over 630 registered deaths. Of the dead (on official records) are over 570 Muslims and 90-odd Hindus.

The NHRC intervened last month after key witness in the Best Bakery case Zaheera Sheikh admitted that she lied in the court under pressure. A fast track court for want of evidence acquitted all the 21 accused in the case. Fourteen persons were burnt alive, bodies of two are yet to be identified.

Most of the ministers of the Modi government remain tight lipped when asked to react but a close associate of Mr Modi and Minister of state for home Amit Shah says that the NHRC move will set a wrong precedent in the judiciary prompting other aggrieved parties to put up a similar demand. At no point of time during the course of hearing did Zaheera point out that she had been receiving threats, the minister said.

Chandrakant Shrivastav, a Congress corporator who has been accused by Zaheera to have threatened her, in fact says that the guilty should be punished. He, however, maintains that he had saved her life. Mr Shrivastav also criticises Zaheera for having lied under oath. “Any Muslim will prefer to die instead of speaking lie,” he pointed out, adding that now that the witnesses have turned hostile it does not make any difference wherever the case is handled.

Noted human rights lawyer Girish Patel considers the NHRC move as a slap on the face of the Modi government and says that moving the Supreme Court was the only remedy. “It is a belated move by the NHRC but it has acted and I am relatively happy,” he says.

State BJP president Rajendrasinh Rana is critical about the NHRC’s move. “Why is the NHRC only limiting itself to Gujarat? What has it done in other parts of the country? The NHRC move is a question mark on the Constitution and the judiciary,” Mr Rana says.

Welcoming the NHRC move, a Godhra-based lawyer A I Khatuda says that cases of killings in Limidiya, Pandarwada and Eral should also be moved to courts outside Gujarat.