

# ***Statement by Shri L.K. Advani at a press conference in Gandhinagar***

**PM has buckled under Sonia Gandhi's pressure to bury the Bofors truth forever. For this and other sins, Congress will be punished by the electorate in the same way as in 1989.**

I have seen in today's *Indian Express* the lead report titled "In last days of Congress-led government, Ottavio Quattrocchi is off CBI's wanted list". It states that the "Attorney General calls Red Corner Notice against Italian businessman an 'embarrassment', says 'cannot remain in force forever'."

This is the latest in a long series of the UPA government's shameful acts of misuse of governmental institutions, CBI in particular, for crass partisan ends. Everybody knows that the Bofors scam has been the most political explosive corruption scandal in independent India's history. In 1989, it led to the downfall of Rajiv Gandhi's government, which was voted out in spite of winning a massive majority in Parliament in 1984.

Ever since the Bofors scam surfaced in April 1987, the Congress party has done everything to prevent the truth from coming out. Under pressure from 10 Janpath, the government of P.V. Narasimha Rao allowed Quattrocchi to flee India. However, the most brazen acts of subversion of justice were seen in the tenure of the UPA government. It first allowed defreezing the bank account of Quattrocchi, the Italian middleman who is the principal accused in the scandal and one known for his proximity to Sonia Gandhi's family and hence to 10 Janpath. It later allowed him to go scot-free after having been arrested in Argentina. The last nail in the coffin of the judicial process is the latest news that the UPA government wants Quattrocchi's name off the CBI's "Wanted" list.

**I condemn this decision of the UPA government in the strongest possible terms. I hold Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and Congress president Smt. Sonia Gandhi directly responsible for colluding in this conspiracy to bury the truth about Bofors. It is obvious that he and his government have acted under instructions from 10 Janpath. His silence over the past five years on the systematic misuse of the CBI and the law ministry confirms his guilt. It also confirms my assessment that he is a weak and unworthy Prime Minister who has devalued his high office by making it subservient to the diktats of 10 Janpath.**

For this and other sins, the Congress party will be punished by the electorate in the same way as in 1989.

In this context, I wish to make another important point. The BJP has pledged to bring back enormous Indian wealth illegally stashed away in secret Swiss bank accounts and other tax havens. It is worth noting that the kickbacks paid in the Bofors scandal were also deposited in secret Swiss bank accounts. Rattled by the huge public support to the BJP's initiative, some Congress leaders are now saying in

muted voices that they too are attempting to bring this money back. However, the contrast between the BJP and Congress can be clearly seen in the diametrically opposite stands of the two parties on the Bofors issue. **How can the Congress leadership, which has allowed the main Bofors scamster to run away with crores of bribe money parked in a foreign bank, be trusted to bring back Indian wealth hoarded in tax havens abroad?**

### **Massive nationwide sentiment for change of government at the Centre**

Today is the last day of campaigning in my constituency, as also in all other constituencies that go to the polls on April 30 in the third phase of polling to elect the 15th Lok Sabha. Based on the feedback from diverse sources, including our own party sources, my belief is further reinforced that there are two defining characteristics of the ongoing parliamentary elections: firstly, **a massive nationwide sentiment for change of government at the Centre; and secondly, a desire to see a strong and stable alternative.**

The Congress-led UPA government's failures and betrayals are of such magnitude that the people of India have decided that it deserves to be shown the exit door. The voters will give a decisive mandate against this failed government.

**One issue — the UPA government's abysmal failure to check the prices of essential commodities, especially food items — alone is enough for the aam aadmi to conclude that the Congress deserves punishment, and not a second term.** Throughout my campaign across the length and breadth of the country, people have told me that skyrocketing price rise tops the many reasons why they want a change of government at the Centre. **Hence, my pledge today is that taking effective steps to control and reverse the price rise would be the very first task in the 100-day programme of a future BJP-led NDA government.**

In keeping with the BJP's commitment to make India hunger-free, we have promised in our manifesto that **every BPL family would get 35 kgs of rice or wheat per month at a rate of Rs. 2 per kg. If elected to office, our government will take a decision on this matter in the very first meeting of the Cabinet.**

The Prime Minister has said in a recent press interview that he would take steps to revive the economy within the first 90 days. All along, senior leaders of the government and the Congress party have shirked their own responsibility for the severe economic crisis in India by saying that it is due to external factors, specifically the recession in the western economies. Now they are promising to revive the Indian economy in the first 90 days. **This hollow promise, which cannot fool the people, is nothing but an open admission of the UPA government's failure to revive the economy so far.**

My attention has been drawn to press reports that Mahamahim Rashtrapati has refused to accede to the Union government's request to send the GUJCOCA (Gujarat Control of Organised Crime) bill back to the

Gujarat government and, instead, asked the Union government to record its own recommendation in the matter. **The leadership of the UPA government and the Congress party owe an explanation to the people of Gujarat and the rest of the country why they have continued to block GUJCOCA. There can be no explanation other than the Congress party's crass votebank politics.** Its approach to GUJCOCA has been no different from its approach to POTA, which it scrapped for votebank considerations. The 26/11 terrorist attacks on Mumbai forced the UPA government to do a U-turn on the need for a strong anti-terror law. The fact that it has refused to do a similar U-turn on GUJCOCA shows how the Congress party has continued to play dirty politics on the issue of fighting cross-border terrorism.

**A future NDA government's zero-tolerance policy on terrorism will be free of the poison of politicization.**

### **My appeal to voters: For a stable govt. in New Delhi, give a decisive mandate to BJP and its NDA allies**

I mentioned that the second defining characteristic of the ongoing parliamentary elections is the popular **desire to see a strong and stable alternative at the Centre.** It is beyond a shadow of doubt that the so-called Third Front cannot fulfill this desire. The current blow-hot-blow-cold verbal duel between the Congress, its allies in the UPA government and the Left parties has discredited all of them. It has shown that the Congress does not trust these parties, and they in turn do not trust the Congress. Yet, all of them are collectively trying to fool the people that there should be a "secular" government at the Centre.

**Today I appeal to the people, especially our minority brethren, to see through this bogus talk of "secular unity". It is nothing more than a desperate attempt to prevent the formation of a BJP-led government at the Centre.** India paid a heavy price due to a similar anti-democratic experiment in blind anti-BJPism in 1996, when the BJP could not form a government in spite of emerging as the single largest party with 162 MPs. It resulted in two highly unstable governments at the Centre.

**The many serious internal and external challenges that India is currently facing make it clear that instability at the Centre would be disastrous for the country. Therefore, I appeal to the people to give the BJP and its allies in the NDA such a strong and decisive mandate that the 15th Lok Sabha can produce a stable government capable of meeting the formidable challenges before the nation.**