

‘The agricultural growth in my Gujarat is 14%, but no one looks at it’



In the first part of his interview, Gujarat Chief Minister **Narendra Modi** told **Saisuresh Sivaswamy** and **Nikhil Lakshman** that he planned to stay on to Gujarat if the National Democratic Alliance formed the next government in New Delhi.

In the second part of the interview, Modi discusses the flavour of the ongoing Lok Sabha election campaign, and his prime ministerial ambitions.

Do you think the development debate in this country has turned pro-business? And that ordinary people are feeling left behind?

You've asked a very good question, and I will be pleased to answer this one.

In my Gujarat I hold the Vibrant Gujarat global investor summit once in two years, on January 13-14. Some 700-800 government officers of mine are involved in it, and I invite industrialists and businessmen to come for the summit and invest in the state.

Also in my state, for one month every year, we hold an agricultural festival in which about a lakh government servants go to the villages in May-June, braving the 44 degree temperatures, sit down with the farmers and work towards agricultural development. You remember what we do for two days out of two years, but where the government travels to the countryside for a month every year and promotes agriculture, you are not interested.

The result of such attitude is that the Manmohan Singh government's targeted agricultural growth of four per cent is stuck at 2.5%. The agricultural growth in my Gujarat is 14%, but no one looks at it.

I have given priority to the girl child's education. Every year on June 13, 14 and 15 my entire government goes to the villages -- and you are also invited to come along -- the chief minister, minister, chief secretary, secretary, IAS officers, all of us go from home to home and get the girl child admitted in schools. And today my state has 100 per cent girl-child enrollment. You don't think this is work?

For news traders only the two-day Vibrant Gujarat is useful which is why they talk about it.

In Gujarat we have the Chiranjeevi scheme -- in this nation everyone from the poor man to the President is against maternal and infant mortality. My government has formulated the Chiranjeevi Yojana under which every below poverty line mother will have her childbirth in hospital, I have started this as a movement, and done partnerships with private doctors. From 40%, today we have 80% to 85% of the deliveries happening in hospitals, thus we have saved the lives of many poor mothers and children. But you are not interested in this.

There is a saying 'justice delayed is justice denied'. Everyone knows of it, you do too. I have done three major things in Gujarat. I have increased court hours by 30 minutes every day; reduced court vacations by seven days; started evening courts with the same infrastructure.

We had 45 lakh cases pending from 2003-2004, to which 65 lakh new cases were added, making it more than one crore pending cases. After our initiatives, there are only 20 lakh pending court cases. Now my target is that by 2010, when Gujarat will complete 50 years, we will make it no-pendency. Cases will be disposed of in the very year they are filed.

You tell me, since Independence, in the field of justice delivery, has so much work been accomplished anywhere?

But, for news traders, these things perhaps are not saleable. Now you tell me if these things are pro-poor or not.