

PRESS RELEASE

June 14, 2015

Randeep Singh Surjewala, Incharge Communications, AICC has issued the following statement to the Press today:-

“Today, entire country is witnessing a most unfortunate and sordid drama involving the highest offices of the Government including External Affairs Minister, Smt. Sushma Swaraj with direct questions being raised qua role of Hon’ble Prime Minister and Finance Ministry. What we have witnessed today involves blatant quid pro quo, direct help to a fugitive from law, internecine warfare between the top echelons of government and unraveling of the nexus between BJP leadership and its crony criminal friends.

There is a clear-cut case of gross impropriety on part of External Affairs Minister of India, Smt. Sushma Swaraj helping a fugitive of Indian law against whom a blue corner notice/lookout circular had been issued by Enforcement Directorate of India as also who was being investigated by Income Tax authorities for financial impropriety, illegal betting and money laundering cases worth nearly Rs.700 crore. None less than the Finance Minister, Shri P. Chidambaram in UPA Government had officially sought action against Shri Lalit Modi by two written communications to Chancellor of Exchequer, UK in light of allegations of serious financial frauds and money laundering. Look out circular/blue corner notice issued by Enforcement Directorate remain valid till date. Income Tax authorities have also issued notices for financial bungling and money laundering worth nearly 700 crores which remain valid till date. Enforcement Directorate is claiming serious Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) violations in the look out circular on part of Shri Lalit Modi.

Despite all this, Shri Lalit Modi, a fugitive from Indian law was helped in securing travel documents from UK Government at the instance of External Affairs Minister, Smt. Sushma Swaraj. He (Lalit Modi) also thanked a number of people including Shri Swaraj Kaushal (husband of Smt. Sushma Swaraj) for asking for the grant of travel documents. Even in the past, Shri Lalit Modi’s help had been sought by Shri Swaraj Kaushal (husband of Smt. Sushma Swaraj) and Sushma Swaraj herself for securing admission of her nephew to a University in UK.

These facts make position of Smt. Sushma Swaraj and her as External Affairs Ministry completely untenable. These facts warrant that Smt. Sushma Swaraj should immediately step down as External Affairs Minister in the Union Cabinet.

FACTS

- (i) Shri Lalit Modi was stripped of all his posts in Indian Cricket and suspended by the BCCI after the third edition of IPL got over in 2010. Shri Lalit Modi was accused of a wide range of financial impropriety from rigging bidding deals related to the IPL, offering bribes, betting and money laundering. Income Tax Department also opened a case against Shri Lalit Modi and was investigating tax evasion and money laundering to the tune of Rs.700 crore.

Time ran out for Shri Lalit Modi soon after the Chennai Super King won the 2010 IPL Final by beating Mumbai Indians by 22 runs. Shri Lalit Modi was informed about his suspension through an e-mail by BCCI. Shri Lalit Modi, however, had escaped to London, UK.

(ii) **13th October, 2010**

Enforcement Directorate (ED) asked Ministry of External Affairs to revoke Shri Lalit Modi's passport, a move clearly aimed at his deportation from UK. ED also asked Mumbai Passport Office to seize his passport.

(iii) **14th October, 2010**

Enforcement Directorate issued a 'Look Out Circular/Notice' against former IPL Commissioner, Shri Lalit Modi. Income Tax authorities had also issued notices and started investigations for serious financial bungling against Shri Lalit Modi.

(iv) **May-June, 2013**

Indian Government (UPA) asked the British Government for action against former IPL Commissioner, Shri Lalit Modi who had sought refuge in London, UK. The then Finance Minister, Shri P. Chidambaram, wrote two letters to Chancellor of Exchequer, Shri George Osborne asking him for action against IPL Chief, Shri Lalit Modi and his repatriation to India for being tried under various offences including FEMA violations and other violations being investigated by Enforcement Directorate and the Income Tax authorities.

During his visit to UK in June, 2013, Shri P. Chidambaram, the then Finance Minister, personally took up the matter for action against Shri Lalit Modi with the Chancellor of Exchequer.

(v) **26th August, 2013**

Shri Swaraj Kaushal (husband of Smt. Sushma Swaraj) wrote an e-mail to Shri Lalit Modi in UK seeking admission for his nephew Jyotirmay in Sussex University, UK.

(vi) **29th August, 2013**

Shri Lalit Modi then wrote an e-mail to Shri Keith Vaz, Labour Leader & MP stating that Smt. Sushma Swaraj had called him (Shri Lalit Modi) for admission and that her nephew should be helped to get into the law programme at Sussex University.

(vii) **29th August, 2013**

Shri Keith Vaz, Labour MP agreed to help.

(viii) **16th May, 2014**

BJP Government headed by Shri Narendra Modi came to power in India. Immediately thereafter, Smt. Sushma Swaraj was inducted as External Affairs Minister.

(ix) **31st July, 2014**

Shri Keith Vaz, wrote to Ms Sarah Rapson, Director of UK Visas & Immigration Department asking for grant of travel documents to Shri Lalit Modi. Following are the excerpts of contents of the e-mail:-

“Foreign Minister of India (Sushma Swaraj) has spoken to me making it very clear that the Indian Government has no objection to the travel document being granted which is contrary to what the refusal notice has stated. Mrs Swaraj has also spoken to Sir James Bevan, who even though is on leave, said he will speak to the relevant person in the Home Office. Frankly everyone has been involved in this apart from Ban-ki-Moon.”

(x) **31st July, 2014**

Ms Sarah Rapson wrote to Shri Keith Vaz. Following are the excerpts of contents:-

“We are looking into this and will give you a proper update tomorrow.”

(xi) **1st August, 2014**

Ms Sarah Rapson wrote to Shri Keith Vaz and informed him about clearance of travel documents of Shri Lalit Modi.

(xii) **1st August, 2014**

Shri Lalit Modi wrote an e-mail thanking Shri Keith Vaz with copy to Shri Swaraj Kaushal (husband of Smt. Sushma Swaraj). Following are the excerpts of contents:-

“Thank you for putting all your might and help and sleepless nights in resolving this major issue which has taken us thru tremendous roller coaster ride.” (---) “Roger and his team backed by just super star Keith Vaz with the support of numerous friends in India, Malta, Portugal, Virginia Waters, Tel Aviv, Lisbon, Lyon and some unnamed stars I cannot thank you enough. The sigh of relief I got even for a minute as I held the document before relinquishing to my Portuguese friends was sheer delight.”

(xiii) 1st August, 2014

Shri Keith Vaz, Labour MP wrote an e-mail to Shri Lalit Modi. Following are the excerpts of contents:-

“From the horses mouth! I will do a thank you we will need her again.”

11 QUESTIONS THAT PRIME MINISTER, SHRI NARENDRA MODI AND BJP MUST ANSWER

In light of these facts, Indian National Congress calls upon Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi to answer the following questions to people of India:-

1. Why was External Affairs Minister of India helping a fugitive from India law accused of money laundering and FEMA violations secure travel documents?
2. Was it done with the prior approval of Shri Narendra Modi? If it is correct, why would Prime Minister nudge the External Affairs Minister to help Shri Lalit Modi? What was the quid pro quo for help being extended by the Government to Shri Lalit Modi or was the External Affairs Minister acting on her own behest?
3. Which players in the Government and BJP were batting for Shri Lalit Modi? What is the connection of Modi Government – Sushma Swaraj – Lalit Modi – Keith Vaz and others in Indian and UK Governments?
4. Why is it that Finance Ministry continues with an Enforcement Directorate Lookout Notice and Income Tax authorities continue to investigate a nearly Rs.700 crore tax evasion/money laundering cases, while External Affairs Ministry bats for giving travel documents to Shri Lalit Modi?
5. What happens to the ‘bringing black money’ claim of Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi when his own government is helping Shri Lalit Modi – an accused in Rs.700 crore money laundering case and FEMA violations?
6. What happens to the ‘transparency’ and ‘no-corruption’ claims of Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi when it is apparent that his own government is actively helping a fugitive from Indian law accused of financial bungling and money laundering?
7. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi and BJP had sought resignation of former HRD Minister, Shri Shashi Tharoor on the allegation of his wife holding a small share in IPL Team.

Will the Prime Minister and BJP now apply the same yardsticks of moral and constitutional propriety and accountability?

8. Will the Finance Ministry including the Enforcement Directorate and Income Tax authorities place all the facts qua all the current ongoing investigations and allegations against Shri Lalit Modi in public realm for people to judge?

9. Admittedly, UPA Government had sought action against Shri Lalit Modi by way of two written communications of then Finance Minister, Shri P. Chidambaram to Chancellor of Exchequer, UK and with a one-to-one request being made by Shri P. Chidambaram to Chancellor of Exchequer, UK during his visit in June, 2013.

What is the reason, then, for a change of stand on part of Government of India?

10. What action would the Prime Minister and Finance Ministry propose to take against Shri Lalit Modi in light of the fresh revelations? Does the Prime Minister/Finance Ministry propose to compound and close all the offences of financial bungling, illegal betting and money laundering against Shri Lalit Modi or is a meaningful action contemplated? Would Prime Minister and Finance Ministry place details thereof in public realm?"
11. Statements by BJP President, Shri Amit Shah and Home Minister, Shri Rajnath Singh now justify the conduct of External Affairs Minister by calling it a 'person to person help'.

Is this the new policy of Modi Government to help all fugitive of law on humanitarian grounds? Will Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi and his government continue to help all the black money hoarders, illegal betterers, match-fixers, money launderers and criminals on humanitarian grounds in future? Is this declaration of policy per se not against National interest and shameful?"

Randeep Singh Surjewala