

"In Gujarat, as long as Narendra Modi is at the helm of affairs, public should not be afraid because the state is in safe hands..."

SMRITI IRANI  
 BJP Rajya Sabha MP from Gujarat

## Poll panel bans political activities at Navratri fairs

**NEW DELHI:** Navratri festivities beginning Tuesday will be under the scanner of Election Commission, which on Sunday barred all kinds of political activities at such religious functions in poll-bound Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh during the nine-day revelry.

Navratri, which is a major festival in Gujarat, sees a number of garba and other programmes being held across the state, attracting tens of thousands of people.

EC officials said there is no ban on organising "dandias", "aartis" and other such programmes during the period, but political leaders cannot be invited as chief guests and they cannot use it as a platform for campaigning. Also, they will not be allowed to distribute any publicity material in any language at such events.

However, the prospective candidates and politicians can attend these functions as ordinary citizens. Officials said there would not be any spe-

cial inaugural or closing ceremony.

Election authorities in the state will ensure that organisers do not allow the politicians to give speeches or use the events for campaigning and any violation will invoke strict action under various laws, including Religious Institution (prevention of misuse) Act, Chief Electoral officer of Gujarat Anita Karwal said.

Before granting permission to organisers of such functions, the authorities will take an undertaking from them that they will not allow the event and the venue to be used for any political activity.

The use of religion and religious spaces for campaigning during elections is not allowed as per existing election norms.

CCTVs will be installed on the location of Navratri fairs to help election officers monitor the conduct of politicians attending religious ceremonies. **PTI**

# Surrogate poll ad war hots up

Parties distance themselves from NGOs as posters, e-mails and SMSes reach voters

RITU SHARMA  
 AHMEDABAD, OCTOBER 14

GROUPS working for social change seem to be lending a helping hand to the political class in influencing voters ahead of the Assembly elections. These groups, including non-government organisations (NGOs), are actively backing either the BJP or the Congress even as the parties deny any association with them.

The latest instance is of Noorjahan Diwan, the president of Congress's minority women's cell, who was summoned a couple of days ago by the Detection of Crime Branch in connection with an incident of arson and rioting in Karanj area early this month. Diwan is also a member of ANHAD, a Delhi-based NGO run by social activist Shabnam Hashmi.

ANHAD is believed to be supporting the Congress and is actively involved in helping the party (behind the scenes) to come out with slogans, blogs and messages for the masses keeping the upcoming elections in mind.

Last week, Ahmedabad-based NGO Aims held a roadshow in the city against rising inflation and corruption. Fine Arts students of M S University were roped in for preparing cartoons, caricatures (of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress president Sonia Gandhi), slogans and posters on this theme.

While Aims spokesperson Sunny Bhatt admitted that participants were BJP supporters who were against the Centre's "misrule", the saffron party denied any linkages with such organisations and campaigns. The BJP claimed the ideology of the party and the organisation might be one but not the command.

"There is no association with any NGO or such social organisations. They are acting on their own; standing up for the cause. There is no support, financially or otherwise, to these organisations. Rather, we are focusing on technology and Internet with emphasis



Groups working for social change are actively backing either BJP or Congress as the Assembly polls inch closer. **EXPRESS PHOTOS**

on social networking websites for our party's campaigning and publicity," said Kaushik Patel, BJP media co-ordinator.

Such incidences are more than mere co-incidence as these groups have suddenly become active in organising roadshows, putting up hoardings, sending e-mails and SMSes, and blogging.

Recently hoardings with an appeal to "join hands for change" have been spotted across the city. With emphasis on "missing", these hoardings are sending across the message of Narendra Modi government's 'false claims'

of development. They are, however, silent as far as naming any party or leader is concerned.

Similar messages are propagated through blogs the website of 'join hands for change' (the URL is mentioned on the hoardings).

Inviting people to "join hands for a change", the hoardings have catchy lines in English and Gujarati, like "affordable homes for 16,50,000 Gujarat families missing", "22 per cent of top government employees of Gujarat missing" and "70 per cent of health staff in Gujarat villages missing". Although there is a mention of

the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee in fine print at the bottom of the hoardings, the media co-ordinator of Congress party denied having any connection either with the organisation or the hoardings.

"The party is not at all associated with 'join hands for change' or any other non-profit organisation. We have no clue to whom this organisation belongs. This time in elections, the party's main focus will be on the lacunae of development in right direction," said Siddharth Patel, state media planner for Congress during elections. On the possibility of support

by political parties to NGOs and other organisations, Patel said these organisations work independently. "There is no financial or other support from the party (Congress). It is entirely their prerogative to support X or Y party," he said.

Besides, e-mails and SMSes by various social activists are also doing the rounds in the state. While some are working on campaigns like spreading awareness of exercising the right to vote, others are challenging claims of development and motivating people to follow their ideology.

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**THIS WEEK IN BRIEF**

**OUR TAKE**  
 Vespa's first ad captures the spirit of the seventies. Positioning the brand as a symbol of freedom and romance, the ad is retro, not retrograde.

**AD-DENDUM**  
 Allowing specialisations to become silos is perhaps the biggest mistake that holding companies in the communications business have made, says Aegis Media's Ashish Bhasin.

**YESTERDAY, TODAY & TOMORROW.**  
 Subhash Chandra is known as the pioneer of private broadcasting in India. His son Punit Goenka now plans to take Zee Network beyond mere television broadcasting.

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## NewsTRACK

**Dr. Jatin V. Modi elected as the President of UCLG-ASPAC**

**D**R. Jatin V. Modi, Former Mayor of Vadodara City is elected as the President of UCLG-ASPAC (United Cities and Local Governments - Asia-Pacific Region), a global organization working for the cause of local bodies recognized by United Nations Organization, in the election held on 4th October, 2012 at Jakarta. He is the National President of All India Institute of Local Self-Government (Union of Municipalities). His name has been nominated by the Mayor of Hamamatsu City in Japan and seconded by the President of Australian Mayors' Association. The prominent cities that supported him are Chengdu of China, Hamamatsu of Japan, Seoul of Korea and Melbourne of Australia amongst others. Almost about 300 representatives from different municipal corporations of various countries were present. His term as a President will remain for a period of two years.

**Seminar on Seven Habits for Success**

**S**even Habits for success workshop was recently organized at Calorx Public School, Ahmedabad. Dr. Shailendra Gupta, Registrar Calorx Teachers University conducted the workshop. The workshop was for the parents of Pre-Primary section (Nursery, Jr. K.G, Sr. K.G.) as well as Grade Class I and II. The vice-principal of the school, Ms. Nishrin Rafique delivered Vote of Thanks at the end of the workshop. The workshop was an excellent opportunity not only for the parents but also for the teachers which will help them to understand their children better.

**Matrix Comsec inaugurates its new factory in Vadodara**

**M**AIRIX Comsec manufacturer of Telecom and Security products has recently inaugurated its new Manufacturing Unit at Waghodia, in Vadodara. The launch of the factory reinforces Matrix vi-

sion of providing innovative world-class Products and Solutions for a better tomorrow. The new manufacturing unit is spread over an area of 78,000 sq. ft., Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Ganesh Jivani, the Managing Director of Matrix Comsec said, "Matrix is among the few Indian companies which indigenously manufactures and markets both Telecom and Security products. Today Matrix is positioned as a qualitative and competitive product manufacturer on the global plane and has introduced more than 40 innovative products through continuous research and development activities; strengthening its global competency."

**Grub Finance Ltd Financial Results for the Half Year Ended**

**T**HE Board of Directors of GRUH Finance Ltd. (GRUH) - a subsidiary of HDFC Ltd. - has approved the accounts for the half year ended September 30, 2012 at their meeting held in Mumbai. Profit after tax for the year amounted to Rs. 53.93 crores as compared to Rs. 41.47 crores for the previous year - an increase of 30%. The loan portfolio as at September 30, 2012 amounted to Rs. 4672.03 crores as against Rs. 3543.52 crores in the previous year - an increase of 32%. Loan disbursements during the half year were Rs. 959.96 crores as against Rs. 647.56 crores in the previous year indicating a growth of 48%.

**Cera Sanitaryware Limited**

**C**ERA Sanitaryware Limited, the total bathroom solutions provider and the third biggest player in the Indian Sanitaryware products has achieved yet again impressive growth with a figure of Rs. 111.38 Crore being 52% smart increase in top line and Rs. 11.03 Crore being 44 % increase in PAT for the second quarter of 2012-13 ended September 30th, 2012. Mr. Somany said that CERA has launched an array of elegant range of HD digital wall and vitrified tiles with matching floor tiles. The company is also offering the normal vitrified tiles with nano technology.

**Meeting of Board of Directors**

**P**ursuant to Clause 41 of the Listing Agreement, the meeting of Board of Directors of Gokul Refoils and Solvent Limited will be held on Tuesday, the 23rd October, 2012 at 12.00 Noon, at the Corporate Office at "Gokul House" Navrangpura, Ahmedabad interalia to consider and to approve the Unaudited Financial Results for the second quarter and half year ended 30th September, 2012 along with various other businesses.

**Vijaya Bank Flags off Festival Bonanza**

**V**ijaya Bank, a leading nationalized bank, on the Auspicious occasion of this festive season & on their 82nd Foundation Day Bank has got a bouquet of attractive offers for its eteemed customers. 'Festival Bonanza', a four month business development campaign, is launched by Shri H.S. Upendra Kamath, Chairman & MD, Vijaya Bank in the presence of Smt. Subalakhmi Panse & Shri K. RR Shenoy. The bouquet consists of 7 schemes which are V-Vaibhav, V-Samman, V-Parivar, V-Dhanvanthri, V-Vidya Vahini, V-Home Loan & V-Wheels. Bank has also launched new loan schemes for Rice/Dal Mills.