

Political grudge behind PIL by Congress leader on Remdesivir distribution: Gujarat BJP chief

AHMEDABAD, JUNE 22 / -Gujarat BJP president C R Paatil today said the political grudge and grievance behind the PIL filed by Congress leader Paresh Dhnanani in the Gujarat High Court over the distribution of Remdesivir injections from the BJP office in Surat when COVID-19 cases had peaked in April.



Gujarat BJP president C R Paatil

In an affidavit in-reply filed before the court, Paatil claimed that the facilitation of Remdesivir injections for the treatment of COVID-19 patients in Surat and Navsari in south Gujarat was done in accordance with the guidelines issued by competent authorities and at no point was the drug hoarded in the BJP office or

elsewhere as alleged in the PIL. The BJP leader was responding to a PIL filed by Leader of the Opposition Dhnanani, which challenged as illegal the act of 'hoarding' and 'distributing' Remdesivir injections to needy persons by Paatil, an MP from Navsari, and BJP MLA Harsh Sanghani, in Surat and Navsari in April when the demand for the drug was at its peak due to the surge in COVID-19 cases.

hoarding at any place, including the party office of the BJP. The allegation was 'thoroughly baseless,' he said. 'The availability and facilitation of the injection was done strictly in accordance with the statutory provisions and guidelines issued by the competent authorities.... By the alleged act of facilitating the patients who were in dire need of Remdesivir injections, no public injury was caused and hence the question of indicating public interest does not arise,' he said.

The BJP leader further said the petitioner should have waited for a reply from the commissioner of the Food and Drugs Control Administration before moving the court, and should have raised his grievances before the chief minister, Government or the competent authorities. Paatil said he had mobilised senior party workers and elected representatives 'to extend maximum help and assistance to those who were in acute need of Remdesivir' when there was a huge demand for the injection and oxygen. etc. MLA Sanghani, also a respondent in the case, had earlier stated in his affidavit that more than 2,500 injections were facilitated to needy persons in Surat and Navsari between April 10 and 12 with the 'sole intention of compassion and humanity' and to save lives.

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The matter will come up for hearing in the court of Chief Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Biran Vaishnav on July 6. Paatil said the petition is not maintainable on several counts, and asserted that its 'real purpose is to malign (Paatil and Sanghani) as well as the political party to which they belong and also get publicity in the media'. 'At no point of time was the injection kept for the purpose of

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BPJL MHA Harsh Sanghani) as well as against the BJP, since the petitioner and the political party are rivals in the political scenario of Gujarat', Paatil stated in the affidavit.

A total of 2,506 vials of the injection, made available to needy persons in Surat and Navsari, were procured from a distributor, who supplied it to the medical stores, and a hospital in Surat. Dhnanani has in his plea said that the distribution of Remdesivir injection by Paatil and Sanghani is illegal and violates several provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, Pharmacy Act, and Drugs Control Act among others. He has sought the court's direction to constitute an expert committee of highly distinguished and impartial persons to inquire into the incident, and present a report before the court in the context of the said Acts as well as the Disaster Management Act, and Epidemic Diseases Act, and action be taken on the basis of the report. (PTI)

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Paatil 'Centre-state bhagidari in ushering reforms by conviction and incentives' during Covid

NEW DELHI, JUNE 22 / -Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said the economic response to the COVID-19 pandemic was formulated to ensure that solutions do not follow a 'one size fits all' model, and asserted that 'reforms by conviction and incentives' were undertaken on the back of 'Centre-state bhagidari (partnership)'.

In a post on social media platform LinkedIn, he said that in the backdrop of the financial crunch seen across the world, Indian states were able to borrow significantly more in 2020-21. 'It would perhaps pleasantly surprise you that states were able to raise an extra Rs 1.06 lakh crore in 2020-21. This significant increase in availability of resources was made possible by an approach of Centre-State bhagidari,' the prime minister said.

Noting that COVID-19 pandemic has come with a whole new set of challenges to governments across the world in terms of policy-making, Modi said India was no exception and asserted that raising enough resources for public welfare while ensuring sustainability is proving to be one of the biggest challenges. 'When we formulated our economic re-

sponse to the COVID-19 pandemic, we wanted to ensure that our solutions do not follow a one size fits all model. For a federal country of continental dimensions, finding policy instruments at the national level to promote reforms by State governments is indeed challenging,' he said. 'But, we had faith in the robustness of our federal polity and we moved ahead in the spirit of Centre-State bhagidari,' he said in his post titled 'Reforms by Conviction and Incentives'.

Modi noted that in May 2020, as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat package, the Centre announced that state governments would be allowed enhanced borrowing for 2020-21. An extra 2 per cent of GDP was allowed, of which 1 per cent was made conditional on the implementation of certain economic reforms.

roadmap with like-minded countries. The positioning of the officer at the Centre, in addition to a planned visit to India by the UK's Carrier Strike Group led by aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth. 'Lt Commander Stephen Smith will be based full-time at the Centre, working directly with the Indian armed forces and fellow liaison officers from partner nations to enhance maritime domain awareness in the region.' The high commission said, 'He will be inducted in an official ceremony as the UK's first ILO at the Centre, building on the UK and Indian prime ministers' historic commitment to boost cooperation with the Indo-Pacific region since the launch of the 2030

aid. Asserting that this huge reform is rare in Indian public finance, Modi said it was a 'judicious' move under a far less than 120 states completed this reform and were allowed additional borrowing of Rs. 39,521 crore. Modi said the fourth reform was the introduction of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) in lieu of free electricity supply to farmers and the requirement was for formulation of a state-wide scheme with accountability to the state government. 'The Union Nation One Ration Card policy required state governments to ensure that all ration cards in the state under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) were seeded with the Aadhaar number of all family members and that all Fair Price Shops had Electronic Point of Sale devices. He highlighted that 17 states completed the reform and granted additional borrowings amounting to Rs. 37,600 crore. He said that the second reform, aimed at improving ease of doing business, required states to ensure that renewal of business-related licences under seven acts is made automatic, online and non-discretionary on mere payment of fees. Another requirement was implementation

of a computerised random inspection system and prior notice of inspection to reduce harassment and corruption under a far less than 120 states completed this reform and were allowed additional borrowing of Rs. 39,521 crore. Modi said the fourth reform was the introduction of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) in lieu of free electricity supply to farmers and the requirement was for formulation of a state-wide scheme with accountability to the state government. 'The Union Nation One Ration Card policy required state governments to ensure that all ration cards in the state under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) were seeded with the Aadhaar number of all family members and that all Fair Price Shops had Electronic Point of Sale devices. He highlighted that 17 states completed the reform and granted additional borrowings amounting to Rs. 37,600 crore. He said that the second reform, aimed at improving ease of doing business, required states to ensure that renewal of business-related licences under seven acts is made automatic, online and non-discretionary on mere payment of fees. Another requirement was implementation

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No balance doses of direct state procurement pending with Covid vaccine manufacturers: Govt

NEW DELHI, JUNE 22 / -The health ministry today said the Centre had ensured that the full supplies of COVID-19 vaccines under direct state procurement were provided to the states concerned before June 21. The ministry issued a statement, saying certain media reports have alleged non-supply of free vaccines for COVID-19 patients under the scheme to the Delhi government amid the ongoing free COVID-19 vaccination drive. 'It is clarified that the Government of India had ensured that full supplies of COVID-19 vaccines under the direct state procurement were provided to the concerned states before June 21 of this statement said.

According to the state procurement data, the allocated 5.6 lakh doses of direct state procurement were supplied to Delhi before June 21 by the vaccine manufacturers. Further, an additional 8.1 lakh vaccine doses under the Centre's procurement were provided to Delhi for free and more are in the pipeline, which will be supplied by June-end, the statement said. As on June 22, Delhi has over 9.9 lakh unutilised doses of Covid vaccines, it added. With effect from June 21, both the state government and Government of India supplies, irrespective of the type of supply, are to be used to vaccinate people above 18 years of age as all categories of priority groups are now unified and are to be provided vaccination for free at the state-designated government Covid vaccination centres (CVCs), the statement said. (PTI)

Britain positions liaison officer at Indian Navy's Information Fusion Centre

NEW DELHI, JUNE 22 / -In reflection of growing bilateral defence ties, the UK today posted a liaison officer at India's Information Fusion Centre (IFC) which has emerged as a key hub of maritime security information relating to the Indian Ocean, a region witnessing increasing Chinese naval presence.

A very small group of India's strategic partners have positioned their officials at the Gurgaon-based facility. The UK's International Liaison Officer (ILO) has today joined the Indian Navy's Information Fusion Centre (IFC) which has emerged as a key hub of maritime security information relating to the Indian Ocean, a region witnessing increasing Chinese naval presence.

Admiral Tony Radakin, KCB, Air Vice Lord and Chief of Naval Staff of the UK described it as a significant step towards maritime domain awareness by both India and Britain. 'Coming as a natural outgrowth of the strong partnership between the Royal Navy and Indian Navy, this is a significant step towards shared maritime domain awareness effort, and boldly underlines UK and Indian desires to work together in the Indian Ocean Region and wider Indo-Pacific,' he said. Jan Thompson, Acting British High Commissioner to India, said, 'The UK has committed to becoming the European country with the broadest, most integrated presence in the Indo-Pacific in support of trade, shared security and values. 'I am delighted that we've taken another tangible step to enhance our joint capability to tackle shared challenges,' he added. (PTI)

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