

Ad factor: Congress is the newest Modi fan

Written by priyank

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Praise comes in form of a two-page advertisement by the Gujarat Congress that describes Modi as an organiser and astute strategist

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More space for CM than Congress's Chhabildas Mehta, Shankarsinh Vaghela

In an example that reflects the miserable state of the Congress in Gujarat, the party came out with an advert that actually praised their rival number one, Chief Minister Narendra Modi. The imagination-starved Gujarat Congress actually planned an advertisement aimed at highlighting the "uniqueness of Gujarat" and the Congress contribution. But the final product that was published on Republic Day came as a shocker. It gave more weightage to Narendra Modi and his contribution to Gujarat.

In fact, Modi has been given much more prominence than several former Congress chief ministers like Amarsinh Chaudhry and Chhabildas Mehta. Senior Congress leader Shankersinh Vaghela, who then headed the RJP and became the CM with outside support from the Congress, also pales in comparison with Modi who has been prominently displayed with a box highlighting his contribution to Gujarat.

The two-page advert describes Modi as a successful organiser and an astute strategist. A strip at the bottom salutes Gujarat's asmita (pride) — words oft used by Modi.

Though the Congress got defensive, claiming "the advertisement is a subtle sarcasm on Modi", party leaders, off the record, admitted it was a big blunder. "If Modi's presence had to be taken note of, the box could have listed fake encounters in his tenure, how he scuttled lokayukta appointment and corruption allegations. If the party intended to be sarcastic, they should have highlighted Gujarat HC judgement on lokayukta which used harsh words for Modi. This is like a progress certificate for Modi by the Congress and it is very embarrassing," a senior Congress leader said.

"This is a crucial year. The party should be readying its arsenal for an electoral battle to put Modi government on the mat. But here we are praising him and offering him accolades on the platter," another leader said.

The Congress has listed the achievements by past CMs including that of BJP CM Keshubhai Patel, but with special display for Modi, it seems the latter has had the last laugh.

While Mirror has found out that the person in charge of this advert happens to be Siddharth Patel, chairman of the publicity and media wing of GPCC, the blame is being passed over. He had passed it on to GPCC president Arjun Modhwadia who cleared it.

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The Congress was making calls urging media to “understand the satire” and view the ad in a larger perspective but its efforts appeared pointless. Siddharth Patel said the advert is a satire on claims by Modi that Gujarat has progressed just because of him. “The advertisement lists the achievements of all chief ministers and rebuts claims that Modi solely developed the state.”

GPCC spokesman Manish Doshi reiterated Patel’s claim that the advertisement was an honest appraisal of the work done by all CMs without criticism or comment. “It emphasises that only 10 metres were raised during Modi’s reign and mocks at the festivals and utsavs started by the CM. Please look at the ad in the right perspective,” he claimed.

A BJP leader said, “Congress has no option but to acknowledge the contribution of Chief Minister Narendra Modi. It is praiseworthy that for the first time the Congress has been honest.”