



PRESS STATEMENT

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Statement by.....

The National Herald Case is a BJP invention for digression, diversion and distortion. Digression of public attention from crucial issues facing the nation. **Diversion** from its failures. **Distortion** of the Freedom Struggle and disparaging its heritage. **Stung by the Congress party's historic Gujarat session**, held recently, wherein Shri Rahul Gandhi aggressively exposed the BJP, the Modi-Shah duo has again unleashed the ED - their favourite criminalised extortion machine on to the Congress party.

The so-called chargesheet filed by the Enforcement Directorate against Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Smt. Sonia Gandhi and Leader of Opposition Shri Rahul Gandhi is nothing but pure political witchhunt. Every member of the Gandhi family - whether in politics or not - is being targeted by the BJP.

Ironically, for the first time, charges of money laundering are being made in a case where not a single penny or asset has been transferred! Debt is converted into equity to make the balance sheet debt free. It is a common practice and perfectly legal in nature. Where is the laundering when there is no money?

Selective justice is nothing but political thuggery. Modi Govt has made the ED its election department and is shamelessly and repeatedly misusing it for vendetta. The conviction rate of ED cases is just 1%. Moreover, 98% of the political cases the ED has registered are against political rivals of the ruling party.

The witchhunt against Smt. Sonia Gandhi, Shri Rahul Gandhi, and the family of Smt. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in the fabricated cases is nothing short of a grotesque abuse of state machinery. **By targeting the leadership and their families through fabricated and false cases, the BJP Govt is desperately trying to muzzle the Congress party— the only force that has consistently stood with the people and for the soul of this nation.** This is a direct and dangerous assault on the very idea of democratic opposition. It is a crude attempt at political intimidation, orchestrated by a Prime Minister and Home Minister. This is vendetta politics at its worst.

No matter how much they try to silence us, we won't be silenced. Those who try to scare others are scared themselves. This is a political witchhunt, and the Congress Party will face it head-on. Truth will prevail.



Facts about National Herald:

1. In 1937, with freedom fighters like Purushottam Das Tandon, Acharya Narendra Dev, and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru launched the National Herald newspaper as the main voice of India's freedom struggle against British colonial rule, with Hindi and Urdu editions titled Navjivan and Qaumi Awaz. **National Herald is the National heritage of the Freedom movement.**
2. The British felt so threatened by this paper that they **banned National Herald during the 1942 Quit India Movement**, and the ban lasted until 1945.
3. The *Associated Journals Limited (AJL)* was formed in 1937–38. AJL was originally founded as a public limited newspaper company. **The objective was to be the mouthpiece of the struggle and not to make profits.**
4. AJL holds immovable properties in six cities – Delhi, Panchkula, Mumbai, Lucknow, Patna, and Indore – but Lucknow is an only freehold property. Rest of the properties are leased/allotted to publish newspapers. At the time of allotment, **the precondition was that these can't be sold, barring Lucknow, which is a free hold property.** Over a period of time **AJL incurred losses and accumulated debts** due to which its operations were temporarily suspended. The allegation that AJL holds thousands of crores in real estate value is baseless because the government had imposed prohibitions and restrictions on sale. **Due to heavy financial losses, AJL and National Herald could not pay employee salaries, VRS dues, taxes, and other liabilities.**
5. The Congress Party stepped in **between 2002 and 2011 with 100 small tranches spread over a decade, amounting to ₹90 crore by bank cheques to protect the institution.** The staff and personnel of National Herald were suffering extreme delay in getting their salaries due to the dire financial condition of the newspaper. This money provided by the Congress party was used to pay salaries, PF, VRS, gratuity and pending electricity bills. Over the years, Congress kept supporting this institution, considering the National Herald not just a newspaper but a living symbol of India's freedom movement, the values of the Republic and the Congress party's ideology.
6. **The Congress Party was and is committed to reviving AJL – a symbol of the freedom movement.** Our Constitution in Article 51A(b) states: It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom.



Subsequently to revive the company and its newspapers, AJL had to be restructured. And so after obtaining legal advice, in 2010, **Young Indian was formed which is a charitable not-for-profit company (Section 25 company under the Companies Act, 1956, and now under Companies Act (Amendment) 2013, it is Section 8.)**

7. Young Indian Ltd had 4 shareholders, all of them were seniormost office-bearers of the party- Smt. Sonia Gandhi (then President of AICC), Late Shri Motilal Vora (then Treasurer of AICC), Late Shri Oscar Fernandes (then General Secretary of AICC), Shri Rahul Gandhi (then General Secretary of AICC), and two non-shareholder directors Shri Sam Pitroda, and Shri Suman Dubey.
8. The company took over the ₹90 crore loan from Congress by paying ₹50 lakhs. Since AJL was in distress, the ₹90 crore loan was converted to equity through Young Indian. No director, no shareholder can or has gained financially—no salary, dividend, or profit can be accrued, even if Young Indian were to shut down. Young Indian Ltd is a not-for-profit Section 8 company under the Companies Act, 2013, and so it cannot give a single penny in profit, dividend or salary to any of its shareholders or directors. **There was not a single Rupee that either Smt. Sonia Gandhi or Shri Rahul Gandhi or any other Director of Young Indian Ltd got.**
9. AJL was a heavily-debt laden and a loss-making property. This debt was irrecoverable. When Young Indian acquired the loans for 50 lakhs, **it actually bought an irrecoverable loan and did so to revive the company by converting debt into equity. The entire Bankruptcy Code is based on this principle and is a well-established global practice, including in India (NCLT) for reviving companies.** This has precedents in past. For instance -
 - (i) Ruchi Soya's debt was waived off and Baba Ramdev's Patanjali bought it.
 - (ii) Modi Govt waived off ₹36,000 crore owed by Vodafone and even took over its ownership, which has now increased to 48.99% from 22.6%.
10. The BJP and its ecosystem also lie about the value of AJL's assets at some **imaginary false figure of ₹5000 crore**, a figure that keeps changing according to their convenience. The reality is that Modi Govt's Income Tax Department has valued all its properties at **₹413 crores**, which is also notional in nature, considering only freehold property was in Lucknow.
11. In 2013, Subramanian Swamy filed a case in court, which he pursued until 2020. Strangely, **Swamy sought a stay on his own cross examination and in turn against his own case.**



12. Earlier, in 2012, Subramanian Swamy's complaint to the **Election Commission was dismissed, was later investigated by the ED.** The EC ruled that under Sections 29(B) and 29(C) of the Representation of the People Act, there is no restriction on how a political party may use its funds. Congress had declared the loan in official filings and made the transactions public.
13. In August 2015, the matter was referred to it and **ED closed the file on record. Modi Govt removed the then-ED Director, Shri Rajan Katoch,** the case in September 2015, showcasing a clear example of political vendetta.
14. Some years later, in 2021 **when ED became the direct political extortion machine of the BJP** and when Subramanian Swamy became vocal and began criticising Modi and Shah openly, the Modi Govt filed its own case through the ED.
15. In 2023, the Enforcement Directorate issued a provisional attachment order, which was confirmed by a tribunal on **10 April 2024.** The ED then had 365 days to file a chargesheet. On the 365th and final day, **9 April 2025,** the ED filed the chargesheet, which is only being reported in the media, **but the contents of the chargesheet is yet not public.**
16. If there were any evidence or real wrongdoing, the government wouldn't have had to wait till the very last day. **This delay shows both the desperation for a case, which is on a very frivolous footing and also reeks of the moral-political bankruptcy of the Modi Govt.**
17. After a successful restructuring AJL prints and publishes the National Herald and Navjivan newspapers and publishes Qaumi Awaz online. **AJL manages various websites and multiple social media platforms across English, Hindi and Urdu and has a healthy print and digital presence nationally.**
18. A new false controversy is being created by the BJP about Govt advertisements in the National Herald newspaper. This is the silliest argument being made. By that logic, why do BJP state governments and the **central government advertise in RSS associated Panchjanya and Organiser or BJP's Tarun Bharat?** Government advertising in newspapers and on TV channels is a fairly common practice. Infact BJP's Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh governments should actually explain advertising in Hindi across Malayalam newspapers of Kerala! **The Congress Party will pursue the matter in courts, but we refuse to be intimidated by the Modi Govt.**



19. **AJL is inextricably linked to its role as the mouthpiece of the freedom struggle.** Article 49 of the Constitution of India makes it the duty of every single Indian to preserve the heritage of the freedom struggle. For many years, this company which was run not to make profits but to preserve and uphold the values of the Republic of India. **The Indian National Congress from time to time bailed this heritage out.** Based on legal advice, this financially insolvent company laden with debt had to be revived through this totally legit route. This is a success story of revival, and not an irregularity.

20. **BJP, whose forefathers supported the British against Indians, during the freedom struggle, and which is hellbent on erasing the history of freedom struggle is using propaganda to tarnish the Congress party's role in freedom struggle and importantly the freedom struggle at large.** They have tried to bring disrepute to this living monument of the freedom struggle.

Satyameva Jayate.