



## Vishal Jolly

National Executive Member BJP,  
Former State President, Member Home  
Minister's Advisory Committee, Gol &  
Core Committee Member

भारतीय जनता पार्टी  
Bharatiya Janata Party  
Andaman & Nicobar Islands



### "PRESS STATEMENT"

15<sup>th</sup> October, 2023

I, Vishal Jolly, National Executive Member-BJP, state & concur that the demands raised by the elected representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions of North & Middle Andaman District in the ongoing protest are genuine, reasonable and should be supported with.

I make it clear that the PRI members has been made to struggle since past 4 to 5 years and only when every limit got crossed, they were left with no other option than to resort to protest. All the major issues, especially the demands pertaining to:-

1. Devolution of powers under 29 subjects to PRIs.
2. Governing process of sanction of leave to the officials attached to PRIs.
3. Issues pertaining to delay in estimate preparation, technical sanction and calling for tender in relation to Engineering Wing.
4. Providing funds and functionaries for Maintenance of Rural Street lights.
5. Delay in disbursement of Grant-In-Aid.
6. Enhancement of powers of Elected Heads for Issuance of Work Order to Cooperative Societies at various levels.
7. Enhancement of powers of Elected Heads for Issuance of Administrative approvals and Expenditure sanctions at various levels.
8. Separation of Rural Development Department and Panchayat Directorate.
9. Separate Executive Engineers Office Division for Diglipur.
10. Sanctioning of surplus funds and giving complete freedom to the Panchayats for engaging DRMs.

11. Insufficiency of Quarry products and consequent stoppage of developmental activities.
12. Enhancement of Honorarium of PRIs.
13. Allocation of funds based on population, geographical isolation, tourism potential and cost index.
14. Review of Ratio of 70:30 for procurement and office expenditures.
15. Empowering the Pradhans to provide monetary assistance without insisting upon formal plan during natural calamities, availing medical treatments, disasters etc.

In my view, all these issues are honestly justified, genuine and in consonance with the letter and spirit of the Local Self Governance. Several powers were in existence but were curtailed by amending the rules and norms by the A & N Administration. A lot many powers although exists, but its implementation gets largely delayed. The curtailment of powers by A & N Administration is nothing but a colorable exercise of power and therefore the same has to be done away with and all the previously conferred powers should be restored immediately without any further delay. The concept of Local Self Government has its own significance and in a Union Territory like ours, it is much needed especially in absence of any State Legislative Assembly.

During the period when Hon'ble Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji was leading the nation, I was elected as a Member of Zilla Parishad for the term between the year 2001 to 2005 and subsequently I was also elected as Adhyaksh of Zilla Parishad. At that point of time as a result of making serious endeavors, the process of devolution of powers was initiated in a grand manner by organizing a programme that was held at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Auditorium in presence of the then Hon'ble Union Minister of Rural Development Mananiya Venkaiah Naidu Ji and vide Order No. 409 dated 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2002, the A & N Administration transferred the activities of several Departments of the Administration among the three tiers of Panchayati Raj Institutions to enable them to function as an Institution of Local Self Government. Consequently, directions were issued to all departments to examine the activities in respect of their subjects that can be devolved to the PRIs and invited comments on it.

Following such directions, various orders were issued by different departments such as RD, Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services, Agriculture, Fisheries, Electricity, Industries, Education, Civil Supplies, Social Welfare, APWD, Sports, Arts & Culture expressed their intentions for devolving their respective activities and some of the departments also placed functionaries at the disposal of PRIs. The Engineering/technical officers & staffs were placed at the disposal of the PRIs for providing & strengthening technical assistance to PRIs for execution of Civil Works.

Devolution of Fund, Functionaries and Functions pertaining to 29 subjects is provided under the local Panchayat Regulation of 1994 and every positive and germane step was taken to strengthen the PRIs. But later with the advent of UPA Government led by Indian National Congress at the Centre, the entire scenario changed and nothing was pursued or implemented.


It is a matter of fact & of record that during the COVID-19 pandemic, by breaking all norms and also by amending/modifying the relevant rules, the officials officiating the Panchayati Raj Institutions, in the absence of elected representatives made mass purchase of irrelevant materials such as Cricket Kits, Volley Balls and other sports materials in bulk which has no relevance with COVID-19. It is relevant to mention here that at that point of time the requirement was that of Sanitizers, Masks, PPE kit etc but instead, large scale purchasing of unwanted materials were made and the same was distributed amongst the Panchayats when indeed people were required to stay home & safe. This was done with an ulterior motive. I seriously presume that it is a deep-rooted conspiracy and appropriate inquiry should be held to unearth this issue.

I would further like to firmly repeat & reiterate my commitment of continuing my fight for suitably strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institutions by empowering the elected representatives. In my considered view, the essence of 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment of Constitution of India was to empower the Local Self Government and to ensure the development of rural India through grass root planning by Gram Sabha.

  
(Vishal Jolly)

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