

Gujarat BJP rebels to corner Modi on price rise

The rebels in Gujarat's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), lying low after the party's victory in the assembly polls in December, have ganged up again to target Chief Minister Narendra Modi, this time raising the issue of the price rise.

'We are agitating against the abnormal hike in prices of petrol, diesel, cooking gas, electricity charges and state transport bus fares,' said Sunil Oza, a former BJP legislator from Bhavnagar and a key member of the Gujarat Jan Andolan (GJA).

In many other states, value added tax (VAT) on petrol and diesel is 20 percent and 12.5 percent respectively while in Gujarat it is 26.5 percent and 23.5 percent respectively, he pointed out. The people in this state pay Rs.4 more for a litre of petrol and Rs.5 more for diesel, he underlined.

'If Delhi or West Bengal can afford it, why not Gujarat?' Oza asked while talking to IANS Sunday.

Following the spiralling global oil prices, the central government earlier this month allowed the state-run oil marketing companies to hike the retail prices of petrol, diesel and cooking gas. However, many state governments reduced state taxes to ease the burden on the consumers.

Oza said: 'Today there is an undeclared emergency in Gujarat. No one is able to raise his voice whether it be (senior police officer) Rajnish Rai or the rape victim in Patan town or even the MLAs of the ruling party who are terrified to ask questions in the assembly.'

GJA, formed over a month ago, will continue to agitate on all these issues, he said.

GJA comprises BJP rebel leaders including former home minister Gordhan Zadaphiya and former Rakjot legislator Siddharth Parmar.

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