

You are here: Home » India

RELATED ARTICLES

- Shiv Sena backs Congress claim for LoP status in Maharashtra assembly
- 120 file papers for Cantt Board elections
- Sick wineries await govt funds for revival
- Funds for Ghaztebad civic work cleared
- 78 companies vanish after raising funds: 17 in Gujrat
- Thane's cyber cell may shut soon over shortage of funds
- First get credit rating then borrow funds: State to TMC

FEATURED TODAY IN ROW

- Gujarat truckers fly tomatoes to Pak in 30 hours
- Lankan President worships at Lord Venkateswara temple
- We will show black flag to Modi, MDMK leader Vaiko says
- Modi, Putin look to put shine back in ties
- From Russia, with love, the diamond connect
- Sushma slammed for plan to make Gita national book
- Shah: Congress falsely implicated me in fake encounter
- Janata parivar may have to use Samajwadi 'cycle'
- 33 Pak-backed espionage modules busted in three years, Govt
- Hideout busted in Doda, war-like store recovered

more

RELATED KEYWORDS: Maharashtra | Funds | PIR | Elections | Congress

Rs 10 crore Congress war chest stolen before Maharashtra polls?

TNN | New Delhi | 11.05.2014 | 11:59PM IST

Like Share 3 1 Tweet 110 8 1

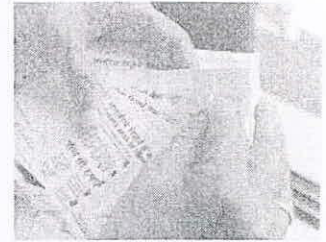
MUMBAI/DELHI: Even in a country where crimes routinely go unreported because of corruption or callousness of police or reluctance of victims, this purported one stands out both because of its enormity and the status of those who suffered.

Top Congress sources said a huge amount of cash, at least Rs 10 crore, which was part of the war chest for Maharashtra poll campaign, was stolen from a flat in Prabhadevi. The matter was brought to the notice of former chief minister Prithviraj Chavan and PCC chief Manikrao Thakre but was not reported to police.

It came to light only after a majority of party candidates, who had been assured "support" by the leadership, panicked when they did not get the promised funds. The party could reach funds to only 137 candidates, while the rest were left to fend for themselves.

Former chief minister Prithviraj Chavan did not respond to TOI, but state Congress president Manikrao Thakre denied that there was theft of party funds. "There is no substance in reports of theft or embezzlement of party funds," Thakre told TOI.

However, Thakre admitted that there was acute resource crunch owing to large number of candidates. "We were to field 174 candidates, but at the last moment, it swelled to 288. Compared to our rivals, our resources were limited," Thakre said.



Top Congress sources said a huge amount of cash, at least Rs 10 crore, which was part of the war chest for Maharashtra poll campaign, was stolen from a flat in Prabhadevi.



The matter was brought to the notice of former chief minister Prithviraj Chavan (above) and PCC chief Manikrao Thakre but was not reported to police. (TOI photo)

A high profile former Congress minister told TOI that the funds were grossly inadequate. "Our information is that the AICC had released adequate funds, but the actual amount given to the candidates was meagre. Two of the ministers of state were given the responsibility to release the funds provided by the AICC," he said.

When asked about the possibility of theft of funds, the former minister said he too heard that a huge amount was misplaced, but there was no confirmation. "I heard it, but I have no evidence or proof," he said.

Sources, however, confirmed that the state unit has blamed the funds crunch, a handicap which

inspired Sena and were without the support of NCP, on the 'disappearance' of crores of rupees from the flat.

According to sources, the state unit explained that the money was kept in the flat, located close to the party's Dadar office, which was rented by it for storing propaganda material. The campaign saw it serving as the distribution centre, with candidates—the lucky ones—taking away their share of the poll coffer in their vehicles.

This has not helped mollify the aggrieved candidates, many of whom were bold to enter the fray against tough odds only because they felt that they could match the opponents at least in terms of financial resources, and are sceptical that such a large amount disappeared. They have cited the failure of the leadership to lodge an FIR to justify this disbelief. The aggrieved lot appreciates that the entire amount, as is typical in the case of campaign funds, could not have been accounted for, but feels this should not have kept the state leadership from approaching the police.

"Many people in similar situations, where the colour of money becomes a hindrance, get around the obstacle by reporting a lesser amount as having been stolen. The flat has surveillance cameras and registering an FIR would have at least helped us know the identity of the thief," a source familiar with the developments said.

Even as official spokespersons denied the alleged theft, the suspense as to why the dog did not bark on the fateful night has added to the already-long litany of grievances against the Congress persons. Sources said Chavan, who is blamed also for precipitating the collapse of ties with NCP and by exacerbating the disarray in the party by seeking to buff his image at the cost of his factional rivals, had assured the candidates that they would not be inconvenienced in terms of money.

Stay updated on the go with The Times of India's mobile apps. [Click here to download it for your device.](#)

More from The Times of India

- Salman Khan proposed to Katrina at Arpita's wedding! 20 Nov 2014
- Girls told to stay indoors every time Uber 'rapist' driver Shiv Kumar... 10 Dec 2014
- 'The Addams Family' child star Ken Weatherwax passed away 09 Dec 2014
- Uber suspends driver, issues statement 07 Dec 2014
- Fog likely this weekend, wet and cold weather ahead 10 Dec 2014
- Rahul Mahajan: I am going to the Bigg Boss house, but it's not for Dimp 10 Dec 2014

Recommended by

Reader's opinions

Sanjeev Sharma (Nashik)
22 Followers

Full Text



All these years Congress was in power in centre and in state. We all know how well they stand on the corruption issue. Now they say they did not have fund like the opposition had. What a silly joke

Sanjeev Sharma (Nashik)
22 Followers

Full Text



The complaint could not be lodged as the money was black and not declared to the EC

Jagdeep H Vaishnav (Unknown)
148 Followers

Full Text



Why not a single leader from Congress party has lodged complaint , Shri Narayan Rane has , in his press conference has said he shall inquire in to the issue . However appropriate course of action like taking a yellow complaint . Complaint is not lodged , might be because it is unaccounted money.