

GUVNL throws no light on RTI queries

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Vadodara: Is the Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Ltd (GUVNL) transparent enough to issue tenders for electrical works? An applicant has sought some information under the Right to Information (RTI) Act that can shed some light on the issue, but is yet to receive a reply despite the fact that the deadline expired well over a week ago.

Thirty-eight days after applicant Vipul Patel demanded the information, he is yet to get any reply. Interestingly, the GUVNL authorities themselves had marked the query as 'Most Urgent' and sent it to North, South, West and Central Gujarat power companies.

"I had sought information regarding the procedures followed by the GUVNL before issuing the tenders on May 5 this year. Even a month after the query, I did not get any response from the authorities.

I made several visits to the GUVNL too, said Patel.

He had also questioned the way GUVNL issues tenders. "GUVNL had issued tenders mentioning only the cost of work along with the time limit for finishing the work, tender fees to be charged and penalty details," Patel said.

"Going by rules, they have to mention the quantity of material to be used along with the location of work. I have also demanded information about how they fixed the cost of work without determining the exact quantity of material to be used," he questioned.

When contacted, GUVNL chief information officer and V-P (co-ordination) B J Bhatt said, "The query has already been sent to the concerned companies and the applicant may get the reply soon."

When asked about the unwarranted delay, Bhatt shifted the responsibility on other officials and said, "The information officers of

the concerned companies might not have sent the reply to us causing the delay. It is not intentional."

Patel, who already wrote to an appellate authority regarding the delay, said that the officials are dilly-dallying over giving the reply as they had not followed the procedures properly.

"GUVNL issues tenders for the same contract several times and also collects non-refundable fees from the contractors for filing them each time. Why should the contractors pay the amount all the time?" said Patel.

In another case, the GUVNL authorities did not accept any fee from Patel when he sought information. But they denied giving him information later stating that he had not paid the fees. "The officials did not accept any fee and when the 30-day deadline expired they said that my application will be considered from the day I pay the fee. They deliberately delayed things," added Patel.

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APPROACH**