



Kumar Sambhav Shrivastava [REDACTED]

URGENT: Media query from Al Jazeera

Kumar Sambhav Shrivastava [REDACTED]

9 March 2022 at 17:01

To: [REDACTED]

Shri Anil Baluni
Chief Spokesperson & Media In-charge
Bhartiya Janata Party

Shri Amit Malviya
IT and Social Media Head
Bhartiya Janata Party

Dear Sirs,

I am a journalist with [The Reporters' Collective](#). We are currently working on a series of stories commissioned by Al Jazeera on political advertising on Facebook in India. The reportage has references to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its election campaigns.

In this regard we have the following queries.

Kindly respond to the queries by 6 PM on Saturday, March 12, so that we can appropriately incorporate the information you provide into our reportage.

1. According to the Meta Ad Library data, a large number of advertisers placed pro-BJP political advertisements on Facebook without disclosing their real identity or association with the party between February 2019 and November 2020, which saw the Parliamentary elections and nine state elections. Some of these advertisers (such as [this](#) and [this](#)) show BJP headquarters in Delhi as their address, some placed pro-BJP ads dressed as news (such as [this](#) and [this](#)), while many others list inactive websites (such as [this](#)) or show no information about source of funding (such as [this](#)). These advertisers boosted BJP's visibility significantly. Did the party fund these advertisers or authorised them to place advertisements on its behalf? If yes, why do these advertisers not declare BJP as the funding entity?
2. Some of the political ads published by these proxy advertisers presented inaccurate information about the elections candidates while others pitted one religious group against the other while continuing to promote BJP. Did BJP authorise the content of the advertisements or got them pre-certified by the Election Commission of India? If yes, please share the records.
3. The Meta Ad Library data shows in nine of the 10 elections between February 2019 and November 2010, BJP was charged a lower rate for advertisements than its opponents. Its advertisements got more views for less money, on an average, as compared to its competitors. How did BJP manage to get the cheaper price on the Facebook ad platform? How did this help BJP in the election campaigns?
4. Facebook's advertising policies show that its algorithm offers subsidies to advertisements that it finds are more "relevant" to the targeted audience and makes them cheaper. Did BJP benefit from this

policy and its learnings from working with Facebook for the election campaigns? Did BJP design its election campaigns to benefit from this policy?

5. Any other comments that BJP would like to make regarding its political campaigns on Facebook's platforms.

Thank you,

Kumar Sambhav

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]