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Q11

Case study. Vinod is an honest and sincere IAS officer. Recently, he has taken over as Managing Director of the State Road Transport Corporation, his sixth transfer in the past three years. His peers acknowledge his vast knowledge, affability and uprightness. The Chairman of the State Road Transport Corporation is a powerful politician and is very close to the Chief Minister. Vinod comes to know about many alleged irregularities of the Corporation and the high-handedness of the Chairman in financial matters. A Board Member of the Corporation belonging to the Opposition Party meets Vinod and hands over a few documents along with a video recording in which the Chairman appears to be demanding bribe for placing a huge order for the supply of QMR tyres. Vinod recollects the Chairman expediting clearing of pending bills of QMR tyres. Vinod confronts the Board Member as to why he is shying away from exposing the Chairman with the so-called solid proof he has with him. The member informs him that the Chairman refuses to yield to his threats. He adds that Vinod may earn recognition and public support if he himself exposes the Chairman. Further, he tells Vinod that once his party comes to power, Vinod's professional growth would be assured. Vinod is aware that he may be penalized if he exposes the Chairman and further be transferred to a distant place. He knows that the Opposition. Party stands a better chance of coming to power in the forthcoming elections. However, he also realizes that the Board Member is trying to use him for his own political gains.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2023 · GS IV · 20 marks · Ethics Case Studies

Case Studies on above issues.

Core demand of the question

- Vinod, an IAS officer and Managing Director of a **State Road Transport Corporation**, faces a political Chairman and an opposition board member who offers a bribe video on QMR tyres and wants Vinod to expose it for party gain
- Set out options, ethics, and what Vinod should do

Revision summary

Vinod holds a likely bribe video on QMR tyre procurement and a request to use it for opposition gain.

The ethical duty is to protect passengers and public money without becoming a party worker.

Silence and a leak timed for elections both fail.

He should record the material, send it to vigilance and police under the **Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988**, audit the tender, and stop unsafe tyres.

He should not hold a political press conference or give the Chairman a private first look that can destroy evidence.

Introduction

Vinod is the IAS Managing Director of a **State Road Transport Corporation**. The Chairman is a politician. An opposition member of the board gives him a video of bribery in QMR tyre procurement and wants a public exposure that will help that party. The file is both a fraud against the corporation and a trap for the civil service.

Body

Stakeholders

- Vinod as Managing Director and as a member of the All India Services.
- The political Chairman of the corporation.
- The opposition board member who holds the video and wants political use of it.
- Employees, passengers and the public exchequer that pay for tyres.
- The persons allegedly taking a bribe on QMR tyres.
- Vigilance, police and courts who must try facts.

Ethical issues

- Procurement fraud on tyres is a public wrong. Quality, material and rate (QMR) cheating can kill passengers if a tyre fails, and it steals public money.
- **Neutrality of the civil service:** Vinod must not become the opposition's loudspeaker, nor the **Chairman's shield**.
- The video may be true, edited, or a lure to destroy a rival. Ethics forbids both burying a likely crime and publishing an untested clip for votes.
- **Courage versus career:** exposing a Chairman's network can mean transfer; hiding it is a different kind of careerism.
- Confidentiality of a board and of an inquiry versus the public's right not to ride on corrupt rubber.
- The **Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988** is the criminal frame; a press conference is not a substitute for it.

Options

- **Option 1:** Hand the video to the opposition member's campaign and join the exposure.
- **Merit:** speed and fear among the corrupt.
- **Demerit:** Vinod becomes a party tool, the trial is by media, and a later government will treat him as a faction worker.
- **Option 2:** Give the video to the Chairman and wait for instructions.

- **Merit:** apparent loyalty to the present board head.
- **Demerit:** if the Chairman is in the chain, the evidence may vanish.
- **Option 3:** Ignore the video as "politics".
- **Merit:** quiet posting.
- **Demerit:** possible deaths on the road and certain failure of integrity.
- **Option 4:** Seize the process: receive the material against acknowledgement, send it to the competent vigilance and criminal agencies, order a technical audit of the tyre contract, recuse from any private briefing to either party, and inform the Chief Secretary through a factual note.
- **Merit:** law, neutrality and passenger safety.
- **Demerit:** both parties may be angry; that is the cost of the oath.

What Vinod should do

- Take the video and any supporting files on the official record. Do not keep them only on a personal phone.
- Forward them to the State vigilance organisation and, where the facts suggest a cognizable offence, to the appropriate police station or anti-corruption bureau, citing the **Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988**.
- **Order an immediate technical and financial audit of the QMR tyre tender:** specifications, test certificates, actual fitment, and payments.
- If safety is in doubt, stop further fitment of the suspect batch and protect passengers first.
- Do not hold a political press conference and do not leak to one party's channels.
- Inform the Chairman only through a proper board or government channel after the evidence is copied to vigilance, so that the first act is not a private warning to a suspect.
- Recuse from inquiry steps if his own earlier signatures are on the tender, and still do not sit on the video.
- Remain civil to the opposition member as a board colleague, and refuse the bargain that exposure must be timed for an election.
- Accept that a transfer may follow. Integrity is the posting; the next town is not the test.

Flow diagram

Bribe video on QMR tyres -> Vigilance and PCA
 Bribe video on QMR tyres -> Technical audit
 Technical audit -> Stop unsafe fitment
 Opposition leak -> Politicised MD
 Only to Chairman -> Evidence lost

Conclusion

The tyre fraud must be inquired under criminal and vigilance law. Vinod must not bury the video and must not run it as an opposition film. Neutrality is the method; passenger safety is the reason.

Facts & figures

Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988

The principal statute on bribery and related offences by public servants; procurement kickbacks are its core field.

All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968

Require integrity, political neutrality and that an AIS officer not become a party instrument while in service.

QMR in procurement

Quality, material and rate (or related specification-and-price terms) in a tyre contract; cheating any of the three can be fraud and a safety failure.

State Road Transport Corporation

A public utility whose board often includes political nominees; the Managing Director remains a public servant with a fiduciary duty to the corporation.

Vigilance channel

The competent anti-corruption machinery of the State, which is the lawful first door for a bribe video, not a party office.

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