

For favour of publicity

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A statement circulated by Shri Ram Naik, BJP leader & former Petroleum Minister in a press-conference held in Pune on 25th July 2012

Formation of Leprosy Affected Persons' Human Rights Cell

Pune, Wednesday: After raising and discussing problems of leprosy affected persons (LAPs) on the national level for the last five years with the President, the Prime Minister and the Parliament and also on state level with the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister, the International Leprosy Union (ILU) has decided to constitute 'LAPs Human Rights Cell' as these efforts have not succeeded in solving their problems. This information was given by Shri Ram Naik, Bharatiya Janata Party leader and former Petroleum Minister in a press conference held today in Pune after he inaugurated the three day conference convened by the ILU, which has been attended by activist leaders from different states. Dr. S.D. Gokhale, President, ILU was also present.

While elaborating on the problems of the LAPs, Shri Ram Naik said, "While the representatives of the LAPs met and discussed their problems with the President Smt. Pratibha Patil on 15th June 2012, they also met the Chief Minister Shri Prithviraj Chavan in Mumbai on 20th June. Prior to that, a petition was presented to the Rajya Sabha on 5th December 2007, before more than four years back and discussion was also held with the then Deputy Chief Minister Shri R.R.Patil. We subsequently followed up the issue with different authorities, but no positive steps were taken by both the governments. Meanwhile startling and shocking information was given by the Health Minister, in his reply to a Rajya Sabha question on 13th March 2012 stating that out of 2,28,474 new leprosy cases detected in the world in 2010, Indian figure stood at 1,26,800 i.e. 55.5 percent. If the Union Government and the State Governments do not take serious note of this fact and initiate effective steps to eradicate leprosy, the problem would become further more acute."

"As the bodies of LAPs become insensitive due to leprosy, it appears that both the governments have been also struck by leprosy, resulting into insensitiveness. As an antidote against their inaction, ILU has decided to constitute 'LAPs Human Rights Cell' to take their collective and individual grievances to the Human Rights Commission. The names of office-bearers of the Cell would be announced at the end of three day conference. ILU has filed 64 cases so far in the last few months to the Human Rights Commission and has secured redressal in 90 percent cases", stated Shri Ram Naik.

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The major 14 demands pending with the Union and State Governments are: 1) Formulation of Comprehensive Socio-Economic Rehabilitation Policy for empowerment of LAPs. 2) Amendments to the provisions of 16 Acts mentioned in the original Rajya Sabha Petition. 3) Enhancement of pension to Rs.2,000/- per month per LAP and also uniform pension in all states. 4) Provision of social and economical benefits given to persons below poverty line (BPL) and handicapped persons to all LAPs. 5) Land records of self-settled colonies should be suitably revised and they rehabilitated. 6) Provision of civic amenities to Self-Settled Colonies of LAPs. 7) Provision of higher educational facilities and scholarships for children of LAPs. 8) LAPs should be given concessional loan for self-employment. 9) Educated LAPs or their children be given suitable employment in government jobs and their children be given 75 percent fee concession for higher education. 10) Removal of VAT imposed on products produced by LAPs. 11) Conducting a fresh all-India survey to assess the increase and/or elimination of leprosy. 12) Implementation of WHO Guidelines for strengthening participation of LAPs in leprosy services. 13) Nomination of LAPs on National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), state and district level committees as well as nominations of LAPs on Rehabilitation Council of India. 14) Leprosy Rehabilitation Committee is not in existence for the last twelve years in the state. It should be re-constituted with inclusion of two representatives of LAPs.

(Office Secretary)