

For favour of Publicity

12th January, 2010

A statement circulated by Shri Ram Naik, former Petroleum Minister and Shri Prakash Kulkarni, President, Maharashtra Kushthapidit Sanghatana in a press conference held in Mumbai on 12th January, 2010

Leprosy affected persons to undertake self-immolation

Mumbai, Tuesday : "A charter of 18 demands has been presented to Chief Minister Shri Ashok Chavan. He has been warned that Leprosy Affected Persons (LAPs) in Maharashtra would undertake self-immolation if the State Government does not find a satisfactory solution," stated Shri Ram Naik, former Petroleum Minister and Shri Prakash Kulkarni, President, Maharashtra Kushthapidit Sanghatana in a press conference held today in Mumbai. The LAPs would march in support of their demands from Azad Maidan to Mantralaya on 30th January, Mahatma Gandhi's death-anniversary and the world leprosy eradication day, added Shri Naik and Shri Kulkarni.

Elaborating on the issue of rehabilitation and empowerment of LAPs and their demands, Shri Naik and Shri Kulkarni said that the issue was discussed in details with the then Deputy Chief Minister Shri R.R. Patil on 14th February, 2006 and 6th August, 2008. While he conceded some of the demands, the assurances were not implemented. Again a memorandum was submitted to Chief Minister Shri Ashok Chavan on 22nd December, 2008 seeking his appointment to discuss the issue. Subsequent reminders also did not solicit any response from him. Moreover a representative petition was submitted to the Rajya Sabha for these problems on 5th December, 2007. The Petition Committee of the Rajya Sabha tabled their report on 24th October, 2008 after studying the problem in depth. However, neither the Central Government nor the State Government have taken any step so far to help the LAPs. All this has an adverse impact on the LAPs. Hence the Maharashtra Kushthapidit Sanghatana have decided to take out a Morcha on 30th January to ventilate their grievances. The Chief Minister has been requested to give appointment for discussion on that day.

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The Charter of 18 Demands presented to the Chief Minister on 5th January include : 1) Every LAP be given monthly Rs. 2,000 as Sustenance Allowance as recommended by the Rajya Sabha Petition Committee. 2) Jobs should be provided to LAPs on the lines provided by Karnataka, Gujrat, Delhi states. 3) The backlog of vacancies for LAPs in government offices be cleared on priority. 4) LAPs should get loans on easy terms for development on the lines of the Apang Vikas Mahamandal. 5) Children of LAPs should get education free, including higher education. 6) The condition of 40% handicapness for LAPs, for government jobs should be withdrawn. 7) Ground rent, property tax etc. by the Municipal Corporation and other local institutions be charged only at 25%. 8) The dissolved Kushthrogi Mahamandal be reconstituted and LAPs living in colonies should get representation on the Mahamandal. 9) Efforts be made to have All-India Policy for empowerment of LAPs and also to secure special central grants. 10) Prompt-implementation of the report of the state committee for empowerment of LAPs. 11) All settlements of LAPs should be rehabilitated on the same locations and should be given photopasses. 12) Young family members of LAPs should be given auto-rikshaw permits. 13) Two persons for each colony of LAPs should be sanctioned for dressing of wounds of LAPs and their honorarium should be paid directly to the colony establishments. 14) All LAP families should be treated as Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and should be given 20 kg. wheat at Rs.2 per kg. and 15 kg. rice at Rs. 3 per kg. per month. 15) LAP families should be given houses from Government of India schemes for poor. Such houses have been provided by the state governments of Tamilnadu, Delhi, etc. 16) LAP colonies should be provided with free water and electricity. 17) Recommendations of the Rajya Sabha Petition Committee should be implemented. 18) Problems of Non- Government Organisations (NGO) working for eradiction of leprosy and empowerment of LAPs should be studied and solved.

"LAPs from all parts of Maharashtra should join the Morcha in big number to get their charter of 18 demands conceded", appealed Shri Naik and Shri Kulkarni at the end.

for (Secretary)