

Maintain the sanctity of electoral rolls for Lok Sabha elections: *Ram Naik*

Mumbai, Tuesday: "For successful democratic process, prepare fool-proof electoral rolls and maintain their sanctity. It is the duty of the Election Commission", appealed Shri Ram Naik, Bharatiya Janata Party leader and former Petroleum Minister while discussing the issue with Shri C.V. Oak, Mumbai City District Electoral Officer who is also holding the additional charge of Mumbai Suburban District Electoral Officer as Shri Sanjay Deshmukh is on leave. The discussion on 15th July was also attended by BJP Municipal Councillor Shri Vinod Shelar and City District Deputy Electoral Officer Smt. Maya Patole. This information has been given in a press note circulated by Public Relations Office of Shri Ram Naik.

Giving details of the discussion, Shri Ram Naik said, "The political battles for the Lok Sabha elections 2014 have already begun. Electoral rolls play a major role in the successful completion of election process. It is therefore the duty of the Election Commission to prepare them without any defect and to maintain their sanctity. During 2004 Lok Sabha elections, it was noticed that many electoral rolls did not have voter- photographs, there were also duplicate names, many buildings were excluded, etc. I therefore decided to check the names of duplicate voters through a software. I compared electoral rolls of three assembly constituencies, Borivli, Kandivli and Malad with 34 constituencies of Mumbai and 6 constituencies of Thane i.e. 40 constituencies. To my surprise and shock, out of 18,02,887 names we could locate 3,57,520 i.e. 20% duplicate names. We submitted all these names to the Election Commission and had a detailed discussion with Shri N. Gopalswami, the then Chief Election Commissioner and also Shri Devashish Chakravarti, the then Chief Electoral Officer, Maharashtra. We were following up the issue. The Election Commission have now taken a decision to revise the electoral rolls."

In order that the exercise be fruitful, Shri Ram Naik submitted and discussed the following points: 1) Verification should be done by house to house visits. For those buildings which could not be located, the election duty officer should certify accordingly so that these names can be deleted. 2) It should be ensured that electoral rolls have 100 percent photographs. Voters without photographs should be given a time bound notice to have photographs. In case of default, names should be deleted. 3) Duplicate voters should be given notice and one name be deleted on the basis of his choice. They should also submit photographs. 4) For those buildings which are under development and voters' names are with photographs, proper procedure should be evolved so that their voting rights are not disturbed. 5) During house visits, when names of 'dead' voters come across, their names should be deleted after getting a declaration signed by a relative so that there is no dispute afterwards.

"District Electoral Officer has assured that the suggestions would be examined and time for detailed discussion would be given to BJP delegation after 8-10 days", stated Shri Ram Naik at the end.

(Office Secretary)