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A statement circulated by Shri Ram Naik, BJP Leader & former Petroleum Minister in a press conference held on 21st June, 2012 at Mumbai

Chief Minister to solve problems of leprosy affected persons: Ram Naik

Mumbai, Thursday: "Chief Minister Shri Prithviraj Chavan has assured the leprosy affected persons (LAPs) to solve their 11 demands which have been pending for the last four years." This assurance was given by the Chief Minister to a delegation led by Shri Ram Naik, BJP leader & former Petroleum Minister and Shri Vinod Tawade, Leader of the Opposition in Legislative Council on Wednesday. The delegation included Shri Baliram Tambade, President, Maharashtra Kushthapedit Sanghatna, Advisor Shri Bhimrao Madhale, Convener Shri Rasul Mulla and Sarvashri Safi Shaikh, Vijay Patil, Pandurang Dhanavate, Mohan Pandhram and Shri Prakash Patil. This information was given by Shri Ram Naik in a press conference today in Mumbai, when Shri Baliram Tambade and Shri Bhimrao Madhale were also present.

Giving further information about the LAPs, Shri Ram Naik said, "About 65,000 LAPs reside in 39 self-settled colonies in Maharashtra. Their problems were discussed on 6th August 2008 nearly 4 years back with Dy. Chief Minister Shri R.R. Patil when certain decisions were taken. However, inspite of persistent follow up they were not implemented. The Government of India had claimed in 2005 that leprosy has been eliminated in the country. However, while replying to a starred question in Rajya Sabha on 13th March, 2012 the Health Minister stated that out of 2,28,474 new leprosy cases detected world-wide in 2010, India contributed 1,26,800 cases which is about 55.5% of global disease burden. Maharashtra State has reported 15,498 new cases in 2010. We therefore decided to meet and discuss the serious problem with Chief Minister Shri Prithviraj Chavan."

Shri Ram Naik further added, "After discussion the Chief Minister assured to solve the problem by taking pro-active and immediate steps in respect of these 11 demands." The demands are:-1) As the grant for LAPs rehabilitated by NGOs is increased to Rs. 2,000/- per person per month; LAPs residing in self-settled colonies should get Rs.2,000/- per person per month as sustenance allowance. 2) LAP families should get all the facilities which are given to citizens below poverty line (BPL) including essential commodities. 3) Young LAPs should get auto-rickshaw permits. 4) Recommendation of the Rajya Sabha Petitions' Committee should be implemented. 5) Land records of self-settled colonies should be suitably revised and they be rehabilitated. 6) Concession of 75% be given in water tax, property tax and electricity bills. 7) LAPs should be given concessional loan for self-employment. 8) Educated LAPs or their children be given suitable employment in government jobs. 9) Children of LAPs be given 75% fee concession for higher education. 10) Dressing material and medicines be provided in the self-settled colonies. 11) The Leprosy Rehabilitation Committee is not in existence for the last twelve years. It should be re-constituted with inclusion of two representatives of LAPs.

(Office Secretary)