

LSP Maharashtra appoints PIO, opposes move to keep political parties outside RTI ambit

Written by Maharashtra Administrator
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Lok Satta Party President for Maharashtra, Dr Kedar Diwan announced the appointment of Mr. D S Ranga Rao as the Public Information Officer (PIO) of the Lok Satta Party, Maharashtra State Unit. Dr Diwan also voiced strong opposition to the Bill that is expected to be tabled in the monsoon session of Parliament that would seek to amend the RTI Act with the specific aim of ensuring that political parties stay outside its purview. This Bill is said to be backed by all major political parties, most of whom have failed to appoint PIOs within the deadline set by the CIC last month.

Lok Satta Party had earlier announced its full support to the CIC ruling that major political parties are public institutions and must come under the purview of the RTI Act. Although the CIC ruling only applied to six major parties, Lok Satta Party has chosen to act proactively, in continuation of its strong belief in increasing transparency and public accountability of political parties. Dr Diwan expressed hope that this step will help build pressure on other parties to recognize the changing expectations of the electorate, and force them to reform their functioning.

Mr. D S Ranga Rao, a retired officer from the IB, has committed himself to improve probity in public life. He is associated with the Public Concern for Governance Trust (PCGT) founded by Mr. Julio Ribeiro, and has extensive experience in RTI related work. Speaking on his appointment, Mr Rao stated "One should not have any second thoughts to work for the Lok Satta Party which has been a path-breaker in not only putting forward many democratic reforms but also achieving them successfully and silently. In all humility, I accept the role of the PIO for Lok Satta Party, Maharashtra in accordance with the provisions of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005."

Maharashtra General Secretary of Lok Satta Party, Mr Rajesh Jogani added that every such step is increasing the pressure for political reform and people should not be despondent. As more public spirited and competent people step forward, the future of the country will be steered in a better direction. He emphasized that people need to shed the apprehension that only the big parties can remain credible alternatives. Increased support to the mission of Lok Satta Party will make better politics inevitable.

Dr. Diwan added that with the appointment of an experienced person with impeccable credentials like Mr. Rao as the PIO, the party will undertake steps in Maharashtra to fully comply with the provisions of the RTI Act. More details as to the functioning of the PIO will be made available in due course.

All queries to the PIO are to be addressed to - Base Unit 4, Byculla Service Industries Premises, Dadaji Kondeo Road (Sussex Road), Byculla East, Mumbai 27 (Tel: 022 23772279), or emailed to pio@loksattamh.org