

Statement issued by Shri Ram Naik, former Petroleum Minister & BJP leader in a press conference held on Monday, 11th May, 2009 at Mumbai.

Ram Naik Supports Metro Railway; but Opposes to Charkop Car-shed

Mumbai, Monday: "I fully support Metro Railway; but at the same time I strongly oppose car-shed at Charkop as it would make thousands homeless", was the submission made by Shri Ram Naik, BJP leader and former Petroleum Minister during public hearing today. Shri Naik gave this information later while addressing the media.

Shri Naik in his testimony said that like all Mumbaites he too is in favour of Metro Railway as it would reduce the agonies of Mumbai railway commuters. But its proposed car-shed at Charkop would make thousands of residents of Ganesh Nagar, Sanjay Nagar, Laljipada, Gandhi Nagar, Ekta Nagar, Janata Colony, etc. homeless. "As this is not in accordance with humanity; the place of proposed car-shed should be shifted", Shri Naik demanded. Shri Ram Naik has represented Mumbai North Parliamentary Constituency five times and Charkop is part of the constituency. He also held the office of Minister of State for Railways (Independent charge) and Metro Railway of Delhi was planned during his regime. Naturally, he is aware of all aspects of the issue.

Nearly 14,000 families are presently residing on the plot of the proposed car-shed. Many recognized schools, temples, mosque, church, shops and industries are on the plot. Instead of shifting all of them, Shri Naik suggested to shift the proposed car-shed on another vacant plot between Charkop-Dahisar. He also drew attention to the local resentment to the car-shed.

The moment it became clear that MMRDA officials want to push the project inspite of resentment Shri Naik submitted signed appeal of thousands of residents to the then Chief Minister Shri Vilasrao Deshmukh on 11th September 2008 requesting for an appointment. Thereafter he sent three reminders. Later Shri Ashok Chavan took the reins. Shri Naik requested him for an appointment to discuss the issue vide three letters dated 19th December, 2008, 18th January and 4th February 2009. He also wrote twice to the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. Unfortunately, neither of them had the courtesy of even acknowledging the letters. "This clearly indicates that this government is insensitive. It has to

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change the attitude and discuss the issue to solve the problem, otherwise another 'Singur' may take place", warned Shri Naik.

"The Metro railway project will be undertaken by the private sector. It is therefore required to formulate a policy of rehabilitation and re-settlement, otherwise the same may obstruct the progress on later dates", suggested Shri Naik. Shri Naik also suggested to specify where and how many people would be affected all over the city. Shri Naik emphasized the need to run Metro railway on broad guage to cut down the cost. He also insisted that the fares of Metro should be on par with suburban railway. "It should be affordable to comman man. The legislative assembly should exercise control over the metro fares", suggested Shri Naik.

"Several news items are appearing which indicate that inspite of issuing tenders for four times, there is not a single bidder so far. The government must let people know the facts", demanded Shri Naik at the end.

(Office Secretary)