**National Press Release – to be released across India**

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**Swarna Bharat Party calls for a national emergency to stop 5 lakh Indians dying from TB each year**

Mr Rahul Pandit, President of Swarna Bharat Party, India’s only liberal party, said that tuberculosis is a totally preventable Third World disease. It is basically a disease of acute misgovernance. It is a great shame that five lakh Indians die from this preventable disease each year. And yet the government is doing nothing to eradicate TB. Its “targets” do not even talk about eradication.

SBP believes that government has a significant role in preventing infectious diseases. India needs an intense and ceaseless public awareness campaign against TB. We need active monitoring of everyone who has the disease, we need people to put masks over their face while travelling in public transport. We need a dramatic increase in the resources allocated to this fight. This needs to be declared a national emergency.

The government rightly cares for the life of every soldier but why is the preventable loss of life of nearly five lakh Indians each met with indifference?

India’s TB rate is 180 times that of the USA (noting that the overwhelming majority of American TB cases arise from foreign-born patients). Our multi-drug resistant TB rate is 500 times that of the USA. We get 28 lakh new cases of TB each year compared with around 10,000 in the USA. Even if foreign born Americans are included in the American statistics, India should get at most 40,000 cases of TB each year. The suffering of over 27 lakh Indians is entirely preventable.

The most problematic situation relates to multi-drug resistant TB (MDR-TB) which is caused when people stop taking medicines for normal TB when they feel a little better. At that stage their TB morphs into a drug resistant form and requires hundreds of injections and 15,000 pills to even attempt a cure. In this regard the USA gets less than 100 new cases each year of MDR-TB (with over 85 per cent of these being foreign born), compared with at least 80,000 in India. These 80,000 Indians undergo extreme suffering, and almost half die despite the treatment. We cannot allow MDR-TB to develop in the first place

Mr Rahul Pandit said that the Modi government needs to stop its idle boasts and start performing. There was time for boasting but three years after coming to power, the incompetence that was the hallmark of the UPA has now become the hallmark of the Modi government.

Mr Pandit said that the only way to ensure competent basic governance in India is for the Modi government to implement all aspects of the SBP manifesto. Else India will continue to remain a Third World country with a totally broken system of governance.

**Notes for Editors**

SBP is India’s only liberal party, committed to defending liberty and promoting prosperity.

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