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

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**Swarna Bharat Party opposes the communist policy to cap healthcare prices in Karnataka**

Mr Asif Iqbal, Karnataka State coordinator of Swarna Bharat Party, today strongly opposed the communist, anti-market and anti-people policy of the Congress Karnataka government to cap healthcare charges in the private sector.

Mr Iqbal said that the Siddaramaiah government should start learning basic economics. Good intentions do not necessarily lead to good outcomes. This communist policy will shut down many hospitals and drive away thousands of health professionals. In this way it will hurt everyone, including the poor. No communist society has ever done well and this communist policy will badly harm Karnataka.

In a free market people voluntarily give their custom to the service provider who gives them the best service at the lowest cost. Simultaneously, the desire for profits motivates healthcare providers to provide good quality healthcare while keeping their costs down. And they can’t charge whatever they wish, since they are forced by the competition among hospitals to keep prices low. Anyone who makes a profit in such a competitive environment is signalling that he has successfully and efficiently served the people. That is the best outcome for society.

Mr Iqbal said that a government’s role is to create the environment for market-led profitable investments, thereby serving the needs of the community. But instead of identifying and addressing any barriers to investment, the Congress communists are attacking the very existence of the health sector.

Mr Siddaramaiah should remember that the taxpayer does not subsidise private medical establishments, nor should there be any such subsidy. These establishments buy land at commercial rates, pay commercial taxes and get utilities like water and electricity at commercial rates. In fact, SBP understands that most private hospitals and clinics do not break even for the first 5-10 years and most earn barely enough to stay in business.

Mr Iqbal said that instead of Mr Siddaramaiah worrying about the private sector (which is already badly shackled with thousands of rules and infrastructure constraints), he should look within – at the total mismanagement of government hospitals. The private sector is the last ray of hope for the people of Karnataka. Now the anti-people Congress wants to extinguish even this last ray of hope.

SBP also opposes many other aspects of the new health laws, such as a district redressal body that comprises six members but with only one doctor member. Further, there are already several avenues for patients to complain, including consumer courts, civil courts, medical bodies. Creating another body is unnecessary and will only increase fear in doctors’ mind. SBP demands a complete repeal of the new law.

**Notes for Editors:**

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

**Contact:**

Asif Iqbal (Bengaluru) +91 8553010064, ietoblr@gmail.com

Rahul Pandit (Hyderabad) National Working President, +91 9703425422

Sanjeev Sabhlok (Melbourne), sabhlok@gmail.com