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'Fix responsibility of curbing drug menace on legislators'

Lahar Singh urges leaders not to interfere in probe

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Bharatiya Janata Party MLC Lahar Singh has suggested that Karnataka should become a model to other States by making the MLAs responsible, along with the police officers concerned, for any operation of drug mafia in their jurisdiction.

"Such a system is the need of the hour as political will can help put an end to the drug menace," he told *The Hindu*. He maintained that it was possible to eradicate the drug menace if MLAs made up their mind and displayed strong political will in their jurisdiction.

Mr. Singh, who has also written a letter to Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, has appealed to him to convene a meeting of MLAs, MLCs, and MPs, as well as police officers from Bengaluru city, to discuss the drug issue.

Referring to the modus operandi of the drug mafia, he said they were targeting



Lahar Singh

children of powerful and influential people, including various professionals, in order to get away. "We all must introspect and commit to non-interference in such investigations," he said.

He suggested that educational institutions, hotels, bars, pubs, and other places where drug-related activities are noticed should be made criminally accountable and stringent action should be initiated against offenders.

He also called for amending legislation, including the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, to

make it more effective so that the guilty do not go scot-free.

My. Singh further urged the government to appoint efficient prosecutors to ensure the case is not diluted. He maintained that generally, the drug mafia would be controlled by terrorist groups. "A few arrests and detention of suspects in the heat of the moment will not do much to rid the city of drugs," the MLC said, stressing the need for taking the issue to the logical end by getting to the crux of the problem.

Expressing concern over the increasing drug operations in Bengaluru, he pointed out that NCB officials had said that Bengaluru had become the transit hub and headquarters for drug cartels in South India. "If we do not act sternly now, then the image of Bengaluru as the country's IT capital and commercial hub will get affected," he said.