

# India Rejuvenation Initiative (IRI)

(a group for probity in public life)

## Founder Members

Justice R.C. Lahoti,  
Former Chief Justice of India

Shri J.M. Lyngdoh  
Former Chief Election Commissioner

Shri V.K. Shunglu  
Former Comptroller & Auditor General

Air Chief Marshal S. Krishnaswamy  
ex-chief of Air Staff (Retd.)

Shri Julio Ribeiro  
Former Director General of Police

Dr. Hari Gautam  
Former Chairman UGC

Dr. N.C. Saxena  
Former Secretary to Govt

Shri S.A.T. Rizvi  
Former Secretary to Govt

Shri Prakash Singh  
Former Director General of Police

Prof. H.C. Pande  
Professor Emeritus

Prof. S.K. Dube  
Director, IIT Kharagpur

Shri Sharat Pradhan  
Journalist

Shri S. R. Lakha, IAS

Shri V.S. Pandey, IAS

Shri Raju Sharma, IAS

Smt. Renuka Kumar, IAS

Shri Jasvir Singh, IPS

Shri Sunil Kumar, IAS

Dated: 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2006

*My dear Prime Minister,*

I am writing this letter on behalf of **India Rejuvenation Initiative (IRI)**, a purely apolitical and social organization of concerned citizens who have come together with the sole objective of restoring probity in public life in the country.

2. Needless to mention, probity in public life and transparency are important cornerstones of any vibrant democracy. With this objective in view, a lot of new laws and guidelines have been put in place including the ones relating to the conduct of elections. Provision for the disclosure of assets and belongings by the contesting candidates was, to our mind, aimed at putting an effective curb on the increasing influence of money power in politics. Unfortunately, the intended objectives have not been fully achieved. It is common knowledge that, barring a few exceptions, most of those who have held high public office, have assets grossly disproportionate to their known and legitimate sources of income.

3. A law not backed with the requisite enforcement mechanism fails to achieve its objectives. This is what happened with the laws concerning disclosure of assets and properties by public servants. Barring a few exceptions, filing of incomplete returns, or worse, non-filing of returns, have become the norm of the day. Lack of transparency, unaccountable governance and all-embracing corruption have become the hallmark of our system of governance.

4. At the IRI, we have given considerable thought to this issue and have reached the conclusion that the time has come to set up a mechanism to check this malady. To begin with, as a first step, returns of all those who occupied or are occupying high public office in government need to be taken up for verification in a "fast track manner". For this purpose an **Integrity Commission** needs to be set up at the National level. The Commission can adopt the simple method of verification by first making public the returns filed by the concerned public servants and then inviting the public to come out with whatever

information they have regarding the assets possessed by the concerned individuals. The Commission can, thereafter, make discreet enquiries before making its findings public. It can be assisted by all investigating agencies of Government. Based on the Commission's findings, necessary action can be quickly taken against those who are found to possess assets disproportionate to their known sources of income.

5. A similar system needs to be adopted in case of civil servants occupying high positions, say officers in super-time scale of All India Services and other similarly placed officials in Public Sector Units. Once the 'returns of assets' of senior civil servants are made public and information is invited from common public, keeping ill-gotten asset will not only become difficult but also a big liability. We certainly have enough laws to punish the guilty! Only collective will to cleanse the system needs to be expressed to ensure that the guilty actually get nailed.

6. We believe that the aforesaid step will instill requisite degree of confidence in the public and will be a concrete step in the direction of cleaning the Government apparatus quickly and restore probity in public life.

7. We request you to consider taking immediate and concrete steps to put in place a system that is in line with your own oft repeated commitment towards ensuring clean governance.

*With warm personal regards,*

Yours sincerely,



(R. C. Lahoti)

**Hon'ble Dr. Manmohan Singh ji,**  
Prime Minister,  
Government of India,  
South Block,  
New Delhi -110001