

VEGGIE EXPERTS

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QUALITY CONCERN: Health minister Ashwini Kumar Chaubey, urban development minister Prem Kumar and BJP MLA Arun Kumar Sinha take a look at the quality of vegetables presented to them by vendors at a state-level meeting organized on the occasion of Vendors' Day at the S K Memorial Hall in Patna on Thursday

TIMES REGION

'Law to protect street vendors' interests soon'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Patna: State urban development and housing minister Prem Kumar on Thursday said the state government would shortly initiate the process for a legislation to protect and promote the livelihood and social security rights of street vendors. The government was committed to protect the rights of urban poor, particularly the vendors, he stated.

Kumar, while inaugurating the State-level Vendors' Conference organised by the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) in association with Nidan and Centre for Civil Society here at S K Memorial Hall, promised that the state government would soon initiate process for framing laws as demanded by the NASVI.

More than a thousand vendors

participated in Thursday's conference celebrating the Vendors' Day.

Incidentally, NASVI is a coalition of 540 street vendor organisations, trade unions and non-government organisation (NGOs) across 23 states in the country. It has demanded strict implementation of the National Policy for Urban Street Vendors in Bihar and passage of legislation to this effect. Even the Supreme Court, in its recent verdict, had upheld the fundamental rights of vendors to carry on their business.

Addressing the conference, NASVI national president Arbind Singh expressed serious concern over the deprivation and marginalisation of street vendors and asked the state government to initiate legislation to protect their interests in a time-bound manner.

Singh said, "The vendor community is tired of listening to gov-

ernment's assurances in this regard." He also called for immediate halt to eviction drives by municipal bodies across the state.

A five-point resolution was passed at the conference, demanding implementation of the National Policy for Vendors (2004), enactment of law with clear provision for natural markets, earmarking 2.5% of streets for vending, institutional arrangements for grievance redressal through appellate authorities, and formation of town vending committees with adequate representation of vendors in the said committee.

State labour minister Janardan Sigrwal, health minister Ashwini Kumar Choubey, JD(U) Rajya Sabha MP Ali Anwar, BJP MP Bhol Singh, Kumhar MLA Arun Kumar Sinha and Patna mayor Afzal Imam were also present on the occasion.