

## Lack of foresight to blame for grid collapse: Dr. JP

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The collapse of the power grids resulting in half of the Indian population going without power is the culmination of neglect of the power sector for decades by successive Governments, said Lok Satta Party President Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan here today.

Although India has abundant coal reserves that can last for nearly 300 years, power plants are starved of the fuel because of lack of foresight on the part of the Government, he said. We import not merely gold but also 130 million tons of black gold worth billions of dollars every year.

Dr. JP was addressing media after unveiling a booklet on 'Environment in the Jaws of Pollution', penned by Prof. Gollu Suryanarayana in Telugu. Dr. JP commended Prof. Suryanarayana as a self-made man who started his career as a school teacher and rose to become a university professor and embellished the State Public Service Commission. Prof. Suryanarayana has done a signal service to Telugu-speaking people by bringing out the booklet in intelligible Telugu.

Dr. JP underlined the importance of achieving economic growth with minimum pollution. Establishment of washeries and beneficiation plants will reduce pollution resulting from coal mining. In its bid to save a few crores of rupees, Dr. JP recalled, the National Thermal Power Corporation failed to attend to efficient handling of ash at the Simhadri power plant in Andhra Pradesh. The ash emanating from the plant has been blanketing a number of villages around the plant. Seeing the plight of villagers around the Simhadri plant, people in other parts of the State are fiercely resisting establishment of thermal power plants.

Dr. JP said corruption, short-sighted policies and inefficiency are to blame for the chronic power shortage in Andhra Pradesh. Instead of reducing losses in transmission and distribution, the Government is encouraging establishment of more and more power plants, unmindful of the pollution they cause. The State perhaps needs an additional installed capacity of about 15,000 mw whereas the Government talks of promoting generation of 66,000 MW. It persists with unviable lift irrigation schemes which require massive amounts of power.

Voicing concern over growing pollution, Prof. Suryanarayana said that the day is not far off when we have to carry oxygen cylinders strapped to our backs just as we carry bottled water these days as pure air and water have become scarce.

Lok Satta Party General Secretary Katari Srinivasa Rao welcomed the media. Dr. JP honored Prof. Suryanarayana and publisher Indukuri Appalaraju Varma (Rajababu) with shawls and mementos. Lok Satta Party Working President D. V.V. S. Varma shared the dais.