

Dr. JP charges Congress, TDP with collusion

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Lok Satta Party President Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan today charged both the ruling Congress and the Opposition TDP with smartly colluding in the Assembly to divert people's attention from the problems they faced and avoid determined action to put an end to corruption.

Addressing the media, Dr. JP regretted that the Assembly had so far failed to have a meaningful discussion on the State budget which envisaged an expenditure of Rs.103,000 crore because the two main parties indulged in shouting and counter-shouting and mutual mud-slinging. They were oblivious of the fact that the State as also the country were going through an economic downturn and that people were undergoing untold hardships. They don't seem to realize that the Government planned to spend Rs.20 lakh a minute or Rs.282 crore a day during 2009-10. Far from discussing what had gone wrong in the past and what should be done in future for people's welfare, the top leadership of the two parties were insulting the House and the people who had elected them by indulging in fake encounters.

Referring to the exchange of corruption allegations by the Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in the House earlier in the day, Dr. JP wanted them to stop indulging in rhetoric and start action to get at the truth. Inquiries by a sitting judge or a retired judge of the High Court or the Supreme Court - a bone of contention between the two parties -- would take them nowhere because a judge whether sitting or retired would merely submit a report after which an FIR had to be filed. If both the Government and the main Opposition were sincere and serious, special courts could straightway be constituted, independent prosecutors appointed, the ACB made totally autonomous and a law facilitating attachment of properties of the accused pending trial could be passed.

Dr. JP recalled the Lok Satta Party had drafted a Bill to amend the Prevention of Corruption Act, circulated it among all parties and convened an all-party meeting. Significantly, the two

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main political parties had maintained studied silence on the Bill although they feigned to fight corruption by trading accusations. Dr. JP pointed out the Bill drafted by the Lok Satta is in tune with the recommendations of the Law Commission, the Administrative Reforms Commission and the Santhanam Committee (44 years ago).

Dr. JP alleged that the two main parties resorted to shadow boxing on corruption once again to divert people's attention. "Most of the members, belonging to all parties are public spirited and sincere in their purpose. But the leaderships are hijacking the House, and undermining public good."

Dr. JP called upon people and the media to exert pressure on these party leaderships to mend their behavior. They should be reminded that they had been elected to serve the public and not to lord them over. The people could launch signature campaigns, personally meet the legislators and write to the media.

The media itself should mold public opinion by shunning publicity to politicians who repeated allegations against each other ad nauseam instead of initiating follow-up action.