

2G scam underlines need to strengthen Prime Minister: Dr. JP

Written by

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Demanding that Mr. A. Raja, former Communications Minister, and all others who defrauded the exchequer in the 2G spectrum licenses scam be meted out exemplary punishment, Lok Satta Party President Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan today suggested that the nation debate ways and means of strengthening institution of Prime Minister in an era of coalition Governments. The Prime Minister, whether heading a coalition or no coalition, should have unfettered freedom to choose Ministers, allocate portfolios, monitor their functioning, and sack them if necessary, Dr. JP said.

In a media statement, Dr. JP said the country is today paying a heavy price as the ruling establishment because of coalition compulsions failed to act decisively as soon as the scam surfaced. "Although Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh's personal integrity is beyond doubt, he could not act against Mr. Raja when he betrayed national interests. Raja was guilty of arbitrarily allocating for a song precious and finite spectrum to fly-by-night operators who had no domain expertise. The operators, without rolling out any services or adding any value, minted millions of rupees by selling it within days."

There can be no greater glaring act of corruption than this, said Dr. JP and added that the Prime Minister should have sacked the Minister and ordered his prosecution. Instead, the powers that be indulged in legal nit-picking on whether the operators resorted to divestment or dilution of equity.

Dr. JP recalled that he drew the Prime Minister's attention to the scam as soon as the operators made windfall profits through its sale. Such bold action might have resulted in the Government falling. The Prime Minister ought to have taken the risk of dissolving the Lok Sabha and seeking a fresh mandate.

Dr. JP said that the fall-out of the 2G scam merely underlined the need to strengthen the hands of a Prime Minister in a coalition era. Coalition partners should not weaken the Prime Minister and paralyze administration. It is time the nation debated the best means of strengthening the Prime Minister so that the leadership of the nation is not jeopardized.