

Constitute National Judicial Commission: Dr. JP

Written by

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Lok Satta Party President Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan has requested Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to immediately constitute a National Judicial Commission with powers to appoint and terminate the services of Supreme Court and High Court judges.

Dr. JP, who called on the Prime Minister at Raj Bhavan here last night, said the commission should comprise eminent citizens chosen in a bipartisan manner and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India. He also wanted the formation of an Indian Judicial Service on the lines of the Indian Administrative Service.

Dr. JP's suggestion assumes significance in the context of allegations of corruption against a section of the judiciary and the controversy surrounding the declaration of assets by Judges.

Addressing the media, Dr. JP said he had also suggested to the Prime Minister to make civil services competitive by providing opportunities for induction of the best and the brightest in different fields. He pointed out that sectors like education and health care are in an awful state throughout the country because there are not many competent people in the services to handle such all-important sectors and deliver results. Although Governments spent thousands of crores of rupees, the quality of education is shocking in that 40 percent of students cannot read a simple passage and 70 percent cannot do a simple division or subtraction after seven years of schooling.

There should be competition to appoint the best in key positions, drawing from government as well as outside. All key appointments, he said should be made by invitation and not by application. The time has come to put an end to hierarchy in civil services and encourage competition and choice.

Dr. JP also pleaded for initiation of reforms in policing by making crime investigation independent so that it could be shielded from political pressures.

On governance in general, Dr. JP suggested that unless powers and resources are devolved on local governments, there can be no improvement. To curb likely irregularities and corruption because of decentralization, Dr. JP said, ombudsmen could be appointed in every district to check them.

Dr. JP told the media the Prime Minister had appreciated the suggestions and promised to follow them up.

Dr. JP, who is visiting the flood-hit Mahbubnagar and Kurnool districts on October 11 and 12, indicated that the Lok Satta Party planned to adopt a village in each of the four badly affected districts (including Krishna and Guntur) to facilitate their all-round development with the help of NGOs, the Government and philanthropic individuals on a long-term basis.

Dr. JP said that there was a proposal to divert the Hundri river a few kilometers away from Kurnool so that the town would not be vulnerable to frequent floods. If the proposal was feasible, funds should not be a constraint for implementing it.

Dr. JP heartily congratulated the officers and staff who have been tirelessly working to extending relief to the flood victims. He described the public response to the tragedy as magnificent in that every section contributed their mite towards relief.

Dr. JP demanded that all liquor outlets in the flood-affected areas be shut down at least for three months to protect the lives and security of poor families.

In a letter addressed to the Chief Minister, Mr. K. Rosaiah, Dr. JP quoted field reports to point out that large numbers of people in the flood-affected areas are squandering the assistance they are receiving from the Government and NGOs on liquor consumption.

The licenses of the shops which remain closed could be extended for the period they remain closed.