

Ordinance on food security Unwarranted

Written by Maharastra Administrator
Friday, 05 July 2013 14:02 -

Lok Satta Party national President Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan today deplored the Union Cabinet's decision to rush through the Food Security Bill through an ordinance.

Dr. JP pointed out that the Food Security Bill is equivalent to a money Bill as it commits the Government to a vast expenditure year after year. It cannot, therefore, be pushed through an ordinance without a thorough debate in Parliament.

In a media statement, Dr. JP said that a Government should resort to an ordinance if the matter is urgent and the legislature cannot meet in the near future. The Food Security Bill warrants a thorough discussion since it involves issues of far reaching importance. For instance, it cannot be enforced without bringing the States on board.

The Government is resorting to the patently undemocratic method for short-term, opportunistic political gains. The game of one-upmanship will erode the credibility and legitimacy of the Government, Dr. JP warned.

Dr. JP, who did not go into the merits of the Food Security Bill, said that if the Government is seriously concerned about food security to most of the people, it should strive to build a consensus through exploration of all alternatives to end malnutrition.

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Dr. JP welcomed the Union Government's affidavit in the Supreme Court listing out certain measures to unshackle the CBI. The moves for appointment of the CBI Director and certain senior officers through a collegium, institution of independent prosecutors, provision of financial autonomy and an independent monitoring mechanism are all welcome but not sufficient.

Dr. JP said that the Government should repeal the 'single directive' under which the CBI has to seek prior Government permission for taking up a case against senior functionaries. It should also scrap Section 19 of the Prevention of Corruption Act under the CBI has to get Government clearance before it can prosecute anybody.

Dr. JP suggested that if necessary the Central Vigilance Commissioner can be made the authority to sanction such investigations and prosecutions, subject to certain safeguards. The amending law should provide for constitution of special courts to expedite trial and ensure swift and effective justice.

The Government should also take steps to strengthen the CBI. As of now, it has a total workforce of 6000 of whom only 2500 are investigators. It handles a mere 3000 cases of the tens of thousands of cases that are filed every year in a vast and populous country like India. In contrast, the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the US has 60000 investigators.

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The Government should recognize that the CBI is just one of the organs of the rule of law. ACBs and CBCID wings in States handle hundreds of thousands of cases every year. India is the only in which two-thirds of cases are criminal and only one-third civil. By and large, the State investigative agencies are under the thumb of the Government of the day. They too should be made autonomous.

Dr. JP said that effective rule of law is the corner stone of democracy and liberty. Both democracy and liberty will be in peril if the Government cannot ensure that the law is just, efficient and applicable to all without any discrimination. That is possible only when investigative agencies are made autonomous and accountable.