

## Centralization of power at Root of our ills: Dr. JP

Written by Administrator  
Thursday, 25 June 2009 12:56 -

---

The bane of governance in India is the centralization of power and emasculation of local governments, Lok Satta Party President Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan said yesterday.

"The local governments are structurally strong going by the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution which are lengthier than the American Constitution. But they are functionally feeble." He was addressing the Emerging Markets Forum, which met in Mumbai, focusing on the theme of "Creating an affluent society in India by 2039 on par with the U. S. and Europe."

Emerging Markets Forum is a network of thought leaders, opinion makers, policy formulators and business people who come together to discuss issues of global and national significance. It is mainly a network of leading minds, who create a platform for an open and informed debate focused on emerging markets. The conference was organized by IDFC and supported by the Express group along with the Bombay Chamber of Commerce.

Speaking on governance reforms, Dr. JP pointed out that many districts in India are bigger than 50 percent of the countries in the world and the metropolitan cities are larger than 80 percent of the countries. Yet the local governments have been made irrelevant. No wonder, most people in the country do not know the names of Mayors of even large metropolitan cities in India, unlike those of London, New York or Mexico City.

## Centralization of power at Root of our ills: Dr. JP

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 25 June 2009 12:56 -

---

Dr. JP said that power had been concentrated so much that there are only three decisions makers in India - the PM, the CM and the DM (district magistrate).

He called for genuine decentralization with devolution of powers, responsibilities, resources and personnel on the local governments. The people would not realize the importance of their vote unless they appreciated how it was going to transform their lives. Otherwise they would succumb to short-term sops or money and liquor offered by political parties.

Dr. JP underlined the need for civil service reforms. India is perhaps the only modern democracy in the world, which clings to institutions created by colonial rulers a century and half ago.

The Lok Satta President said that decentralization should provide for local policing and local courts. There has been a market demand for criminals and thugs because the people could not depend on the police and the courts to render them timely justice.

Dr. JP asserted that India could not be transformed unless competent people with leadership qualities entered politics as they did during the freedom movement. People like Jawaharlal Nehru, Dadabhai Naoroji, Chittaranjan Das, Prakasam Pantulu, Subhash Chandra Bose and Vallabhbhai Patel started their political by taking interest in local civic affairs and emerged as national leaders during the freedom struggle. "Since there is now an absence of such leaders, sons and daughters of politicians and criminals have filled the vacuum. People are thirsting for

## Centralization of power at Root of our ills: Dr. JP

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 25 June 2009 12:56 -

---

change and waiting for a miracle. But the miracle won't happen unless the educated young and middle class people plunge into politics."

Among those who took part in the EMF proceedings were EMF Chairman and Philippines former President Fidel V. Ramos, Asian Development Bank President Haruhiko Kuroda, Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia, former RBI Governor Bimal Jalan, former Mexican President Vincent Fox and former Union Minister Arun Shourie, economist Sankar Acharya, political scientists Prof. Asutosh Varshney and Prof. Inder Sud and Maharashtra Lok Satta President Surendra Srivatsava.