

The suspension of Mr. T. Pattabhirama Rao, First Additional Judge for CBI cases, on corruption charges in granting bail to Obulapuram mining case accused Gali Janardhana Reddy merely reflects the precipitous decline in judicial standards, commented Lok Satta Party Working President D. V. V. S. Varma here today.

In a media statement, Mr. Varma pointed out that democracy has remained intact so far because the judiciary enjoyed credibility among people when both elected representatives and officials lost it by indulging in corruption.

It is time that a National Judicial Commission is constituted to safeguard judiciary and ensure its credibility. Mr. Varma recalled that at the initiative of the Lok Satta three former Chief justices of the Supreme Court – Justice J. S. Varma, Justice M. N. Venkatachalaiah and Justice Krishna Iyer – have drawn up a National Judicial Commission Bill and submitted it to the Government.

Mr. Varma said that there have been no instances in Andhra Pradesh of elected people's representatives and bureaucrats who indulged in massive corruption by squandering away finite natural resources being sacked and jailed and their ill-gotten wealth being confiscated. It is only because of judicial intervention scams in Jalaygnam, land allotment and liquor distribution have come to light. Even at the national level, it is the Supreme Court's intervention in issues like the 2-G scam, caste reservations, Rama Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute and inter-State water issues that has preserved the country's integrity. If even the judiciary becomes corrupt against such a backdrop, democracy ceases to work and paves way for military rule. Therefore, Mr. Varma said, all democrats should strive for the constitution of a National Judicial Commission to ensure an independent and strong judiciary.

Mr. Varma said the Judicial Commission would have powers to appoint competent and honest judges to the Supreme Court and High Courts and weed out corrupt elements.

Mr. Varma also called for making the CBI, ACB and CB CID autonomous and bringing them under the purview of strong and independent Lokpal and Lokayukta institutions. Once such institutions are in place, the regular courts can be spared the bother of ordering inquiries into corruption scams.