

Bid to delegitimise systems will cause chaos, says Ansari

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VICE-PRESIDENT Hamid Ansari on Saturday warned that attempts to delegitimise political and constitutional mechanisms could create chaos in the long run.

He was speaking at a function to mark former President R Venkataraman's birth centenary, hosted at the India International Centre. "There are many grass-roots movements in the country, speaking in quasi-legal or extra legal terms. De-legitimising the political and constitutional mechanisms that are already in place would spell chaos in the long run. Our founding fathers have put in place institutions, ideas and processes for the country and Venkataraman was from that political stock. There is merit in rejuvenating that spirit today," he said.

Ansari said Venkataraman was an eminent lawyer, trade union leader, parliamentarian and a statesman who contributed in strengthening the institutions of the republic. He said the nation needs to remember him in these times as a leader who combined political virtue with constitutional morality.

The event was attended by several political figures,



Former Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil with Vice-President Hamid Ansari at a function held to mark former President R Venkataraman's birth centenary.

PREM NATH PANDEY

including Punjab Governor and former Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil and former West Bengal Governor Gopalkrishna Gandhi. Venkataraman's family was represented by his daughter, Lakshmi Venkataraman Venkatesan.

Shivraj Patil recalled Venkataraman as someone who understood the difficulties and aspirations of people in both rural and urban India. "He always pleaded the cause of workers and trade unions, and helped entrepreneurs es-

tablish new industries in Tamil Nadu. He was of the view that unless all three worked together, targets cannot be achieved," he said.

Remembering his own experiences with the former President, Patil said he always took a holistic and balanced approach towards any policy. "When I was the Defence Minister, I had once asked him for Rs 200 crore to build a railway line from Jodhpur to the border areas. He said to improve the security of the country, one

should focus on economic development and education. That way, wars could be won without fighting," he recalled.

Gopalkrishna Gandhi said Venkataraman was a leader and a statesman. "He could see both the small picture at home and the big picture abroad. When I worked under him, he would make every task seem like a duty to the nation. We feel hollow that he is not here to guide us through these troubled times," he said.