

Centre's action in JNU case has to be reviewed: Venugopal

'Merely Shouting Slogans Cannot Be Sedition'

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Ahmedabad: Senior Supreme Court lawyer, KK Venugopal, said on Saturday that merely shouting anti-India slogans cannot be considered sedition. Talking on the sidelines of seventh convocation of Gujarat National Law University (GNLU) at Gandhinagar, the eminent lawyer spoke on the ongoing row over the sedition case slapped on Jawaharlal Nehru University student union president. He echoed the view of President Pranab Mukherjee that the Indian Penal Code needs to be revised.

Venugopal, who was the chief guest at the event, said that when the central government could find no reason to punish the students, it came up with the sedition charge.

"Whatever they (the central government) have done in the JNU case has to be reviewed. Sedition charge can't be slapped unless someone is inciting people to violence. Merely shouting anti-India slogans can't be sedition. When the government doesn't find a good reason to punish people, it goes for sedition. The sedition charges are unjustified," he said while answering a query on sedition char-

ges imposed on JNU students by Delhi police.

"Macaulay wrote the IPC about 150 years back and, after that, the world has changed completely. Therefore, what were offences then are no more offences now. The government is making certain acts more heinous than even rape. The government has to set up a commission for a complete review of the Indian Penal Code and connected laws," Venugopal said.

The eminent lawyer also asked the Bar Council of India to take stern action against the lawyers who had disrupted legal proceedings.

Earlier during his speech at the convocation, Venugopal raised the issue of lawyers assaulting journalists and the accused by lawyers in Delhi. "Recently, you must have heard of most shocking news of lawyers beating up journalists in Delhi. The police openly declared that they were afraid of arresting any lawyer, however heinous his crime because the whole brotherhood would retaliate by going on strike and paralyzing normal life," Venugopal said.

Supreme Court judge, Justice Abhay Sreepresid over the function in the presence of Gujarat high court chief justice R Subhash Reddy. At the convocation, 17 gold medals were awarded to meritorious students in various subjects as well as for outstanding overall performance. Thirty-seven students received LLM degree and 157 got integrated LLB and LLM degrees with honours respectively.