

4425

Chagla Call To Vote For Freedom, Democracy

Mr. M. C. Chagla, a former Union Minister, asked the citizens to vote for freedom, democracy and the soul of the country.

If the citizens did not vote for the party that stood for democracy then they would have to forget their rights and liberties for next six years or even indefinitely.

Mr. Chagla who was addressing a public meeting of the organisation "citizens for Democracy" at Sunderbai Hall, said that each one of them should carry flag of democracy and freedom in his heart.

The former Chief Justice of Bombay described the coming election as 'vital' and said it would decide the destiny of the country.

Since the people get the Government they deserved and desired, the voters should see that they got the one they desired. For this he asked the people not to vote by promises.

The slogan of 'garibi hatao' had shown, that not only poverty had not gone. It had increased more than ever.

He said that for the first time the things before the people were clear — democracy or dictatorship and the united opposition. This election could not be decided by the programmes of the parties but by the issues.

He said that the people had seen what happened in the last 19 months. India which was a democracy with independent judiciary and free press, was suddenly converted into dictatorship by undermining judiciary.

Speaking about Socialism, he said that two things were needed for it equality and freedom. Equality without freedom was a tyranny and freedom without equality was an aggrandizement of the rich.

Mr. Chagla said that the record of the Government was shocking and menhored how independent judiciary was undermined by superceding judges that were "naughty". Transfer of judges was also resorted to. He said that the solemn promise given by the

Law Minister when Mr. Chagla was in the Government was not maintained.

Now the judges think twice before delivering judgements as 'sword of transfer' was always hanging over their head. About the free press, he said that voice of dissent was muted and criticism was not allowed. Even letters to the editors that were not in favour of the Government were not allowed to be printed in the paper.

The only news agency — 'Samachar' was not objective and the TV and Radio praised the Government all the time, he said and asked in these circumstances how could citizens could be kept informed about the happenings in the country.

Referring to the civil liberties, he said that even now anyone could be arrested without trial. All those who were arrested were not released as yet. The emergency had been relaxed but not revoked, he said.

He said: "I have no doubt in my mind that if the Congress is elected emergency will continue and MISA will go on merrily".

Even today, he said that the editorial policies were being watched and advertisements were being stopped to punish newspapers for editorial policies.

He said that the voters should decide which party would guarantee them democratic rights, freedom, independent judiciary and freedom of the Press.

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