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## Disengagement, de-escalation...

and capabilities, which he said he has always experienced first-hand during his visits to forward areas.

Delving into the complex world situation, Singh said it affects everyone globally. "Unconventional and asymmetric warfare, including hybrid war, will be part of the future conventional wars. Cyber, information, communication, trade and finance have all become an inseparable part of future conflicts," he said.

"This necessitates that the armed forces will have to keep all these facets in consideration while planning and formulating strategies," the defence minister said. He highlighted the stellar role played by the Army in guarding the country's borders and fighting terrorism, apart from providing assistance to the civil administration in every need of the hour.

"The Army is present in every domain, from security, HADR (humanitarian assistance and disaster relief), medical assistance to maintaining the stable internal situation in the country," he said.

"The role of the Indian Army is very important in nation building as also in the overall national development," he noted.

The defence minister complimented the leadership of the Army for successfully taking ahead the country's "defence and security" vision to new heights.

He also hailed the Army's approach on the infusion and absorption of cutting-edge technology.

Singh paid tributes to all bravehearts who made the ultimate sacrifice in the defence of the motherland.

The Army Commanders' Conference is an apex-level biannual event that is held in April and October every year. The conference is an institutional platform for conceptual-level deliberations, culminating in making important policy decisions for the Army.

The commanders comprehensively deliberated upon all aspects of the existing security scenarios, the situation along the borders and the hinterland and the challenges for the present security apparatus.

In addition, the conference also focused on issues related to organisational restructuring, logistics, administration, human resource management, modernisation through indigenisation, induction of niche technologies and the assessment of the impact of various existing global situations.

In his address, Singh appreciated the Army's efforts to develop niche technologies in collaboration with civil industries and thereby progressing towards the aim of 'modernisation through Indigenisation'.

"The nation is proud of its Army and the government is committed to facilitating the Army in their forward movement, on the road to reforms and capability modernisation," he said.

The defence minister emphasised that a regular interface of armed forces with emerging technologies is a must.

Singh concluded by saying that issues related to "defence diplomacy, indigenisation, information warfare, defence infrastructure and force modernisation should always be deliberated upon in such a forum."

Doctrinal changes whenever required should be made to make the armed forces future-ready, he said,

The recommendations and suggestions made by the senior leadership in forums such as the Commanders Conference should be deliberated upon and be taken to a logical conclusion with midcourse review and modification if required, he said.

## Three terror associates...

suspicious persons attempting to flee from the spot.

"However, the alert party apprehended them tactfully. They have been identified as Faisal Ahmad Kachroo, Aquib Mehraj Kana and Adil Akber Gajree. During search, a pistol, mobile phones and other incriminating materials were recovered from their possession," the spokesman said. A case under relevant sections of law has been registered against the trio.

## ED attaches properties...

provisionally attached movable and immovable properties worth Rs 1.56 Crore in the form of land, measuring 01 Kanal, 03 Marlas, situated in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir along with a Two-storey residential house made thereon and a vehicle of Niamat Ali Bhat in a case related to Hakeem Imtiyaz, Junior Engineer of R&B Department, J&K under the provisions of PMLA, 2002," the ED posted on X.

## Azad to contest...

On the possibility of an alliance with the Apni Party of Altaf Bukhari, Mohiuddin said no progress has been made on that front.

"We are short of time and there was not much headway in talks. So it is better they do their bit and we do ours. They were not in any case interested in Anantnag seat," he added. Mohiuddin said candidates for other Lok Sabha Seats in Kashmir will be decided in due course.

## First LS poll...

said he was not born to have fun but to work hard for the welfare of the country.

He said that this Lok Saha election is not a normal election, it is an election of the resolve for development of India and making it the third largest economy in the world.

"This is the first election in which big leaders of the Congress are not talking about winning the polls, but they are threatening that if the BJP wins, the country will be on fire," he said.

Modi said that he has been there for 10 years and extinguishing the fires set by them.

He said that during the Congress' term, India was known as the "world's largest arms importer" and today the country is an arms exporter.

The prime minister said he has taken the decisions awaited for decades.

"That is why some people have started saying that so much has happened, Modi ji, what is left now, now take rest. But such people forget that Modi was not born to have fun...Modi is born to work hard," he said.

He highlighted his government's decisions like abrogation of Article 370, construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya and a law on triple talaq.

"When I talk about the development of India and when I take action against corruption, people from the Congress and NDI Alliance abuse Modi," he said.

The prime minister said that the BJP takes the pledge of 'nation first', while the Congress party is looking for an opportunity to loot the country.

"Today, on one side is BJP which considers the country bigger than its family, and on the other side, there is Congress which considers its family bigger than the country. The BJP is making India proud in the world while the Congress abuses the country abroad," he said, adding for him, India is his family.

He alleged that the Congress never got time to take care of farmers, workers and labourers.

"Modi provided the facility of 'One Nation One Ration Card', launched pension scheme for them. Our government is giving free ration to 80 crore people. The government has decided that free ration will continue for the next five years. I cannot think of someone sleeping empty stomach," he said.

Modi said the Congress party is being seen as the root cause of every problem in the country.

"There was poverty in the country because of the Congress. The party did not allow the Army to be self-reliant. During the time of Congress, India was known as the world's largest arms importer, today it is an arms exporter. The country has exported defence goods worth Rs 21,000 crore. India sells Made in India weapons to more than 80 countries," he said.

The prime minister also sought votes for party candidate from Jaipur Rural seat Rao Rajendra Singh in the rally. Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma and other senior BJP leaders were present in the rally.

## Terror module busted...

ammunition, IEDs, cash and narcotics dropped through drones from Pakistan and distributed them further to forward linkages.

Both CID and police worked well in coordination and performed the best groundwork together to bust this module, he said.

Those arrested include notorious OGW in jail under UAPA, Talib Shah's wife Gulshan Naaz, Imtiyaz Ahmed (both from Kotranka) and Abid Shah of Budhal area, he said, adding that they were involved in receiving material dropped from Pakistani drones.

"We have digital and electronic evidence against them. They were in touch with the mastermind in Pakistan. They have also distributed to forward linkages. Forward linkages, to whom they distributed money, are also being investigated," he said.

The money has come in lakhs and was distributed to several people in small amounts, Swain said, adding that they are categorized as over ground workers (OGWs).

The DGP said that their mastermind is Mohammad Qasim alias Salman alias

Sulliman of Mahore (Reasi) currently based in Pakistan.

"He is a LeT leader. He has been declared a designated terrorist by the Government of India. We have announced a Rs ten lakh award on Qasim. A poster has been released in this regard," he said.

Qasim is sending arms and explosive material, cash and narcotics, and is involved in networking in Rajouri and Poonch, he said.

He was involved in the blasts of a bus at Katra and Narwal in Jammu, the DGP said, adding he is involved in luring people, particularly youth, through VPN and PoIP networking.

We appeal to youth not to fall into their trap and to report any suspicious activity, he said.

## Udhampur among India's...

attention deserved. As a result of this, he said, the people of this far flung region had to suffer the agony and hardship of carrying their patients and the elderly members of the family physically for movement from one place to the other or in a 'palki'. This, in turn, also led to increase in morbidity as well as mortality because of lack of healthcare facilities and lack of accessibility to health centres, he added.

Addressing a series of massive public meetings during his election tour of the upper reaches of district Udhampur including the areas like Basantgarh, Lati, Gordy, Landar, etc., Dr Jitendra said, Udhampur because of its typical topography with a large part of the district located on difficult terrains this road construction work should have been undertaken several decades ago but as a deliberate design it was not done in spite of the fact that the PMGSY scheme for the rural road construction was also introduced by NDA-1 under PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee but not carried forward with the same spirit by the successive governments till Prime Minister Narendra Modi took over in 2014 and Udhampur was given the top priority.

Thanking Prime Minister Modi for having given due attention to this region Dr Jitendra said, today the people in the far flung areas have not only received the benefit of connectivity but this has in turn also boosted their morale and awakened their aspirations to engage in trade and business.

Dr Singh said, significantly the lavender cultivation which for the first time in the country began from the small town of Bhaderwah in the same constituency has now been undertaken also in these areas of Udhampur district particularly Ladi and Basantgarh. This is going to be an important source of lucrative livelihood for the local youth, he said and added that the earlier governments led by Congress and its allies made false promises to the youth of giving government jobs to each individual, which he said could not have been possible. Though lavender and other means of livelihood were available in this region, but the Congress governments did not bother to explore the national resources available, he alleged.

Dr Jitendra said, with 'Kaladhi' being recognised under the category of 'One District One Product' for Udhampur, this area in the upper hills of the district is particularly known for this recipe and will also in the years to come provide an avenue of food industry and food StartUps.

Dr Singh said, that in the last ten years under Prime Minister Modi, Udhampur has emerged on the national map for more than one reason including the purple revolution and in the next five years it is bound to get established as an important junction and destination of North India when it also becomes the nodal point of connecting railway with the Kashmir valley and also becomes an important junction of the transport connectivity in the region.

Former Minister and MLA Pawan Gupta, BJP District President Arun Gupta, PRIs and DDC Members including Kasturi Lal Gupta, Thakur Hansraj, Jeevan Sharma, Aarti Sharma, Rakesh Bodhi, Pinky Devi, Makhnan Manhas, Jagdev Singh, senior leaders Beant Gupta Mandal Presidents and others were among those who accompanied Dr Jitendra Singh in this election tour.

## Nine more candidates...

Shaber Ahmed, Dr Prince Raina, Karanjit and Bansilal filed their nomination papers in the office of Returning Officer Jammu Lok Sabha constituency.

With the filing of nomination papers by these nine candidates, the total number of candidates who have filed their candidature for 5-Jammu PC goes to thirteen.

The last day for filing of nomination papers is April 04, 2024 up to 03:00 PM.

## Gangster opens fire...

"Around 2235 hrs, firing incident occurred in between Police and gangsters in GMC Kathua as a result one PSI Deepak Sharma got injuries and one gangster died in shootout", tweets ZPHQ Jammu.

Meanwhile, one of his accomplices Mukul Kumar, resident of Bari Brahmana has been arrested.

## CEO visits Rajouri...

Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) machines, manpower besides infrastructure, are in place to facilitate smooth conduct of elections. Additionally, establishment of training centers, dispatch/receipt centers and strong rooms was also discussed to ensure operational efficiency of the district team.

Under the SVEEP initiative, robust voter awareness campaigns are being held to bolster voter turnout and inclusivity. The district SVEEP cell is actively engaged in organizing a myriad of awareness programs to ensure that every eligible voter is empowered to exercise their franchise. The vulnerability mapping revealed that there are 379 vulnerable polling stations in the district, underscoring the need for heightened vigilance and security measures to safeguard the electoral process. Additionally, the status of cash seizure by Special Surveillance Teams (SST) and Flying Surveillance Teams (FST) was briefed, which was Rs. 1,254,000.

The Chief Electoral Officer engaged with the AROs and Nodal Officers and sought details of the activities being carried out in the district. Subsequently, the AROs and Nodal Officers provided detailed briefings on the ongoing activities.

All Assistant Returning Officers (AROs) were directed to ensure cleanliness of polling stations within their respective jurisdictions besides ensuring proper accessibility of polling stations, for providing conducive environment for voters to exercise their democratic rights during the upcoming elections.

The Chief Electoral Officer reiterated the paramount importance of strict adherence to guidelines, timelines for the Model Code of Conduct, and robust media monitoring to uphold the sanctity of the electoral process. He also outlined various tasks and duties assigned to the concerned stakeholders encompassing a wide array of responsibilities. He directed the officers to exhibit exemplary commitment, dedication and sincerity while discharging their election duties, recognizing their pivotal role in facilitating free, fair and peaceful elections.

Later, P K Pole visited the Counting Centres and strong rooms established at Government Degree College Rajouri.

The officers who attended the meeting were DIG Rajouri Poonch Range, Tejinder Singh, CO 237 Bn, Ashok Kumar, ADC Rajouri, Rajeev Khajuria, ADC Sunderbani, Rajeev Magotra, ADC Nowshera, Babu Ram Tandan, ADC Kalalakote, Mohammad Tanveer, GM DIC, Fareed Kohli, ASP, Abdul Majid Basu, ACR, Mohammad Jhangir Khan, ACP, Sheraz Chowhan, DDE, Zaheer Kaifi, Dy DEO, Shakeel Mir, SDM Thanamandi, Abid Hussain, CPO, Maqsood Ahmed, DSEO, Sandeep Sharma, CAO, Sohan Singh, DPO, Mohammad Nawaz Choudhary, DSWO, Wakeel Ahmed Bhatt, ARTO, Pawan Kumar and other concerned officers.

## 1 dead, another...

two accident victims were taken to a hospital where one Kamal Singh (27) was declared dead, they said. The condition of Ranjeet Singh who also received injuries was stated to be critical, the officials said.

## Arvind Kejriwal 'kingpin'...

the money laundering case linked to the "scam", the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said the political party, which was the "major beneficiary" of the proceeds of the crime, has committed the offence through Kejriwal.

"Arvind Kejriwal, Chief Minister of NCT of Delhi, is the kingpin and key conspirator of the Delhi Excise Scam in collusion with Ministers of Delhi Govt, AAP leaders and other persons.. Arvind Kejriwal was directly involved in the formulation of the Excise Policy 2021-22.

"This policy was being drafted considering the favours to be granted to the South Group and was formed in collusion with Sh Vijay Nair, Manish Sisodia and members representatives of the South Group," said the response.

The AAP has committed the offence of money laundering through Kejriwal and the offences thus are covered by section 70, PMLA 2002, it said.

"The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is the major beneficiary of the proceeds of crime generated in the Delhi Liquor Scam. Sh Arvind Kejriwal was and is not only the brain behind the AAP but also controls its major activities, he was also one of the founding members and was also involved in the decision making of the policy as evident from the statements of the witnesses," it added.

The petition is listed for hearing before Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma on Wednesday.

## AAP MP Sanjay Singh gets bail

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: In a relief to AAP leader Sanjay Singh, the Supreme Court on Tuesday granted bail to him in the Delhi excise policy-linked money laundering case after the Enforcement Directorate conceded that it has no objections.

The grant of bail to the Rajya Sabha member is a reprieve to the beleaguered Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in midst of Lok Sabha poll campaigning as two of its top leaders -- national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia -- are in jail in connection with the case.

Polling for the Lok Sabha polls will be held in seven phase between April 19 and June 1, and Delhi will vote on May 25. Counting of votes is scheduled for June 4

A bench of justices Sanjiv Khanna, Dipankar Datta and P B Varale ordered the release of Singh, who has been in jail for six months, observing that no money has been recovered from his possession and there is no trace of it.

The bench ordered that the AAP leader can continue with his political activities but cannot make any statements with regard to the case.

It said Singh will remain out on bail during the course of the entire trial and that the terms and conditions for the bail will be fixed by the special court.

During the post-lunch session, Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, appearing for the Enforcement Directorate (ED), said he has taken instructions from the probe agency and it has no objections if Singh is enlarged on bail.

"I am making the statement without going into the merits of the case and keeping all the rights and contentions open," he said.

Taking note of the statement, the bench ordered, "In the morning session ASG SV Raju was asked to obtain instructions. He states they have no objections if Sanjay Singh is released on bail in proceedings arising out of the FIR...In view of the statement made, we allow the present appeal and direct that Sanjay Singh be released on bail during pendency of trial on terms and conditions set by the trial court."

The bench said the concession of bail granted to Singh will not be treated as "precedent". Consequently this bail order may not be of much help to other jailed AAP leaders, including Kejriwal.

The bench clarified that the bail was granted to Singh on the concession granted by the ED and not on merits.

The top court was hearing Singh's plea challenging denial of bail by the Delhi High Court and an appeal challenging his arrest and remand in the money laundering case.

The bench in the morning session had asked Raju to take instructions on whether the ED needed further custody of Singh.

The bench told the ASG that apart from the statements there are no implications and the approver, Dinesh Arora, who initially did not implicate him, has named him in the tenth statement.

"No money has been recovered from his (Singh) possession and the Rs 2 crore bribe allegations can be tested in the trial. There is no trace of it. Maybe a lot of time has passed but all this can be examined in trial and tested in a witness box. He is in custody for six months," the bench said.

It said if the court were to grant bail to Singh on merits, then it would have to give a prima facie finding that he has committed no offence, given the mandate of Section 45 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

"This might have ramifications on the trial," the bench told Raju.

The ASG said he will respond to the submissions of Singh against his arrest and remand in the post-lunch session.

As soon as the bench assembled in the post-lunch session, Raju at the outset said the ED has no objection to the grant of bail to Singh, provided it is not made a precedent.

During the hearing, senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Singh, said the AAP leader was arrested on the basis of approver Arora, who in the tenth statement recorded before the agency has named him.

While concluding his arguments on merit, he alleged that the ED had not objected to the bail of Arora after he had named Singh in his statement.

Singh was arrested in the case by the ED on October 4 last year.

Before the high court, Singh had sought bail on the grounds that he has been in custody for more than three months and no role has been attributed to him in the predicate offence.

The ED had in the high court opposed the bail plea and claimed that Singh was involved in acquiring, possessing, concealing, dissipating and using proceeds of the crime generated from the alleged Delhi liquor scam pertaining to the policy period of 2021-22.

The agency had also claimed that the AAP leader had gained illegal money or kickbacks which are proceeds of crime generated from the alleged liquor policy (2021-22) scam and that he has also played a role in conspiracy with others.

The ED's money laundering case stems from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) FIR.

## 'Bad habits', countries should not comment on others' internal affairs: S Jaishankar

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

AHMEDABAD: In a stern warning to the international community on Tuesday, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar cautioned against unwarranted political commentary on India's internal matters, stressing that any such interference would be met with a "very strong reply." Jaishankar's remarks came in the wake of recent statements by envoys from the US, Germany, and the United Nations regarding the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by the Enforcement Directorate. India has vehemently protested these statements.

"Somebody asked a person from the UN (about Kejriwal's arrest), and he gave some reply. But in other cases, I would say very frankly these are old habits, these are bad habits," Jaishankar told reporters here.

The Minister emphasised the importance of respecting the sovereignty of nations and refraining from meddling in each other's domestic affairs.

"There is a certain 'maryada' (restraint) among countries. We are sovereign countries, we should not be interfering in each other's internal affairs, we should not be passing comments about each other's politics," he added.

There are certain etiquettes, conventions and practices which must be followed in international relations, the minister said, adding that if a foreign country comments on India's politics, "they will get a very strong reply from us, and that is what has happened."

"...we sincerely urge all the countries in the world that by all means you have your views about the world, but no country has the right to comment on another country's politics especially in situations like this," Jaishankar said.

The External Affairs Ministry last week had summoned a senior American diplomat to protest against the US state department's call for a fair legal process for the arrested Delhi chief minister. A similar protest was lodged with Germany.

The External Affairs ministry had issued a strong statement, saying that in diplomacy, countries are expected to be respectful of the sovereignty and internal affairs of others. "This responsibility is even more so in case of fellow democracies. It could otherwise end up setting unhealthy precedents".

During his interaction with the media here, Jaishankar also condemned China's actions in renaming places in Arunachal Pradesh as "senseless," reiterating that the northeastern state is an integral part of India.

In response to China's release of a fourth list of new names for locations in Arunachal Pradesh, Jaishankar reaffirmed India's unwavering stance on the region, emphasising that Arunachal Pradesh has always been and will remain an integral part of India.

"I want to be very clear that Arunachal Pradesh was, Arunachal Pradesh is, Arunachal Pradesh will always be India. I hope I am saying it so clearly that not only in the country but beyond the country also people get that message very very clearly," he said. The MEA, earlier, averred in a statement that assigning invented names will not alter the reality that Arunachal Pradesh is, has been, and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India.

The minister further criticised Congress leader P Chidambaram for his remarks on the Katchatheevu island issue, asserting that the facts must be acknowledged, regardless of political affiliations.

In a tweet on X earlier, Chidambaram said any "untruthful and belligerent" statement by the Indian government about the island will bring the Sri Lankan government and 35 lakh Tamils into confrontation. Jaishankar did a "somersault" on the issue, and once a liberal foreign service officer, he has become a mouthpiece of the RSS-BJP", the Congress leader said.