

**Title: Regarding CBI raids on retired Air Force Officers' premises.**

**1201 hours**

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): Mr. Speaker, Sir, in a joint operation conducted by the Central Bureau of Investigation, the Intelligence Bureau and the Indian Air Force Intelligence, some retired Air Force Officers and a few Civilians have, on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> July, been arrested for activities detrimental to national interests and relating to defence deals.

Some months back it had come to the knowledge of our Air Force Intelligence that Sergeant K.C. Saini, who was posted as equipment Assistant, D Stores, Air HQs was providing information on defence purchases, in consideration of sums of money. It thereafter got established that Sergeant Saini attempted to recruit another NCO working in a sensitive Directorate of Air HQ, for the same purpose. This NCO, after having been contacted by Sergeant Saini, reported the matter to his superior officer in Air HQ, who promptly informed Air Force Intelligence.

It was then decided to let the matter `run' and to have this superior officer act as a `decoy', by posing as a supplier of information, so that the full dimensions of this nefarious activity could be unravelled. At this juncture, Intelligence Bureau was also brought on the scene, and all subsequent meetings of the aforementioned officer with suspects, were monitored jointly by the IB and Air Force Intelligence. At this stage, Sergeant Saini arranged a meeting of the `superior officer' with Air Vice Marshal J.S. Kumar, (Retired). This was in May, 2001. During the introductory meeting itself, Air Vice Marshal J.S. Kumar, (Retired), paid Sergeant Saini approximately Rs. 19,000/-. At a subsequent meeting, AVM J.S. Kumar, (Retired), paid the decoy officer a sum of Rs. 50,000/-, with a promise of further "handsome" rewards for passing needed commercial information. Thereafter, AVM Kumar sought specific information in regard to certain projected purchases of the Indian Air Force.

At this juncture the Central Bureau of Investigation's assistance was sought, and a formal FIR lodged with them, the CBI. From this stage onwards, the CBI handled the case along with the IB and our Air Force Intelligence. The operation was then launched on 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2001. At 1830 hours, on that date, during a meeting arranged earlier between the Retired Air Vice Marshal, Sergeant Saini and the `decoy superior officer', the CBI apprehended the Air Vice Marshal and the Sergeant. Simultaneously, the CBI also raided the houses of four other retired IAF officers, one civilian employee of the Ministry of Defence, and four civilians.

In the searches so far conducted by the CBI, it has been revealed that the retired Air Vice Marshal was in possession of documents pertaining to defence deals and a large amount of cash, at his residence. Similarly, documents of commercial nature pertaining to defence deals were also confiscated from the premises of the other retired IAF officers. As of now, seven individuals have been arrested for questioning.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to place on record the appreciation of the Ministry of Defence for the efficiency, co-operative interaction and patient unravelling of this entire matter jointly by our Air Force Intelligence, the Intelligence Bureau and the Central Bureau of Investigation.

Hon. Members would no doubt appreciate that as detailed investigations are currently on, it would not be in public interest to reveal any more details.

...(Interruptions)

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