

Sanctioned terrorists on Pak soil, its govt cannot say no idea: Jaishankar



PTI

S Jaishankar with his Danish counterpart Lars Lokke Rasmussen in Copenhagen

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UNDERLINING THE role of Pakistan's government and army in their country's terror infrastructure, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar warned of further consequences if terrorist attacks continue from across the border. India wants a "definitive end" to terrorism, he said.

In interviews with the Dutch media during his visit to the Netherlands on May 19-20, which were published Thursday, he also ruled out third-party involvement, including by US President Donald Trump, in the ceasefire that ended the military confrontation with Pakistan following Operation Sindoor nearly two weeks ago. The "cessation" of hostilities was "negotiated directly" between the two countries, he said.

Jaishankar made these comments in The Hague during his three-nation tour that also included Denmark and Germany. His remarks come in the wake of President Trump repeatedly

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claiming credit for the cessation of hostilities — as recent as Thursday morning during an interaction with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa at the White House. On Thursday, Jaishankar reached Berlin on the concluding leg of his tour and chaired a regional conference of Indian ambassadors stationed in Europe.

Earlier, asked by the Dutch media if he was suggesting that the Pakistan government was part of the terror infrastructure there, Jaishankar said, "I am not suggesting that, I am stating that. Suppose that there were large military centres in the middle of a city like Amsterdam, where tens of thousands of people gathered for military training, would you say that your government knows nothing about that? Of course not.

"We should not go along with the narrative that Pakistan does not know what is going on. The most notorious terrorists on the United Nations (UN) sanctions list are all in Pakistan. They operate in the big cities, in broad daylight. Their addresses are known. Their activities are known. Their mutual contacts are known. So let's not pretend that Pakistan is not involved. The state is involved. The army is up to its neck in it... Let's not pretend that Pakistan is not involved."

Asked if the ceasefire was a

temporary solution and what a more sustainable solution to the conflict with Pakistan could be, he said, "We want a definitive end to terrorism. Our message is therefore: yes, the ceasefire has put an end to military actions against each other for now, but if the terrorist attacks from Pakistan continue, there will be consequences. The Pakistanis must understand that very well."

In an interview to Dutch broadcaster NOS, Jaishankar said the Government was very clear that "if there is such an attack, there will be a response". "The operation continues because there is a clear message in that operation... that if there are acts of the kind we saw on April 22, there will be a response, that we will hit the terrorists," he said.

"If the terrorists are in Pakistan, we will hit them where they are. So, there is a message in continuing the operation but continuing the operation is not the same as firing on each other," he said.

Asked if the Kashmir dispute would be resolved first, he said, "No, for us terrorism is an independent, completely unacceptable international crime that should not be condoned or justified. The terrorists targeted the vibrant tourism industry in Jammu and Kashmir with their attack. So they are prepared to destroy things in Kashmir for their own,

very limited, selfish purposes. They also deliberately gave the attack a very religious tint... The world should not accept such practices.

"As for Jammu and Kashmir, it is a historical fact that it joined India when India and Pakistan separated in 1947. Our position is that the illegal occupiers should return their illegally occupied parts to the rightful owner. And that is us."

Responding to a question on whether the international community can mediate in the conflict over the status of Kashmir, he said, "No, it is a bilateral issue between the countries involved."

Pressed on whether Delhi would spurn Trump's offer of help with the dispute, he said, "As I said, this is something we will do together with Pakistan... When two countries are engaged in a conflict, it is natural that countries in the world call up and try to sort of indicate their concern.

"But the cessation of firing and military action was something, which was negotiated directly between India and Pakistan... We made one thing very clear to everybody who spoke to us, not just the US but to everybody, saying if the Pakistanis want to stop fighting, they need to tell us. We need to hear it from them. Their General has to call up our General and say this. And that is what hap-

pened."

Jaishankar said New Delhi is willing to hold talks with Islamabad on the return of the illegally occupied part of Kashmir to India, and on terrorism.

On security concerns emanating from frontiers along China and Pakistan on India's economic growth, Jaishankar indicated that economic growth and security are part of the same coin. "Our security challenges were far more threatening than yours (Europe's). So we had to prioritise security. You don't choose between security and economic prosperity. Today, you are realising that they are part of the same coin," he said.

Jaishankar was at The Hague to prepare for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit later this year. Modi was scheduled to travel to the Netherlands last week to strengthen bilateral relations but the visit was cancelled amid the escalating conflict with Pakistan.

In Berlin later, while chairing the conference of ambassadors, Jaishankar focused on India's stance against terrorism and strategies to deepen engagement with European nations amid evolving global dynamics. "We discussed #OpSindoor and our message of zero tolerance for terrorism. Also deliberated on various aspects of more deeply engaging Europe at a time of change," he said in a post on X.