

CM makes submissions, questions the grounds of his arrest as ED produces him in court In remand application, probe agency alleges bribes

ED creating smoke screen: Kejriwal ED: Punjab excise officials arm-twisted wholesalers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

CHIEF Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday himself made submissions in a court here during the hearing in the excise policy case and said a smokescreen of the AAP being involved in corruption is being created before the nation.

The AAP national convener made the submissions in Hindi after taking permission from the court despite his lawyers being present. He made the submissions as the Enforcement Directorate (ED) produced him in the court of Special Judge Kavari Baweja and sought seven-day further custody, arguing he needs to be confronted with some people linked with the case.

The ED said Kejriwal was giving evasive replies and not disclosing passwords of his digital devices.

Presenting his case in the court, Kejriwal said, "So far, the CBI has filed 31,000 pages in court and examined 294 witnesses. The ED has examined 162 witnesses and filed 25,000 pages. Why have I been arrested when all these witnesses and documents are available? My name appears directly in



CM Arvind Kejriwal being taken to Rouse Avenue Court | PARVEEN NEGI

only four statements."

Chief Minister further argued, "My name appears in four places. First, in the statement of C Aravind who was the secretary of Shri Manish Sisodia. He stated that one day, in my presence at my home, Manish Sisodia handed him some excise documents. He did not say that any money was given, no such allegation even for a month. Ma'am, many legislators, ministers, and officials come to my house, their secretaries come, and they interact with each other, and ex-

change documents. How would I know who is giving what to whom? Is this statement enough to arrest the current Chief Minister?"

Kejriwal further alleged that Sarath Chandra Reddy donated ₹55 crore to the BJP. "I have evidence of this. Money trail is established as he donated the funds after being arrested," the CM said. Reddy is the director of Aurobindo Pharma Limited and one of the co-accused-turned-approvers in the case.

A smokescreen of the AAP being corrupt has been created

Kejriwal not cooperating, probing agency say

The ED produced Chief Minister Kejriwal in the court of Special Judge Kavari Baweja and sought seven-day further custody, arguing he needs to be confronted with some people linked with the case. The ED said Kejriwal was giving evasive replies and not disclosing passwords of his digital devices. Kejriwal's advocate Ramesh Gupta said the chief minister wants to cooperate in the investigation but not on the ED's grounds for which the agency is seeking extension of his custodial remand.

UJWAL JALALI @ New Delhi

THE Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday alleged that some wholesalers in the national capital were arm-twisted by senior Punjab excise officials after the former refused to pay bribes in connection to the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy 21-22. The disclosure was made by the agency before the Rouse Avenue Court while seeking extension in Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's custody, which was later granted till April 1.

"The factories of these wholesalers were either shut down or not allowed to dispatch their goods in Punjab by Punjab excise officials when the demands of bribes were not fulfilled in Delhi," it read.

The probe agency in its remand application said that during Kejriwal's six-day custody, summons were issued to senior excise officials in Punjab in connection with the case. It has been alleged that all three officials were involved in devising Punjab's excise policy in 2022. However, they

The factories of wholesalers were either shut or were not allowed to dispatch their goods in Punjab by state excise officials when the demands of bribes were not fulfilled in Delhi. — ED remand application

could not appear before the ED apparently due to hooch tragedy in Sangrur, Punjab.

The ED had summoned three Punjab officials, IAS officers, KAP Sinha and Varun Roojam, and additional excise commissioner Naresh Dubey. Previously, the trio had been summoned by the ED in relation to the same case in 2022.

The ED claimed that Roojam and Dubey were present at the residence of Manish Sisodia, who is also under arrest in connection with the Delhi excise case, when the Punjab policy was formulated.

"The trio faces scrutiny following the statement of Deepa Chadha, who alleged that she was pressurised by Punjab authorities to surrender her L1 licence in Delhi by disrupting

the operations of her Punjab-based distillery," sources said.

Further, in its remand application, the ED stated that a statement from an AAP candidate in the 2022 Goa Assembly elections was obtained, revealing that his election expenditure was taken care of by the AAP office in Delhi.

"He (the candidate) has revealed that he was not having any money and his election expenditure (all expenses for rallies/events/public hoardings) was taken care of by the AAP Delhi office only, through their associates," the official document read. Kejriwal's statement was recorded on five consecutive days and his responses were "evasive", the ED charged.

The ED also said that some details such as movable/immovable property details, other financial details etc. were sought and Kejriwal said that he would tell his counsel/family members and the information would be shared by them. "However, no details were furnished by him and his counsel/family members," it said.

SLUGFEST CONTINUES

ED's arguments trashed in court in 7 minutes: AAP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

AAP leader Atishi on Thursday said that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, while arguing for himself in court clearly demonstrated how baseless the charges brought against him by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) are. "A sitting chief minister has been arrested without any evidence in this baseless case," Atishi said, expressing her concern over the "undemocratic nexus" between the probing agency and the BJP-led Centre.

AAP leader Saurabh Bharadwaj, also attending the press conference, said Arvind Kejriwal, during his remand hearing in a city court, sought to know whether just four statements against him in connection with the alleged excise policy scam were enough for his arrest.

Kejriwal also said in the court that the objective of the ED probe into the alleged liquor scam was to "crush AAP and prove it was corrupt", said Bharadwaj who was present in the court.

The Delhi chief minister also brought to the cognisance of the court that one of the four witnesses whose statements were



used against him, donated Rs 55 crore to the BJP through electoral bonds which was a proof of money trail in the alleged liquor scam, Bharadwaj said in a press conference.

No immediate reactions were available from the ED or the BJP over the charges and claims of AAP leaders Kejriwal as well as Bharadwaj. A Rouse Avenue court earlier in the day extended Kejriwal's custody to the ED till April 1.

The Delhi chief minister was arrested last week from his residence by the ED in a money laundering case linked to the now scrapped excise policy (2021-22) of the Delhi government.

City in constitutional crisis, Kejriwal should quit: BJP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE Delhi BJP has once again called for the resignation of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal following his arrest by the ED in connection with the excise policy case, citing a perceived constitutional crisis in the city.

In a press conference on Thursday, Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva and party MP Manoj Tiwari emphasized the urgency of the situation asserting that the AAP had the option to appoint a new chief minister from within the party's ranks after Kejriwal's arrest.

"Delhi is under a huge constitutional crisis. If you have even scant regard for the people of Delhi who elected you, you could have made anyone (from AAP) chief minister," Tiwari said.

Meanwhile, Sachdeva alleged internal power struggles within the AAP for the position of the chief minister and questioned the legitimacy of governing while in the ED custody.

"Show us one example in the entire world of somebody running the government from jail. If you have any ethics left in you, resign," he said. He also



questioned the rationale behind the resignations of Manish Sisodia and Satyendar Jain if functioning from custody was deemed legal.

Responding to concerns about the potential imposition of President's Rule in Delhi, cabinet minister Atishi dismissed the notion as a political vendetta.

"What is the constitutional provision he is drawing on? The law of the country is very clear: You have the GNCTD Act which clearly states that you cannot be the chief minister if you do not enjoy the majority of the House. These conditions do not apply. So, under what conditions will President's Rule be imposed?" she questioned.

IN AND OUT OF COURT

My arrest is part of political conspiracy, says Kejriwal

A day after Lieutenant Governor (L-G) VK Saxena said the city government will not be run from jail, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday called it a 'political conspiracy' and said 'people will give a reply'. Before being produced in a city court on Thursday, Kejriwal was asked about Saxena's statement. The L-G had said, "I can assure the people that the government will not be run from jail."

Kejriwal congratulates Mann on daughter's birth

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday congratulated his Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann on his newborn while being escorted out from the court by the Enforcement Directorate. "Many congratulations to Mann sahab, he has been blessed with a daughter today," Kejriwal said while being produced before the court. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's wife Gurpreet Kaur has given birth to a girl.

Man with liquor bottle detained outside court

A man carrying a liquor bottle was detained by the Delhi Police Thursday for allegedly creating a ruckus outside the Rouse Avenue court when Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was produced in the excise policy case, police said. The man, identified as Raghav Kumar Tiwari, dressed in a lawyer's attire was taken to nearby police station for questioning. Tiwari staging a protest against Kejriwal, was also carrying a beer bottle, a police officer said.

Who is Sunita Kejriwal, and why have we been hearing her name?

ANUP VERMA @ New Delhi

AFTER Arvind Kejriwal, the incumbent Chief Minister, is arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with the excise policy 'scam' on March 21 and remanded to ED custody for six days by the Rouse Avenue Court, whispers over who may succeed him to the post begin to float in political circles. And the first name on the list of probable candidates, Sunita Kejriwal.

Sunita Kejriwal, wife of the Chief Minister, comes to the fore a day after the arrest, when she condemns the ED's action on social media, stating, "This is a betrayal to the people of Delhi. Your Chief Minister has always stood with you. Whether inside or outside, his life is dedicated to the country. The public knows everything."

Sunita, a 1994-batch Indian Revenue Services (IRS) officer, served in the Income Tax (I-T) department for 22 years before opting for voluntary retirement in 2016. She has been consistently seen by her husband, particularly during significant events like the India Against Corruption movement and his electoral victories in Delhi.

Following her husband's arrest, Sunita held a press conference where she delivered



Kejriwal's message while seated in the chair used by the CM for press briefings, prompting speculations about her potential promotion to the CM's post. Although the CM has not announced his resignation, Sunita's probable rise to the rank cannot be dismissed if Kejriwal resigns in coming days.

Sunita Kejriwal, aged 58, began her professional journey as an IRS officer in 1995, meeting Arvind during a training program in Bhopal. She held the position of commissioner of I-T in the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal in Delhi before her retirement. Regarding her academic background, official records indicate that she holds a master's degree in Zoology. On March 27, she held an-

'He's not keeping well'

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife Sunita on Thursday claimed he is not keeping well and is being "harassed a lot". Sunita Kejriwal, who had come for her husband's court hearing, told reporters, "He has not been keeping well. His sugar levels are fluctuating. He is being harassed a lot. This tyranny won't last and people will give a reply." Earlier on Thursday, the Rouse Avenue Court extended the chief minister's ED custody till April 1.

other press conference, reiterating Arvind Kejriwal's message. In her address, she stated, "Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will reveal evidence in court on March 28 regarding the alleged liquor scam."

After Kejriwal's arrest, Sunita seems more proactive, taking prominent steps to connect with the people of Delhi. Despite comparisons drawn by the opposition BJP, between her actions and those of former Bihar Chief Minister Rabri Devi, Sunita is actively conveying Kejriwal's message to the public. She has been playing a crucial role since her husband's arrest, leading to speculation that she might assume the CM's post if Kejriwal resigns or is dismissed.

ED QUESTIONS AAP'S GOA CHIEF, THREE OTHERS

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday questioned AAP's Goa unit president Amit Palekar and three others in connection with a money laundering case. The ED had summoned Palekar, AAP leader Ramrao Wagh and two others for questioning in a case registered under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. Palekar arrived at the ED office at Panaji at 12.10 pm and was allowed to go at 6 pm by the ED officials. A senior AAP leader said that they were called for questioning in the money laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam, in which Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and a few other party leaders have been arrested. "This is just the beginning of a prolonged harassment of the opposition leaders by the ruling party," Palekar said.

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