

Kiran Bedi says political parties have 'approached' her

Kiran Bedi, India's first woman police officer, has said that several Indian political parties have 'approached' her since she quit service last year.

Saying she was non-partisan and that people's issues were more important to her, Bedi took a dig at Indian political parties with a cryptic comment: 'All of them are the same.'

Bedi, who was chief guest at an awards ceremony over the weekend organised by a Punjabi language newspaper, did not identify the political parties that she said had contacted her.

At the event, a leader of the Indo-Canadian community urged Bedi to aspire to be the prime minister of India.

'We want you to become the prime minister so that the system can be cleaned up. Indians in India and abroad want a person like you at the top, and we will back you,' said lawyer Harleen Grewal, donating \$2,000 to Bedi's foundation.

Bedi did not comment on Grewal's suggestion, but explained that she felt liberated after quitting Delhi Police after 35 years of service during which she became one of India's best-known officers.

Bedi bowed out as the director general of the Bureau of Police Reserve and Development after she was ignored for the post of Delhi Police chief.

'After my (voluntary) retirement, a whole new wider world has opened up before me. Now I can do so much as I am not bound by government rules,' she said.

She said if the expatriate community had complaints against the police in India, 'please write to me at my website www.saferindia.com, and I will take up your complaints with the DGP (director general of police) of state police'.

She lauded the Indo-Canadian community for its achievements in politics.

'Indians have done very well in other countries. But it is only in Canada that they have reached top political offices. You have MPs, MLAs, ministers and here you have Ujjal Dosanjh who has become premier of British Columbia,' she said, pointing towards him in the audience.

'If there is any report in India on your achievements, you are referred to as Indian-origin people. Uphold the name of your ancestral land.

'Don't bring bad values such as corruption here, leave them in India. We have over one billion people and we will take care of it. But don't pollute Canadian values. Be clean so that Canadians think why they like Indians here.'

Amid laughter, she said in Punjabi: 'Tusi bhoori majh da dudh pita hai.' (You have drunk the milk of a brown buffalo.)

She went on: 'You have drunk Mother India's milk. India is in your blood. So give something back to

your motherland. Adopt villages, build schools and hospitals, provide drinking water and give scholarships in India. Believe me, the greatest satisfaction lies in giving.'

Speaking later, Dosanjh said Bedi stood out for her achievements and integrity. 'I wish every Indian police officer was like her.'

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