India not doing it right on terror: Jaggi Vasudev

Coimbatore (IANS): Mystic and yoga expert Jaggi Vasudev, a regular speaker at the World Economic Forum (WEF), feels "India is not handling the issue of terrorism with Pakistan right".

"For the last two months India has become a big joke because of the way it has been bargaining with Pakistan to hand over wanted terrorists. If someone believes that Pakistan will hand over all the terrorists and suspects back to India, then India should go back to kindergarten school," Vasudev, head of the Coimbatore-based international non-profit organization Isha Foundation, told IANS in a free-wheeling chat here.

The tall, dark guru with a flowing mane and beard runs a sprawling spiritual and eco-friendly retreat on the Tamil Nadu-Karnataka border here, spread over 145 acres.

"I think India is losing a rare opportunity. Just for the first time, the country, which had sunk into depths of poverty over the last 10-20 years, had the possibility of taking people to the next step of prosperity and turning around the economy, but someone has spoilt it with this whole gamut of terror. I think India is not doing it right," he said, explaining his views on the contemporary geo-politics.

He had addressed the WEF in Davos in January on subjects ranging from recession, depression, faith and youth, new catalyst for faiths, agile leadership and cultural literacy across several sessions.

Terror, he said, is not a new phenomenon.

"It has just taken on various forms. Terror based on religion was there even 1,000 years ago. But it has taken on various forms. Attacks like those in Mumbai 26/11 had happened even 500 years ago, but no one came to know about them because there were no televisions in the bedrooms and drawing rooms. Mumbai made headlines courtesy the media.

"This does mean we are ratifying terror. In an technological age, this should not have happened. In India, terror is being perpetrated by a small group of people helped by religion, of course. These people are being helped by hostile neighbours who are in turn being helped by someone else." The 26/11 attacks left 170 people dead, including 26 foreigners.

Vasudev, who does not believe in dogma and scriptures, counsels his disciples, who include celebrities, professionals, bureaucrats and industry barons and a mammoth body of youth, with simple yogic techniques which rely on "inner engineering or transformation of the inner self, voluntary service and environmental awareness".

"I have no philosophy, no beliefs, no system. Whatever a human being has in his core - as his essence - is spirituality. Ideologies, beliefs and systems are made - but I teach my followers the technology to experience the innermost interiority," said Vasudev.

The seer, who sticks to Tamil Nadu because he does not speak Hindi, is trying to take his organisation all over the country.

The unconventional mystic is known for his penchant for high speed automobiles and two-wheelers, which he drives himself at a "maximum possible speed".
Globally, he is known as the tree-planter for his environmental awareness drive, Project Greenhand, which has won a Guinness Book of World Records tag in 2006.

Vasudev feels no one is actually interested in god because they "seek individual well being". "People want to go to heaven because they have made a mess of life out here. It is best to address the contentious personal and spiritual issues in the world itself consciously. Spirituality should be practised within the ambit of worldly concerns," he said.

"The biggest problem that ails the globe today is ignorance. There are five dimensions of ignorance. Education does not eradicate ignorance; it has equipped us to lead a better quality of life with the help of technology. It is a passport to livelihood. Knowledge has not made humanity joyful or any blissful.

"For instance, a block of granite may be more precious than diamond because it is used for building edifices. What's more precious is inner joy - the basic humanity. There was a time I would not bow down to god, but now I bow down to everyone," he said.