

CONG ANGRY OVER TARDY PREPARATIONS FOR RAHUL'S MASS CONTACT PROGRAMME | 10

TWO US OFFICIALS, WHO FRISKED KALAM AT AIRPORT, SACKED FOR NOT FOLLOWING 'PROCEDURES' | 10

## China puts pressure on nations to shun Dalai

Tried To Arm-Twist Bengal Guv Into Not Meeting Him

Indrani Bagchi | TNN

New Delhi: The Dalai Lama's informal interaction with the diplomatic community in New Delhi over the weekend may be a test case whether China succeeds in pressuring other countries to shun the Tibetan spiritual leader.

On Saturday, the Dalai Lama is scheduled to meet the diplomatic community in what is described as an informal interaction. The Czech Republic embassy is hosting the event because he is due to travel to that country soon. But all envoys thinking of attending the event are the target of enormous Chinese pressure to skip the event.

China's overt arm twisting on the Dalai Lama in India may be backfiring spectacularly. On Thursday, M K Narayanan, governor of West Bengal, was conspicuously present during an event in Kolkata where the Dalai Lama was addressing the gathering. His presence would have been routine were it not for the fact that the Chinese consulate had asked the state government to ensure that both CM Mamata Banerjee and Narayanan not attend the meeting.

The Dalai Lama was never a political issue in India, until the Chinese government made him one. Earlier, India and China called off their boundary talks because Beijing asked India to stop a conference of Buddhist scholars as the Dalai Lama was going to address



**GESTURE OF FRIENDSHIP:** West Bengal governor M K Narayanan with The Dalai Lama in Kolkata on Thursday. China wanted Narayanan not to attend the meeting

them. The Buddhist conference had been scheduled many months ago, and included scholars from 32 countries. India had no choice but to cancel the boundary talks.

Indian government sources believe the Chinese are trying to change the rules of the game regarding both India and the Dalai Lama. First, it is equating India with countries like South Africa and Australia where the local government comes under tremendous pressure whenever the Dalai Lama visits. Recently, South Africa had to deny the Buddhist leader a visa under Chinese pressure. Beijing has sat hard on Canberra on several occasions although Australian PMs have

always met the Dalai Lama whenever he visits down under. The Americans also routinely come under Chinese pressure — US President Barack Obama's first meeting with the Dalai Lama had to be away from cameras.

But with India the understanding had hitherto been this: New Delhi, which gives a home to the Dalai Lama and treats him as a spiritual leader, does not conduct political activities and Indian leaders should not share a public platform with him. India, said officials, has been sensitive to these unwritten concerns. But China is trying to change the rules of the game.

## India snubs Oz move to contain China

Says It Won't Be Part Of Trilateral Security Pact

Rajat Pandit | TNN

New Delhi: India on Thursday firmly rejected any prospect of joining or forging a trilateral security pact with US and Australia, remaining steadfast on its long-standing stand of bolstering defence cooperation with other countries on a strictly bilateral basis.

Completely "taken aback" by Australian foreign minister Kevin Rudd's statement that India would be roped into the trilateral pact, which obviously will seek to "contain" China in the Asia-Pacific region, top defence ministry sources said India was "not keen" on hopping onto "any multi-lateral security con-



Australian foreign minister Kevin Rudd reportedly said India's response to the pact was positive

structs" in the region. "The only exceptions are those which come under the UN Flag or are broad-based arrangements like ARF

(Asean Regional Forum) and ADMM-Plus (Asean defence ministers plus eight countries like India, China, US, Russia, Australia, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand)," said a source.

This came after Rudd, in an interview to an Australian newspaper, was quoted as stating that the Indian government's "response" to the proposed trilateral economic and security pact "has really been quite positive".

The Indian external affairs ministry spokesperson, however, said India was "not aware of any such proposal", clearly cold-shouldering any move to drag New Delhi into a security cooperation axis against a prickly Beijing.

MoD sources, on their part, said Australian defence minister Stephen Smith, who has supported his PM Julia Gillard's move to revoke the ban on uranium exports to India, would get the same message when he comes for delegation-level talks with his Indian counterpart A K Antony on December 7.

"We are definitely looking to fur-

ther expand our defence cooperation with Australia, especially in counter-terrorism and maritime security, but on a one-to-one basis. There is no security grouping in the offing," said the source.

India, of course, remains wary about China's "aggressive behaviour" as well as its massive military infrastructure build-up all along the 4,057-km Line of Actual Control.

But while New Delhi may stand its ground on the activities of the Dalai Lama, which led to the last-minute cancellation of the Sino-Indian boundary talks recently, it wants to be "a neutral player" in the ongoing geopolitical rivalry between US and China in the Asia-Pacific region that has flared up in recent days.

First, earlier this month, Washington and Canberra announced the move to establish a de facto US base in north Australia, which is clearly intended to provide a military outpost for forays into the disputed South China Sea.

## MPs to get iPads as govt decides to go paperless

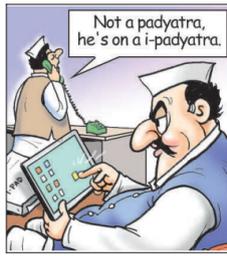
New Delhi: Parliament may be in a state of paralysis these days but it has not deterred the authorities from taking a digital leap of faith. Aiming to make its office paperless and the members tech-savvy, the Lok Sabha secretariat has sanctioned Rs 50,000 for each member to buy an iPad.

"We are encouraging MPs to use iPads. This would save a lot of paper," Lok Sabha secretary general T K Vishwanathan said. Officials said the MPs can buy either Apple iPads or Android-based Samsung Galaxy Tabs.

Following a decision to this effect by the Lok Sabha committee on paperless office, the lower house secretariat has also held a familiarization drive for the MPs.

According to officials, they send daily notices, emails, questions and answers and details of House proceedings to the MPs in printed format. The paper used for such communication can be saved if the MPs start checking out this information in a digital format using iPads, they said.

"It is easier to retrieve and



rearrange information in a digital format," said Vishwanathan. As part of the digital drive, the Lok Sabha secretariat has already reduced printing of many reports tabled in the House and has instead started uploading them on the official website.

"People can download this information and print it if they want," he said. The MPs too seem to be excited about the move. "I intend to buy an iPad," S S Ramasubbu, Congress MP from Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu, said. To let the members make good use of iPads, the secretariat is also planning to make selective areas of the Lok Sabha Wi-Fi-enabled. IANS

## SC raps Guj govt for withholding proof

Dhananjay Mahapatra | TNN

New Delhi: The Sohrabuddin fake encounter case probe may move beyond chargesheeting of former Gujarat minister Amit Shah as the Supreme Court on Thursday rapped the Gujarat government for not handing over crucial mobile phone call records of accused ex-cop D G Vanzara and others to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Amicus curiae and former solicitor general Gopal Subramanian pointed out several flaws in the probe into the fake encounter killings of Sohrabuddin and Tulsiram Prajapati, drew a link between them and drew the court's attention to the attempt by Gujarat government to stall investigation by not giving the CDs with call records of ex-cops to CBI, which is probing both the cases on the SC orders.

A bench of Justices Aftab Alam and Ranjana P Desai refused to consider Gujarat additional advocate general Tushar Mehta's explanations and directed the state government to provide the CDs containing call records to the SC



**It appears the call records CDs were withheld on one pretext or the other. It is very disquieting and we take serious view of this. The CDs just cannot disappear**  
Supreme Court Bench

by Wednesday.

The call records pertain to the period between November 20 to 30, 2005, wherein Sohrabuddin, his wife Kausar Bi and Tulsiram Prajapati were allegedly abducted by a joint police team of Gujarat and Rajasthan with the help of counterparts from Andhra

Pradesh, brought to Ahmedabad and killed.

CBI sources said that some call records pertaining to Tulsiram Prajapati case had been handed over by Gujarat police but most of it relating to the case had been withheld. The bench said, "It appears the call records CDs were withheld on one pretext or the other. It is very disquieting and we take serious view of this. The CDs just cannot disappear. You must bring the CDs to the court on Wednesday. The CDs were in existence and must be in possession of someone."

When additional solicitor general Vivek Tankha said "CBI would get to the bottom of the case", the bench wanted to know what the agency had done till date in identifying police personnel who lent more than a helping hand in the operation of abducting Sohrabuddin and others on the night of November 22, 2005.

The court was ready to spend time on the case as Subramanian, assisted by additional solicitor general Harin Raval and advocate Padmalakshmi Nigam, laid bare lapses in the probe.

## US-bound Indian IT professionals to get green cards faster now

Washington: In a move that may allow more highly skilled immigrants from India and China to obtain the so-called green cards faster, the US House of Representatives has passed a bill modifying the visa system.

The Fairness for High-Skilled Immigration Act (H.R. 3012), eliminating per-country caps on employment-based visas and instituting a first come, first served system, drew broad, bipartisan support, passing the House with a vote of 389-15 Tuesday. The bill is expected to move swiftly through the American Senate.

Currently, immigration law limits employment-based green cards allowing permanent residence for citizens from any one country to no more than seven percent of the total green cards approved by the State Department in any particular year.

The rule makes it easier to obtain a green card for applicants from smaller countries that don't generate a significant amount of applications, but makes it tougher for workers from big countries that provide most of the foreign tech workers sought by companies. IANS

## Big B writes to Akal Takht in bid to clear air on 1984 riots

Yudhvir Rana | TNN

Amritsar: Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan has sent a sealed letter to Jathedar of Akal Takht Giani Gurbachan Singh reportedly to plead innocence on the allegations of instigating the killing of Sikhs during 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

"Amitabh Bachchan along with his son Abhishek Bachchan had himself gone to the residence of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee member from Mumbai, Gurinder Singh Bawa to handover the sealed letter," said Jathedar of Akal Takht, Giani Gurbachan Singh while talking to media persons here on Thursday. Bawal's relative Satnam Singh had personally delivered the letter to Jathedar.

While the refusal to divulge the contents of letter, the Jathedar indicated that Amitabh had pleaded innocence about the allegations levelled against him regarding 1984 anti-Sikh riots. "Amitabh's letter at least indicates that he has respect for Gurus and Sikh religion, and wanted to clarify his stand and that's why he himself went to Bawa's residence," the Jathedar said.

Giani Gurbachan Singh said a decision would be taken on the letter after a discussion at a meeting of the five high priests. Amitabh in his letter stated that he wanted to take the blessings of the Gurus by attending inauguration of Viraat-e-Khalsa function at Sri Anandpur Sahib but couldn't come due to a controversy over his participation in the function.

## MoEF's climate agenda gets govt nod

Subodh Ghildiyal & Nitin Sethi | TNN

New Delhi: The Centre endorsed the mandate sought by Union environment minister Jayanthi Natarajan for negotiating at the ongoing Durban climate talks on Thursday, key being the power to take decisions based on her strong stance on equity.

Natarajan, as reported by TOI on Wednesday, had asked the Union Cabinet to approve a mandate to push a three-point agenda at the UN meet — equity, intellectual property resources and trade barriers.

The note from the environment ministry said that keeping historical responsibilities of developed nations in mind, India should ensure that a new single global treaty, enforcing responsibilities even on developing countries, be discussed only after 2015. The timeframe would provide space for developing world, which cannot take binding emission cuts at



**ANGER ON STREETS:** Activists protest against the World Bank outside the UN Climate Change conference in Durban on Thursday

this stage of its efforts to alleviate poverty and attendant socio-economic development.

But contrary to environment ministry's suggestions seeking dogged pursuit of the agenda, the Cabinet meeting saw arguments made in favour of "flexibility" that would involve sparing the developed world for its past emissions.

Planning Commission deputy chairman Montek

Singh Ahluwalia argued that India does not depend on the principle of historical emissions in negotiations and instead look at the current scenario alone. The principle is based on the fact that developed world is responsible for most of the greenhouse gases in atmosphere and should do the maximum to resolve the problem — including cutting emissions and supporting the

developing world with both finance and technology.

He, however, was cut short by HRD minister Kapil Sibal, commerce minister Anand Sharma and urban development minister Kamal Nath. They said the US had done little and provided even lesser space to developing world or India in negotiations. Sibal, as science and technology minister, led the Indian delegation at Copenhagen in 2009 and got principles of equity and historical emissions into the climate talks.

Union rural development minister Jairam Ramesh was of the view that Natarajan should show flexibility at the talks, including on the three-point agenda India has proposed in the agenda much against the wishes of the rich nations. But it was pointed out that the three critical issues were revived and pushed back into the international climate agenda during Ramesh's tenure as environment minister.

## Insulate cables to save flamingos, says Gujarat govt

Himanshu Kaushik | TNN

Ahmedabad: Insulate high tension cables or put them underground when they run close to the breeding grounds of the migratory greater flamingos in the Khadij region of Kutch. The state forest & environment department issued this order to the Gujarat Energy Transmission Company (Getco) on Thursday after TOI reported that 400 flamingos were electrocuted in the past 10 days after coming into contact with cables.

Principal secretary forests & environment, SK Nanda told TOI, "Getco will have to complete the work before September 2012, before a new batch of flamingos arrives." He also asked senior forest of-

ficers to identify other such sites, where the birds may be in danger. "We will ensure the cables are laid underground at all sites used by the flamingos." The officials have already identified an eight km stretch in Khadij, where maximum birds have been killed.

TOI had reported on Thursday that the largest number of birds may have been killed at night. They may have been startled by a passing vehicle or an attack by a predatory bird and flown straight into the high tension cables difficult to see in the dark. On Thursday, Gujarat principal chief conservator of forests S K Goyal held a series of meetings with Getco officials to find out ways to immediately reduce flamingo deaths.

## In Bangalore, villaments are the new buzzword

Anshul Dhamija | TNN

Bangalore: Villament is the latest buzzword in Bangalore's real estate lexicon. A villament is where an apartment ends and a villa begins. It's a concept that's gaining popularity with those who want the luxury of a villa and yet crave the comfort and convenience of an apartment.

"It's a marketing strategy where we offer the privacy of a villa and the facilities of an apartment," says Syed Beary, CMD, Bearys Group, a Bangalore-based real estate developer. While prices of villas may be out of reach for many, and the density of apartment units too claustrophobic for some, villaments step in to bridge the divide.

"There is a large section of people who aspire to own a vil-



la but can't afford it. Here comes the concept of a villament, which offers them a villa lifestyle at affordable prices," says Bijay Agarwal, CMD, Salarpuria Sattva.

VILLAS  
Independence and exclusivity; lifestyle statement; privacy; 'landed property'; garden area; parking in front of the house; flexibility to accommodate specific needs of each family

APARTMENTS  
Value and affordability; denser and more vibrant community; lower maintenance cost and effort; security; amenities like club house, pool, sports facilities

Higher cost; fewer neighbours; most have surface drive-around, posing a safety concern to residents; distant locations  
Lack of privacy; limited or no outdoor/garden area; less flexibility for lifestyle; no proximal parking

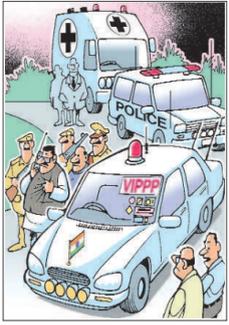
units in each block, with the ground-floor units getting garden space, the middle floors enjoying a lot of balcony space, and the units on the top floor getting their own terrace space.

Habitat Ventures has just launched Habitat Crest Villaments in Whitefield. "Each villament has an exclusive green space of up to 1,250 sqft, enabling you to create your own kitchen garden, zen garden or barbecue pit. There are just five homes in each tower with space for 3 cars in the basement," explains Bhaskar TN, executive director of the company. The company is building 150 villaments that would have corresponded with 400-450 units in an apartment complex and 40-50 units in a villa project.

considering the prime location, we could blend the luxury aspect of a villament in rather than do a generic apartment project, which had a supply surplus. Our market research showed that most apartments in our micro market were priced between Rs 50 lakh and Rs 1.25 crore. A decent villa would cost in excess of Rs 2.5 crore. Hence a doing a villament project allowed us to position ourselves between these two segments, in terms of the physical attributes of the units and its price point," says Bhaskar.

Salarpuria Sattva is launching a villament project on Sarjapur Road in the next 3-4 months. Similarly, real estate developer LGCL is launching a villament project, Luminaire, spread over 3.8 acres off HAL Airport Road.

JUST LIKE THAT AJIT NINAN



VIPPP is 'Very Important Politician-Prisoner-Patient'... in that order.

## Raja's ex-secy Chandolia gets bail in 2G scam

New Delhi: A CBI court on Thursday granted bail to R K Chandolia, former secretary to ex-telecom minister A Raja, in 2G spectrum scam case.

Earlier, the agency had claimed that A Raja and two ex-bureaucrats R K Chandolia and Siddharth Behura were the "core sector" of conspiracy, and stand on a "different footing" from those granted bail in the case. Special CBI Judge O P Saini released Chandolia on bail while noting that his case "cannot be equated" with that of Raja and former telecom secretary Siddharth Behura. The judge agreed with Chandolia's counsel who said that his client did not "independent powers" on his own and there was no allegation that he accepted any bribe.

The court said, "Accused R K Chandolia was only the private secretary to the then minister of communication and information technology (A Raja) and was not having any independent powers on his own... co-accused A Raja was political head of the department of telecommunication whereas co-accused Siddharth Behura was its administrative head. As such, with due respect, his case cannot be equated with these two accused." TNN