

Monica Bedi will be extradited to India

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

2/12
International News
New Delhi: The Portuguese high court has ordered the extradition of Monica Bedi, one-time Bollywood actress and gangster Abu Salem's partner, to face trial in India.

The CBI, which had made an appeal for her extradition, was intimated by the Portuguese authorities on Monday of the court verdict.

The extradition order came after the Portuguese supreme court directed the high court to review the order of a lower court, which had earlier rejected the CBI plea for her extradition.

Bedi now has the choice of making an appeal to the Portuguese supreme court against the high court order.

A lower court had last week sentenced both Abu Salem and Monica Bedi to jail—terms of various durations—for a number of offences.

The sessions court of Portugal served a three-year prison term on Salem on

charges of using forged travel documents, another two years for resisting arrest and assaulting a police officer and one year for false depositions before the competent court.

Under Portuguese laws, these terms of imprisonment total six years. The court, however, directed him to serve a prison term of four-and-a-half years.

The court found Monica Bedi guilty of using forged documents. Her jail term was lessened to two years after Abu Salem admitted having obtained a passport for her in the name of Sana Malik Kamal.

Salem, a close associate of Dawood Ibrahim, is a prime accused in the Bombay blast cases of 1993. He was arrested by the crime branch of the Portuguese police on September 18, 2002. Monica Bedi was arrested along with him.

Their identities were established after the CBI furnished evidence. The agency subsequently initiated the extradition proceedings for both absconders with an appeal in the court

THE TIMES OF INDIA

21 DEC 2003

Monica seeks Lisbon asylum

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New Delhi, Dec. 9 (PTI): Underworld don and Bombay blasts accused Abu Salem's wife Monica Bedi has approached the Portugal government for asylum, a move to be opposed by the CBI.

Monica's move came after Portugal High Court ordered her extradition to India for allegedly obtaining fake travel documents in the name of Sana Malik Kamal from Hyderabad and fleeing the country using the same papers, CBI sources said today.

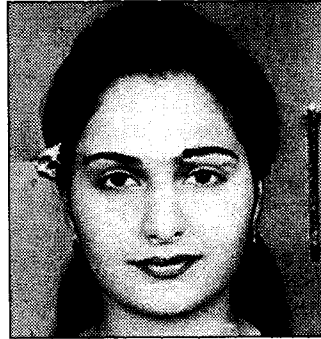
The little-known Bollywood actress has again cited minority discrimination among the reasons prompting her asylum move.

During her trial, Monica had told the court that she would be discriminated against by the Indian government as she belonged to the minority community. But the agency countered this and handed over copies of judgments given out by various courts proving that the Indian judiciary was impartial.

Monica moved the asylum application even though she could have challenged her extradition to India in the Portuguese Supreme Court.

The CBI was preparing its grounds to oppose this fresh move. The agency will file an application through the prosecutor-general of Portugal, citing the law under which criminals are barred any kind of asylum, the sources said.

Monica's extradition order was issued after the Portuguese Supreme Court had asked the high court to review the order of a trial court, which had quashed



Monica Bedi

a CBI petition for her extradition to India.

Salem's wife was awarded a two-year jail term by a lower Portuguese court for entering Portugal on a forged document and continuing to stay in the country.

She was caught with the same passport and detained on September 18 last year along with Salem and two other companions.

During her extradition trial, Monica's brother Bobby had deposed before the court and stated that her sister and Salem had entered Portugal as they feared threat to their lives from the Indian mafia.

Court nod to Monica extradition

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NEW DELHI, Dec. 1. —

In a major success for the CBI, a High Court in Portugal has granted extradition of Monica Bedi, former Bollywood actress and girl friend of Mumbai underworld don, Abu Salem.

However, there are still many hurdles to cross before the CBI brings her back to India. She can appeal against the High court order in the Supreme Court of Portugal. And if the apex court, too, rejects her appeal, she can move a constitutional body.

Earlier a trial court in Portugal had rejected the CBI petition for her extradition. But later the apex court asked the High Court to review the order.

Ms Bedi was arrested in Portugal on 18 September last year when she was travelling along with Abu Salem on a fake passport issued in the name of Sanha Kamal Mallick with a Hyderabad address. — SNS

THE STATESMAN

2 DEC, 2003

2 DEC 2003

India, Pakistan must cooperate in action against terror: Prodi

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, NOV. 30. The fight against terrorism must entail daily action and is not just making declarations, the European Commission President, Romano Prodi, said when asked about the role played by Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir and Afghanistan.

In an exclusive interview to *The Hindu* on Saturday, Mr. Prodi said: "We have always pressed Pakistan in the direction of active cooperation against terrorism. In spite of difficulties, progress has been made and we are really... pressing [the Pakistanis] to make further progress."

"It is clear that the fight against terrorism is not only a kind of declaration, but also daily, daily action... we know the difficulties... but it is in the interests of the countries [India and Pakistan] to cooperate in the common action against terrorism."

Asked if the European Union had any opinion about the nature of a "final solution" between India and Pakistan on Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Prodi said the E.U. completely respected the autonomy of the two countries to arrive at their own decisions.

"Even if we have a [a final solution in mind], we can't express our views because we respect the possibility of India and Pakistan finding a final, final agreement on Kashmir," he argued.

Expressing confidence that the recent contacts between India and Pakistan would deepen, Mr. Prodi was of the view that



both countries had "interests" in finding a peaceful agreement. "The basis of this can only be decided by you and your counterparts, your friend, Pakistan."

To a question why an agreement on the Galileo satellite navigation project was not reached during Saturday's India-E.U. summit, Mr. Prodi said a final accord was not expected yesterday.

"We have a political agreement and will start negotiations [on details] and they will not be long... the most important was the political agreement. Galileo is a project which links the participants strongly... it will be vital for India and European lives."

Is the E.U. ready to respond to public opinion against the war in Iraq to counter unilateral tendencies in the world? "A big, big majority of European public opinion was against the war, which did not have the backing of the United Nations."

"What is important is that six months after the end of the war there was a poll inside the E.U. which demonstrated that the

opinion had not changed. European people are still against the war and what is even more interesting is that there is no difference between public opinion in countries that participated in the war and those who were against it."

Mr. Prodi, however, made it clear that a common foreign policy was not within the grasp of the Union. "This is one of the most delicate points on the agenda of the new [E.U.] Constitution that is being discussed these days."

"We will make some progress by having a common Minister for Foreign Affairs."

It will be a task to coordinate this action, but he will have, in any case, limited power in the beginning... there will not be a real, common foreign policy for a while, but step by step, we are going in that direction.

"But this is not a failure... we started with economic cooperation [in the E.U.]... now we are dealing with internal home and justice affairs. We are starting out with foreign policy. We need time, but we will have a common foreign policy."

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has recently expressed concern about a common asylum policy being discussed by the E.U. What about claims that the E.U. is making asylum regulations very tough while promoting democracy abroad?

Denying the charge, Mr. Prodi said the E.U. was discussing issues related to distinguishing between people seeking asylum and those trying to reach Europe for a "better life."

Rare Gita manuscripts stolen

DARBHANGA, NOV. 30. Several rare manuscripts, including that of 'Shrimad Bhagwat Gita' written by poet 'Vidyapati' and 'Geetgovinda' — a pictorial script written by poet Jaidev have been stolen from a university library here.

The District Superintendent of Police, Sunil Kumar, said the manuscripts were stolen from the Kameshwar Singh Darbhanga Sanskrit University (KDSU) library on Friday night.

Mr. Kumar said the police had launched a massive search operation to arrest the culprits and retrieve the manuscripts.

He said it was difficult to assess the loss in monetary terms as the manuscripts were invaluable.

An FIR has been lodged with the university police station in connection with the theft, the SP said. — PTI

HINDU

1 DEC 2003

THE HINDU

Lisbon law nails Salem, Monica

51-1 23/11
Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Nov. 28. — A Lisbon court has sentenced Mumbai don Abu Salem to four-and-a-half years and girlfriend Monica Bedi to two years in jail, but there is a strong possibility that Delhi will not have to wait as long to try them for crimes committed in India.

For one, Portuguese High Court is understood to have cleared Monica's extradition. And the CBI believes a provision in Portuguese law, that allows Lisbon to extradite a convict before completing his jail term on the condition that he serves the remaining part of the sentence in a foreign jail, could come in handy.

The Indian Parliament had approved a similar legislation, Repatriation of Prisoners Bill, in the monsoon session. "We believe it can be done," a senior CBI officer said, but pointed out that the agency was yet to study the legal provisions. "There are some issues that need to be exam-

ined," said the officer, closely associated with attempts to bring Salem to justice. He said the judge took a lenient view of Monica's offence in view of Salem confessing that he, not Monica, was responsible for procuring their fake travel papers.

She was convicted for entering Portugal on forged documents and continuing to use the same for her stay there. The Portuguese government had dropped one of the three charges against Salem and Bedi — of marrying a local girl and a man respectively to get resident permits.

Salem was convicted on three counts: entering Portugal on forged documents; causing injury to a policeman on duty; and perjury — deliberate false depositions before court on his identity as Arsalan Mohsin Ali, a Pakistani national.

Salem had said during the trial that he had entered Portugal while running away from his Indian mafia adversaries who were chasing him ever since he parted ways with them.

Lisbon court jails Salem, Monica Bedi

International Law
for *Monica* *Bedi*

27/11
TIMES NEWS NETWORK
AND AGENCIES

Lisbon \ Mumbai: Underworld don Abu Salem, wanted by the Indian authorities in connection with the 1993 Mumbai blasts, was convicted in Portugal on Friday on charges of using false documents and resisting arrest and sentenced to four-and-a-half years in prison.

Salem is also wanted by the Mumbai police for more than 40 cases of extortion and shootouts, the most sensational being the murder of music baron Gulshan Kumar at Andheri on August 12, 1997.

Judge Francisco Caramelo told a Lisbon court that Salem was also ordered to pay court costs.

Salem's girlfriend Monica Bedi was sentenced to two years in prison on charges of using false documents to enter and stay in Portugal.

Salem was arrested in Lisbon on September 2, 2002. The police said in court that he had tried to flee when ordered to stop in his car.

In earlier court appearances, Salem claimed he had fled India and settled in Portugal to elude Indian mafia gangs who were chasing him over unpaid debts.

India has been trying to extradite Salem and Bedi since the Portuguese police arrested them with another suspect, who was released by the court on Friday.

Portuguese payback



Abu Salem Monica Bedi

Judge Caramelo said while reading the sentence that the extradition proceedings, being heard in another court, were "pending observation".

Salem may have to serve his sentence in Portugal first before he can be extradited.

Meanwhile, reports from New Delhi said the Portugal high court was understood to have allowed Bedi's extradition.

In Mumbai, the police said Friday's court order would further paralyse the activities of the Salem gang. "Salem's arrest itself was a major blow. several of his lieutenants deserted the gang as they found it difficult to extort money in his name. Now, with Salem being put behind bars, his gang will find the going really tough," a crime branch officer said.

Salem, known for his association with a few actors, mainly targeted the Hindi film industry for extortion. He had threatened several film producers and financiers for film distribution rights in the UK and the US.

Belgium gives in to US on ^{HR-15} war crimes law

^{NS/B}
Brussels, June 24 ^{of Law}

BELGIUM HAS bowed to US pressure and agreed to limit the scope of its controversial war crimes law.

American officials signalled that the changes might defuse a row which has led to the threatened boycott of Nato's Brussels headquarters and soured relations between the two countries.

Nato's secretary general, Lord Robertson, said on Monday that he hoped a "major crisis" had been averted.

The "universal competence" law has been used to target Tony Blair, Yasser Arafat and Ariel Sharon, as well as former President George Bush.

In its original format, dating back to 1993, the law allowed virtually anyone to use Belgian courts to bring war crimes charges against virtually anyone else, regardless of where the alleged crimes were committed.

It was amended in April to allow the Belgian government to dismiss politically motivated or "propaganda" cases by transferring them to courts in the defendants' home country.

But the US insisted it wanted more done to prevent complaints being filed in the first place, preferably by repealing the entire law.

The Guardian

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2003

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DOCTRINE OF AGGRESSION
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LEADERS OF NATIONS who failed to stand up and condemn the American war of aggression against a sovereign, independent Iraq must share the blame for the unfolding consequences of the superpower's unilateral action. Before the dust has settled over its first unprecedented invasion, the United States has begun to target a second nation, with dark hints of possible other victims being added to the list. The combined verbal assault on Iraq's neighbour, Syria, by the U. S. President, George W. Bush, and his Secretaries of Defense and State, with warnings to Damascus and threats of sanctions against providing sanctuary to fleeing leaders and officials of the defeated Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein and against developing its own chemical weapons capabilities, must alert the international community to the continuing dangers of American unilateralism born of arrogance and its pursuit of the doctrine of pre-emption. The unprecedented ease with which the regime in Baghdad has been driven out has apparently whetted the appetite of the hawks in the Pentagon. The warnings have now acquired an ominous ring. Their progression in the case of Iraq, beginning with the demand that it disarm voluntarily and ending with forcible regime change, must be a grim pointer. The stridency of the demands on Syria, ruled by the socialist Baath Party like Iraq till recently, is especially ominous. On Sunday, Mr. Bush charged that Syria had chemical weapons (of mass destruction) and wanted it "to just cooperate" by not providing refuge to Iraqi leaders. His Secretary of State, Colin Powell, was more to the point: "With respect to Syria, of course we will examine possible measures of a diplomatic, economic or other nature as we move forward." Donald Rumsfeld, Defense Secretary, repeated the allegation that Syria had tested chemical weapons in the past 12 to 15 months.

Britain's Prime Minister, allied to Mr. Bush in the war on Iraq, has denied that there is any

plan to attack Syria. But Tony Blair's word lacks credibility or weight as shown up during the Iraq crisis when the U.S. remained undeflected and unpersuaded by British entreaties. He must convince his American ally that targeting Syria has even less logic than the arguments against Iraq since it is not a signatory to the chemical weapons convention and would therefore not be breaking international law if it seeks to possess these weapons. Washington's agenda appears to be to exert its extraordinary military muscle to reorder the geopolitical map of the region and tilt the balance in favour of Israel. The next few weeks will show whether targeting Syria means military action or is a less ambitious pre-emptive strategy to stop the young ruler, Bashir Assad, in Damascus from sponsoring terrorism or fuelling a guerilla movement in occupied Iraq. The latter is a potential threat as the U.S. consolidates its hold and increases its presence in Iraq. Occupation hazards can be impossible to foresee in the unfamiliar terrain, as the Americans have been recognising everyday. A guerilla movement led by the retreating supporters of Saddam Hussein can prove a formidable foe.

In many parts of Iraq, there was by the weekend some movement towards restoration of a semblance of law and order and an end to the looting and mayhem that erupted at every city when the regime of Saddam Hussein lost its hold and the invading forces were at the gate. It will take months of stupendous effort for a return to normal life for a people who had faced the most vicious bombing campaign in the past quarter century. The fall of Tikrit where rumours had it that the Iraqi dictator might make his last stand means that the country is at a turning point in its long history, heralding the decisive end of rule by the Baath Party. As the Iraqis pick up the pieces, they must continue to be puzzled by the sidelining and paralytic silence of the United Nations, which had for a decade sapped their energy through a sanctions regime.

16 APR 2003

THE HINDU

Genocide law approved

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BRUSSELS: The Belgian Senate, following the example of the House of Representatives, approved changes on Saturday gutting a law that lets Belgian courts hear war crimes cases against foreign leaders. In a 36-to-22 vote, with five abstentions, the Senate approved an amendment to the 1993 law designed to invalidate high-profile war crimes cases that have come to embarrass Prime Minister, Guy Verhofstadt's Government. Those targeted under the law include the former U.S. President, George H.W. Bush, and the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon. The amendment was approved by the House on last Wednesday. — AP

Protest against Lincoln statue

RICHMOND (VIRGINIA): A statue of Abraham Lincoln, commemorating the 16th U.S. President's only visit to the one-time capital of the Confederacy, was dedicated on Sunday with speeches and ceremony. At the Richmond National Battlefield Park Civil War Visitor Centre, speakers praised Lincoln as a man of compassion whose visit was

meant as an act of reconciliation. Not everyone saw it that way. About a mile away, members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans gathered at the grave of Jefferson Davis to denounce the statue as an insult to the honour of the Confederacy. Some protesters later made their way to the National Park Service site, where they stood outside and chanted and whistled in an unsuccessful effort to disrupt the statue dedication. — AP

7 APR 2003

THE FINCH

UK carries on crusade for Bleach

Arindam Sarkar
Kolkata, March 17

THE POLICE might have dug up mobile numbers from Peter Bleach's cell at Presidency Jail but British Deputy High Commissioner Andrew Hall is not losing sleep over it. He will meet Bleach soon and urge the Centre and state government to ensure he is 'treated properly' in jail.

"We don't know what the truth is. I only saw it in the newspapers and can't add anything more to it," Hall said on the recent discovery of cell coordination between Dubai-based don Aftab Ansari and Bleach. "Whatever it is, I plan to go and meet Peter Bleach soon."

Bleach's release has been an uncomfortable issue between the state government and the Deputy High Commission and Sunday's finding might have just made things more difficult. Hall, however, is not about to let the issue drop.

He called on Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee immediately after taking charge of the consulate and quizzed him on Bleach's release.

"During my last meeting with the chief minister, I made it a point to discuss about Bleach's release. Meanwhile, we want him to be treated properly inside the jail. We are concerned as he is suffering from tuberculosis and needs to be given proper medicines. We want to make sure prison conditions do not deteriorate further," said the UK envoy.

That Bleach has been socialising in jail is no matter apparently. "Our actions are in support of Peter Bleach's welfare and not meant to condone his activities. We are simply requesting that he be treated in a non-dis-



Andrew Hall
Standing by a countryman

Bleach monitor his health till the issue of release is resolved. "Bleach has served seven years, a long time for a serious offence. But his co-accused — the Latvian pilots (crew) — charged with the same crime were released a couple of years ago. Bleach deserves to be given a reprieve," said the deputy high commissioner.

The five Latvian pilots, arrested along with Peter Bleach in 1995 for the Purulia armsdrop, were released in 2000 after diplomatic intervention.

"We have voiced our concern on his failing health to the Indian Government. Prime Minister Tony Blair has already written to his counterpart, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and it is for the Indian government to decide now," Hall said.

The chief minister has washed his hands of the issue so far. He reportedly told Hall that Bleach's release does not fall within the state government's jurisdiction and that he contact Union Home Minister LK Advani.

Meanwhile, Ansari was flown

18 MAR 2003

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

India, France ink extradition pact

Press Trust of India

PARIS, Jan. 24. — Moving a step ahead towards bilateral cooperation in fighting terrorism, India and France today signed an extradition treaty with the condition that those extradited to India won't be given death sentences.

"The treaty would go a long way in ensuring that terrorist and criminal elements are brought to book," the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr LK Advani, said after signing the treaty with French justice minister Mr Dominique Perben.

Mr Advani said India had faced a lot of difficulties in getting a wanted criminal extradited from Portugal, a reference to underworld don Abu Salem.

He said the government had the authority to give an undertaking that criminals wanted in India would not be awarded death sentence upon extradition. "That approach would remain in case of France also", he said.

France becomes the third European country to sign an extradition treaty with India after UK and Spain.

Mr Perben said the

extradition treaty signed with India was similar to the one France had signed with some other countries under which both countries recognise that extradition is possible in compliance with the criminal rules applicable to each other country.

As and when a case comes, each case would be taken up and considered, he said.

Mr Perban said a criminal won't be able to escape the process of justice in his own country under the garb of being tried for some minor offences in France.

The wanted person in France would be tried for any offence he committed there and would go through the due process of law. He would be deported to his country once he served the punishment in France, he said.

"We are on the verge of reaching agreement on mutual assistance on criminal and civil matters," Mr Advani said, adding on prisoners, a bill has already been introduced in Parliament.

To a question whether France would extradite its nationals for any offence in India, the French Minister said his country's Constitu-

tion did not have such a provision and that such a person would be first tried under the French laws.

French national released

In a humanitarian gesture, Delhi has decided to release a French national serving a prison term in India, as he has been suffering from AIDS. The visiting Deputy Prime Minister, Mr LK Advani, said the decision has been taken on humanitarian grounds.

France invites Vajpayee

France, as G-8 chairman, is mobilising countries as part of attempts to choke financing of terrorism. Addressing a press conference at the end of his two day visit, Mr LK Advani said France has convened a meeting of leaders of some developing countries in June, to which Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee has been invited.

India would carry on discussion on these issues with France when the French Prime Minister, Mr Jean Pierre Raffrain, visits India on 6-7 February, he said.

25 JAN 2003

Dalai Lama 'rejects' self-rule

ASSOCIATED PRESS

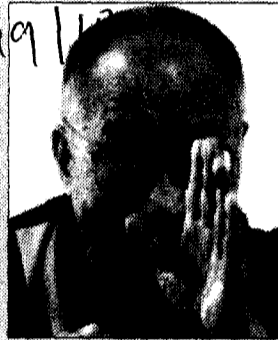
BERLIN, Oct. 18. — The Dalai Lama today said Tibet can benefit economically from remaining a part of China. "Tibet is a backwater and China can help us because we need much material development," the 68-year-old leader of the Tibetan government-in-exile told a press conference before addressing an audience at Berlin's Humboldt University.

The Dalai Lama, who wants self-rule for his Himalayan region occu-

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pied by China since 1951, praised liberalisation in China and a new readiness for dialogue, but said suppression of Tibetan culture and religion is still commonplace.

"We are very happy to have sent representatives to China," he said. "But for the six million people inside Tibet there is no sign of improvement."

The Dalai Lama said he has repeatedly emphasised that Tibet does not want independence from China, but "the Chinese government always suspects us".



CHANGE OF HEART?

Tibet can benefit from remaining a part of China, the Dalai Lama said on Saturday. — AFP

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THE STATESMAN

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Russia denies visa to ^{(2) Shw Kuni} Dalai Lama

29/9 HE 15
Moscow, September 23

RUSSIA HAS denied entry visa to Dalai Lama, saying a visit by him would violate friendship and cooperation agreements between Moscow and Beijing.

The Dalai Lama, who was to arrive Thursday on a visit to Russia's Buddhist-dominated internal republic of Kalmikiya on an invitation by its President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, was refused visa "keeping in view a whole complex of conditions," Russian foreign ministry was quoted as saying by Interfax.

The ministry said currently "very complex and delicate" negotiations were under way between Beijing and representatives of the Dalai Lama.

Understanding the sensitivity of Tibet issue and sticking to the "principle of non-interference in internal affairs", Russia did not want the visit to have a "negative impact" on the talks, it said.

Expressing respect for the Dalai Lama as a religious leader, who has many followers in Russia, the ministry underscored that on the issue of his visit, Moscow is "guided by Russia's supreme national interests and its international obligations, including Sino-Russian Good-neighbourly Friendship and Cooperation treaty."

The Dalai Lama had visited Russia in 1993.

PTI

Dalai eyes end to 45-year exile

Luke Harding
Dharamsala, September 5

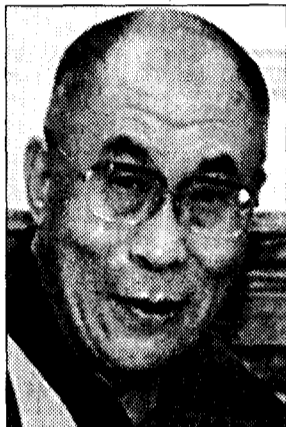
THE DALAI Lama is willing to return to Tibet and end nearly half a century of exile in India if China allows him to go back to his homeland "without preconditions".

Tibet's exiled spiritual leader said he was ready to return to the capital, Lhasa, which he fled in 1959, as soon as he got the "green light" from Beijing. He said China's Communist government had stopped him visiting Tibet, most recently in 1984, and prevented him from travelling to sacred Buddhist sites inside China.

"I'm hopeful to visit Tibet, to see my old place with my own eyes, and try to cool down the situation," he added.

"You ask under what circumstances? China should give me the green light, without preconditions."

The Dalai Lama's offer



The Dalai Lama
Homesick

follows a thaw between China and Tibet's exiled leadership, and came on the eve of his three-week trip to the US, which began on Thursday. He is likely to discuss his possible return to Tibet with President George Bush, whom he is to meet next week.

Speculation that the Dalai Lama is secretly

Tibet H.C. 15 69
preparing to make a deal with China has been growing since two of his envoys made a trip to Beijing last September. They visited China again in late May, in the first direct contact between both sides since 1993.

The visits, together with the release of several Tibetan political prisoners and government tours to Tibet for foreign journalists, including one last week, have prompted hopes of an end to Beijing's decades-long impasse with Tibet's exiled government.

The Dalai Lama said that negotiations with China had been "positive", and stressed that the only way of finding a solution to the Tibet problem was through "dialogue".

But he said meaningful negotiations with China had not yet taken place, with Beijing unwilling to make any concessions. "We have not yet started serious discussions," he said. "For the moment I believe it is

very essential to develop confidence. This is the moment to try and build confidence and understanding."

In the meantime the situation in Tibet had not improved, he said. He also reiterated his demand for Tibet to be given a degree of self-rule, the so-called "middle way approach" he has pursued since the 1970s, after renouncing independence.

"Our position is not seeking independence for Tibet, but genuine autonomy, which the Chinese Constitution mentions," he said.

The Dalai Lama fled from Tibet in 1959, after a failed uprising against China's occupation. Since then he has lived in Dharamsala, a hill station in northern India, where hundreds of Tibetan monks wearing maroon robes trek up and down the steep, potholed roads alongside foreign backpackers.

The Guardian

Tibetans laud Indo-China statement

Press Trust of India

PALANPUR (Himachal Pradesh), July 6. — Taking a positive view of Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee's recent visit to China, the Tibetan government-in-exile has said the joint statement issued during the visit should be accepted as an effort towards peace in Asia which will also lead to peace in Tibet.

"Normalisation of relations between two giants in Asia will have an impact on world peace and this will definitely affect Tibet," Mr Samdhong Rinpoche, 'Kalon Tripa' (prime minister) of the government-in-exile, said.

Addressing a gathering at the main temple here on the eve of the 68th birthday celebrations of Dalai Lama yesterday, Mr Samdhong hoped that the improvement of relations between India and China will also lead to settlement of the Tibet issue.

Mr Samdhong expressed gratitude to India for the humanitarian support given to Tibetan refugees during the last 40 years.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Pema Jugme, chairman of Tibetan Assembly of Deputies, said the path shown by their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, was the only path through which the Tibet issue could be solved peacefully. Despite heavy downpour in McLeodganj hundreds of Tibetans, including senior ministers and officials of Tibetan government-in-exile, foreign tourists and locals, gathered at the main temple premises to participate in the celebrations and prayers for the long life of the Dalai Lama.

Though the Dalai Lama was here, he did not participate in the celebrations and held puja at his residence where senior ministers, officials and other dignitaries felicitated him on his birthday.

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Tibet static in China

By C. Raja Mohan

NEW DELHI, JUNE 22. The Tibet question may or may not come up formally in the talks between the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, and his Chinese hosts in Beijing. But the political static from Tibet can never really be avoided in any engagement between the two neighbours.

Five decades of endless friction between the two nations has resulted in the accumulation of enormous static electricity. Much of it is centred round the issue of Tibet; and some of the static inevitably gets discharged on the rare occasions when the top leaders of India and China meet. Whether it is the discussion of the boundary dispute or the differences over Sikkim, Tibet does not take long to pop up.

When the Chinese leaders visit India, the Tibetan community here takes to the streets. And when the Indian leaders head to China, they are cautioned by the Tibetan movement not to abandon their cause.

During the historic visit of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to China in December 1988, the Chinese side had expressed concern about the activities of the Tibetan groups in India. Rajiv Gandhi came up with a formulation on Tibet that has remained the basis of Indian policy since then.

On the one hand, New Delhi recognises that "Tibet is an autonomous region of China" and on the other that "anti-China political activities by Tibetan elements are not permitted on Indian soil".

Despite the dramatic rise in international support to the Tibetan movement since the late 1980s, New Delhi has consciously refused to take advantage and has done nothing to raise the political hackles in Beijing. Given the great sensitivities about Tibet on both sides, Mr. Vajpayee and his hosts are likely to handle the issue with supreme caution.

Mr. Vajpayee's engagement of the Chinese leadership is taking place amid an interest-

ing political dynamic between Beijing and the Dalai Lama, spiritual leader of the Tibetan people, exiled in India for more than four decades. A delegation of the Dalai Lama's representatives returned from China earlier this month after a second round of consultations in less than a year. Analysts of Sino-Tibetan relations all over the world are surprised by the positive tone on both sides.

Lodi Gyari, leader of the Tibetan delegation, in a press statement issued from Dharamsala on June 11 after he briefed the Dalai Lama about his talks, expressed cautious optimism. "We feel greatly encouraged by our first encounter and exchange of views with our new Chinese counterparts. They have explicitly acknowledged the pos-

DIPLOMATIC NOTEBOOK

itive efforts made by the Tibetan leadership to create a conducive environment for the continuation of the present process and we suggested that both sides take further steps."

"Both sides agreed that our past relationship had many twists and turns and that many areas of disagreement still exist. The need was felt for more efforts to overcome the existing problems and bring about mutual understanding and trust," Mr. Gyari added.

In a statement on June 12, the spokesman of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs reciprocated the sentiment. "This method proves that there is contact between the central government and the Dalai Lama. The lines of communications are open."

When Mr. Gyari's team visited China in September, Beijing characterised it as a private visit. But this time, China is calling it a "contact" which is expected to continue.

Analysts note that Mr. Gyari, once seen in Beijing as being responsible for the successful global campaign on Tibet, has now been accepted by China as an interlocutor.

They suggest this could be yet another signal of a new level of seriousness in both Beijing and Dharamsala.

In an interesting move, the Chinese allowed the Dalai Lama's delegation to travel this time to Tibetan areas outside the administrative border of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). The delegation visited holy sites in the Dechen Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province.

Tibetan exiles have long complained that China has merged many traditionally Tibetan areas into other neighbouring provinces such as Qinghai, Gansu, Yunnan and Sichuan. But the Chinese generally insist that the "Tibet issue" does not apply to other areas outside the present TAR. During its September 2002 visit, the Tibetan delegation was confined to the TAR.

While scepticism prevails internationally about Beijing's approach to Tibet, many Tibet watchers are wondering if China has begun to soften a bit and recognise the advantages of settling the issue during the lifetime of the present Dalai Lama.

There is also an interesting debate about the role of the Chinese President, Hu Jintao, in the latest Tibet initiative from Beijing. Mr. Hu had served as Communist Party boss in Tibet in the past and still holds a seat in the National Peoples Congress, Chinese version of Parliament, from Tibet.

The new Chinese interlocutor for Mr. Gyari, Liu Yandong, is said to be close to Mr. Hu in Tibet. Ms. Liu, who heads the United Front Work Department of the Communist Party of China, and Mr. Hu rose through the ranks of the Youth League.

While many credit Mr. Hu for pushing the political contact with the Tibetan exiles forward, others give senior leader Jiang Zemin his due for opening the door for an engagement with the Tibetans. After serving as President for two terms, Mr. Jiang has held on to the powerful job of Chairman of the Central Military Commission.

THE HINDO

23 JUN 2003

Al-Qaeda leader to be treated 'humanely'

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MARCH 4. The Bush administration is officially saying that the captured Al-Qaeda operations leader, Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, will be treated according to international laws with officials here maintaining that domestic laws do not allow torture of a prisoner. That said the administration is not willing to disclose where it is that Mohammad is being held with one speculation that the captured terrorist mastermind could be held in a facility at the Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan where the CIA runs an interrogation centre.

From the air base, he could be shifted to the Guantanamo Bay in Cuba which is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Further, the facility in Guantanamo Bay holds scores of other

Al-Qaeda terrorists who have been brought here for detention and interrogation.

While the administration here maintains that Mohammad, or for that matter

any captured terror suspect, will be treated 'humanely', the real debate is if this scenario holds should a terror suspect is held at an overseas facility even while being technically in the hands of the U.S. In the case of Mohammad, in spite of what was originally dished out from Islamabad, the authorities there "handed over" Mohammad to the U.S. in a very short period of time. But reports in the local media make the point that the authorities while trying to walk that fine line between interrogation and torture, do go through a number of routine processes and procedures that use 'stress' and 'duress'.

In fact, it is said that one of the techniques used by the CIA in the face of non-cooperation of detainees is to put them through long hours of standing or kneeling with hoods over the faces or deprivation of sleep with bright lights on. It is unlikely that the administration here will be making headlines out of what Mohammad may be telling his interrogators, if he chooses to speak. But the all round anticipation is that at some point in the not-too-distant

future intelligence agencies will have a better idea and understanding of the near and longer term objectives of the Al-Qaeda.

In the short term, there is also the feeling that Mohammad could throw light on the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden. Analysts are making the point that the top Al-Qaeda leadership including Osama are bound to be jittery in the aftermath of the arrest. There is also a perception that Mohammad cannot lead his captors to where exactly Osama, for instance, is holed up as the top Al-Qaeda leader would have moved his position now. For all the positive attention on Pakistan — including a congratulatory call from the Secretary of State, Colin Powell to the President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf on Sunday — and the flaunting of Islamabad's 'cooperation' in the war against terror, one other crucial aspect is also not going unnoticed: that the terror kingpins are not holed up in some remote area of Pakistan or in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, but right in the heart of the country and in large cities.

THE HINDU

5 MAR 2002

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INVESTIGATING AGENCIES SURPRISED

Portugal ready to hand over Abu Salem: Minister

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, FEB. 20. Portugal has agreed to hand over the underworld don, Abu Salem, to India, the Government informed the Rajya Sabha today.

"We do not have an extradition treaty with Portugal. But it has said that he (Abu Salem) would be handed over soon," the Minister of State for External Affairs, Digvijay Singh, said in reply to a supplementary raised by Manoj Bhattacharya (RSP).

On being asked about the identity of the person (arrested) in Lisbon, Mr. Singh said: "As far as identity is concerned, he is Abu Salem."

However, the investigating agencies are believed to be surprised over the Government announcement. The Minister's cate-

gorical statement, according to sources in the agencies, is premature.

The technical position is that the proceedings against Abu Salem are on in a court of law and that no one is in a position to anticipate the verdict.

The agencies are apprehensive that the Minister's remarks could complicate the extradition process.

'Fire-fighting' operation

The agencies and the Ministry of External Affairs are now engaged in a "fire-fighting" operation, ensuring that the Minister's statement is not misunderstood by various authorities in Portugal.

The fear is that the judicial authorities in Portugal may take a negative view of the assumption in Mr. Singh's announcement.

On the deportation of Dawood Ibrahim's brother, Iqbal Shaikh Kaskar and Ezaz Pathan, Mr. Singh said the success or failure of deportation of wanted persons from countries with whom India did not have an extradition treaty depended entirely on the countries concerned.

The Minister said India had concluded extradition treaties with 19 countries and it was in the process of finalising such arrangements with seven countries, besides initiating proposals with 30 countries.

The pace was slow as each treaty had to be discussed, taking into account the legal system of India and the contracting party.

Asked if India had signed the United Nations Convention on Trans-National Organised Crime, Mr. Singh said the proposal was with the Government.

Buoyed govt guns for the big fishes

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Encouraged by the deportation of Dawood Ibrahim's brother Iqbal Kaskar and notorious gangster Ejaz Pathan by the Dubai authorities on Wednesday night, the Centre is mounting pressure on the United Arab Emirates government to deport 15 other gangsters, including big timers Mustafa Majnoon and Mohammed Dossa, to India.

The government has also sought US assistance to put pressure on the Pervez Musharraf government to deport Dawood, his brothers Anees and Noora and aide Chhota Shakeel to India. However, Islamabad seems reluctant to do so as Dawood and his associates are reportedly working for the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).

Police commissioner R.S. Sharma told reporters on Thursday that more deportations were likely from Dubai in the coming weeks. There are indications that the Dubai authorities may want to rid the emirate of gangsters before any US attack on Iraq. The Dubai police are

keen to ensure total peace in their jurisdiction in the event of a war in the neighbourhood. Sources said the Dubai police would have deported the gangsters even without any pressure from New Delhi.

Following the murder of Dawood aide Sharad Shetty at the Indian Club by the Chhota Rajan gang late last month, the Dubai police authorities cracked the whip on the D-gang and detained over 100 gangsters.

On Thursday, a metropolitan court at Ballard Estate remanded Iqbal Ibrahim Kaskar (43) to police custody until March 6. Iqbal has been accused of killing customs informer Ravindra Singh near GPO in September 1998. Besides Iqbal, seven others, including Noora, are wanted by the MRA Marg police in connection with the murder.

Meanwhile, the CBI produced Ejaz Pathan (49), an accused in the serial bomb blasts case of 1993, before Tada judge Pramod Kode at the Arthur Road jail premises. Pathan has been remanded to CBI custody until February 27.

2 1 FEB 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Dubai deports Dawood's brother, aide

Statesman News Service & PTI

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI, Feb. 19. — UAE authorities today granted India's request and deported Iqbal Shaikh Kaskar, younger brother of Dawood Ibrahim and 1993 Mumbai blasts-accused Ejaz Pathan, Maharashtra deputy chief minister Mr Chhagan Bhujbal said.

Both were arrested on arrival and questioned by the CBI. They will be produced in court tomorrow.

They were recently arrested in Dubai after the murder of satta-don Sharad Shetty in a local club. India had requested UAE to deport them in keeping with the extradition treaty, police said.

Iqbal was involved in several cases including murder and Ejaz Pathan was wanted in many cases of contract killing and drugs smuggling, a police officer said.

This is the first time that Dubai deported a close relative of Dawood Ibrahim along with an accused in the Mumbai blasts case. Dubai authorities had recently deported Ravindra Rastogi, Rehman Khan and Mohammed Afzal, main accused in the Ghatkopar bomb blast case, and Aftab Ansari.

Ejaz Pathan, a close aide of Dawood, provided logistical support to his gang by taking active part in contract killings and drugs smuggling. In the 1993 blasts case, Ejaz is

charged with helping Dawood in landing arms and ammunition at Shekhadi and Dighi coasts in Raigad district in January-February 1993. Ejaz was also wanted in several cases of contract killing and smuggling, an official said.

The move to bring Iqbal began two years ago when India refused to extend his passport in April 2001. The Centre decided it was not in public interest to issue a full validity passport. Iqbal challenged the decision in the Supreme Court but failed to get a favourable ruling.

Bangla arrests

DHAKA, Feb. 19. — Police today arrested Rahmat Ali Sarkar, treasurer of the Dawood Ibrahim-backed proscribed Islamic militant organisation Shahadat-e-Al-Hikma from Rajshahi and detained another Hikma leader Shamimuddin following a court order. Search is on for seven top Hikma men. — SNS

The officials, however, were unclear as to the nature of cases in which Iqbal is wanted. "He is charged with several cases," an official said. He said Iqbal's deportation was significant simply because he is Dawood's brother. The CBI is expected to seek Pathan's custody in connection with the serial blasts while the Mumbai crime branch may ask for Iqbal's custody.

CBI came close to nabbing a Dawood relative when Dubai Police arrested Anees Ibrahim, but he was let off the hook on bail and packed off to Karachi.

The deportations are seen by the foreign ministry as "the result of consistent and continuous diplomatic efforts" that are beginning to pay off. This is a symbol of "good cooperation" from the ruling family of Dubai and the UAE leadership.

17 FEB 2003

Poland ready for extradition pact

NEW DELHI, Feb. 16. — India and Poland will sign an extradition treaty during Polish Prime Minister Mr Leszek Miller's state visit tomorrow, giving a new impetus to bilateral ties. Mr Miller, who is on a four-day visit, will also hold wide-ranging talks with Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee on bilateral issues and on important regional and international issues of mutual interest.

The visit is aimed at giving a new dimension to bilateral ties with special focus on enhancing trade and economic cooperation. Bilateral agreements to combat organised crime and international terrorism, defence cooperation and a cultural exchange programme are expected to be inked.

Delhi is attaching considerable importance to the visit, the first by a Polish premier to India after Poland's transition to a multi-party democracy in the early 1990s.

The visit is also taking place at a time when Poland is on the threshold of joining the EU. The Iraq crisis, West Asia are expected to figure during the parleys. The Polish leader will also call on Dr APJ Abdul Kalam. —PTI



Polish Prime Minister Mr Leszek Miller (right) with MoS for external affairs Mr Digvijay Singh in Delhi on Sunday. — AFP

Beijing in talks on Dalai Lama's return

Luke Harding & Bharati Puri
New Delhi, February 8

SECRET NEGOTIATIONS between China and the Dalai Lama will resume next month amid growing signs that Tibet's spiritual leader is preparing to cut a historic deal allowing him to return to Tibet after almost half a century in exile.

Several of his senior envoys will travel to Beijing next month, learned the Guardian. The delegation from Tibet's India-based government is expected to discuss the circumstances under which the Chinese government would allow the Dalai Lama to visit Lhasa, Tibet's capital.

Since he fled Tibet in 1959, the Dalai Lama has been denounced by Beijing as a 'splittist' (separatist)

who takes over in March, will abandon Beijing's hard line position on Tibet, and usher in a period of constructive change.

"The Dalai Lama wants to go back very much," Thupten Samphel, a spokesman for Tibet's government, said yesterday. "It is every Tibetan's hope that the Dalai Lama will return to Tibet sooner rather than later, under conditions which satisfy the majority will of the Tibetan people." He added, "The Chinese government has the mistaken conception that the Dalai Lama is the problem rather than the solution to the issue of Tibet. We are trying to persuade them that if they want long-term stability they must allow the Dalai Lama to play a useful role."

At 67, the Dalai Lama has become

increasingly keen to return to Lhasa. Asked when that might happen, Mir Samphel replied, "I really don't know. It depends on the new Chinese leadership."

When Chinese troops invaded Tibet in 1950, the Dalai Lama was a teenager. He fled to India with his followers when he was 23, and has since lived in the dusty north Indian hill station of Dharamsala.

The Chinese authorities are acutely aware that their human rights record is likely to attract intense scrutiny in the run-up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics, and they are understood to be keen to soften their stand on Tibet. But the new Chinese President's record offers little grounds for immediate optimism.

The Guardian



Dalai Lama

On comeback trail?

But relations between the two sides have recently thawed. Last September two of the Dalai Lama's envoys went to China for the first direct negotiations with the communist regime in 20 years. Tibet's exiled leadership is now hopeful that China's new president, Hu Jiantao,

BDR agrees to pullback

9th Feb
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Changrabandha (Cooch Behar), February 7

BANGLADESH WILL gradually remove its additional forces from the North Bengal frontier and fill up the trenches that were recently dug, as a first step towards defusing tension along the border.

The assurance came following a meeting between the BSF and BDR commanders at Changrabandha international check post on Fri-

day. This is the first meeting between the Bangladesh forces and the BSF since the February 3 flag meet fell through at Satgachi. The BSF is hailing the meeting as a major breakthrough.

The BDR team was led by its deputy director general and comprised two sector commanders, two commandants and two staff officers. The Indian team was led by IG (acting) BSF K.C. Sharma and comprised five officers including DIG (Cooch Behar range) D.L. Chaud-

huri. The meeting started at 2 pm and lasted two hours, with both border forces deliberating on a host of issues including the recent effort by the BDR to push in 213 families from Nazirgumani in Rongpur.

"We made it clear that India will not tolerate any efforts by Bangladesh to push in people. Besides, we also took a strong note of the recent deployment of the forces along the border and their efforts to spark tension," Sharma said. The

BSF also pointed out how the BDR had refused to accept letters from India thereby worsening the situation along the border.

The BDR brass agreed to meet the BSF more frequently to sort out differences that might come in the way of maintaining cordial relationship between the neighbouring countries.

The BDR had heightened tension during the Satgachi crisis by deploying mortars and heavy machine guns in its newly dug trenches.

US crew cleared of air violation

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI,
FEBRUARY 4

GOVERNMENT agencies today cleared the 11-member crew of an American Boeing 757 from charges of airspace violation yesterday after their interrogation proved that they had inadvertently strayed into prohibited flying zone over Mumbai.

"It appears that the violation was inadvertent and a mistake rather than a willful act," Defence sources said.

Civil Aviation Minister Syed Shahnawaz Hussain said it now appears that the Karachi air traffic control (ATC) gave wrong information to the Boeing because of which it flew on the flight path



N-519 which is prohibited between 0600 hrs and 1800 hrs.

MIG fighter planes scrambled from the Bhuj airbase after the Indian Air Force's surveillance unit noticed that the cargo plane owned by Conco Corporation had deviated significantly from its flight path, the sources said.

The Boeing had taken off from the US on January 31, it

reached Karachi yesterday and was bound for Male in the Maldives.

The crew was confined to the reserved lounge of Sahar Terminal of the Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport and was questioned by a joint investigating team of the RAW, Intelligence Bureau, Indian Air Force, Police and the Directorate General of Civil

Aviation for hours overnight. Only US Vice Counsel General Michael Cole was allowed to meet the crew led by Captain John Burg, airport officials said. However, the American Embassy has been asked to provide further certification prior to the release of the crew of the plane owned by the Nashville-based Conco which handles chartered flights.

5 FEB 2003

Showdown shadow on border

BSF-BDR flag meet fails • Govt ready to evacuate Satgachi villagers

HT Correspondents

Satgachi/Kolkata/New Delhi,
February 3

THE INDO-BANGLADESHI border standoff at Satgachi is threatening to erupt into a gun-battle, prompting the state government to ask the Cooch Behar administration to be ready to evacuate villagers any moment.

The tension seemed to reach breakpoint late in the morning, soon after the crucial sector command talks between the BSF and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) reached a stalemate. The BDR refused to let in the 213 gypsy snake charmers — stranded in no-man's-land for three days since being pushed across the border from Bangladesh — saying they are Indians.

As news of the talks' failure spread, hundreds of Bangladeshi youths, who were waiting at the border, marched towards Zero Line carrying sticks, spears and swords and shouting anti-India slogans. Fearing an attack, the stranded gypsies began crying for help. Soon, hundreds of villagers from the Indian side rushed towards the Zero Line armed with bamboo sticks and stones.

The BDR immediately positioned its forces and the BSF ordered its men to crawl closer. For a nerve-wracking 45 minutes, a showdown seemed certain, till both forces gradually withdrew.

The BSF and the state government declared an alert along the border and rushed in more forces. "We have told the district administration to evacuate civilians in case there is firing," said DIG (Headquarters), Narayan Ghosh, in Kolkata.

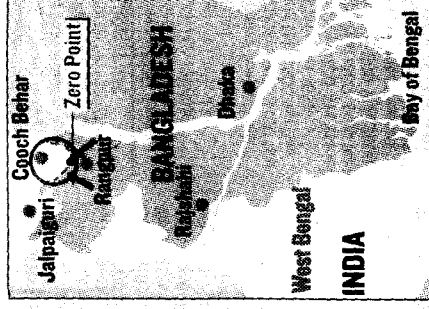
As the border bristled, there was hectic activity in New Delhi, with the Bangladeshi high commissioner, Tufail Haider, meeting the additional secretary in

the ministry of external affairs, Mira Shankar, to try and resolve the dispute. He was handed an aide memoir in which India demanded that the standoff be resolved swiftly as it involved a "humanitarian issue".

The BSF (North Bengal) sent to the headquarters in Delhi proof that the gypsies are Bangladeshis. This includes 11,000 Bangladeshi taka seized from the snake charmers, the addresses of some of them and



A Bangladeshi snake charmer waits at Zero Point on Monday.



FACTS IN FIGURES

North Bengal-Bangladesh border: 1,066 km

Fenced: 350 km

Infiltration hotspots:

Islampur in North Dinajpur,

Mathabhanga in Cooch Behar

and the Jalpaiguri sector

Infiltrators caught by BSF

every year: 700 to 900

Stepped-up vigil: Over 100

BSF men and 150 policemen on

round-the-clock border watch

at Satgachi

Number of Bangladeshis

stranded: 213. They include

68 men, 65 women and 80

children

No. of failed flag meetings

between BSF and BDR: Five

The BSF says all 213 gypsies — 80 children, 68 men and 65 women — are from Purbharipara, a few kilometres from Dhaka. "They told us their names are on the Bangladesh voters' list and that their MP's name is Salauddin," said officiating IG, BSF (North Bengal), K.C. Sharma.

The gypsies reportedly told the BSF that they had travelled to Nilhati, a border village in Bangladesh, to hold shows. It had rained very hard on January 30 and they were looking for a shelter when the BDR told them about a nearby school-house where they could spend the night. They found no such building — it was just a BDR ploy to get them to cross the border. When they tried to return, the BDR beat them up and pushed them back into Indian territory at gunpoint.

Sources in Satgachi said the gypsies (locally known as Bede) are Muslims, but they perform certain Hindu rituals and worship the snake goddess Manasa. This makes them unpopular with Muslim fundamentalists, who might have plotted with the BDR to push them into India.

The move is possibly an answer to Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani's charge that infiltration from Bangladesh had reached serious proportions, Bengal intelligence officials said. Dhaka probably wants to let the situation escalate so that it can convince the world that India has been pushing minorities into a bordering country.

Caught in the crossfire, the 37 gypsy families are losing hope by the hour. They have been receiving food and water from the state government "on humanitarian grounds", Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee said at Behrampore circuit house. "But we will never accept them."

Related report on Page 3

India Thailand to sign treaty on extradition

Press Trust of India

Intention *SR 10* New Silk Route

BANGKOK, Jan. 31. — India today received full support from Thailand in countering terrorism with the two countries deciding to conclude an extradition treaty and to share information about terrorists through an institutional mechanism.

At the end of discussions, between the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr LK Advani and the Thailand Prime Minister, Mr Thaksin Shinawatra and Deputy

Mr Wissanu Krea-Ngam, it was announced that the two countries had "expressed full agreement and willingness" to conclude an extradition treaty.

Indo-Thai mutual cooperation will also cover drug trafficking and counterfeiting of travel documents and currency, officials said. Mr Advani said since terrorism is not confined within geographical boundaries, strategies have to be evolved to deal with the menace urgently. After the breakfast meeting, Mr Thaksin said the two countries have agreed to set up a committee to exchange information about terrorists and would cooperate in fighting international terrorism.

Mr Advani, who also met his Thai counterpart Mr Wissanu Krea-Ngam, justice minister Mr Purachai Piusombun and interior minister Mr Wan Muhammad Noor Matha, said India had been facing cross-border terrorism for over two decades, much before the 11 September attacks in the USA.

Mr Advani and Mr Thaksin discussed issues including treaties on extradition and mutual legal assistance, operationalising of the Joint Working Group on Security already in existence, an MoU to deal with drug trafficking and counterfeiting of travel documents and currency.

The two sides decided to work out a mechanism on intelligence sharing and strengthening cooperation in these areas. Both "expressed full agreement and willingness" to conclude the extradition treaty, Indian officials said.

BISHKEK (KYRGYZSTAN), Jan. 31. — India, Iran and Afghanistan have agreed to develop a "new Silk Route" to enhance trade with Central Asian countries, external affairs minister Mr Yashwant Sinha said today.

It will use the Chah Bahar port of Iran to send goods through Afghanistan and to Central Asian countries. Mr Sinha, who is on a visit here, was addressing the Kyrgyz National State University. — PTI

Border forces push back & forth

OUR BUREAU

Jan. 31: The Border Security Force and Bangladesh Rifles today came close to a face-off as both forces tried to "push back" more than 230 people across the Indo-Bangladesh border in south and north Bengal.

The BSF jawans stopped 213 alleged Bangladeshis when the BDR was trying to herd them into India at Satgachi in Cooch Behar district. Conversely, the BDR personnel prevented 26 Bangladesh nationals, who had been picked up in Delhi and taken to the border by the BSF today, from crossing over at Phulbari in Nadia district.

Tension erupted when the

border guards on both sides went on high alert. As both sides reportedly despatched reinforcements, BSF officials camping in the area said they were trying to avert what could become an eye-ball-to-eye-ball confrontation.

The stand-off could not have come at a worse time when diplomatic relations between the neighbours have plunged to an all-time low, with Delhi accusing Dhaka of harbouring ISI-backed militants sneaking into India to create disturbance.

A senior BSF official, based in the force's north Bengal frontier headquarters in Kadamtala near Siliguri, said the jawans spotted the BDR personnel chasing a total of 213 Bangladeshis

into India at Satgachi in the Mathabhanga sub-division of Cooch Behar district. "We foiled the attempt immediately."

Among those crossing over were 65 women and 80 children. Under interrogation, they admitted that they belonged to the snake-charmer community from Saulchamari on the outskirts of Dhaka, BSF officials said. They remained on no-man's land after the BSF refused to let them in.

Official sources said police in Delhi had picked up a total of 56 Bangladeshis and brought them to Sealdah on a train early this morning. After they were handed over to the BSF, they were taken straight to the border in Nadia.

While 30 of them managed to slink into Bangladesh, the BDR personnel caught the others. But as they tried to "push them back" into India, the BSF protested, accusing the BDR of refusing to take back their own nationals.

With both forces refusing to budge, the 26 Bangladeshis, including nine women and six children, were sheltered in a bamboo grove on no-man's land. The Bangladeshis told the police that they had gone to Delhi in search of livelihood from Moralganj in Bangladesh's Khulna district about 10 years ago. They were mostly employed as domestic help and gardeners in the capital.

While those intercepted in Satgachi were left to fend for

themselves on no-man's land, Phulbari residents forced the authorities to let the 26 people take shelter in their village for the night. Among them were 22-year-old Rina Akhtar and her three small children. One of them was one-and-a-half-month old and ailing. The mother had no idea how to nurse the infant.

"We have contacted the BSF and senior district officials to provide help to these stranded people on humanitarian grounds," block development officer of Kairampur-I Prashanta Bagchi said.

Mamata Bibi, one of those on the no man's land at Satgachi, said: "I don't know why we were stopped from entering our own country."

9-14-11 9-10

Portuguese prosecutor to look into Salem extradition plea

NEW DELHI, JAN. 12. The Portuguese Government has handed over India's extradition request for the underworld don and main accused in the 1993 Mumbai bomb blasts case, Abu Salem, to its chief prosecutor for examination.

The move came after the Lisbon authorities cancelled the resident work permit of Salem, which he had procured after marrying a Portuguese woman on forged documents.

CBI sources said the extradition request of Salem, whose judicial remand had been extended by another three months, was given to the Portuguese Chief Prosecutor (at par with the Attorney General in India), for giving his opinion after which only extradition proceedings could commence.

The Lisbon authorities were probing how Salem and little-known Bollywood actress and his girlfriend, Monica Bedi, had managed to procure forged documents which led to their marriages. The two had managed a resident work permit after marrying a local girl and a man there.

The CBI's extradition request listed Salem's involvement in three CBI cases, four cases with the Delhi Police and two cases registered against him by the Mumbai police.

The extradition request, which gave an executive assurance to Portuguese authorities of not awarding Salem capital punishment in case of his conviction by Indian courts, highlighted his role in the conspiracy leading to the Mum-

bai bomb blasts.

Salem, Monica Bedi and Syed Haider were arrested in Lisbon by the Portuguese police on September 18 for staying in the country on forged documents.

The underworld don is facing charges under Section 120B and 302 of the IPC and Sections 3, 5 and 6 of TADA, under which he could be awarded life imprisonment and death sentence.

The assurance against capital punishment was given as the Portuguese judiciary would not give its nod for extradition unless it is accompanied by a sovereign assurance which is a mandatory requirement that the accused would not be given death penalty or imprisonment beyond 25 years in the event of their conviction. — PTI

India for extradition treaty with Qatar

By Anjali Mody

DOHA (QATAR), JAN. 21. The Deputy Prime Minister, L. K. Advani, had the first of a series of bilateral meetings in Qatar with the Foreign Minister and a key political player in this natural gas rich Gulf country, Sheikh Hamad bin Jasim bin Jabir Al Thani, today. Issues ranging from the threat of terrorism to the concerns of the large Indian population in Qatar were discussed.

According to Indian officials, both sides agreed that their relations posed no problems and that "the way ahead was to build on the co-operative relationship which exists at present." But their cautious tone suggested that these were simply talks about talks. En route to Qatar on Monday, Mr. Advani said that India was interested in putting in place "institutional arrangements" such as an extradition treaty to deal with issues such as terrorism. And, in the meeting with the Qatar Foreign Minister, it was agreed that the pending issues of an extradition treaty, a mutual legal assistance treaty and a joint working group on counter-terrorism "would be finalised quickly... if necessary, after further discussions between officials."

Indian officials said that draft extradition treaties had been exchanged more than two years ago, but had not been pursued. Now, there was agreement that whatever needed to be done at



The Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, with the visiting Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, in Qatar, on Tuesday. — AFP

the official level "needs to be done quickly." Mr. Advani also raised the issue of the universal threat of terrorism and the need for countries "to act in a concerted manner" to deal with the problem. He briefed the Qatari Minister about Pakistan's continuing support to cross-border terrorism. Indian diplomats have, from time to time, suggested that Qatar's presidency

of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and its positive attitude towards India could be translated into pressure on Pakistan from within the Islamic world. However, in the meeting with Mr. Advani, while accepting that there were serious problems between India and Pakistan, the Qatari Minister took the view that it had independent relations with both

the countries and that "its relations with Pakistan did not impinge on its relations with India."

The security scenario in the Gulf region, especially pertaining to Iraq, was also discussed. Qatar has two U.S. military bases, with 3,000 troops, and is expected to be the nerve-centre of any U.S.-led war against Iraq. Mr. Advani, according to officials, expressed the hope that no unilateral action would be taken and that whatever was done would be with the mandate of the United Nations. Qatar, while agreeing with this sentiment, is reported to have said that "events were moving in a way that it was difficult to say what could happen."

Earlier today, Mr. Advani was the "guest of honour" at an inauguration of a chemical plant by the Emir of Qatar, Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani. The appointment, made at the eleventh hour and requiring Mr. Advani to arrive here a night in advance of his original travel plan, found the Indian Embassy officials stretching the limits of diplomatese to explain its significance.

The Q-Chem plant is a joint venture between the Qatar Government and the U.S. chemicals major, Chevron Phillip. Indian Embassy officials insisted that once the plant went into production, Qatar would "naturally" look to India as an export market.

On Naga talks: Page 11