

INSPECTION I Lack of independent access to Cirus reactor slowing down Indo-US n-cooperation

Canada urges India to open up n-reactor

CAROL GIACOMO
WASHINGTON, DEC 20

CANADA has urged India on Monday to allow nuclear inspectors access to a Canadian-supplied reactor, where experts say the country produces a significant amount of its weapons-grade plutonium.

Lack of independent access to the Cirus research reactor in north of Mumbai, is one of the issues slowing implementation of a sweeping nuclear cooperation deal that the United States announced with India on July 18.

That deal has come under fire from the US Congress and from non-proliferation experts, who say the case of the 40-megawatt reactor raises questions about India's trustworthiness.

In a statement, Canada said it has urged US and Indian officials to designate the reactor a civilian facility open to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The United States is directly affected because it supplied Cirus with "heavy water",

which is used in some reactors to moderate nuclear fission.

"Our 1956 bilateral agreement, through which we provided India with the Cirus research reactor, states that that reactor and products resulting from its use would be employed for peaceful uses only," said the statement, read by Canadian diplomat Kelly Anderson.

Designating Cirus a civilian facility "would respect the peaceful assurances of our original agreement," Anderson said at a programme sponsored by the Monterey Institute's Center for Non-proliferation Studies.

Canada cut off nuclear cooperation with India in 1974 after plutonium from Cirus was used in India's first nuclear test.

The US administration maintains that India has an excellent non-proliferation history, thus meriting the major changes in US law and international regulations needed to permit previously-banned civilian nuclear cooperation with India.

India, along with Pakistan

and Israel, has not signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Nuclear expert Leonard Spector, who heads Monterey's Washington office, said Cirus is now "embedded in the nuclear weapons programme of India". Plutonium produced by Cirus should be sequestered from India's military inventory, he added.

Former IAEA inspector David Albright estimated that about 25 per cent of India's stockpile of weapons-grade plutonium came from Cirus. This is a "significant amount... so this is a real issue," he said.

In a recent interview with Reuters, India's ambassador to the United States, Ronan Sen, said India will not designate Cirus or other research reactors as civilian facilities and hence they would not be subject to international inspection.

Asked on Monday if that remained India's position, an embassy spokesman declined comment, noting that Indian foreign secretary Shyam Saran is in Washington this week for talks. —Reuters

21 DEC 2005

Canada lifts N-ban on India

PRAMIT Pal Chaudhuri

CANADA JOINED the Indian nuclear bandwagon on Monday with a joint statement where it agreed to roll back bilateral sanctions on the export of dual-use technology to India. The statement is being seen as an end to over 30 years of acrimony between the two countries on India's nuclear programme. The Indo-Canadian joint statement was issued from Ottawa after talks with an Indian delegation led by foreign minister K. Natwar Singh.

The sanctions being lifted are those

that go beyond the curbs set by the multilateral Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). The US and the UK have already taken this action. In addition, Canada has committed to work with India on nuclear safety issues.

The icing on the cake is the fourth point of the statement which speaks of "further cooperation" on the nuclear front. Diplomatic sources say that Ottawa has agreed in principle to support a modification of the NSG to grant India the rights of a nuclear weapons state. Like all NSG countries, Canada will wait for the US Congress to okay

the Indo-US nuclear deal before committing itself publicly. Canada has been among the most vitriolic critics in the world in demanding that India give up its nuclear weapons programme.

Ottawa claims India betrayed its trust by using spent nuclear material from civilian reactors provided by Canada to carry out India's 1974 nuclear tests.

Subsequently, India's rejection of the CTBT infuriated the then Canadian foreign minister, Lloyd Axworthy. The resulting deterioration of relations—dubbed the "Axworthy effect" by Indian wags—led the then finance minister

Jaswant Singh to slap a ban on overseas aid from Canada.

A Canadian endorsement of India's inclusion into the nuclear club is seen as important by New Delhi in part because of the fallout it will have on the thinking of other non-proliferation hawks in the NSG like Sweden.

Canadian officials were also gratified by India's 'yes' vote during the IAEA debate on Iran. Canada holds the chair of IAEA board of governors at present and saw India's vote as evidence of New Delhi's sincerity regarding non-proliferation.

India - Canada

Promises to keep

27/09/05
K.P. Nayar

This is a week for celebrating Indo-Canadian relations. K. Natwar Singh's whistle-stop tour of Canada, which began in Ottawa yesterday, taking him to Montreal today and ending in Toronto, will be the precursor to a long-overdue visit by an Indian prime minister to Canada. If all goes well, Manmohan Singh will be in Ottawa in the summer of 2006.

Visits to Canada by Indian leaders have been few in the last seven years since India tested nuclear weapons for the second and third time — that is, exempting visits by politicians in Punjab and Haryana, who use taxpayers' money to spend time with their relatives in Canada. Visits by Canadian leaders to India, on the other hand, have been many. Two Canadian prime ministers — Jean Chrétien in October 2003 and Paul Martin in January 2005 — have visited India without a return visit by an Indian prime minister taking place or even being considered until the last few months.

As an enthusiastic supporter of India's nuclear weapons programme and a long-time critic of Canada's double standards on nuclear non-proliferation, it would be very tempting for this writer to gloat on the occasion of the external affairs minister's visit that the normalization of Indo-Canadian relations since the 1998 nuclear tests has been entirely — 120 per cent — on India's terms. But to do so will be a disservice to a relationship, which is full of promise. Promise which appeared to be on the verge of realization several times in the last 15 years, only to be scaled back and reduced to pious platitudes at dinner toasts, media appearances and other platforms.

Rajiv Gandhi proposed to Deng Xiaoping and Li Peng during his historic journey to Beijing in 1988 that improved relations between their countries should not be hostage to the difficult boundary dispute between India and China. The Chinese agreed. Atal Bihari Vajpayee proposed to Nawaz Sharif, and later to Pervez Musharraf, that while efforts go on to find a solution to Kashmir, the countries should not miss out on opportunities to develop their ties in other areas. Sharif agreed, but was undercut by the army. Musharraf has not been able to make up his mind.

This writer has come away from a recent visit to Ottawa with clear signals that between Natwar Singh's talks in Canada this week and Manmohan Singh's planned trip next year, Canada will go through the motions of creating a *modus vivendi* for work-

The foreign minister's visit to Canada is the beginning of India's attempt to regenerate a model bilateral friendship, writes **K.P. Nayar**



Paul Martin and delegation in India

ing with New Delhi on the nuclear issue. But such an arrangement can only be cosmetic, since nuclear non-proliferation is one of the many holy cows in Canadian foreign policy.

What is needed is an acknowledgement and a declaration of intent, such as the one made by Li Peng and Rajiv Gandhi in 1988, that while efforts will be made on both sides to reconcile India's non-negotiable status as a nuclear weapons state with Canada's non-proliferation concerns, development of bilateral relations in other areas will not be hostage to the nuclear issue. In a way, this is already happening, but it is not taking root fast enough for a vibrant and multifaceted Indo-Canadian partnership.

Since the Fifties, Hindi films have been one of the most potent, but under-used tools of Indian foreign policy. Raj Kapoor's films did much more than socialism or non-alignment to bring the Indian and Soviet people closer, creating a friendship that has stayed robust until this day. Given that bit of history, it is fortuitous that Canada's international trade minister, Jim Peterson, has become a fan of Hindi films. Peterson saw two Hindi films at a festival of Indian films at the National Archives of Canada in Ottawa in July-August this year: the festival featured *Lagaan*,

Jogger's Park, *Monsoon Wedding*, *Zubeidaa*, *Morning Raga* and *Mission Kashmir*. The minister has been telling his friends that he would have liked to see all six films, so India's high commissioner in Ottawa, Shyamala Cowsik, has sent him DVDs of the films Peterson could not see.

Peterson's new-found passion for Hindi films may well open new vistas. On September 16, students from 40 schools in New Delhi sent their students to the capital's Vasant Valley School to see some of the world's best mountain films brought to them from the Banff Mountain Film Festival in the Canadian Rocky Mountains. The untapped potential of films was underlined once again this month when some 1,300 people gave film-maker Deepa Mehta a standing ovation at the 30th Toronto International film festival opened with her controversial film, *Water*. Premiered at the festival were two more Indian films: *The Myth* and *Mistress Of Spices*. The festival also featured Buddadeb Dasgupta's *Kalpurush*.

In April this year, the Canadian government tabled in parliament an international policy statement. Described as Ottawa's "first comprehensive framework in a decade on the country's role in the world", the statement is significant for its desire to be

engaged in new and wider areas of the world even as Canada seeks its natural anchor in North America. The IPS calls for the creation of new networks of influence through which Canada can broaden and deepen ties with "emerging world powers such as China, India and Brazil".

A portion of the vision document reads: "India has developed largely on the basis of its own market and the considerable skills of its people... We will also pursue particular Canadian needs — such as air links, investment protection and science and technology partnering — that tap into the dynamics of India's information and technology sectors in particular. The new science and technology agreement with India will open the door to accelerated cooperation in this area."

Two days before Natwar Singh arrived in Ottawa, *Globe and Mail*, Canada's leading newspaper, splashed a story with the headline: "Generic Giant Moves in from India". It was not long ago that the only stories about India that one could find in the Canadian media were about diseases, natural disasters, human rights violations and secessionist movements. Today the stories are increasingly about how Canada is benefiting from reforms that allow overseas investments by Indian companies. Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, Satyam and Wipro have set up facilities — some of them even have software development centres in Canada.

Two years ago, Chrétien visited New Delhi, signalling a thaw in relations with India which virtually froze after the Pokhran-II series of nuclear tests. A joint statement issued after meetings between Chrétien and then prime minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, put the two countries on the road to rediscovering each other.

In January this year, Martin, who succeeded Chrétien, made another prime ministerial visit to India. By that time, India and Canada had travelled some distance along their path of post-Pokhran-II reconciliation and partnership. Martin and Manmohan Singh identified a host of areas such as science and technology, environment, corporate partnership and people-to-people links which the two countries could jointly work on. Moreover, the two prime ministers put their countries well on the way, once again, towards the kind of international cooperation that they practised in the Fifties, when Indo-Canadian friendship was seen as a model for countries of the South and the North to emulate.

Ex-Canadian PM meets Kanishka victims' kin

Vancouver: Former Ontario PM Bob Rae, appointed to review the Air India bombing trial and advise the Canadian government whether a public inquiry is needed into the 1985 tragedy, has met family members of the victims for the first time.

A British Columbia court had in March found the main accused Ripudaman Singh Malik, a Vancouver-based millionaire businessman and millworker Ajaib Singh Bagri not guilty of eight murder and conspiracy charges, triggering a wave of protests from relatives of the victims who termed the judgement as a "second tragedy" and demanded a public inquiry.

Public security minister Anne McLellan had announced last week that Rae will review all evidence, previous inquiry findings related to the Kanishka bombing case and actions taken by police after the bombing of the flight which crashed off the Irish coast killing all 329 people on board. Rae, a lawyer and former premier who retired from politics in 1996, said he wouldn't discuss details of the four-hour meeting on Saturday, but admitted there were questions that needed to be answered. Agencies

02 MAY 2005 THE TIMES OF INDIA

Kanishka inquiry mooted by Canada House

Press Trust of India

VANCOUVER, April 13. — Grieving relatives of the Kanishka victims may yet find relief after the Canadian parliament passed a motion for a public inquiry into the 1985 Air India bombing. The government, however, claimed that the Opposition motion "was not binding".

The move came following acquittal of the two main accused in the Kanishka case by a court leading to outrage among families of the 329 victims of the disaster.

The motion, passed by 172-124 vote by the House of Commons yesterday, embarrassed the minority Liberal government which insisted the vote was not binding. The passage of the motion witnessed a bitter exchange during which Opposition leader Mr Stephen Harper asked whether an inquiry would have come sooner if more of the victims were white.

Prime Minister Mr Paul Martin reacted angrily: "Any notions of racism are odious and any accusations of such are simply not acceptable."

According to Canadian Press News Agency, Mr Martin added that the Deputy Prime Minister, Ms Anne McLellan, was working with the families of the victims on an appropriate course of action. "She is seeking the questions that the families want to have answered. Unequivocally the government will take action in an appropriate way."

The two main accused — Ripudaman Singh Malik and Ajaib Singh Bagri — were last month found not guilty.

Ms McLellan announced last week that she would appoint an "eminent person" to review the Kanishka file and make recommendations.

India yesterday took note of the Canadian government's move to review the case and said it wanted justice to be done.

14 APR 2005

THE STATESMAN

India gets Kanishka case reopened

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, April 13

INDIA HAS prodded Canada into taking a fresh look at the Kanishka bombing case. Outraged by the acquittal of the main accused, Delhi has conveyed its feelings to Canada, whose Parliament has now backed the call for a public inquiry.

More than 200 Canadians were among the 329 who died when a bomb blew apart the Air-India plane off the Irish coast.

The non-binding motion was passed yesterday in Canada's Parliament after India and Canada concluded the seventh meeting of their Joint Working Group on counter-terrorism in New Delhi. India had conveyed its sense of "disappointment and outrage" at the acquittal of the main accused in the case.

"India wants justice to be done," the MEA's official spokesman said. "India and Canada are partners in the fight against terrorism. We are confident that Canada will do the right



The accused: R.S. Malik
(top) and A.S. Bagri

thing." According to the joint statement released after the JWG meeting, the Indian delegation, led by Meera Shankar (additional secretary in the MEA), shared the sense of disappointment and outrage among the relatives of the victims. It was understood that Canada would continue its investigation towards bringing the case to a logical conclusion.

The Canadian inter-agency delegation was headed by Ruth Archibald, senior coordinator for international crime and terrorism in the Canadian department of foreign affairs.

The Canadian government has also appointed an independent adviser. "Clearly there are some questions that we may not have answers to. There will be a process. Whether it's a public inquiry, whether it's a parliamentary committee... There are a number of possibilities, and that's why I want to take the advice of an eminent person, independent of government, to help me decide,"

Deputy PM Anne McLellan said. In the Canadian Parliament, Opposition MPs united to pass the motion.

14 APR 2005 THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

India had warned Canada about Kanishka

**Search Disputed
in New Delhi**

March 24. — No preventive or contingency means were adopted by Canada although India had warned the government of a threat to its national airlines two months before the Flight 182 disaster in June 1985, following undercover activities in British Columbia's Sikh community, a former senior official in India's intelligence agency says.

Mr Maloy Krishna Dhar, who served for three decades in the Intelligence Bureau, says he "stumbled upon a piece of uncorroborated information" in early April 1985 that two Sikh groups in Canada were planning "some spectacular show". The revelation comes amid a rising chorus of demands for an inquiry into the Air-India disaster that killed 329 people on 23 June, 1985.

On Tuesday, former Canadian Cabinet minister

Mr Herb Dhaliwal joined the call for an inquiry, charging that not doing so would be a "betrayal". Despite a 20-year police investigation, the only person to be convicted for the crime is auto mechanic Inderjit Singh Reyat, who collected items for the bombs.

Ajaib Singh Bagri and Ripudaman Singh Malik were acquitted last week of all charges, after spending four-and-a-half years in jail. "Discreet probes" in quarters close to Talwinder Singh Parmar, the alleged mastermind of the blast, and others raised information about a suspected threat of sabotage involving a civilian Indian aircraft, Mr Dhar states in his newly released book, *Open Secrets, India's Intelligence Unveiled*. "The information was shared with Delhi and the High Commissioner personally briefed the Canadian foreign office," he writes.

However, Canadian offi-

cial, who were not identified in the book, did not react to the warning as India anticipated.

Mr Dhar attributes Canada's concern about the violation of human rights in Punjab to propaganda from Pakistan and a few unnamed nations. "They poured in more money to oil their propaganda machine and they had found ready allies amongst the 'hurt and bruised' Canadian humanitarians and the misled Sikh population," he writes.

He also says that Parmar had been under the patronage of ISI, in 1981. Parmar was killed by police in India in 1992. Mr Dhar was transferred to Canada in October 1983 as a counselor in India's high commission in Ottawa.

One of his primary responsibilities during his four-year term was clandestine intelligence gathering, a practice that violates normal diplomatic protocol.

THE STATESMAN

25 MAR 2005

SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2005

A DESPAIRING VERDICT

TWO HUNDRED AND eighty of the 329 dead were Canadian nationals and the incident occurred off the southwestern coast of Ireland. Yet the bombing of Air India Flight 182, which plunged into the Atlantic on June 23, 1985, left a deep scar on the consciousness of an India that felt extremely vulnerable in the face of a savage international terrorist strike that had no geographical locus and that was indiscriminate about its choice of victims. The massive and long-drawn out investigation into the Kanishka bombing case — spearheaded by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and carried out with the help of investigative agencies in India, the United States, and Europe — seemed to be going nowhere until a few years ago. The arrest of three Sikh fundamentalists in 2000 and 2001 seemed to have marked a turning point in the investigation, with the RCMP claiming that it had finally gathered the evidence required successfully to prosecute the accused in a court of law. When one of the three, Inderjit Singh Reyat, charged with fabricating the bomb that brought down the Kanishka, pleaded guilty to manslaughter last year, it led many to believe that the charges of criminal conspiracy and first-degree murder against the two main accused, Ripudaman Singh Malik and Ajaib Singh Bagri, would be sustained.

The sense of shock and disappointment in India and abroad over the verdict of the Vancouver court, which recently acquitted Malik and Bagri, stems from the harsh reality that a protracted, elaborate and expensive investigation failed to establish the guilt of the two accused to the law's satisfaction. The investigation took close to two decades, covered a large number of countries, and consumed a reported 30 million Canadian dollars. The RCMP has justified the inordinately long investigative process on the grounds that a large number of witnesses needed to be interrogated, that there were international ramifications to this case, and that

cooperation on terrorism issues was much weaker when the probe was conducted than it is today. There is an element of truth in this explanation, but the lengthy 15-year hiatus between the Kanishka bombing and the first arrests in the case cannot be explained away by these factors alone. Crucial leads, which emerged within three months of the Kanishka tragedy, were apparently not followed up with the seriousness they deserved. For instance, the founder of the Babbar Khalsa, Talwinder Singh Parmar, was taken into custody in September 1985 in connection with the bomb blast at Narita airport. This terrorist outrage took place on the same day as the Kanishka bombing and the explosive was intended to blow up an Air India flight out of Tokyo. The two terrorist strikes were clearly related but Parmar was let off. Significantly, Justice Ian Bruce Josephson of the Vancouver court noted that Parmar, who fled some years later to India where he was shot dead in 1992 by the Punjab police, was the likely mastermind behind the Kanishka bombing.

The investigation was also marred by allegations of bungling, following revelations that intelligence officials had furnished misleading affidavits to conduct phone taps, and that taped interviews with Air India officials were destroyed because of a turf war within the investigative machinery. The prosecution was forced to rely heavily on the testimony of a string of witnesses, including that of a former lover of Malik. While it may have shown that the two had a clear motive to blow up the Kanishka, the prosecution evidently failed to unearth the evidence required to prove their involvement in the conspiracy beyond reasonable doubt. The RCMP and the Canadian intelligence agencies are bound to be asked a lot of tough questions following this verdict, which makes a mockery of the marathon investigation into what was regarded as the biggest act of air terrorism before 9/11.

THE HINDU

19 MAR 2005

Second tragedy, say relatives

Want public inquiry into Kanishka case

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, March 17

SHOCKED AND angered by a Canadian court's acquittal of the two alleged masterminds of the 1985 bombing of Air-India's Kanishka aircraft, relatives of the 329 victims are demanding a public inquiry to undo the "tragedy of justice".

Ripudaman Singh Malik and Ajaib Singh Bagri, both Indian-born Canadian Sikhs, were set free by a Vancouver court on Wednesday. After a 20-year investigation and a 19-month trial, Justice Ian Bruce Josephson held that the prosecution had "not proven its case beyond a reasonable doubt".

Relatives of the victims were left stunned as the judge handed down his verdict — and millionaire businessman Malik, 58, and sawmill worker Bagri, 55, walked free after more than four years in custody.

Accounts in the Canadian media spoke of the shock, agony and anger of the bereaved families. "The perpetrators of this crime are free men today, they have made a mockery of the Canadian justice system," said Eddie Madon, son of a victim. Another said the verdict was "a victory for terrorism in Canada". Some families said the "not guilty" verdict meant that they were suffering yet another tragedy.

The demand for a public inquiry quickly gathered momentum. "You think one man, one person, makes a decision. That's not right. The only way to solve this case is to go to a public inquiry," said Mahesh Sharma from Montreal, who lost his wife and two children in the tragedy.

"Every Canadian has the right to an answer. Something went wrong. Everyone's disappointed after 20 years. There should be a public inquiry," Sarwan Singh Randhawa, a spokesman for the Sikh Khalsa Diwan Society, told the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

However, Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan said there was no point in an inquiry. "There will be, tragically, some questions that may very well not be answered," she said.

Canadian government spokesman Geoffrey Gaul refused to rule out an appeal. The prosecutors will review the judgment before deciding on an appeal, which must be filed within 30 days. "It's premature at this point to say what will transpire," Gaul told reporters.



Mansi Kinworthy, who lost her mother and cousin in the Kanishka bombing, at a press conference following the verdict. REUTERS



"I sympathise with the victims' families... I want to repeat publicly what I have told authorities numerous times — that I had no involvement in any of these criminal activities," Ajaib Singh Bagri (above) said in a statement after the verdict



Ripudaman Singh Malik walked out of the court premises with a smile but said nothing. A statement released by his family, while expressing sorrow for the victims, said he was innocent

18 MAR 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

কণিক্স মামলায় 'বিচার' পেলেন না আত্মীয়েরা

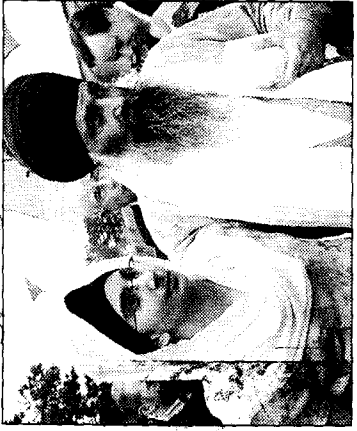
শর্মিষ্ঠা গোস্বামী • টরন্টো

১৭ মার্চ: কুড়ি বছর, সাড়ে চারশো কোটি টাকা, আড়াইশোজন তদন্তকারী অফিসার এবং শতাধিক সাক্ষী। তাও শেষরক্ষা হল না।

টরন্টো উত্তরজনা, অবিশ্বাস আর কান্নায় ভেঙে পড়া — এই ছিল বুধবার ডায়ালগের আদালতের দৃশ্য। ১৯৮৫ সালে এয়ার ইন্ডিয়ায় কণিক্স বিমানটিতে বিস্ফোরণের ঘটনার মূল অভিযুক্ত রিপুদমন সিংহ মালিক ও আজিব সিংহ বাগরি বেকসুর খালাস পেয়ে বাড়ি ফিরে গেলেন। তবে মুক্তি পেলেও উচ্ছ্বাস দেখানোর সাহস করেননি মালিক ও বাগরি বাড়ির লোকজন। দেশের ইতিহাসে সবচেয়ে বড় সন্ত্রাসবাদী হামলার এই ঐতিহাসিক তদন্তের পরেও নিহত ৩২৯ জনের পরিবারকে সুবিচার দিতে পারল না কানাডা। বুধবার রায় শুনবেন বলে আদালতে জড়ো হয়েছিলেন প্রায় শ'দেড়েক মানুষ। বিচারক যখন বললেন, সাক্ষীদের রায় 'বিশ্বাসযোগ্য' নয়, নিজেদের কানকে বিশ্বাস করতে পারেননি অনেকেই।

১৯৮৪ সালে অমৃতসরের স্বর্ণমন্দিরে ভারতীয় সেনাবাহিনীর 'অপারেশন ব্লু স্টারের' ফলা নিতে কানাডায় দু'টি ভারতীয় বিমানে বিস্ফোরণ ঘটানোর হুকু কবেছিলেন বাগরি, মালিক ও বড়বাবুর মূল পাণ্ডা তালবিন্দর সিংহ পারমার। '৯২ সালে ভারতীয় পুলিশের হাতে মারা যান পারমার। কোটিপতি ব্যবসায়ী মালিক এবং বাগরি যে নিজের মুখে নানা জায়গায় এই ঘটনার কথা কবুল করেছেন তা আদালতে জানিয়েছিলেন বহু সাক্ষী। তা সত্ত্বেও আজকের এই রায় অবাক করে দিয়েছে অনেকেকেই। নিহতদের আত্মীয়েরা কণিক্স দুর্ঘটনার প্রকাশ্য তদন্তও দাবি করেছেন। তবে এই সন্তাননা ক্ষীণ। কারণ নিরাপত্তা বিষয়ক মন্ত্রী এই দাবি প্রায় নাকচ করে দিয়েছেন।

রায়ে পরে প্রকাশ্যে ক্ষোভ জানিয়েছেন নিহতদের পরিবারবর্গ। ১২ বছর বয়সে মাকে হারিয়েছিলেন সুশীল গুপ্ত। আজকের দিনটা যে এমন আঘাত নিয়ে আসবে তা ছিল তাঁর কল্পনার অতীত। একই ভাবে ক্ষোভ জানিয়েছেন এ ডি ম্যাডন, শ্রীনিবাসন কৃষ্ণ, বানু সাকলিকাররা। টরন্টোর



মুক্তির পরে সন্ধ্যা আজিব বাগরি। — রয়টার্স

আদালত থেকে বেরিয়ে আজিব সিংহ বাগরি এক লিখিত বিবৃতিতে জানান এই রায়ের ফলে শিখ সন্ত্রাসদায়ের উপর আরোপিত কলঙ্ক মুছে যাবে। কিন্তু এখানকার টিভিতে সারাদিন ধরে দেখানো হচ্ছে ২০ বছর আগের ভিডিও ফুটেজ। যেখানে বাগরি প্রকাশ্যে এক সভায় বলছেন, "৫০ হাজার শিখকে হত্যা করব।" এখন প্রশ্ন এর পর কী? এই রায়কে চ্যালেঞ্জ জানিয়ে ফের ফেডারেল কোর্টে আপিল করা হবে কি না তা নিয়েও জল্পনা চলছে। তবে তা স্থির করবেন বিচার যেখানে চলছে সেই ব্রিটিশ কলম্বিয়ার অ্যাটর্নি জেনারেল জিওফ ব্ল্যাট। ৩০ দিনের মধ্যে সিদ্ধান্ত নেননি তিনি।

নয়াদিল্লি থেকে পি টি আই জানাচ্ছে, উদ্ভূত পরিস্থিতিতে কণিক্স-কাণ্ডে নিহতদের পরিবারবর্গের প্রতি সহানুভূতি জানিয়েছে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার। বিদেশ দফতরের মুখপাত্র নভতেজ সরনা বলেছেন, "এত দিন পরেও দোষীদের চিহ্নিত করতে না পারাটা যে তাঁদের পক্ষে কতটা হতাশার, তা আমরা বুঝি।"

বাসিন্দা শ্রীনিবাসন যশিষ্ঠ বন্ধুকে হারিয়েছিলেন ওই দুর্ঘটনায়। ঘটনাটি নিয়ে তিনি একটি তথ্যচিত্র তৈরি করেছেন। এ ডি বলেন, ২০ বছরের তদন্ত কেন এই ভাবে প্রহসনে পরিণত হল তা নিয়ে সরকারকে জবাবদিহি করতে হবে। প্রধান দুই অভিযুক্তকে মাত্র চার বছর আশে, ২০০০ সালের অক্টোবরে গ্রেফতার করা নিয়েও সমালোচনা হচ্ছে। সরকারের গা ছাড়া ভাব দেখা গিয়েছে রায়ে পরেও। কানাডার প্রধানমন্ত্রী পল মার্টিন নিহতদের পরিবারকে সমবেদনা জানানোয় বিক্রম করেছেন এখানকার সংবাদমাধ্যম। সরাসরি মন্তব্য করতে অস্বীকার করে কানাডার নাগরিক নিরাপত্তা বিষয়ক মন্ত্রী অ্যান ম্যাকলেলান বলেন, "৬০০ পাতার রায় পড়ে দেখে মন্তব্য করব।"

এই রায়ের পরে কানাডার শিখ সম্প্রদায় মোটামুটি দু'ভাগে ভাগ হয়ে গিয়েছে। টরন্টোর অধিবাসী কারসন সিংহ, কুলদীপ সিংহরা জানিয়েছেন তাঁরা এই রায়ের খুব খুশি। এডমন্টনের শিখ ফেডারেশনের প্রতিনিধি যশবীর সিংহ বলেন, "এই রায়ে আমাদের মনের ভার লাঘব হল। কারণ শিখদের উপর থেকে সন্দেহের ছায়া সরে গেল।" অনেকে অবশ্য বলছেন, টিক বিচার হল না। উপযুক্ত তথ্য প্রমাণের অভাবে দোষীরা রেহাই পেয়ে গেল।

আদালত থেকে বেরিয়ে আজিব সিংহ বাগরি এক লিখিত বিবৃতিতে জানান এই রায়ের ফলে শিখ সন্ত্রাসদায়ের উপর আরোপিত কলঙ্ক মুছে যাবে। কিন্তু এখানকার টিভিতে সারাদিন ধরে দেখানো হচ্ছে ২০ বছর আগের ভিডিও ফুটেজ। যেখানে বাগরি প্রকাশ্যে এক সভায় বলছেন, "৫০ হাজার শিখকে হত্যা করব।" এখন প্রশ্ন এর পর কী? এই রায়কে চ্যালেঞ্জ জানিয়ে ফের ফেডারেল কোর্টে আপিল করা হবে কি না তা নিয়েও জল্পনা চলছে। তবে তা স্থির করবেন বিচার যেখানে চলছে সেই ব্রিটিশ কলম্বিয়ার অ্যাটর্নি জেনারেল জিওফ ব্ল্যাট। ৩০ দিনের মধ্যে সিদ্ধান্ত নেননি তিনি।

নয়াদিল্লি থেকে পি টি আই জানাচ্ছে, উদ্ভূত পরিস্থিতিতে কণিক্স-কাণ্ডে নিহতদের পরিবারবর্গের প্রতি সহানুভূতি জানিয়েছে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার। বিদেশ দফতরের মুখপাত্র নভতেজ সরনা বলেছেন, "এত দিন পরেও দোষীদের চিহ্নিত করতে না পারাটা যে তাঁদের পক্ষে কতটা হতাশার, তা আমরা বুঝি।"

Kanishka case flops

Vancouver, March 16 (Agencies): A Canadian judge cleared two Indian-born Sikhs of involvement in the 1985 downing of Air-India's Kanishka flight off the Irish coast, history's deadliest bombing of a civilian airliner, and a related bombing in Japan.

British Columbia supreme court judge Bruce Ian Josephson found Ripudaman Singh Malik and Ajaib Singh Bagri not guilty of murder and conspiracy charges for their role in the plot, the subject of a trial that lasted 19 months.

Members of the victims' families wept in the Vancouver courtroom as the verdicts were read. Malik, 58, and Bagri, 55, smiled at their own family members.

"Oh my God. Oh my God," one of the victims' relatives cried to herself.

The mid-air explosion off Ireland in 1985 killed all 329 people on board Air-India flight 182. The other bomb exploded among luggage at Tokyo's Narita airport and killed two workers.

Josephson listened to 115 witnesses in arguments and testimony during one of the most complicated and costly trials in Canadian legal history. "The evidence has fallen remarkably short. I find the crown has not proved his (Bagri's) guilt beyond a reasonable doubt," the judge said while delivering the verdict.

More than 70 relatives of the victims came from around

the world to hear the verdict, delivered in a \$6.2-million high-security court specially built for the trial.

Relatives and supporters of Malik, a wealthy Vancouver businessman, and Bagri, a sawmill worker and Sikh priest, were also in attendance. Both had migrated from Punjab.

Prosecutors accused the two of wanting revenge for the 1984 storming of the Golden Temple.

The two Sikhs living in western Canada were charged with planning to destroy two aircraft simultaneously with one going down over the Atlantic Ocean and the other over the Pacific, according to police.

THE TELEGRAPH

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Kin gather for Kanishka bomb verdict

Vancouver, March 15 (Reuters): Relatives of the 329 people killed on Air-India Flight 182 will gather from around the world in a Canadian court tomorrow to learn the fate of two Sikh militants on trial for history's deadliest bombing of a civilian airliner.

Ripudaman Singh Malik and Ajaib Singh Bagri are charged with murder and conspiracy for what police allege was a plot by Vancouver-based Sikh separatists to simultaneously destroy two



Malik and Bagri:
What lies ahead?

Air-India jets in 1985 as revenge on the Indian government.

British Columbia Supreme Court judge Ian Bruce Josephson, who is deciding the Kanishka case without a jury, will issue his verdict tomorrow after three months of deliberation. Arguments and witness testimony in the trial took 19 months.

Susheel Gupta said he and other relatives of the victims have waited nearly 20 years

for what they hope will be a guilty verdict and a sense of closure. At least 70 of the relatives are expected at the hearing, including some from India.

"It will be an important milestone," said Gupta, of Ottawa, who was a young boy when his mother died on the Kanishka explosion.

One bomb explosion ripped through Flight 182 off the Irish coast, killing everyone on board on June 23, 1985. The plane was on way to India from Toronto.

The other bomb exploded in luggage being transferred at Tokyo's Narita airport to Air-India Flight 301, killing two workers and injuring four others.

Prosecutors say the bombers wanted revenge for the Indian Army's 1984 storming of the Golden Temple in Amritsar. The operation, aimed at ousting militants from the temple, left hundreds of people dead.

Malik, 58, a wealthy Vancouver businessman, and Bagri, 55, a sawmill worker from Kamloop in British Columbia, were arrested in October 2000. Both are prominent members of the Sikh community in the western Canadian province, which has one of the largest Sikh populations outside India.

The defence acknowledged during the trial that there may have been a conspiracy to destroy the aircraft, but denied Bagri and Malik were part of it.

Malik and Bagri were originally scheduled to be tried with Inderjit Singh Reyat, but he pleaded guilty to a reduced charge before the trial began. Reyat was called as a witness, but denied knowing who asked him to help make the bombs.

Police say the mastermind of the plot was Talwinder Singh Parmar, a founder of the Sikh militant group Babbar Khalsa, who was killed by Indian police in October 1992.

Canada offers help to set up tsunami centre

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 18

INDIA and Canada today agreed on upgrading scientific cooperation in the wake of the tidal disaster, with Canada offering technical assistance in setting up a tsunami warning centre. Both sides also agreed to step up overall cooperation in environment and health sectors.

In a joint statement issued after talks between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and visiting Canadian Premier Paul Martin, the two sides stated that they recognised the need for a multilateral initiative for a regional warning system as a measure to be prepared for such disasters.

Martin, who is accompanied by Canadian National Science

Advisor Arthur Carty and renowned tsunami expert Tad Murthy, said: "Canada wants to participate along with India, recognising the absolute necessity of having an early warning system...in this part of the world."

"We have agreed that in developing an early warning system, our two countries will cooperate with other like-minded countries," PM Singh said at a joint media interaction.

On the issue of civilian nuclear cooperation, Martin said Canada's Atomic Energy Corporation contacted India within hours of the tsunami disaster offering help in this area. Further, the two sides agreed to encourage a roundtable of CEOs on

trade and investment promotion and give serious consideration to a partnership in environmental technologies.

Singh, for his part, welcomed Martin's initiative for a meeting of G-20 leaders to discuss issues of global concern such as terrorism, development and public health. They agreed to work towards the recommendations of the high-level UN panel on threats, challenges and change and reaffirmed their commitment towards contributing to a more effective, representative and accountable world body.

As for encouraging people-to-people links, the two countries decided to improve visa and consular services. Martin in-

formed the Canadian High Commission now has nine new visa-granting officers and that more was being done to improve the situation.

During his 40-minute meeting with President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Martin discussed ways to advance cooperation in science and technology, particularly the prospects of examining joint research and development programmes in the field of stem cell research, biotechnology and nano-technology.

Both Singh and Martin were finance ministers at the same time. The Canadian PM, in fact, described Singh as one of "greatest finance ministers", recalling his contribution to the recovery of the Indian economy in the early 90s. He also extended an invitation to the PM, which Singh accepted.



Martin with PM Manmohan Singh at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Tuesday.
Express photo by Anil Sharma