

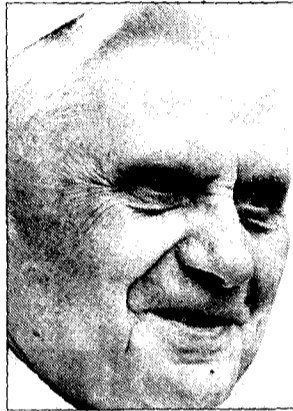
China olive branch to Dalai Lama, Pope

Beijing/Hong Kong, April 3 (Reuters): China may approve a visit by the Dalai Lama, as long as he abandons dreams of independence for Tibet, and establish ties with the Vatican if it breaks ties with Taiwan, the top official on religious affairs was quoted today as saying.

The remarks by Ye Xiaowen, director of the cabinet's State Bureau of Religious Affairs, come just weeks before a summit in Washington between Chinese President Hu Jintao and George W. Bush, a devout Christian who prodded China to allow greater religious freedom when he visited last November.

The Dalai Lama said last month he wanted to go to China to visit Buddhist landmarks and witness the economic progress the Asian powerhouse has made in recent years. Ye appeared welcoming.

"As long as the Dalai Lama makes clear that he has completely abandoned Tibetan 'independence', it is not impossible for us to consider his visit,"



Dalai Lama (left) and Pope Benedict: Winds of change

Ye told the *China Daily*, the government's English-language mouthpiece. "We can discuss it."

The Dalai Lama has lived in exile in India since 1959 when he fled after a failed uprising against communist rule, nine years after the takeover of his Himalayan homeland.

One observer said a visit by the Dalai Lama to a Buddhist landmark such as Wutai mountain in Shanxi province posed a lower political risk

than a return to his homeland or a trip to Beijing. The Tibetan leader has reiterated his "Middle Way" position that seeks greater autonomy for Tibet but not independence.

However, Ye dismissed the Dalai Lama's overtures saying that he "has failed to deliver a clear message on his stance".

China is suspicious of the Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, who is revered by and rubs shoulders with foreign leaders. Talks between the Dalai Lama's envoys and

China resumed in 2002, but have made little substantial progress.

In a sign of movement towards greater religious tolerance, Zhejiang province in China's east coast will host the World Buddhist Forum in April -- the first international religious meeting since the atheist communists swept to power in 1949.

On forging diplomatic relations with the Vatican, Ye said the Holy See must meet two conditions -- break off ties with self-ruled democratic Taiwan which Beijing claims as its own and refrain from meddling in China's internal affairs.

"We can establish diplomatic relations with the Vatican very soon if the two principles are accepted," Ye said. "But it is very hard for us to do so if the two principles are violated."

He gave no timetable. But Cardinal Joseph Zen said in Hong Kong today the Vatican could switch diplomatic relations from Taiwan to China as early as the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

THE TELEGRAPH

'HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED'

Spanish lawsuit on Tibet row

Tibet
5-3

Associated Press

MADRID, June 5: A Spanish judge opened proceedings today in a lawsuit brought by a human rights group seeking to have genocide charges brought against China over its treatment of Tibet.

In its lawsuit, the human rights group says that more than 1 million Tibetans have been killed or gone missing since China-occupied Tibet in 1951.

The Madrid-based Committee to Support Tibet filed the suit against several former Chinese officials under a Spanish law allowing prosecution of human rights crimes even if they were committed in another country.

National Court Judge Mr Ismael Moreno will hear witnesses before deciding whether to file charges of genocide, crimes against humanity, state terrorism and torture against former Chinese President Mr Jiang Zemin, ex-Prime Minister Li Peng and five military and security officials in Tibet, some of whom have retired.

Today, nearly six months after the court agreed to consider the case, Mr Moreno questioned Thubten Wangchen, a Tibetan refug-

ee who has lived in Spain for 24 years and testified about abuses he experienced and witnessed under Chinese occupation.

"It is important that a country like Spain listen to the testimony of a person about the genocide, torture inflicted on the Tibetan people," said Wangchen, 52. "It's a great day. It's a day of hope." Wangchen said his mother was taken away by Chinese forces in the village of Kyirong when he was a child in 1958 and that she has not been heard from since. He said the Chinese rounded up pregnant women and worked them to death in labour camps.

After his mother's disappearance, Wangchen fled his Tibetan village with his father and brothers and went into exile in Nepal, and later India, where he begged in the streets before he got a chance to study and enter a monastery. He came to Spain in the 1980s as a translator for a Tibetan lama and acquired Spanish nationality. Wangchen said he was not looking for revenge, but rather justice.

Mr Moreno has asked Spain's foreign ministry for information on all UN documents and resolutions regarding Tibet.

Panchen Lama calls for harmony

Stresses self-cultivation at world Buddhist meet

HANGZHOU: The 11th Panchen Lama, a high ranking figure of Tibetan Buddhism, highlighted the role of self-cultivation in leading the world to harmony, stability and peace at a Buddhist forum here on Thursday.

"I am convinced that through self-cultivation, all living beings will certainly be on the right track to a harmonious, stable, and peaceful world," he said at the opening ceremony of the World Buddhist Forum in the capital of east China's Zhejiang Province.

The high monk said he hoped Buddhists in all regions and all countries can show mercy, work in the interest of others and jointly fulfil the social obligations and the peaceful mission of Buddhism.

Praising his predecessor the 10th Panchen Lama as having made "great contribution" to national unification and unity, the 17-year-old living Buddha urged the country's Buddhists to carry the tradition of safeguarding the country and benefiting the people.

Noting that defending the na-



Panchen Lama participates in the opening of the five-day World Buddhist Forum in Hangzhou, China, on Thursday. - PHOTO: AP

tion and working for the people is a solemn commitment Buddhism has made to the nation and society, he urged all Buddhists to shoulder the historical responsibility.

Since it was introduced to China more than 2,000 years ago, Buddhism has become an important part of the Chinese culture.

Favourable environment

All the three Buddhist sects are worshiped in China and the Buddhist belief enjoys a favourable environment in the country, the Panchen Lama said.

Born on February 13, 1990 in Lhari county of the Tibet Autonomous Region, Gyaincain Norbu was approved by the central government of China as the reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama after a lot drawing ceremony among three candidates in the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa in 1995.

More than 1,000 Buddhist monks, experts and politicians from 34 countries and regions are attending the Buddhist forum.

The forum will move to nearby Zhoushan city on April 15 and monks will pray for world peace there. It is scheduled to conclude on April 16. - Xinhua

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THE HINDU

Tibet beckons Dalai Lama

By Howard Chosman
in Beijing and Ian McCork

April 4. — The Dalai Lama could be on the verge of a historic visit to the remote, mountainous homeland that the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader has not seen for nearly 40 years, following indications from the Chinese government that dialogue may, at last, be leading to a rapprochement.

But Tibetans are wary of Beijing's tentative approach to the figure they regard as a god-king. The Dalai Lama fled the capital Lhasa in 1959 after a failed uprising against Chinese rule, nine years after Communist troops entered Tibet.

The Chinese government has long proclaimed the Dalai Lama as a dangerous separatist, who wants to declare independence for 2.7 million Tibetans. Yesterday Ye Xiaowen, head of China's powerful State Bureau of Religious Affairs, appeared to extend an olive branch when he said: "As long as the Dalai Lama makes it clear that he has completely abandoned Tibetan "independence, it is not impossible for us to consid-

er his visit. We can discuss it." Mr Ye's comments, which were given prominent coverage in the state-run China Daily newspaper, were seen as the boldest signal yet that the Dalai Lama could fulfil his stated wish of returning to China. But Tibetan rights activists say there is nothing new in the language of the Communist Party official's statement and were suspicious of the timing, just weeks before President Hu Jintao travels to Washington for his first state visit. President George Bush called for greater religious freedom during his visit to China in November.

Unofficial Indian sources confirmed that there were rumours the Dalai Lama could leave his Himalayan retreat to head to China as early as May, although these have been dismissed as premature by the government-in-exile in Dharamsala. "We are happy that the Chinese authorities have paid attention, but at the same time, we note the conditions attached," said Mr Lobsang Nyandak, a diplomat with the Tibetan exile government.

The Dalai Lama, who won the

Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, ceased calling for independence back in 1988, he said, and is a moderate who preaches a "middle way", that seeks autonomy for Tibet within China. Last month, the Dalai Lama asked to be allowed to visit holy Chinese sites such as Wutaishan, a sacred mountain devoted to Tibet's Buddha of Wisdom. He also wants to see for himself the astonishing economic progress that China has made.

There have been some public gestures, including talks with the Dalai Lama's envoys, the granting of more visas to pilgrims wishing to travel to Tibet and the freeing of prominent dissidents. But Tibetan monks and nuns are still being arrested and jailed. Yael Weisz-Rind of the Free Tibet Campaign in London said the timing of the gesture ahead of Mr Hu's trip to Washington made her suspicious. "They expect pressure at the summit in this regard. We are suspicious about the timing and the prominence of the statement. We have no indication of any change in substantive policy," she said.

There are more than 100 million



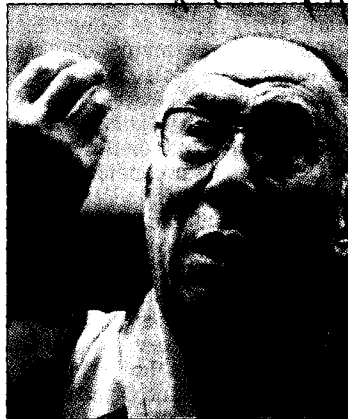
Buddhists in China, which will host the World Buddhist Forum this month; the first international religious gathering since the atheist Communists came to power in 1949.

Some analysts believe Beijing could be prepared to engage in meaningful dialogue because there are fears that when the Dalai Lama is freed, it could create a power vacuum which violent young separatists could try to fill. China is keen to ensure whoever succeeds the Dalai Lama is someone it can do business with. — The Independent

China's welcome note to Dalai Lama with rider

**NILOVA Roy
Chaudhury**
New Delhi, Feb 16

CHINA WILL 'welcome' the return of the Dalai Lama once he stops his efforts to carve out a separate state from the People's Republic of China. The Tibetan monk must recognise the existence of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) as an integral part



Dalai Lama

of China, not only through his words, but also his deeds, Chinese ambassador to India, Sun Yuxi, said on Thursday. Just professing to accept the TAR is not enough, Sun said. "Why does the Dalai Lama have a government in exile?"

Saying that over 70,000 Tibetan "compatriots" had returned since 1980 to visit Tibet, where people were free to practise any religion, Sun said, representatives of the Dalai Lama were visiting Beijing for talks with the government. But Tibetan Buddhism's head lama had to give up any notions of separatism before Beijing would directly speak with him.

Shortly after the special representatives of India and China meet in March to try and carry forward discussions on a resolution to the boundary dispute, a border market is set to finally take off at Nathu La around May. This indicated that the border issue was no longer an impediment to bilateral relations, Sun said. More such cross-border exchanges would take place, Sun said, even as the attempts by special representatives, Dai Bingguo and M.K. Narayanan, and the Joint Working Group on the boundary issue to resolve the boundary question continue.

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Tribal renaissance

9 Tribes 52-7 15/1

The recent revolt by Kalinganagar tribals against poor compensation for the land acquired for establishment of a steel plant is the upshot of a renaissance taking root in the tribal belt of the country.

After the Kalinganagar uprising against industrialisation, tribals of Rourkela and Bastar have also started a revolt against the poor package meted out to them by government and industrial houses.

The renaissance among tribals of Orissa and Chhattisgarh appears to be spontaneous as political parties and politicians and even leaders of non-governmental organisations surfaced at a later stage ~ after the killing of 13 tribals and the chopping off of the hands of five tribals. There was no Medha Patkar or Anna Hazare to champion their cause.

The plan of a big industrial house (Tatas) to establish a Rs 10,000-crore steel plant at Lohariguda in Bastar is also facing tough tribal resistance.

The industrial house proposes to acquire land in 10 villages which would uproot at least 250 families. They have been assured of a house site of 3,000 sqft for each family, water and road connectivity and compensation between Rs 50,000 and Rs 1 lakh per acre as compensation.

Jobs have been promised to one person per family by the industrial house which has told the government it would invest two per cent of the profit on the area's development.

The public sector National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) had also planned to set up a steel plant at Nagarnar, twenty kilometres from the Jagdalpur divisional headquarters.

The foundation stone for the project was laid four years back and the land of the tribals was acquired by the corporation for the project. Tribals have been dispossessed of their cultivable land by the corporation which had promised "peripheral development" of Nagarnar.

In the last four years, there has been no development. Contrary to the NMDC's promise, neither have schools

By seeing through the hypocrisy of industrial houses that want to acquire their land by fair means or foul and the government's pathetic rehabilitation package meted out in the name of industrialisation, tribals of Orissa and Chhattisgarh have demonstrated that they cannot be ignored any longer, writes ABHINANDAN MISHRA



Jharkhand Mukti Morcha activists on the streets with bows and arrows in Ranchi on 7 January to enforce a bandh called to protest against the police firing on tribals in Orissa. PTI

nor hospitals come up in the area. Tribals of Nagarnar are also opposed to the proposed steel plant now.

Another private sector company (Essar) had entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Chhattisgarh government for setting up a steel plant at Bastar.

Tribals of the area have declared they would not give their land for the

steel plant. One more private sector company had signed an MoU for another steel plant in Bastar four years back. After resistance from land holders, the group backed out.

Tribals are holding their *jan adalats* (people's courts) at different places, including Belar, Nagarnar and Lohariguda and passing resolutions such as, "We will not give our valuable land, whatever may be the price".

The tribals feel betrayed by the non-implementation of the commitments made by the government and the industrial houses in the past.

"We would not like to be cheated again," said Laikan Vaghel. "The government had made a commitment to give Rs 5 lakh a year to the nagar panchayat of Nagarnar, but not a single paisa has reached us so far," he said, adding, "We want to reclaim our

land". The tribals have genuine reasons to complain. In the process of land acquisition, the mandatory consent of the gram sabha is not taken. This happened in the case of Nagarnar. During investigations, panchayat employees confirmed that the pages from the register of the gram panchayat's special sabha of Kasturi had been "removed".

"I do not know who tore off the pages missing in the proceeding register," Lakhan Singh, panchayat employee of Kasturi panchayat told the divisional commissioner (now the post is abolished), while giving details about irregularities in the acquisition of land for the Nagarnar steel plant.

Rahuraj Devangan, panchayat employee of Bamhani panchayat, said while elaborating on the proceedings of the gram sabha held for land acquisition: "I did not write the proceedings. Seven pages are missing from the register. I do not know how these pages disappeared and who removed them." There are similar statements made by employees of the panchayats in several villages where vital pages from the registers were missing.

The pages were removed as they carried objections from the tribals and an impression was given outside that the villagers had consented to the land acquisition.

Tribals of the area are illiterate and the lowest-grade employees of the Panchayati Raj bodies who maintain office records of the panchayats come under the influence of agents of industrial houses to manipulate documents to suggest the entire "gram sabha" had given its approval for construction of the plant and land acquisition. Tribals had filed affidavits to claim they had been obliged to accept cheques even though they had not consented to land acquisition.

The tribals appeared to have taken lessons from past mistakes committed by their elders and seem to have realised that their ignorance should not be taken for granted in the name of industrialisation by the government or big industrial houses.

(The author is a freelance writer.)

PEOPLE & PLACES

Winds of change



LONDON — On *Love Trap*, released in 2003, Susheela Raman sang in Sanskrit, Telugu and Tamil, the last being the language of her parents. *Music For Crocodiles*, which has earned her a nomination in the 2006 BBC Radio 3 Awards for World Music, is mostly performed in English. Raman has always been caught on the cusp between her Indian classical training and a desire to belt out the blues. **The Independent**

Rags to royalty



LONDON — The author of the Harry Potter series, JK Rowling seems so determined to not become a frivolous spender that she sets herself limits when she goes shopping. According to *contactmusic.com*, Rowling was a struggling mother a week before her novels made her richer than the queen of England. She enjoys being rich but feels guilty when she spends too much. **IANS**

কলিঙ্গনগরের বদলা নিতে প্রচার মাওবাদীদের

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা, ভুবনেশ্বর, ১৪ জানুয়ারি: কলিঙ্গনগরে 'আদিবাসী হত্যার বদলা' নিতে ওড়িশায় এবং অন্ধ্রপ্রদেশে জোরদার প্রচারে নেমেছে মাওবাদীরা। গ্রামে গ্রামে পোস্টার এবং প্রচারপত্র ছড়িয়েছে তারা।

পাশাপাশি নিহত ৬ আদিবাসীর মৃতদেহের 'অসম্মান' ঘটানোর প্রতিবাদে মুখর হয়েছে কয়েকটি সংগঠন। তারা ভুবনেশ্বরে সভা করে মৃতদেহের গোপনাপ্তে কাটাছেড়ার অভিযোগ তুলেছে। ওই ঘটনাকে 'বর্বরোচিত' বলে বর্ণনা করা হয়েছে। সব মিলিয়ে ওড়িশা সরকার বেশ উদ্ভিন্ন। মৃতদেহের 'অসম্মান' ঘটানোর অভিযোগ প্রসঙ্গে মুখ্যমন্ত্রী নবীন পট্টনায়ক আজ বলেন, রাজ্য মানবাধিকার কমিশনকে এই ঘটনার তদন্ত করানো হবে।

নকশালরা যে কলিঙ্গনগরে তৎপরতা চালাতে পারে, তা আগেই আঁচ করেছিল ওড়িশা সরকার। রাজ্য গোয়েন্দা সংস্থাও এই মর্মে সুনির্দিষ্ট তথ্য-সহ রিপোর্ট পেশ করেছে। জানা গিয়েছে, মাওবাদীরা ওড়িশার পশ্চিম

এবং দক্ষিণাঞ্চলের পাহাড়-জঙ্গল ঘেরা প্রত্যন্ত আদিবাসী গ্রামগুলিতে গত এক সপ্তাহ ধরে পোস্টার ছড়িয়েছে। পোস্টারে কলিঙ্গনগরের 'বদলা' নেওয়ার হুমকি দেওয়া হয়েছে। এ দিকে আজ ভুবনেশ্বরে অন্ধ্রপ্রদেশের নকশাল-ঘেঁষা সংগঠন 'গণতান্ত্রিক অধিকার সুরক্ষা সমিতি'র (ওপিডিআর) নেতা সি ভাস্কর রাও জোরালো ভাষায় কলিঙ্গনগরের 'আদিবাসী হত্যার' ঘটানোর নিন্দা করেছেন। তাঁর অভিযোগ, বহুজাতিক সংস্থাগুলির মদতেই এমন বর্বরোচিত কাণ্ড ঘটেছে।

পাশাপাশি কলিঙ্গনগরের পুলিশের গুলিতে নিহত ছ' জন আদিবাসীর গোপন অস্ত্র কাটার অভিযোগ নিয়ে রাজ্য উত্তপ্ত। নিহত আদিবাসী মহিলাদের দেহকেও রেয়াত করা হয়নি বলে অভিযোগ।

এই চাঞ্চল্যকর অভিযোগ তুলেছেন জাজপুরের শ্রমিক নেতা, সিপিআই-এর মায়াধর নায়ক এবং ওপিডিআর তথা জাতীয় তফসিলি জাতি কমিশনের (এনসিএসটি)

চেয়ারম্যান কুনওয়ার সিংহ। তাঁদের অভিযোগ, নিহত ছ' জনের দেহের কজ্জি শুধু নয়, স্তন, লিঙ্গের মতো গোপন অঙ্গগুলিও ছেঁড়াকাটা হয়েছে। চান্দিয়া গ্রামের মুক্তা বাক্সিরা (৩০), ওই গ্রামেরই আতি জামুদার (৩২), বামিয়া গোঠর গ্রামের লাভু জারিকা (২৯), গোবরঘাটি গ্রামের ভগবান সয়ের (২৫), গারপুর গ্রামের রাম গাগরাই (৩৫) এবং বনা বদ্রার (৩৫) মৃতদেহে এই 'অসম্মান' ঘটানো হয়েছে বলে আদিবাসীদের অভিযোগ।

শ্রমিক নেতা মায়াধর আজ ফুকু কঠে বলেন, "কলিঙ্গনগরের ওই বর্বরোচিত ঘটনা কেবল জাতির কাছে নয়, সারা বিশ্বের কাছে লজ্জার।" এনসিএসটি'র চেয়ারম্যান কুনওয়ার এবং ওপিডিআর নেতা ভাস্কর রাও এই ঘটনার তীব্র নিন্দা করেন।

জওহরলাল নেহরু বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্রদের তথ্যানুসন্ধানী একটি দল ঘটনাস্থল ঘুরে এসে সিবিআইকে দিয়ে গোটা ঘটনার তদন্তের দাবি জানিয়েছে। প্রতিনিধি দলের নেতা নেতা মোনা দাস বলেন,

"আদিবাসীদের মতো আতঙ্ক সৃষ্টি করতেই" মৃতদেহের এই অবমাননা।

ওড়িশা সরকার গোড়ায় ব্যাপারটি অস্বীকার করে যাওয়ার নীতিই নিয়েছিল। সরকারের বক্তব্য, ওই অভিযোগের সাক্ষ্যপ্রমাণ কিছুই নেই। মায়াধরের পাল্টা বক্তব্য, আদিবাসীদের সমাজ রক্ষণশীল। তাই প্রিয়জনদের মৃত শরীরের এই অসম্মানের কথা আদিবাসীরা চেপে গিয়েছিলেন। কিন্তু তাঁরা সরেজমিন ঘটনাস্থলে গিয়ে মৃতদের পরিবারের লোকদের সঙ্গে কথা বলে ব্যাপারটি জানতে পারেন। সংকার করার সময় বাড়ির লোকেরা দেখেন, মৃতদেহগুলির ওই অমর্যাদা ঘটানো হয়েছে।

পরে মুখ্যমন্ত্রী আজ জানান, এই ঘটনার সত্যতা যাচাই করতে রাজ্যের মানবাধিকার কমিশনকে দিয়ে তদন্ত করানো হবে। শুধু গোপন অস্ত্রই নয়, কজ্জি কাটারও তদন্ত করবেন রাজ্যের মানবাধিকার কমিশন। এই তদন্তে যদি প্রমাণ হয়, এই ঘটনায় সত্যি কেউ জড়িত, তবে তার বিরুদ্ধে কঠোর ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া হবে।

Tribal politics

Congress smells opportunity in Orissa

While Navin Patnaik's track record as chief minister had been far from impressive, he has managed to remain afloat owing to lack of effective opposition. But after the tragedy of the tribals in Kalinganagar, it could well be that more than an opposition, popular resentment may spell disaster for the Biju Janata Dal chief. Tribals represent a sizable section of the population who are now up in arms against the government on account of the meagre compensation granted for land acquired for setting up Patnaik's pet project, a steel plant. The discontent has been aggravated by the police firing on agitating tribals and the ambivalent stand taken by the BJP, which no longer seems willing to play second fiddle to the BJD. Now matters have been made worse with Sonia Gandhi arriving on the scene and the tribal agitation spreading to Rourkela which is in the grip of an economic blockade. This is obviously the best opportunity for the Congress, which had ruled the state for many years before internal conflicts allowed Patnaik to rise from nowhere. The Congress president's gesture in flying down with Shivraj Patil to share the sorrow and announce compensation of Rs 5 lakh for each of the victims' families is bound to go down well with the tribals.

Sonia's presence may act as both diversion and balm even as Patnaik tries desperately to shift the responsibility for the agitation in Rourkela to the Centre. Land was acquired many years ago in Rourkela by the railways and the steel plant authorities. Some of it has remained unutilised while the tribals have been displaced. A more alert state government would not have allowed the discontent to go out of control. The BJD government has shown little concern for local causes and Patnaik will only have himself to blame if, as a result, there is a swing towards the Congress. Whether the Congress president can motivate the state leadership is another matter.

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