

'SAFEGUARDS PACT MUST FOR N-FUEL SALE'

# Canberra can if Delhi inks deal

**Indo-Asian News Service**

NEW DELHI, May 5: Australia may change its official policy of not selling uranium to countries such as India, which have not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), if New Delhi negotiates a special agreement with Canberra on safeguarding its nuclear facilities.

A seven-member Australian team headed by Mr David Ritchie, deputy secretary in the department of foreign affairs, met the Indian delegation headed by foreign secretary Mr Shyam Saran this week and hinted at the possibility of Canberra accommodating New Delhi's need for uranium, official sources said.

But they stressed that this could be possible after the Australian government amended its policy on uranium sales, sources said.

Mr Ritchie, who handles international security issues, was an adviser to Australian Prime Minister Mr John Howard on international affairs sometime ago. "As of now, there is no change of position or a change in the intent of the Australian government to sell uranium to non-signatories to the NPT," an Australian diplomat said.

But if India enters into a

special bilateral agreement with Australia, along the line of China, on placing its reactors and nuclear facilities that will use Australian uranium under permanent safeguards, Australia may change its policy, sources said.

Australia will, however, take a final decision on civil nuclear cooperation with India after the 45-nation Nuclear Suppliers Group, of which it is a member, changes the rules and the US Congress approves the India-US civil nuclear cooperation agreement, sources said.

The Indian side underlined New Delhi's impeccable record in nuclear non-proliferation and urged Canberra to change its policy and supply much-needed nuclear fuel for its burgeoning energy needs, sources said.

The Australian team that included Mr John Carlson, director-general of the Australia Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office, and other senior diplomats also sought more details on the India-US civilian nuclear deal.

This visit by Australian officials was decided during talks between Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and his Australian counterpart Mr John Howard here nearly two

months ago to discuss the finer details of the India-US nuclear deal.

During his interaction with the Press here, Mr Howard, while rejecting immediate uranium sales to India, kept the door open by taking a "positive view" of India-US civil nuclear cooperation.

"We are interested in obtaining more information on various aspects of the agreement. The two countries will be in touch with each other to better understand the agreement," Mr Howard had said.

Australia, the world's second largest exporter of uranium that has 40 per cent of the world's total reserves, has bilateral safeguard agreements with 16 NPT-compliant countries to which it sells uranium.

Even China, an NPT signatory and an official nuclear weapon state, had to satisfy Canberra's demands for separation of its civilian and military nuclear facilities and placing civilian facilities under permanent safeguards to clinch an agreement on uranium sales last month.

Under the agreement, Canberra reserves the right "to cross-check" reports from Beijing to safeguard the uranium obtained from Australia.

THE STATESMAN

06 MAY 2006

42-10

## Australia's uranium dilemma

9/13

India - Australia news

**A**t the end of his three-day visit to India, Australian Prime Minister John Howard may well find he has more homework to do when he gets back than he did to prepare for the visit. Weighing on his mind will be the forceful request from Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for the supply of uranium to India's nuclear power plants. After winning President George Bush's support for the resumption of civilian nuclear cooperation, Dr. Singh did lean on Mr. Howard for supplies of uranium, and received from his guest an untypical, wavering reply. Mr. Howard, one of Australia's long serving Prime Ministers, obviously cannot resolve this issue easily. His country holds almost 40 per cent of the world's reserves of uranium, yet it does not have a single nuclear power generation plant. All the uranium it mines is exported, but guided by a policy first outlined in 1977, this can go only to countries that have signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. India clearly does not qualify under this policy as a customer.

Mr. Howard realises that Mr. Bush and Dr. Singh have woven a clever deal that could well confer on India, a nuclear weapon state outside the NPT framework, the privileges of a signatory. The United States as well as other members of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group could well make a constructive exception for India. But Mr. Howard knows his country and its politics are different and difficult. Australian voters have been hypersensitive to nuclear proliferation. A recent opinion poll on the proposed sale of uranium to China showed more than half of the respondents were against it even though China is a signatory to the NPT and therefore an eligible buyer. At the other end of the scale are large uranium mining companies in Australia which sense that the entry of China and India to the club could dramatically expand their market, indeed treble it by 2020, according to one estimate. With global uranium prices likely to rise sharply as demand increases, the companies see substantial profit ahead. For the moment none of them has suggested they want the official line moved, but their influence on their Government cannot be underestimated. With national elections a year away, Mr. Howard will have to evaluate his political and economic cards. Does he cling on to the old NPT-or-nothing policy, ignore India's reasoned request, and risk losing the chance to participate fully as the new Bush-led nuclear game unfolds? Or does he borrow a leaf from Mr. Bush's book and attempt a clever reformulation of the guiding principles so that he can squeeze India across the fence? By constituting a joint group to study the Indo-U.S. deal, Mr. Howard has bought himself time to think. He would be first to acknowledge that the economic and political realities of the day are different from the ones in which the guiding principles were framed. Will he be able to break free?

# Australia sticks to uranium sale policy

ENS & PTI

CHENNAI, MARCH 8

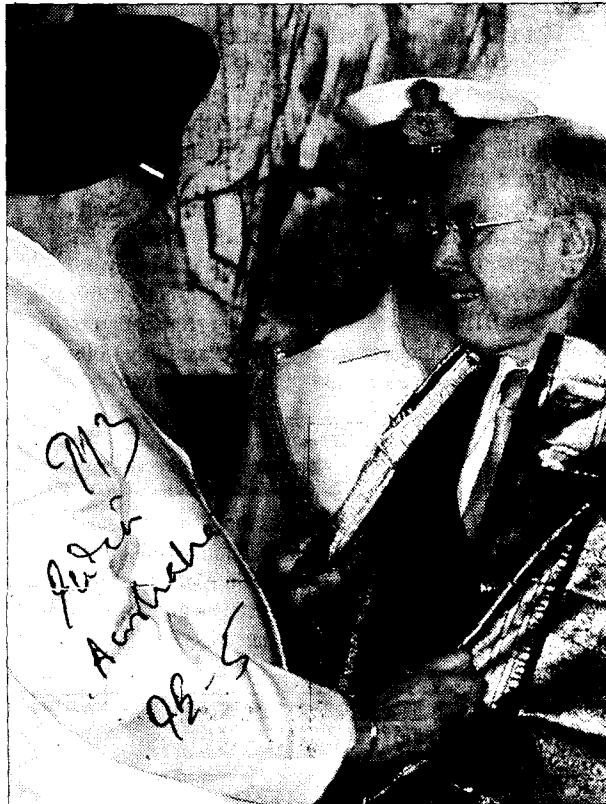
**A**USTRALIA today stuck to its stand of not supplying uranium to countries, including India, which have not signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. "There is no change in our policy adopted for the past 30 years," said Australian Prime Minister John Howard, who is on a two-day visit to the Tamil Nadu.

Addressing a gathering at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) here, he went on to say that he welcomed the nuclear agreement between India and the US. "This is a very positive agreement," he said. "We welcome it. For the first time, Indian civil nuclear reactors will be opened to international inspection."

The Australian PM said the recent agreement was still subject to certain processes between the two countries. "We, at the official level in Australia, are getting together to know how this agreement will operate. We are watching it very closely," he said.

Stating that Australia fully understood India's energy needs, the visiting leader said that he had held discussions with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New Delhi on the issue.

In his address, Howard also said that a consulate of his country would be set up in Chennai to cater to the needs of South Indian students and businessmen. With IIT, the Society for Electronics Transfer and Security Protection (STEP) and the Queensland University of Technology, Australia, signing an MoU for technical and academic collaboration in the fields of informa-



Tamil Nadu Governor Surjit Singh Barnala presenting a shawl to Australian Prime Minister John Howard in Chennai on Wednesday. PTI photo

## We must fight terror together, says Howard

► CHENNAI: Expressing his sorrow and anguish over the terrorist strike at Varanasi, Australian Prime Minister John Howard said today that the incident was a reminder of the need for both India and his country to work together in the fight against terrorism. "I express my sorrow and sympathies over the loss of lives and the grief to the families of those killed in the bomb blasts," he said at a function at the Indian Institute of Technology here. "The modern threat of terrorism reminds us the need to work together to fight against terrorism," he said. — PTI

tion security systems, Howard said the memorandum of understanding would bring more contacts between the institutions in both the countries.

R Chidambaram, principal scientific advisor to the

Prime Minister, said Queensland University was doing pioneering work in information protection and also that today's agreement was the result of two years of discussions.

# IT'S NOT YET HOWARD'S END

## Aussie PM Says There's Room For Talks On Uranium Supply

By Indrani Bagchi/TNN

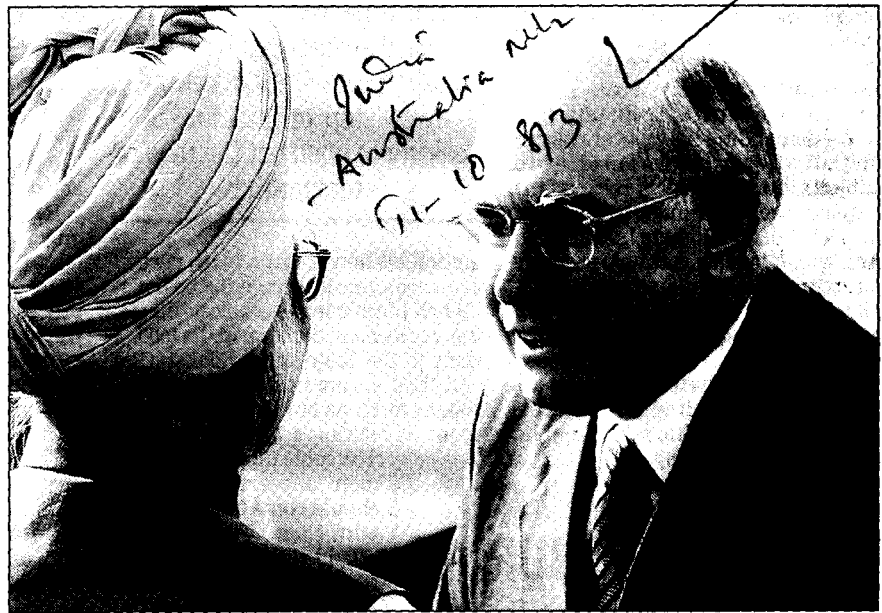
**New Delhi:** Visiting Australian Prime Minister John Howard said on Monday morning he would consider supplying uranium to India in the light of the Indo-US nuclear deal but, later in the day, domestic trouble forced him to settle for a more cautious stand.

While stating that Australia would stick to its policy not to sell uranium to non-NPT countries like India, Howard called the Indo-US nuclear agreement a "significant development", and said that Australia would look carefully into the safeguards agreement for India to assess whether they met Australian safety and non-proliferation standards.

India's request for uranium from Australia has put a strange twist to Howard's visit to India. Much as he tried to keep the focus on counter-terrorism and trade, with India now in the market for nuclear fuel, his trip has been all about uranium supplies. Before he ran into some trouble from domestic opposition and an active green lobby for even agreeing to consider it, Howard had sounded more positive. "There's a lot of good things about that agreement, including in particular for the first time, India's civilian nuclear facilities will come under international inspections," he said.

At the joint press meet, Manmohan Singh said India was deserving of the international exception given that despite not being a signatory to the NPT it abides by its rules and was committed to a moratorium on nuclear testing.

After a 45-minute one-on-one between the two premiers in the evening, India believes there may be negotiating space with Australia on the subject. India, say sources, briefed Howard in detail about the Indo-US nuclear deal, including their approach on



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh receives his Australian counterpart John Howard at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Monday

the safeguards and additional protocol with the IAEA. Earlier, Howard had said: "I'll be interested in hearing more about that (India-US) arrangement."

While there is unlikely to be any sudden movement on this issue which could create a political backlash in Canberra, nobody is writing off future possibility of this deal happening. In fact, according to Australian analysts, there appears to be a mismatch between Howard and his foreign minister Alexander Downer who only days ago ruled out selling uranium to India even if the NSG makes an exception for it.

On Monday morning, Howard took a more flexible approach on uranium selling. "I think we would like to talk about it

(uranium export to India)."

On Monday morning, Howard took a more flexible approach to India's request for uranium. "I think we would like to talk about it (uranium export to India)." Howard said at Rashtrapati Bhavan: "We will talk about it against the background of policies and needs of the two countries."

That Howard was prepared to fight a political battle on this was clear when he said, before leaving for India, "We do have a long-standing policy of only selling uranium to countries that are part of the NPT regime, but we will have a look at what the Americans have done and when we get a bit more information about that we'll further assess it."

# PM to engage Howard on N-fuel

By Indrani Bagchi/TNN

**New Delhi:** Post-India-US nuclear deal, diplomacy is in full flow with PM Manmohan Singh rallying friends and seeking new converts. After receiving Russian president Vladimir Putin's backing for developing "alternative" energy sources, he is looking to rework Australia's tough position on fuel supplies to non-NPT nations.

The tortuous process of navigating the nuclear deal through the international arena is underway with Singh speaking to Putin,



Howard and his wife arrive in New Delhi on Sunday

with whom he shares a warm relationship, for 20 minutes on Saturday night to discuss the agreement and restart a dialogue on nuclear cooperation. This week, he

will also engage Australian PM John Howard who arrived in India on Sunday.

It is expected that deliberations on energy, both hydrocarbons and nuclear, will be thrashed out in detail when Singh travels to St Petersburg for the G-8 summit. Setting priorities of the summit on energy security, Putin said, "Russia calls on G-8 countries and international community to focus efforts on developing innovative technologies"—a reference to nuclear energy.

The visit of the Australian PM, the second time in the wake of a US President, will

also see the issue of nuclear fuel supplies hovering not too far from the surface. Australia has 40% of the world's uranium supplies that India will be keen to access if the India-US deal passes through the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

Canberra has indicated that it will support India's case at the NSG, which is certain to raise confidence levels in New Delhi. Australia remains committed to supply nuclear stuff only to NPT signatories, a point that its foreign minister Alexander Downer made forcefully recently.

# Indo-Aussie defence pact inked

## Civil aviation, Customs, biotech & trade agreements on the agenda

HT Corporate Bureau  
New Delhi, March 6

BRUSHING ASIDE past misgivings over New Delhi's naval buildup, Australia on Monday signed an MoU with India on cooperation in defence — covering maritime cooperation to check the terrorist threat in the Malacca Straits, the key sea lane for trade.

The MoU — signed by defence secretary Shekhar Dutt and Australian High Commissioner John McCarthy — here in the presence of visiting Prime Minister John Howard and Manmohan Singh, also provides for cooperation in military training, defence industries and defence research and development.

For implementing the MoU, New Delhi and Canberra also agreed to set up a joint working group on defence on the pattern of similar high-level working groups India has with France, Russia and the US.

The statement said the conclusion of an MoU was seen as "realisation of the need for developing close and constructive defence cooperation in areas of common interest".

India and Australia will also sign agreements on civil aviation, Customs, biotech and trade and economic framework to boost strategic and economic relationship between the two countries.

John Howard said on Monday that, in addition to the increased strategic and political interests in the region between the two countries, it was the natural economic complementarity of Australia and India that gave the substantial room for developing bilateral relationship.

Speaking at a joint luncheon hosted by three industry chambers — CII, Ficci and Assocham — Howard highlighted that the Australia-India joint working group on energy and minerals would be an important vehicle to address trade and investment issues in the energy and minerals sectors, exchange information on policy development and also identify possible commercial outcomes.

Howard added that the two countries could explore opportunities in the areas of finance, resources, renewable energy and infrastructure.

Welcoming the MoU on defence cooperation, Howard said, "This will be a formal expression of our mutual interest in working more closely to enhance peace and security in our region... India will be an observer to the Proliferation Security Initiative exercise in Darwin in April 2006, which has as its aim the reduction of the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. We hope India will soon join the Proliferation Security Initiative as a full member, and lend its weight to these efforts to prevent proliferation".

Howard also announced that Indian tourists would be allowed to access an 'e-visa' scheme to promote tourism and the Indian entertainment industry.



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his Australia counterpart, John Howard, in New Delhi.

### Cricket — the tie that binds

A KEEN cricket follower, John Howard said what perhaps united people from the two countries more than anything was their passion for cricket.

And of all the stars the two countries had produced, the name of Sir Donald Bradman still embodied a special magic, he said, while announcing that his government would contribute \$1 million in sponsorship for the Bradman exhibition tour of India.

This will be a unique display of Bradman memorabilia — a display assembled specifically for the Indian public. "This exhibition will travel to New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata later this year, so that as many people as possible in this cricket loving country will have the opportunity to see it first hand," said Howard.

While referring to the top Australian cricketers who have been closely followed and liked by cricket enthusiasts in India, Howard avoided reference to current coach of Indian cricket team Greg Chappell.

It was left to Dr Jamshed J. Irani, former CII president and director of Tata Sons Ltd, to point that where Australia failed to beat a common enemy (read England cricket team), it has contributed one of its stars in the form of a coach to Indian team to beat them. "He is so popular that during last three days he has consumed second largest space on news papers, the first being President Bush," said Irani.

# Uranium supply central to talks between Manmohan, Howard

Manmohan hopes Australia will endorse the India-U.S. nuclear deal

Amit Baruah

**NEW DELHI:** India and Australia have agreed that a group of officials will discuss the possible supply of uranium to New Delhi. Canberra, however, ruled out any immediate change in its position on not supplying uranium to countries that were not party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) such as India.

"We don't alter policy at press conferences," the visiting Australian Prime Minister, John Howard, said after talks with his Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh at Hyderabad House on Monday. The two leaders witnessed the signing of six agreements, including one on defence cooperation.

Earlier, Mr. Howard was quoted as saying by Reuters: "We do have a long-standing policy of only selling uranium to countries that are part of the NPT regime, but we will have a look at what the Americans have done [with the Indians] and when we get a bit more information about that we'll further assess it."

"Australia does have large supplies of uranium ... and provided the rules are followed and the safeguards are met, we are willing to sell, but we have to be satisfied about safeguards," Mr. Howard said late on Sunday.

Asked about those remarks on Monday, he said there was no "current intention" to change its policy of not selling uranium to countries that do not adhere to the NPT.

"We are, however, interested in what the Americans and the Indians have agreed to. There are a lot of good things about that agreement, including in particular for the first time, India's civilian nuclear facilities will come under international



**STRIKING A RAPPORT:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh receives his Australian counterpart, John Howard, at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Monday. — PHOTO: V.V. KRISHNAN

inspections. But the Indian-American agreement, in itself, is no reason for us to change our policy and I have said that. Mr. Downer has said it, but we will listen to what the Indians have said ..."

#### "We're short of uranium"

Speaking at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, Mr. Singh said: "We would very much like Australia to sell uranium to India." Earlier,

in an interview to an Australian newspaper, Dr. Singh said: "I hope Australia will be an important partner in this. We are short of uranium. We need to import uranium and our needs will increase in years to come."

"I very much hope Australia, as a member of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group, would endorse what I and President Bush have worked out. This is an arrangement, which helps the cause of

nuclear non-proliferation. India has an impeccable record of not entering into any unauthorised arms proliferation," he said.

Australia, with 29 per cent of the world's medium-cost uranium reserves, operates three uranium mines. Canberra only exports uranium when satisfied that it will not be used for nuclear weapons or any other military purpose. Australia has a special problem since it supplies urani-

um to non-nuclear weapon States or nuclear weapon States: India, on its part, does not fit into either category under the NPT. For nuclear weapon States, Australian uranium must be covered by a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Another photograph on Page 12

John Howard

washingtonpost.com

## Australia PM says may consider uranium sale to India

Reuters

Monday, March 6, 2006; 2:16 AM

NEW DELHI (Reuters) - Australia will consider selling uranium to India if it is convinced about New Delhi's commitment to follow global nuclear safeguards for its civilian atomic reactors, Prime Minister John Howard said.

Howard's comments came as he began a four-day visit to India late on Sunday, days after New Delhi and Washington sealed a landmark nuclear deal that is expected to give India access to the global market for fuel and reactors to meet its soaring energy needs.

Australia has almost half of the world's known uranium resources and it is keen to increase exports but its policy rules out sales to countries like India who have not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

But the issue was expected to figure high on the agenda of talks between the two sides as Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said he would ask his Australian counterpart to back the nuclear deal between New Delhi and Washington.

"We do have a longstanding policy of only selling uranium to countries that are part of the NPT regime, but we will have a look at what the Americans have done and when we get a bit more information about that we'll further assess it," Howard said in comments released by his office in Australia.

"Australia does have large supplies of uranium ... and provided the rules are followed and the safeguards are met, we are willing to sell, but we have to be satisfied about the safeguards," he said.

Howard termed the India-U.S. nuclear pact as a positive development and said Australia had a very positive attitude toward New Delhi.

"I welcome the fact that for the first time a lot of India's nuclear capacity is going to be subjected to international inspections, that's certainly a big step forward.

Ties between New Delhi and Canberra had soured after India conducted nuclear tests in 1998 and Howard, in an interview to Reuters last week, said Australia would not sell uranium to India under current policy.

India's Singh hopes that that policy would change.


"I hope Australia will be an important partner in this. We are short of uranium. We need to import

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/06/AR2006030600108\\_pf...](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/06/AR2006030600108_pf...) 3/6/2006

Advertisement

Microsoft

Today's  
Microsoft Office  
helps keep the  
team in sync.

Explore a shared  
workspace 

 Microsoft  
Office



uranium and our needs will increase in years to come," he told The Australian newspaper in an interview published on Monday.

Howard said he would give Singh a proper hearing, the Australian Associated Press reported.

India, Asia's third-largest economy, is looking to meet its growing energy needs through nuclear power but it has less than one percent of the world's uranium reserves.

Nuclear power now accounts for a paltry 3 percent of India's total energy production.

Under its pact with the United States -- agreed during last week's visit to south Asia by President George W. Bush -- India has to separate its civilian and military nuclear plants and place the former under international safeguards to prevent proliferation.

© 2006 Reuters

Ads by Google

**Broadband Internet Access**

Find the right broadband internet service for your home or business

[www.softwaresolution.org](http://www.softwaresolution.org)

**High Speed Internet**

Go DSL - Browse faster. High Speed DSL Services Made Easy.

[www.MonsterMarketplace.com](http://www.MonsterMarketplace.com)

**Broadband Provider**

We've Found the Top 4 Sites about Broadband Provider

[Best4Sites.net](http://Best4Sites.net)

# Australia will not supply uranium till India signs NPT

K. Venugopal

**CANBERRA:** Australia will not supply natural uranium to India as long as it does not sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT), Alexander Downer, Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, said in an interview here on Wednesday. He was responding to a question whether Australia saw a role for itself as a

supplier of uranium to India in the event of the United States and India coming to an agreement that would help lift international sanctions on the Indian nuclear energy programme.

Speaking to a couple of visiting Indian journalists ahead of Prime Minister John Howard's trip to New Delhi next week, Mr. Downer recalled that the foundation of his country's policy on

nuclear supplies was that it would export uranium only to countries that had signed the treaty. Since India had not signed the NPT, and was not going to do so soon, the export could not happen.

Nevertheless, the Australian Foreign Minister was appreciative of recent proposals emanating from India.

"Some of the proposals put

forward by India, even if they do not amount to signing the NPT but only adhering to the transparency of the regime, may not be optimal but that is a step in the right direction," he remarked.

## A big exporter

Endowed with 40 per cent of the world's cheaply extractable uranium, Australia is a big ex-

porter of the mineral. In recent weeks, it has been negotiating a long-term contract for supplies to China, which is embarking on a large expansion of its nuclear power capacity. China is a signatory to the NPT as a nuclear weapon state.

**Detailed interview on OP-ED Page**

India - A whole new

213