

# Fai claims to have met Indian Cabinet ministers

WASHINGTON, 12 DEC: US-based Kashmiri separatist Mr Ghulam Nabi Fai has claimed that he met several Indian ministers on a regular basis during last two decades of his activities in Washington and had "a channel of communication" opened with the Indian Embassy. Fai (62), who last week in a US court pleaded guilty to the federal charges of being an ISI agent, said in a statement that meeting these Indian officials was part of his strategy to communicate with New Delhi. In his statement titled 'Why Kashmir is Important to Me?', Fai claims, "During the past twenty years, I along with Ambassador Mr Yusuf Buch, former senior advisor to the UN Secretary General and late Ayub Thuker, president, World Kashmir Freedom Movement, have met with various Indian Cabinet ministers, belonging to the administrations of Prime Ministers Chandra Shekhar, Narasimha Rao, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and Mr Manmohan Singh."

However, Fai did not respond to an e-mail on the names of these Indian ministers and officials. "And during the past eleven years, I also met with four different officials at the Indian Embassy who succeeded each other periodically and introduced me to the new incoming official before leaving for a new post," Fai claimed. The Embassy did not respond the mail seeking a response to the allegations being made by Fai on its official who used to meet him regularly or if it was incorrect. Fai claimed that it has always been his habit

to keep the channel of communication open to the Indian Embassy. "I have met with the officials of Indian Embassy in Washington since 1999, sometimes monthly, sometimes bi-monthly. From March 2006 onwards we met monthly and at times twice a month. Whenever we had a seminar or a conference on Kashmir I would invite the Indian Ambassador to speak," Fai said. "I had a habit of exchanging information and establishing the details in advance with an official of the Embassy, and then a final copy of the invitation for the Ambassador would be given to the official, whom I usually met at a public cafeteria. "An Indian official called me either on 18 July or 19 July, 2011, the day I was arrested. He left a voicemail that we must meet, which I heard ten days later after my release," Fai said.

Conceding that he has made "personal mistakes" and he deeply regrets and feels great sorrow for that, Fai claims his fight was for the cause of an independent Kashmir, which is quite contrary to the guilty plea that he was an agent of the ISI and was dictated by the Pakistan spy agency in terms of what he would write, speak and invite guests to his seminars.

Pleading before the US Eastern District Court of Virginia last week, Fai, head of the Kashmiri American Council (KAC), acknowledged secretly receiving money from the ISI through clandestine routes and causing revenue losses to the US government to the tune of US\$ 2,00,000 to 4,00,000. **pti**

# Maharashtra council poll: Jolt for BJP-Sena

MUMBAI, 12 DEC: Maharashtra industries minister Mr Narayan Rane of Congress suffered a jolt on his home turf in Sindhudurg district in Konkan, as the NCP made considerable inroads into Vengurla, Malvan and Sawantwadi, as counting of votes of 133 municipal councils was underway.

In Vengurla, while NCP got 12, Congress bagged only one seat. BJP got two seats, while MNS and an Independent won one seat each.

In Malvan, Congress won eight, while NCP got six, followed by Shiv Sena's two and one Independent. Whereas in Sawantwadi, NCP won all the 17 seats. Supporters of Mr Rane had clashed with the NCP and Shiv Sena workers in the run-up to the election, prompting the NCP to petition the state election commission, urging it to declare Sindhudurg district as sensitive. Even the "original" Congressmen in the district had turned against Mr Rane and complained to the party high command against his style of functioning. In Pen, out of the 18 seats, Congress bagged 14 and four went to Independents. In Roha, Congress bagged four, while NCP got 13. In Srivardhan, it won 12 seats.

Out of the results to 2,985 seats across the 133 municipal councils declared so far, the NCP has emerged as the single largest party with 1,114 seats followed by Congress with 639. Shiv Sena has bagged 325 and BJP 189; MNS has made considerable gains with 51 seats. There are 207 Independents and local outfits bagged 457 and other smaller parties three seats. As many as 168 municipal councils went to poll yesterday and approximately 65 per cent of the electorate exercised their franchise. Remaining 18 municipal councils will vote tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the NCP today said that people of Maharashtra had reposed faith in the leadership of the Union agriculture minister Sharad Pawar, who is celebrating his 71st birthday today, by voting for maximum number of party candidates in yesterday's municipal council elections. **pti**

# A matter of prestige...

NEW DELHI, 12 DEC: A panel of eminent speakers took part in a seminar on "Reasonable Restraint" in New Delhi last Saturday to throw light on an issue that had assumed fresh significance after a hefty fine slapped on a news channel. The seminar was organised by the CR Irani Foundation in association with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung to address the impact of similar judgments on other media houses. The speakers focused essentially on defamation laws, criminal liability and civil damages. The seminar was inaugurated by Dr Beatrice Gorawantschy, Resident Representative of the KAS in India. In his introductory speech, Mr Ravindra Kumar, Editor, The Statesman, spoke about how the case against the news channel could have serious consequences.

Speaking in the first session on whether journalists get away too easily or whether the administration of justice is loaded in favour of the influential litigant, Mr NK Singh, secretary, Broadcast Editors' Association, said that defamatory suits were often filed on the prestige factor rather than the real merit of the case. He alleged that the amount demanded as compensation is often decided arbitrarily. Ms Sevanti Ninan noted that newspapers accused of breach of the defamation law often belong to big houses and take long to put out corrections and clarifications when necessary. Mr Chaitanya Kalbag said journalists should be aware of media laws because they often go out on assignments unprepared. Mr Samar Bansal also talked about the

need for substantial legal knowledge among journalists today. He suggested the decriminalisation of defamatory laws and stressed the need to identify intentions behind defamatory actions. Mr Swapan Mullick, Director, Statesman Print Journalism School, said if the objective of a newspaper is to inform, relying on clear evidence, there is no need to be deterred by the law on defamation even if it is sought to be used by those who have influence. The session was moderated by Ms Usha Mahadevan, Resident Editor, The Statesman, New Delhi.

The second session, moderated by Ms Simran Sodhi, Foreign Editor, The Statesman, revolved around contempt of court, breach of legislative privilege and other "reasonable restrictions". MP and former minister, Mrs Maneka Gandhi, recounted her long experience as a parliamentarian and made specific references to the manner in which matters of privilege have been handled in the House. Former MP and minister, Mr Ajay Singh, wanted journalists to be better informed especially about the law. Mr Pravin H Parekh, senior advocate, chairman of the Supreme Court Bar Association and president of the Confederation of Indian Bar, referred to different aspects of the law which media people should take note of. Mr Kumar referred to specific cases in which The Statesman was charged with breach of privilege. He made out a case for MPs' privileges being codified. **sns (with inputs from SPIS students)**

### W.B. GOVT. CORRIGENDUM

Due to some unavoidable circumstance the following amendment have been made in the interest of Govt. Work for the abovenoted NIQ. No.: 13/2011-12 of Executive Engineer, RCFA Division-I, PHE Dte. circulated vide Memo No. 1077/RCD-I dt. 02-11-2011. Date of issue extended up to 13-12-2011 & date of dropping & opening 15-12-2011 in place of 08-12-2011 & 12-12-2011, respectively. All other terms & conditions will remain unchanged, ...ICAT-1771/2011...

### EASTERN RAILWAY CORRIGENDUM

1) Tender No. 05/11/1053, due on 16.12.2011. Description of Stores should be read as "Antiwear Hydraulic Oil to IS : 11656-1986/Reaffirmed 2002 (with Aniline point 90 degree Cen. min. for all grades in place of Seal Compatibility Test and NAS value below 8) Gr. VG-68" instead of existing entry. 2) Tender No. 05/11/5603, due on 16.12.2011. Description of Stores should be read as "Oil Hydraulic to IS : 10522-83/Reaffirmed 2004 (Antiwear) with Aniline point 90 degree Cen. min. in place of Seal Compatibility Test and min. pass load of 9th stage in FZG Niemann Test Gr. VG-68" instead of existing entry. All other terms and conditions will remain same. LILUC-07 STORES-147/2011-12

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### Civil Work

Separate Sealed Tenders (Tender Notice No. T/PUB/2011/52, Dated: 05.12.2011) are invited by Divl. Railway Manager (Engg.), South Eastern Railway, Kharagpur for and on behalf of the President of India for the following works:

Description of Work	Tender Value (₹)	Earnest Money (₹)
Repairs/renovation to colony drains, colony sub-drains and existing culvert by construction of cement concrete and provision of Extra bed Lift, Electric Traction Elevator, capacity 1768 kg (26 persons) of S.E. Railway Main Hospital at Kharagpur under the jurisdiction of ADEN/Sett/KGP	1,07,49,459/-	2,03,750/-

Cost of Tender document: ₹ 5,000/-. Date of opening: 19.01.2012. Tender document can also be downloaded from websites: www.tenders.gov.in and South Eastern Railway's website www.ser.indianrailways.gov.in PR - 978