

# India to defend developing nations at G8 climate talks

AFP, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh signalled yesterday he would defend the position held by many developing countries on climate change at the Group of Eight summit in Germany.

"Our viewpoint, and the viewpoint of much of the developing world... is that while addressing (climate change), due care must be taken not to allow growth and development prospects in the developing world to be undermined or constrained," Singh said in a statement ahead of his departure.

"It is also a fact that more and not less development is the best way for developing countries to address themselves to the issue of preserving the environment and protecting the climate," he said.

Summit host Germany has placed climate change on the top of the agenda and has staked its G8 presidency on persuading counterparts to agree to limit the global temperature rise to two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit).

It also wants to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent compared with 1990 levels by 2050.

India, which says its greenhouse gas emissions will be cut by more than 25 percent thanks to domestic measures implemented in the past decade, refuses to accept any binding provisions to cap emissions.

A top US official said yesterday that the final communique from the G8 summit would not fix long-term targets for cutting emissions because all nations including non-G8 members have to be involved in any accord.

Yesterday, he insisted India was committed to environment-friendly development "even as we seek to accelerate the pace of economic

growth," already above nine percent. Singh also said India's 1.1 billion people should try to change their behaviour to cut carbon emissions.

India's environment ministry also said this week that it was up to developed nations to cut greenhouse gas output, arguing that India contributed only four percent to total global emissions.

Singh said that the leaders of Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa will meet in Berlin today before holding talks with their counterparts from the G8.

"Prior to the meeting with the leaders of the G8, the president of Mexico will host a meeting of the outreach countries in Berlin on June 7 where we will discuss our positions that are of special relevance to the developing world," Singh said in a statement in Berlin.

The leaders of the five major emerging economies have been invited to the Group of Eight summit by German Chancellor Angela Merkel to discuss issues such as climate change, trade liberalisation and poverty relief.

Merkel wants G8 leaders to endorse ambitious goals on fighting global warming but has warned that efforts to stop the planet overheating were doomed to fail unless they also involved the big developing nations.

China and India, with a combined population of 2.4 billion, signalled last week that they would not accept mandatory targets on cutting emissions for fear that this would slow their economic growth.



PHOTO: AFP

Demonstrators block a road near Bad Doberan leading to the venue of the G8 summit in Heiligendamm, northeastern Germany yesterday. About 16,000 police have been deployed to counter protests.

## Malaysia bans 37 publications that 'twisted' Islam

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia has banned 37 publications that contain "twisted facts" on Islam, state media reported yesterday.

The books and other publications were banned by the Internal Security Ministry, Bernama news agency reported.

Their contents twisted facts and true Islamic teachings, or contained elements that misled the faithful and humiliated the prophets, Bernama quoted an official in the Publications and Koranic Texts Control Division as saying.

"These publications can cause confusion and apprehension among Muslims and eventually jeopardise public order," the official said.

Most of the banned titles were published abroad in English but several are published in Indonesian or Malaysian, Bernama reported.

The banned titles include, "Glad News! God Loves You My Muslim Friends" and "Nine Parts of Desire, The Hidden World of Islamic Women," it said.

Earlier this year, the government banned "March 8," a book by activist K. Arumugam which documents bloody riots that erupted on that date in 2001.

In May, officers from the internal security ministry raided a Kuala Lumpur book store and confiscated 10 copies of a book on earlier race riots in 1969.

The book, "May 13: Declassified Documents on the Malaysian Riot of 1969," tries to shed light on unrest that killed hundreds of people and traumatised the nation.

Discussions on race and religion are considered sensitive topics by the government, while sex and sexuality are seen as taboo.

# Pakistan media curbs challenged in court

AFP, Islamabad

A decree by President Pervez Musharraf placing new curbs on the electronic media amid a growing political crisis has been challenged in Pakistan's top court, reports said yesterday.

Senior lawyer Zafarullah Khan submitted a petition to the Supreme Court on Tuesday saying the people of Pakistan were "stunned" by the measures governing television, radio and the Internet.

"The Supreme Court has received a petition from Mr Zafarullah Khan," a court official told AFP on condition of anonymity. "It will be decided whether to take it up or send it back in due course."

Musharraf granted the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) extra powers on Monday after criticising coverage of the suspension of chief justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry on March 9.

The regulator can now seal the premises or confiscate the equipment of television and radio channels, and suspend the licences of offenders. The decree also sharply increases the fine for violation of rules.

The rules came into force as three private television stations said the government had blocked their transmissions.

Police have also registered cases against about 200 journalists for holding a protest against

Musharraf's decree in Islamabad on Monday in defiance of a ban on rallies of more than five people.

Chaudhry has become the rallying point for a series of protests against Musharraf's military rule as opposition parties join forces with lawyers and rights groups.

They turned violent in Karachi on May 12 with the deaths of more than 40 people in clashes between pro-and anti-government supporters.

One of Chaudhry's lawyers, retired judge Rasheed Razvi, was in Hong Kong on Wednesday where he urged the United States and Britain to put pressure on Musharraf to ensure free and fair polls.

## 'Scooter' Libby jailed for perjury

AFP, Washington

Former White House aide Lewis "Scooter" Libby was sentenced Tuesday to 30 months in prison for lying to an FBI inquiry in a case which spotlighted flaws in the US push to wage war on Iraq.

Libby, 56, once one of the most trusted aides to US Vice President Dick Cheney, was convicted in March for perjury and obstruction in a case probing whether White House officials leaked the name of CIA officer Valerie Plame.

Libby was also fined 250,000 dollars by the court on Tuesday.

He told Judge Reggie Walton he hoped the court would "consider, along with the jury verdict, my whole life" in determining an appropriate sentence.



But the tough sanction handed down was in line with the 30-to-37 month term sought by special prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald, and with federal guidelines.

"It needs to make a clear statement that truth matters and one's status in life does not," Fitzgerald

told the judge ahead of the verdict.

Walton acknowledged Libby's contribution to national security following the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. But he added: "we expect and demand a lot from people ... who have the welfare and security of the nation in their hands."

Cheney branded the jailing of his trusted former aide a "tragedy," and voiced hope the sentence would be revised.

Libby was found guilty of lying about conversations he had about Plame, but not of leaking her name. The leak allegedly aimed to avenge criticism of the White House's rationale for war with Iraq by Plame's ex-diplomat husband, Joseph Wilson.

# Partisan sniping clouds US immigration bill

AFP, Washington

Doubt grew Tuesday over the fate of a crucial US Senate bill which grants a path to citizenship for around 12 million illegal immigrants, as partisan sniping broke out over the timing of votes.

Republicans warned Democratic Senate Majority leader Harry Reid was driving the bill too fast, and said failure to consider their objections could kill the measure, which could shape the destiny of millions of immigrants and is strongly supported by President George W. Bush.

But the top Senate Republican Mitch McConnell said many members of his party, some of whom are facing a severe backlash over their support for the bill, wanted to table amendments.

"Before they would allow us to wrap up this bill, these amendments would need to be considered," McConnell said.

Reid warned Republicans should not seek to use delaying tactics, and try to blame him for any consequent failure of the bill.

"I would hope that my Republican colleagues are not

going to use this as an excuse ... that really is not fair, it is wrong," Reid said.

Reid was adamant that he would hold a vote on ending debate on the bill on Thursday, leaving it unclear if he could get the necessary 60 votes in the closely divided chamber to proceed.

Should his bid to end debate fail, he said he would shelve the bill, likely dealing a death blow to the legislation, as any attempt to bring it up later this year or next year would see it caught in the maelstrom of the 2008 congressional and presidential elections.

The fragile coalition of lawmakers behind the deal hopes to cling together through the storm of amendments, many of which appear designed to kill the measure.

The bill, agreed last month with the White House, would also establish a merit-based points system for future immigrants and institute a low-wage temporary worker program.

It includes a border security crackdown, punishments for employers who hire illegal immigrants and an attempt to wipe out a backlog of visa applications from

those who have gone through legal immigration channels.

Bush last week accused opponents of the bill of trying to stir up fear among Americans.

"If you want to scare the American people, what you say is, 'The bill's an amnesty bill.'"

"It's not an amnesty bill,"

Several amendments have been tabled to attempt to reorient the bill more towards family-based immigration, from its emphasis on merit-based applications.

Earlier Tuesday, senators overwhelmingly endorsed an amendment which would require US firms to seek to hire Americans under the guest worker program, before seeking to take on foreigners.

## Iran detains 3 Finns

AFP, Tehran

Iran has arrested three Finnish nationals for allegedly entering Iranian territorial waters during a fishing trip in the Gulf, Finland's foreign ministry said yesterday.

It said the three men, who work for the Finnish-German company Nokia Siemens Networks in Dubai, were detained on Saturday off the island of Abu Musa and were being held in a secret location.

"We've been in contact with Iran and received information that all three are in good condition. We expect the issue to be resolved as soon as possible," a foreign ministry senior officer, Pasi Tuominen, told AFP.

He said Finland had not been informed of the formal charges against the trio.

Finnish Foreign Minister Ilka Kanerva said meanwhile the Finns may be released as early as Wednesday, Finnish news agency STT reported.

According to Esa Hurtig,

Finland's charge d'affaires in the United Arab Emirates, efforts to obtain the trio's release have been hampered by a two-day holiday in Iran commemorating the death of Ayatollah Khomeini on June 4, 1989 and the uprising against the Shah on June 5, 1979.

Finland's ambassador to Tehran, Heikki Puurunen, was due to meet Iranian foreign ministry officials on Wednesday afternoon, STT said.

Nokia Siemens Networks confirmed the arrest of three of its employees but refused to disclose their identities, saying only they were "three men".

The three were arrested in a disputed area of the Gulf, at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz that links the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman.

Abu Musa is a contested island, claimed by both the United Arab Emirates and Iran due to its strategic location and potential oil reserves.



PHOTO: AFP

Daughters and relatives of woman Afghan journalist Zakia Zaki, shot dead late Tuesday, weep as they sit beside her body in Jabbul Saraj yesterday.

## Second Afghan woman journo killed in a week

AFP, Kabul

AAfghan woman journalist was shot dead overnight, the interior ministry said yesterday, in the second such killing in a week -- crimes that have raised alarm among media rights groups.

Zakia Zaki, owner and manager of private Peace Radio in Jabbul Saraj, 60 kilometres north of the capital Kabul, was killed in her home late Tuesday, the ministry said.

The attackers have not yet been identified, ministry spokesman Zemarai Bashary told AFP.

"Her family has not blamed anybody for the death of Zaki and police have started an intense investigation of the case," he said.

Zaki, aged in her late 30s, was also a school headmistress and attended the 2003 meeting that

drew up Afghanistan's post-Taliban constitution.

She was critical of "warlords" -- commanders of the anti-Soviet resistance during the 1980s who dragged Afghanistan into a brutal civil war, Afghan Independent Journalists Association president Rahimullah Samander told AFP.

The new killing came amid mounting anger over the murder in Kabul on May 31 of popular 22-year-old television presenter Shakiba Sanga Amaj, who was also shot dead in her home.

Police have arrested a suspect for the killing of Amaj but the motive is still unclear. Some reports said her murder may have been related to her refusal to marry someone.