



RAHUL TAKES RAFALE DOGFIGHT TO MODI'S HOMELAND, KICKS OFF GUJ CAMPAIGN | 16



MP'S SLAPPING OF NSA, UP'S SEDITION CASES ACTS OF 'STATE TERROR', SAYS MAYAWATI | 12

'93 serial blasts suspect held in UAE, may be deported soon

Abu Bakar Had Gone To POK For Training

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Mumbai: A 51-year-old fugitive wanted for plotting and helping transport the explosives used in the 1993 serial bomb blasts in the city was detained in the UAE on Wednesday on inputs provided by Indian security agencies, and is likely to be deported soon.

Abu Bakar Abdul Gafour, a central Mumbai resident, is alleged to have undergone training with several others on explosives and in assembling firearms in a camp in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK) before the blasts. "He was never arrested in the bomb blast case," said a source.

Sources said Abu Bakar's name cropped up during the probe and in the statements of

SMUGGLER WHO PLOTTED WITH DAWOOD

Abu Bakar, 51

Accused of conspiracy and helping transport the explosives used in the 1993 serial blasts

Started out as a smuggler in Mumbai with the Dossa brothers, also accused in the blasts



Attended several meetings, some with Dawood Ibrahim, to plot the blasts

Went to Pakistan with about 20 youths from the city before

the blasts, learnt handling firearms and explosives

Alleged to have been active in smuggling the explosives from Dubai to Dighi jetty

Never returned to India, has been dodging arrest since 1997

kar is alleged to have been part of the team that helped smuggle the explosives to Dighi jetty near Murud, where it was collected by other plotters and brought to Mumbai.

Earlier, in Mumbai, in the mid-80s, he joined the Dossa brothers — Mustafa and Mohammed, both also accused in the 1993 case — and worked for them. He was into smuggling electronic goods, TV, gold and clothes from the Gulf countries to India.

It is not clear how Abu Bakar managed to dodge the agencies for so many years. The CBI is probing the 1993 blast cases, one of the world's deadliest terror acts. Twelve blasts at different locations in Mumbai had killed 257 people and injured 713 others. Property worth Rs 27 crore was damaged.

In 2007, the Tada court had sentenced 12 convicts to death. One of them, Yaqub Memon, was executed in 2015. Another 20 convicts were awarded life sentences. However, the SC commuted the death sentences of several accused to life.

India says is in touch with Russia, Iran & Saudi on US-Taliban talks

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: With US now scheduled to hold talks with the Taliban in Islamabad, India said on Thursday it remained in touch with Washington on peace efforts in Afghanistan. US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad discussed the situation in Afghanistan with Indian ambassador to the US Harsh Vardhan Shringla, said the government.

"India is also in touch with partners like Iran, Russia and Saudi Arabia on the situation in Afghanistan," said MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar.

"India will continue to take all necessary steps to

US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad discussed the situation in Afghanistan with Indian ambassador Harsh Vardhan Shringla. The latest round of US talks with Taliban are scheduled to be held in Islamabad

bring peace and stability in the region," he added.

The spokesperson said that discussions on Afghanistan will take place with Russia and China at the RIC (Russia, India, China) trilateral later this month. Official sources had earlier said that India was looking to have a dialogue with China on recent developments in Afghanistan, including the United States-Taliban talks.

While it has refrained

from saying so officially, India remains concerned over the latest 'peace' initiative which has seen the US directly talking to the Taliban and which seems to have kept even the government in Kabul out of the loop.

During Khalilzad's recent visit to India, the government had conveyed to him that any agreement with the Taliban must safeguard existing political and constitutional structure in Kabul and that India

was against the idea of having an interim government in Afghanistan which is scheduled to go to polls in July.

The MEA spokesperson was responding to queries on media reports saying that the Taliban was going to visit Islamabad next week to meet their US negotiators. According to a Washington Post report, the Afghan Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said in a statement posted online late Wednesday that the group's plan to visit Pakistan stemmed from a "formal invitation" from the Islamabad government and that its delegates would meet with the Pakistan premier.

Full report on www.toi.in

Rajbhar returns OBC portfolio, puts Yogi govt on notice

Subhash.Mishra @timesgroup.com

Lucknow: Repeatedly snubbed by UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath, NDA ally and state minister Om Prakash Rajbhar, who heads Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP), on Thursday returned his backward class welfare portfolio and threatened to quit the alliance.

Rajbhar held two portfolios — backward class welfare and disabled welfare. His departure from the government may deal a big blow to the ruling BJP ahead of Lok Sabha elections.



Hours after he shot his protest missive, Yogi deputed his deputy Dinesh Sharma to pacify the sulking minister. Rajbhar, however, rejected the offer and said, "Ab sirf mukhyamantri: ji se hi final baatcheet hogi (Now, I will hold final talks with the chief minister only)."

Rajbhar, who was sidelined for over a year now, had been sending warning signals, but his words of caution went unheeded. His pent-up anger burst forth on Thursday, when he submitted a letter to the CM office, giving up his backward class welfare portfolio.

In his letter, Rajbhar said his recommendations were dumped by the CM. Talking to TOI, he said: "I was not being heard in my own department."

He regretted that his proposal for including certain names in the Backward Class Commission was rejected by the CM. In his letter, he also mentioned that the BJP government failed to implement recommendations of the social justice committee for quota within quota for most backwards.

"I have already told BJP and the chief minister that if the social justice committee report was not implemented by February 24, I would resign and consider other options," Rajbhar said.

SC expels 2 court masters for diluting Ambani order

Dhananjay.Mahapatra @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: In a first of its kind case, the Supreme Court has dismissed two court masters for audaciously tampering with its order and diluting the summons to Reliance ADAG chairman Anil Ambani and other officials of the group in a contempt case filed by Ericsson against Reliance Communications.

On the plea of advocate Dushyant Dave on January 7, a bench of Justices R F Nariman and Vineet Saran had taken note of the alleged breach of undertaking given by Ambani and other officials of the group and asked them to present in court. Request by Ambani's counsel Mukul Rohatgi and Kapil Sibal to exempt them from personal appearance was rejected.

However, the order uploaded on the SC website curiously conveyed that though notice had been issued to Ambani and others in the contempt petition filed by Ericsson, the alleged contemnors could mark their presence through their counsel. Dave had drawn Justice Nariman's attention to this discrepancy between the order dictated in open court and the one uploaded on the SC website.

Noticing the glaring discrepancy, a furious Justice Nariman promised action. He sent a complaint to Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, who initiated an inquiry. SC sources said the complaint was followed by an internal inquiry and it was found that the two court masters had indeed tampered with the court order to dilute its rigour in summoning Ambani, Reliance Telecom



The SC bench had taken note of the alleged breach of undertaking by Anil Ambani and other officials of ADAG and asked them to be present in court. Request to exempt them from personal appearance was rejected

chairman Satish Seth and Reliance Infratech chairman Chhaya Virani.

Ambani and others later appeared before the court and remained present for two days till the bench headed by Justice Nariman completed hearing on the contempt petition filed by Ericsson.

Ericsson had accused Ambani and others of going back on the undertaking given to the court that they would pay Rs 550 crore to the Swedish telecom company. The SC had in its August 3 2018, order recorded the undertaking and asked RCom to pay the amount to Ericsson. The court is yet to deliver its verdict in the contempt case.

Mumbai may turn 10 old buses into mobile toilets

Somit Sen & Richa Pinto | TNN

Mumbai: BMC, unable to bail out a cash-strapped BEST, may convert 10 of its iconic red buses into mobile toilets for those stuck in traffic jams in the city. The cost of procuring an old BEST bus in an auction could be around Rs 3 lakh, sources said.

The sources added that if the proposal is cleared, the toilets could come up along the Eastern and Western Express Highways and other roads. Mooted by Sewri corporator Sachin Padwal over a year ago, the proposal to convert buses that are set to be scrapped will come up



BEST SOLUTION

for clearance this month. Officials from BMC's municipal secretary department said the matter had been listed in February's agenda of the general body meeting.

BMC opposition leader Ravi Raja has opposed the move, saying BEST had the reputation of being one of the best public transport un-

dertakings in the country. "It will be an insult to the organisation to convert its buses into toilets". He said BMC should instead bail out the cash-strapped BEST, which has been unable to get a single new bus after putting up 113 for scrap this year.

Padwal said the reason for proposing the toilets was the ongoing Metro work. "It takes hours to reach from south Mumbai to the suburbs. Senior citizens and diabetic patients are the most troubled. In such a situation, it's important the administration considers turning old buses into mobile toilets," he said.

Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council
(A Govt. of India Enterprise)

INVITES PROPOSALS

for

Supporting Affordable Product/Technology Development
(Discovery to pre-Commercialization)

in

Prioritized areas of Healthcare, Industrial Biotechnology and Agriculture

under

- Promoting Academic Research Conversion to Enterprise (PACE)**
Supports academia to develop technologies/ products (up to PoC stage) and their subsequent validation towards commercialization through Academic Innovation Research (AIR) and Contract Research Scheme (CRS)
- Small Business Innovation Research Initiative (SBIRI)**
Supports industry for development of proof-of-concept and early stage validation of products/technologies
- Biotechnology Industry Partnership Programme (BIPP)**
Supports industry for high risk, transformational technology/process development from proof-of-concept to late stage validation leading to product commercialization

Last date for submission of proposals

31st March, 2019

WHO CAN APPLY?

For PACE
Academic institute, University, NGO or Research Foundation registered/accredited by government body is eligible to apply either alone, or in partnership with academia or industry (while involvement of industry is optional for AIR scheme, it is mandatory to have an industrial partner for CRS)

For SBIRI & BIPP
A single or consortia of Indian company (ies) registered under "The Indian Companies Act 2013" with minimum 51% Indian ownership, and in-house R&D unit, are eligible to apply either alone, or in collaboration with another Company/Institute/University

HOW TO APPLY?

Proposals for all the Schemes are required to be submitted online only. For prioritized areas, scheme details & information on submission of proposal, please log on to BIRAC website (www.birac.nic.in).

For queries, please contact: Head - Investment, BIRAC. Email: investment.birac@gov.in

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