

Interview with James Bennett, ABC AM

SABRA LANE:

The Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull flies back into Sydney this morning after three days in India. Mr Turnbull had been talking up a joint Prime Ministerial commitment between himself and India's PM Narendra Modi to revive free trade talks as a key outcome from that visit. But Mr Turnbull now concedes that despite that a deal may never eventuate. The Prime Minister spoke with the ABC's South Asia correspondent James Bennett who started by asking why negotiations had broken down in the first place.

PRIME MINISTER:

Well look I don't think there's any point in getting into a blame game I mean the fact is that there hasn't been enough progress and so what we've agreed to do is to ensure that our negotiators get back to the table, that they identify the respective claims so we can see where they're close, where they're far apart or issues that they're not addressing and they will then report back to both Prime Ministers and that gives a focus on it and it may be that the conclusion will be that the parties are too far apart to enable a deal to be reached at this time.

JAMES BENNETT:

So that is a realistic prospect? You're open to the fact that a deal worth doing as you've said-

PRIME MINISTER:

Well it has to be a deal worth doing and, so it has got to be a deal worth doing but the important thing, that is that Prime Minister Modi and I have given our prime ministerial direction and leadership and impetus to ensure that the two sides will focus on the nitty-gritty of what the CECA, the free trade agreement would involve and then we can identify where if, where, you know, the parties are apart and see how we can bridge those gaps.

JAMES BENNETT:

Why then did Tony Abbott in 2014 declare that there was a deal that could be signed by the end of 2015?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well you would have to ask him that. The fact is that the Indian offers have not been adequate to date.

You know, look I don't want to get into the blame game, there's no point in that. I know that might be some interest for you perhaps and others.

Mr Modi and I want the matter to be resolved and look we have a great

economic relationship and it's getting stronger all the time and it will grow whether or not there is a free trade agreement but it would obviously be enhanced if there was.

JAMES BENNETT:

Can India really replicate the Chinese economic rise?

PRIME MINISTER:

India is obviously not a country where the government is able to direct investment and production in the way China is. On the other hand, China opened up its market to direct investment, it opened up to trade many years ago. Now India, that is relatively recently but nonetheless from a trade point of view India has had a historically a much more protectionist tradition. Now Mr Modi is changing that but obviously these changes tend to have a period of evolution, they don't turn on a dime.

[ENDS]

[Contrite Metro diners write apology letter](#)



Photo from Metro police's Weibo account shows four foreigners who dined on a Metro train yesterday attend an "education" meeting with police and the Metro operator. [Shanghai Daily]

Four foreigners who set up a table and dined on a Metro Line 11 train last

Friday in Shanghai wrote an apology letter yesterday.

The incident sparked an online uproar, with the foreigners accused of displaying bad manners.

The Metro operator and police officers have summoned and talked to the foreigners, whose nationalities and names were not released, about their behavior and they apologized in the office of Shanghai Shentong Metro Group.

Metro police said a total of six foreigners were involved, all of them working for the same company. As two of them were on a business trip, the remaining four attended the meeting, which was held yesterday.

Eating and drinking on the Metro is not illegal but is discouraged in Shanghai. However, setting up a table in the middle of a train carriage could be dangerous as it might block movement of commuters or injure others, which could mean a 50 yuan (US\$7.25) fine, according to the Metro operator.

Police said they did not punish the foreigners because after checking surveillance footage, "the table was small, not as big as it looked in the photo (initially published on the Internet), and there were not many people in the carriage."

Whether to ban eating or drinking on the Metro has long been a controversial subject in many Chinese cities, including Shanghai and Beijing.

In Hong Kong, it is illegal. People there can be fined HK\$2,000 (US\$257) if found eating or drinking on Metro trains or platforms.

Eating and drinking are also banned on Singapore's subway. But there is no such rule in New York.

[Guidelines to help fix national healthcare](#)

China will press to strengthen medical partnerships and arrange closer ties between top-tier hospitals and grassroots medical services to provide better health management and care for urban and rural residents.

A set of measures was approved during the State Council's executive meeting on Wednesday, presided over by Premier Li Keqiang.

"The goal for the medical partnerships is to make quality medical care more accessible to the wider public, especially in less-developed areas," Li said. "We've managed to set up nationwide medical insurance coverage and increased medical competence in grassroots medical institutions. The coverage is among the highest in the world. What we mostly need now are medical professionals."

People are demanding more and better healthcare, and the allocation of medical resources is a tough balancing act.

The idea of building partnerships across medical institutions providing different levels of care would help bridge the gap of resources. According to the National Health and Family Planning Commission, by 2016 medical partnerships had been set up in 205 cities across China.

“Currently, high quality medical resources are mostly in big cities. These should further trickle down to lower tiers so that wider demand will be met,” Li said. “We must encourage joint partnerships of city level hospitals and grassroots institutions, while imposing expense reimbursements.”

Wednesday’s meeting yielded new measures.

Administrative fragmentation between regions, fiscal expenses, insurance payouts and human resources will be resolved. More diversified forms of medical partnerships will be encouraged, with top-tier hospitals taking on leading roles. The guidelines encourage an internet-based medical information platform to help better diagnose and prescribe treatments for rural patients.

More will be done to allocate high quality medical resources to wider regions. To do this, teams of medical professionals will be sent to less developed areas with enhanced sharing of health and medical services.

China will accelerate building a cascaded medical system and will introduce demand-oriented and contract-based family doctors. The government plans to cover all impoverished regions with such services this year while inviting private healthcare institutions to participate.

The guidelines stress better coordination systems and policies in new medical partnerships, allowing a more balanced allocation of resources across different levels of medical centers. The government will encourage diverse forms of payments and performance at grassroots levels will be included in evaluations of medical practitioners, who often can work at any organization within the partnership.

“The government needs to have well-designed, concrete guidelines to build medical consortia, taking local conditions in different regions into consideration,” Li stressed. “Local governments are encouraged to have their own ideas in exploring systematic innovation.”

Wang Chen, president of the China-Japan Friendship Hospital, said strengthening medical partnerships is the best approach available to improve the nation’s health system.

He said medical resources remain limited, fragmented and unevenly distributed. Also medical doctors’ abilities vary.

“As it’s hard and time-consuming to train quality physicians, medical partnerships is the most feasible way to systemize and optimize resources available now,” he said.

Statement by Federica Mogherini and Johannes Hahn on the latest developments in Albania

We regret the parliamentary boycott in Albania and that the opposition has not yet registered to participate in the elections. The political debate should not take place outside, but inside the parliament according to democratic practise. Citizens deserve responsible leadership.

We once again urge all political leaders to act responsibly, with respect for institutions, and pave the way for democratic elections, in line with international standards.

More specifically, the much needed justice reform in Albania has once again come under attack. We call on all parties to complete the formation of the vetting institutions. Attacking the judicial reform rather than ensuring implementation of vetting, with close monitoring of the International Monitoring Operation, harms Albania's present and future.

We expect that Members of the Parliament will show responsibility, capacity to act within the democratic legitimate institutional framework, and that they stand by the people of Albania, who continue to demand that the vetting is launched and the judiciary eventually reformed, also as a crucial step for the country to join the European Union.

Indian Giant to Expand in Australia

One of the world's largest conglomerates has agreed to expand its operations in Australia, after a visit by the Prime Minister, The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP.

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) announced today it will open a new TCS Innovation Lab in Australia, after a one-on-one meeting between Prime Minister Turnbull and the CEO and Managing Director of TCS, Rajesh Gopinathan.

The Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull toured the TCS headquarters in Mumbai yesterday as part of his three day visit to India.

The new facility in Australia will operate as a collaborative space for TCS and its industry partners, employing the best Australian talent, and

utilising the company's vast network of expertise in innovation.

It will complement the Turnbull Government's Innovation and Science agenda, delivering crucial investment across a range of sectors, including financial services, aviation and retail.

TCS says it will spend the next six months reviewing suitable locations for the lab.

The facility will enable Australia to benefit from the research being carried out by the company – and the technological breakthroughs being made – at a network of TCS Innovation Labs worldwide.

Currently, there are nine such labs: in the UK (Peterborough), North America (Cincinnati) and India (Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai, Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, and Kolkata).

The announcement reflects the Turnbull Government's commitment to invest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics in Australia.

This is an excellent outcome for Australian jobs and innovation.

CEO and Managing Director of Tata Consultancy Services, Rajesh Gopinathan said "TCS has a long history of innovation working with our clients across Australia. I am delighted to take this partnership to a new level in pursuit of Prime Minister Turnbull's Science & Innovation Agenda."

The Tata Group is India's largest conglomerate, and operates across a range of industries including automotive, steel, energy and consumer goods. Some of its brands include Jaguar, Land Rover and Tetley Tea.

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) employs 378 000 people worldwide, including 3000 in Australia. It provides IT services, consulting and business solutions. Its clients include Qantas, Westpac and AGL.