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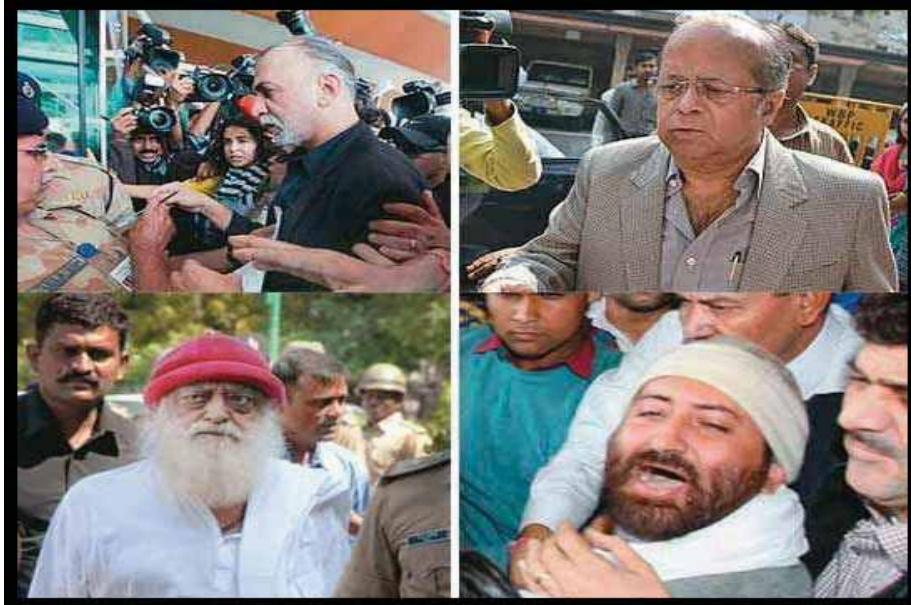


Black money In India :

In 2011, Rs 4 Lakh crore went out

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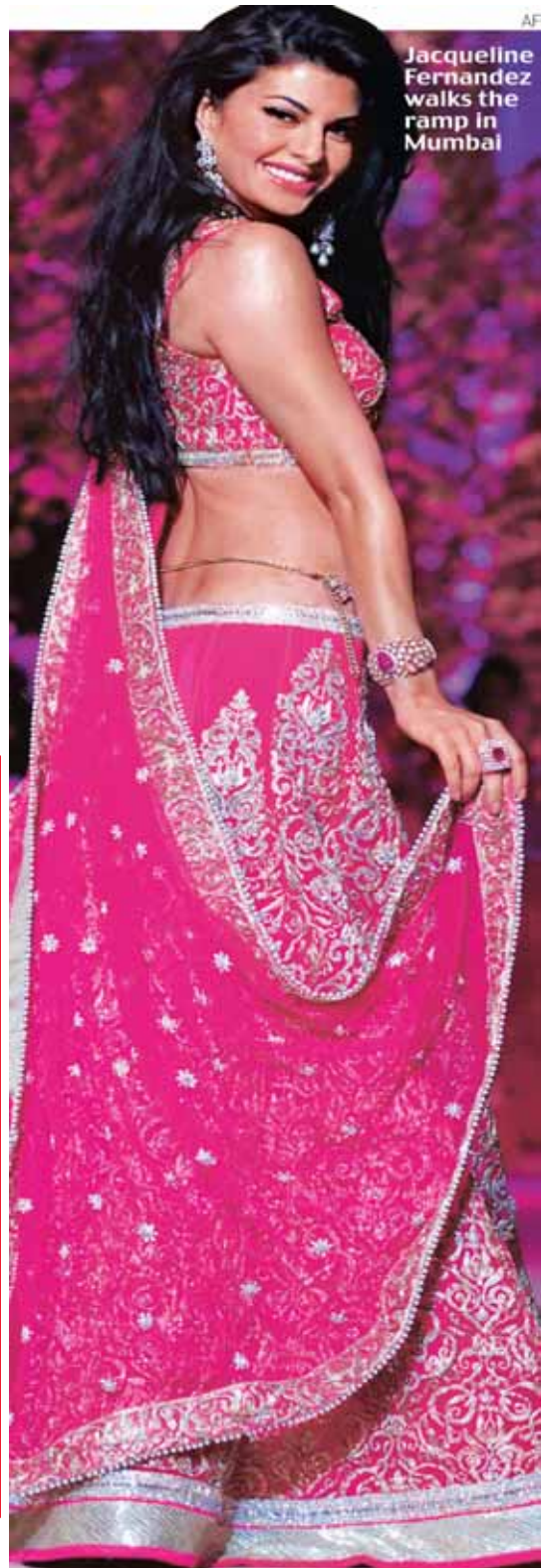
Hear That Shebang?



(Agencies) New Delhi : Of the many fears that the December 16 gangrape of a young paramedic in Delhi last year unleashed, one important but cynical one was that the public outrage that had erupted in its wake would fade away just as quickly as it had built up. That the perpetrators would get away, the case would drag on for years, and nothing, really, would change on the ground. That what Lessing had exhorted women to do would not materialise. But that fear seems unfounded.

Exactly a year after the barbaric rape, the discourse on women's rights has not only persisted, it has acquired new shades, more nuance and a stronger, more assertive tone.

(Contd on page 21)



AF
 Jacqueline Fernandez walks the ramp in Mumbai

India's Deputy Consul General Dr. Devyani Khobragade held & released

(By Sharanjit Singh Thind) New York- Devyani Khobragade, Deputy Consul General at the Indian Consulate here was on Thursday arrested and later released for allegedly presenting fraudulent documents in support of a visa application for an Indian national employed by her, Manhattan's top federal prosecutor Preet Bharara said. Khobragade, 39, was held on charges that she allegedly caused a materially false and fraudulent document to be presented, and materially false and fraudulent

(Contd on page 14)



Sahara offers part of Aamby Valley as collateral to Sebi

(News Agencies) lucknow :Sahara Group has agreed to hand over documents of its 71 properties, which it claimed to be worth Rs 20,000 crore as security with market regulator Sebi for refunding investors money.

The title deeds include 25% of its Aamby Valley project. "Of a total area of 7,000 acres on a hill, 30 km from the Mumbai-Pune expressway, the Sahara group was ready to give title deeds of three unencumbered plots measuring 1,747 acres and worth nearly Rs 11,000 crore." the report said. The Aamby valley title deeds covered a total area of 1,747 acres. The group also gave title deeds for land in

(Contd on page 21)



Obama Reaches Out to Cuba's Leader, but the Meaning May Elude Grasp

(News Agencies) SOWETO, South Africa — President Obama shook hands with President Raúl Castro of Cuba on Tuesday, offering a friendly gesture freighted with symbolism to one of America's most enduring Cold War foes. The brief handshake was delivered with the world watching as Mr. Obama greeted leaders assembled to make remarks at the memorial service here for Nelson Mandela.

(Contd on page 14)



BRIDE & BEAUTIFUL

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Miss America 2014 Nina Davuluri to host Bone Marrow Donor Registry Drive

(Press Release) Queens – The Shops at SkyView Center, Be The Match® and Make Me Stronger today announced that Miss America 2014 Nina Davuluri will host a bone marrow donor registry drive at The Shops at SkyView Center on Saturday, Dec. 14th from 1 p.m. – 5 p.m. The drive is being held to help find a matching donor for Ekata Doshi, a young woman of Indian descent, and other patients like her, who are in need of a bone marrow transplant.

Both Ekata and Miss America 2014 Nina Davuluri are of Gujarati Indian descent. “As a young woman with the dream of attending medical school, helping to improve the lives of others by facilitating access to life-saving treatment options is something I am incredibly passionate about,” said Miss America 2014 Nina Davuluri. “In college I ran Bone Marrow Drives, through the Indian American Student Association, because of the lack of donors particularly in the South Asian community.

So I know how important it is for patients like Ekata who do not have a matching donor in their family, searching the national registry of potential marrow donors is the only way to find a suitable donor. By adding donors to the Be The Match Reg-

istry, ordinary people can give more patients hope for a cure.” The drive is being held in conjunction with Be The Match, a nonprofit organization that operates the Be The Match Registry® and connects patients with bone marrow donors for potentially life-saving transplants, and Make Me Stronger (#MakeMeStronger), a grassroots movement founded to raise awareness of the need for bone marrow donors among minority groups, particularly within the Asian and South Asian communities.

When Ekata was diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL), a cancer of the blood and bone marrow that typically develops slowly, her brother, Adarsh Doshi, founded Make Me Stronger. In Ekata’s case, the cancer is spreading much faster than anticipated and a bone marrow transplant is needed to save her life. There is no match on the Be The Match Registry, nor are any family members a match.

“A bone marrow transplant is the best or only hope of a cure for more than 12,000 people diagnosed in the U.S. each year with life-threatening diseases like leukemia and lymphoma,” said Jair Thompson, Senior Account Executive at Be The Match. “And all it takes to see if you are a match is four simple cheek

swabs.”

All those who participate in the drive will be joining the Be The Match Registry, the world’s largest and most diverse registry of potential bone marrow donors, to help any patient in need. To join at the drive, donors must be between the ages of 18 and 44, meet health guidelines, and be willing to donate to any patient in need. Donors must also complete a health history form and be willing to give a swab of cheek cells. The drive will take place on Level D of the shopping center, located at 40-24 College Point Boulevard in Flushing, Queens.

The Shops at SkyView Center can be reached by subway and LIRR. For those taking the subway, take the 7 train to Main St. Flushing. Exit near the intersection of Main St and Roosevelt Avenue. Start out going West on Roosevelt Ave towards Prince St. Turn left onto College Point Blvd.

For those taking the LIRR, take the Port Washington-bound train to Flushing, Main Street. Exit near 41st Avenue. Start out going Southwest on 41st Avenue towards College Point Boulevard. Turn right onto College Point Boulevard and keep moving ahead on College Point Blvd (Clinton Davis Sr. Road).

Located in Flushing,

Queens, The Shops at SkyView Center is the region’s largest mixed-use, multi-level shopping destination in the neighborhood offering a growing mix of premier national retail stores for women’s, men’s and children’s apparel, shoes, electronics, home furnishings, entertainment, groceries, cosmetics and full service dining restaurants.

The center sits within a vibrant neighborhood with an incredible population density of more than 750,000 people that live within a three miles vicinity, while offering a six-level parking garage with capacity for 2,400 vehicles and offers three hours of free parking every day. The Shops at SkyView Center is a short distance away from Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, the United States Tennis Association (USTA) Billie Jean King National Tennis Center (U.S. Open) and the brand new Citi Field Stadium for the New York Mets. The Shops at SkyView Center is located at 40-24 College Point Boulevard. For more information, please visit www.shopskyviewcenter.com.

For people with life-threatening blood cancers—like leukemia and lymphoma—or other diseases, a cure exists. Be The Match connects patients with their donor match for a life-saving marrow or umbilical cord blood transplant. People can contribute to the cure as a member of the Be The Match Registry, financial contributor or volunteer. Be The Match provides patients and their families one-on-one support, education, and guidance before, during and after transplant. Be The Match is operated by the National Marrow Donor Program® (NMDP), a non-



profit organization that matches patients with donors, educates health care professionals and conducts research so more lives can be saved. To learn more about the cure, visit BeTheMatch.org or call 1 (800) MARROW-2.

Make Me Stronger (#MakeMeStronger) is a grassroots movement founded in 2011 to raise awareness of the need for bone marrow donors among minority groups, particularly within the Asian and South Asian communities. Additionally, Make Me Stronger provides a platform for patients to share what makes them stronger, and for donors and caregivers to share their experience. The hope of Make Me Stronger is that individuals will realize they have the ability to make a difference in someone’s life and that by getting involved they can make someone stronger. For more information, please visit www.MakeMeStronger.com.

(Input by Sharanjit Singh Thind)

John Liu issues statement on tax payer-funded subsidies for Willets Point Retail

(Press Release) New York – City Comptroller John C. Liu issued a public statement in response to questions about his vote against \$42 million in tax breaks and other benefits for the planned hotel and retail development at Willets Point. He said “The EDC’s projected benefits of new jobs and tax

neighborhood, have been shoved to the back burner. Furthermore, the EDC defends these tax breaks and other subsidies as producing a net gain, using calculations that do not account for the hundreds of millions City taxpayers have spent on purchasing the land, building a sewer system under it, and access ramps to get to it. In



fact, when the real math is done, it’s clear the costs outweigh the benefits, leaving taxpayers empty-handed and in the red.” On Tuesday Dec. 10, the Industrial Development Agency, an arm of the City’s Economic Development Corporation (EDC), voted to approve a package of tax breaks and exemptions to assist the development of retail and a hotel at Willets Point. Comptroller Liu voted against the subsidies.

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Lessons from the Assembly polls

(Insider Bureau) The writing was quite evident on the wall but the Congressmen feared to read them. The grand-old 127 years old party had started crumbling from within but the leaders chose to ignore that. The symptoms of structural failure and chinks in the armour was becoming too glaring and yet the leadership kept brushing that under the carpet. The steam of local and state level leadership are started drying up fast and yet no effort was made to reclaim or energize it. The Congress party's traditional vote bank has already vanished and the young voters have turned away from it.

All these factors together have started becoming a Frankenstein for the Congress leadership and with Rahul Gandhi card having become ineffective and inadequate in arrest the saffron surge across the country, the Congress leadership appears to have once again plunged into throes of crisis of credibility.

The BJP on the other hand, has emerged more strong and Gujarat Chief Minister's relentless campaign against the Congress party has clearly made an impact. Modi's pincer attack on the Prime Minister and the Gandhis has started creating nationwide ripples and his crusade on corruption and various scams during the UPA II regime has already started alienating the middle class voters away from the Congress.

Modi's nationwide appeal may have been laughed at by a few congress leaders yet the fact remains that he has played the role of a positive catalyst for the BJP. His campaign across the country has indeed fired-up the BJP and the RSS cadre and that is going to help the party in the coming days.

Secondly, Modi's star power and charisma in rallying various groups which have been traditional BJP supporters is going to strengthen the BJP further and the young voters in particular.

Moreover, Modi has been instrumental in guiding and goading those floating and undecided voters to fall into the BJP kitty and that has been a major factor in the victory of BJP in the State Assembly elections.

On the hindsight, it is not that Modi is not helping the BJP win everywhere as some of the BJP leaders are making a case for him. Modi has just become a symbol of popular antipathy to the Congress and its top leadership and he is just reaping the harvest of discontent shown by the Congress in UPA II regime.

Catharsis in Congress

Different States, different players, different playgrounds, different rules and yet the same result. !! It is time for the Congress leadership to sit back and dispassionately analyse as to what has been destroying the Congress? Why is the party losing everywhere? Why it has walked away from the needs and aspirations of AAM AADMI? Why Congress Rahul Gandhi has failed as a leader? Why Congress poll managers have become so staid, slate, inefficient and incompetent in gauging the mood of the electorate? Where would it go from here and who would lead the party now in the forthcoming Lok Sabha Polls?

Whatever logic and explanations may be given by Congress leaders on camera yet the fact remains that nothing has worked for the Congress in last four years. Be that Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab, Goa and these five states including Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi and even Mizoram, nothing has worked for the Congress party. If this could be hailed as the semi-final, then there are clear indication that the Congress party would struggle to even get into three digits in the forthcoming polls

and it would have tough time in getting into two digits in the Hindi heartland.

The Congress party could have easily snatched Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh from BJP but it lost its path mid-way. It was in opposition in both States and it had everything to gain from voter fatigue against the government. The Congress party had a big advantage in Chhattisgarh in the first phase but it got smug and slackened in the second phase and that gave a big opportunity to BJP to consolidate its position. There was an undercurrent of sympathy for the party in the Chhattisgarh and yet it could not capitalize on it.

In Madhya Pradesh, the Congress party could not stir up corruption and bad governance in Madhya Pradesh and "undeclared war between Suresh Pachauri and Digvijaya Singh faction apart from snipes at Jyotiraditya Sindhia took away the advantage. Media publicity and State level campaign remained lethargic and the Congress party could not pin down BJP governments in Madhya Pradesh with aggressive campaign material.

In Rajasthan, the government was in power and it had a credible face in Ashok Gehlot. The government acted like Santa Claus for almost two years distributing the wealth of the State with both hands in the name of welfare schemes and yet the party faced a rout. The party could not publicize its achievements in Rajasthan and interference from central leaders only added to the chagrin of the Chief Minister.

There was no unanimity among the Rajasthan chief Minister, Dr CP Joshi and AICC general secretary Gurdas kamat on many issues and even the last minute intervention by Shri Gulam Nabi Azad could not stem the tide against the Congress. Moreover, Rebel candidates and dummies (propped by a few congress leaders) also became a source of headache for the party in some areas.

In Delhi, The party had a charismatic leader in Shiela Dixit with a proven record of good governance. Arvind kejriwal's AAM Admi party(AAP) not only made the contest triangular but also divided the Congress vote to an unimaginable extent. Moreover, Chief Minister's quote to electronic media on possible tie up with AAP, was taken with a bag full of salt by many voters. At the end, Chief Minister Sheila dixit not only lost her own seat but the Congress party could not get into double digit.

But the biggest disappointment was the "failure of Rahul Gandhi weapon" which the party had hoped to use as a 'game changer'. This was vindicated by a very senior Congress leader in a private conversation who said that "The Congress party can keep foisting Mr Rahul Gandhi on the electorate and we can never dare oppose him because he is the scion of the party's first family. But it is clear that people are not prepared to accept him in the current Avatar. The sooner our party accepts this, the faster it can start re-building itself".

Rahul Gandhi's close confidants have always been using the term "game changer" more often to demonstrate that his ideas and ideals are different from the present dispensation. Results of this round of assembly polls have once again proved that it did prove to be a "game changer" but in reverse. Instead of mobilising the electorate and translating them into vote, Rahul Gandhi's "poori roti Khayenge. Congress ko Jitayenge(Bor-

rowed from Indira Gandhi election manifesto) in fact, boomeranged on him and his party. Now, the Congress party think tank would be forced to either abandon the term 'game changer' or would have to look for fresh ideas and epithets... and better plan and projects to reclaim the term.

Congress party insiders admit that "As heir to the Nehru Gandhi dynasty, there are but two possible reasons for the party to look to Rahul Gandhi. One was their belief in the possibility of Rahul Gandhi's ability to enthuse voters on the basis of his pedigree while the other was that that he may be able to revitalise a decaying party organisation through his more scientific plans and preparations. "

But a look at the rallies of Rahul Gandhi in a few rallies clearly indicate that he is not a man who has a natural connect with crowds. "He lacks the fluency and charisma that marks a politician who can excite or charm an audience. His mannered behaviour, his stiff body language and his inability to speak Hindi in a fashion that the audience can relate to, has clearly put paid to any expectation of mass support" says a veteran political commentator.

It is no coincidence that by far the greater part of his energy ever since Mr Gandhi entered politics, has been given over to this effort. On many occasions, he has proved to be an enigma and surprised both his friends and foes alike with his quips and quotes on some important issues. And it is here that his failure is most evident, and provides the clearest evidence that it may be best for the party to look beyond Rahul Gandhi.

More than that however, it is the systematic organizational failure and decay within the Congress party which appears to have landed it in such a precipice and for that many people would have to take the collective blame. Says another political analyst "The fall of Rahul Gandhi as a leader is not the only problem with the Congress party, Manmohanomics and Sonianomics too have to take an equal share of blame for the present mess".

There is a lot of truth in this statement. First, a look at a few statements made by Rahul Gandhi in recent times. Rahul's gaffe about intelligence agencies briefing him about plots by terror outfits to lure Muslims victims of communal violence in UP raised many hue and cry and quite ostensible so. Apart from the stigmatization that the victims could do without, questions were raised about Rahul's easy claim that intelligence agencies were briefing him when they had no business doing so because neither he is the Union Home minister nor the Prime minister. A national newspaper also published a report alleging that that there had been a large-scale of misuse of intelligence agencies to screen possible congress candidates at the behest of Rahul Gandhi and his team.

Second, Rahul Gandhi also kept reminding voters in his speeches that Land Acquisition Bill was his idea and that he had personally toiled on foot from Bhatta Parsaul to NOIDA in Uttar Pradesh to understand the set of issues related to land acquisition and then pushed the UPA to adopt this idea as Law. He wanted the compensation of the required land to be raised four times the market value in rural areas and twice the market value in urban areas.

But his think tank members perhaps

failed to make him understand that the landed gentry was well-entrenched in the political game and knew how to play it in its best interests. Business and industry was already opposed to it as it would inflate costs and make the acquiring process so cumbersome that no new ventures would be practically possible. Even Congress President Sonia Gandhi and the rest of Congress party workers remained blissfully oblivious to it and the net result was a dud. !!

Third, Rahul Gandhi also tried to woo the voters in MP and Rajasthan through tear-jerker narration of his mother's illness and Mrs Gandhi's regret of not carrying her resolve to press the button during voting in parliament for the Food security Bill. He tried to evoke and connect the sympathetic and emotional chord by narrating how assassination of his grandmother and father impacted his life. Even his belligerent" tear and throw the nonsense ordinance' approved by his own party government failed to impress the voters.

Dichotomy between words and Deeds

Rahul Gandhi has always said that he wanted to usher in more democratization in the party and was a votary of giving way to younger faces in elections. But the end result of all such exercises have been confusing and at times, contradictory to his statements. For these Assembly elections, the process of selection of candidates has been entirely the work of Rahul and his team, with the Central Election Committee (CEC) headed by Sonia Gandhi virtually serving to endorse the selection. A report in The Indian Express quoted a CEC member as saying that, "At CEC meetings, names are taken and cleared almost like a ritual as we know Rahulji and his team have done the background check through independent surveys, intelligence agencies and various other sources. Madam (Sonia) does not intervene anymore and watches the proceedings silently."

A few members of team Rahul also suggested that he has always favoured credible young faces. Yet the biggest howler on this score was the Congress party's decision to give ticket to a 80 year old Ameri Devi, the mother of Malkhan Singh Bisnoi who remains the main accused in Bhanwari devi abduction and murder case. In Delhi, Sajjan Kumar's son was given Congress party ticket even as the Supreme Court has ordered the commencement of yet another trial for murder against his father. That was interpreted as Congress party's strange way of making amends to the Sikh community in an election where it has been making so much of noise about its concern for the minorities and no wonder then that the Congress lost State Elections miserably.

Even otherwise, this kind of "top down selection approach" puts paid to the hype of inner party democracy. Rahul's major achievement in terms of party reorganisation seems to have been to place great reliance on people like him who have inherited the privileges of power. In Rajasthan for example, both Sachin Pilot and Bhanwar jitendra Singh were made co-chairmen of the poll campaign committee. "This multiplication of imitations of Rahul across the party has virtually ensured that there are no grass root leaders of any importance emerging from within the party structure. At the very least, the result of Rahul's intervention should have been the selection of candidates who represent the new and progressive face of the party" said a Senior Editor of a Prominent Hindi daily from Jaipur.

Ajay N Jha is a veteran Print and Electronic media journalist. He is also Advisor to Prasar Bharti. The views expressed are his personal. His email id is ajayjha30@gmail.com



**TONGUE
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AJAY N JHA

A principled course



The Aam Aadmi Party has creditably been unswerving in its refusal to accept offers of support from the major political parties, the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party, to form the next government in Delhi. By staying true to his pledge not to support either party in the event of a hung Assembly in Delhi, AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal has shown himself to be a person of principles. He has acknowledged that the mandate for his fledgling formation reflected public faith in the AAP's platform. Sunday's fractured verdict placed Mr. Kejriwal on test and his challenge is to resist a continuing flow of inducements from the two other contenders. Having sold a dream to its voters with the promise of clean and principled politics, the AAP cannot afford the slightest misstep in this regard, risking the tremendous goodwill that has brought it so close to power. The AAP was born out of a social movement that tapped into public impatience with the politics of corruption and compromise. Anna Hazare who led the movement drew his credibility from being viewed as a renunciate with no self-interest, but only a deep and abiding commitment to cleanse the system. However, movements are by definition transient, and Team Anna crumbled in the face of the UPA Government's intransigence on the Jan Lokpal Bill which was at the core of the agitation.

When Mr. Kejriwal parted ways with Anna Hazare, it appeared that the movement for political renewal was in serious jeopardy. Yet, if Mr. Kejriwal managed to change that moment of despair into one of hope, it was because he realised the futility of grandstanding from a distance and saw the need to transform the social stirring that drew upon so much idealism and hope, especially among the youth, into a live political battle with the entrenched mainstream political parties. The voter interest in the AAP was on account of its perceived idealism rather than the bagful of populist promises it offered. Mr. Kejriwal owes it to his voters — and the country at large — not to betray their faith in his party. It is important that the AAP sticks to its principled platform, the centrepiece of which was the passage of the Jan Lokpal Bill, intended to bring into existence an independent body which on the basis of complaints from the public could independently investigate corruption cases against political leaders and government officials. The AAP has said that it would sit in the opposition in the Delhi Assembly and not indulge in any "horse-trading". It is vital now than ever before that the AAP keeps its word, if it intends to retain credibility in the long term.

-Editor

Not Congress

If there is a message that binds Sunday's set of four assembly poll verdicts, it is that of the voter's alienation from the Congress, her growing anger with the party. While each scorecard will be read more closely to coax out its specific messages, the expression of a building anti-Congressism rings out across the different political contexts and states. Its most remarkable image belongs to Delhi, where three-time chief minister Sheila Dikshit has been defeated by debutant Arvind Kejriwal of the AAP, which has also laid her government low. But it is anti-Congressism again that accounts for the yawning gap between the party and the victor, the BJP, in Rajasthan and MP, with the Congress only seeming to put up a fight in Chhattisgarh. In the end, it might be an overstatement to attribute the BJP's showing in the four states to the aggressive campaigning by Narendra Modi, given the energetic role played by local leaders in states where it has notched its decisive victories — though the results are certain to lend force to Modi's prime ministerial campaign. But the electorate's rejection of the Congress needs no local nuancing. The party has no fig leaves to hide behind — neither a rote law of anti-incumbency, nor the difference between the voters' calculus for the assembly and general elections, can explain the humbling.

These elections have injected some new questions in the polity. Could it be that an anti-corruption platform can be a winning one, in more cynical times, more than two decades after V.P. Singh deployed it to trounce Rajiv Gandhi in the 1989 elections? Or, can a political force born of a disavowal of politics eventually grow into a political alternative that also bridges caste and regional divides? And, is it possible that the politics of populist schemes has also bumped up against its limits, just as identity-centred politics did before it? This last question is most starkly framed in Rajasthan. Here, outgoing chief minister Ashok Gehlot's array of supposedly crowd-pleasing sops and schemes was capped by the promise to provide 35 kg of wheat free to all families in the state, except income tax payers. The Congress washout here is a warning against an electoral strategy that relies on an indiscriminate, blind populism.



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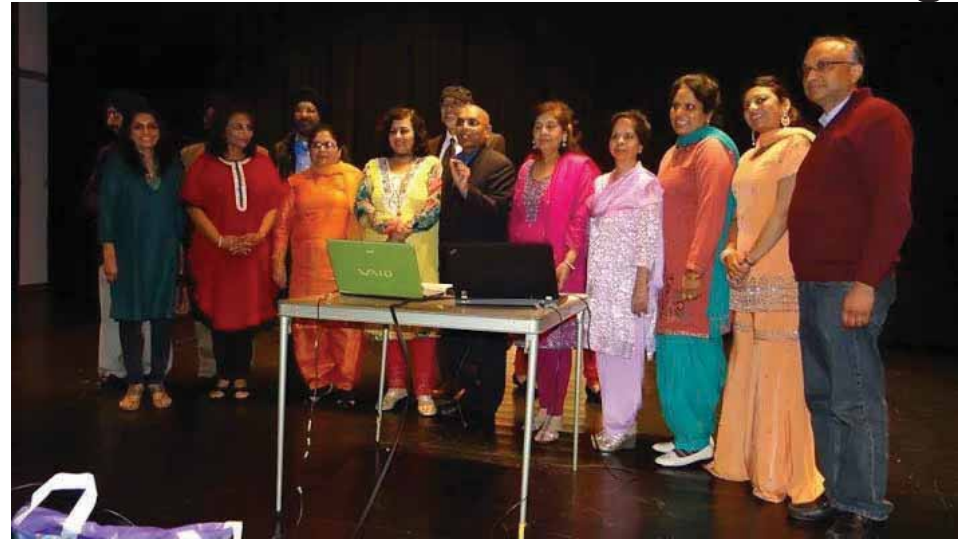
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IALI'S sangeet forum Celebrates Karaoke Musical Evenig



(By Our Staff Reporter) By Rekha Valliappan - The India Association of Long Island (IALI) recently concluded its year long festive activities on a high note with an out of the ordinary "karaoke" musical evening organized by IALI's Sangeet Forum bringing together like minded folks who shared nothing more than a keen ear and an absorbing love for music and song. The surprise and fun part of the event was in discovering that there were many particularly among the IALI membership who came ready and well prepared to display some wonderful talent and could sing. The gathering included a mix of versatile singing pros, some with their own youtube hits in the

making, others who were karaoke experts, still many who were classic music lovers, together with the all-time favorites of golden oldies and evergreen songsters, added with pop and vintage, Hindi, Punjabi, English melodies galore. It was a trip down memory lane listening to nostalgic renderings of yore from Mohamad Rafi to Asha Bhonsle and beyond. It is said music transcends all boundaries and is the universal language of mankind. This it was. Everyone present enjoyed. Jyoti Gupta - IALI Sangeet Forum Chair together with Rashmi Mittal Co-Chair with their joint pure enjoyment of singing opened up the stage to an evening of new vistas to a host of



participants. All who took to the stage displayed a remarkable array of amazing vocals and more acutely than that an undiminished passion for singing. Leading the ensemble was Dr. Kishore Kuncham - IALI President who welcomed all and thanked the audience present before launching into a wonderfully rendered classical number of music maestro Yesudas.

The wide range of IALI's "singer-artistes" included Mr. Devendra Gupta, Rekha Chichara, Mr. Wadhwa, Darshan Seth, Kiran Gupta, Shoba Prakash, Anjana Kashyap, Gunjan Rastogi, Mr. Raj Bhalodkar, Rekha Valliappan, Nishi Behl, Mr. Yogesh Kashyap, Mr. Satnam

S. Parhar, Dr. Jagmohan Kalra, Veena Lamba, Rashmi Mittal. Mr. Manjit Anand joined Jyoti Gupta in separate duets. Rickey Behel accompanied his catchy number strumming on his own guitar. The program commenced with the Ganesha Stotram. Mr. Raj assisted with the sound set up. Damayanti Goklani - IALI Senior Program Nassau Chair assisted with other logistics. The Plainview Public Library generously provided the stage setting and backdrop by opening up its Main Auditorium so that both IALI's Senior Programs of Nassau and Suffolk Counties could be part of the Sangeet Forum Karaoke event. Refreshments were served.



Wells Fargo Shares the Diwali Spirit with the South Asian Community

(By Our Staff Reporter) Wells Fargo & Company (NYSE: WFC) is a nationwide, diversified, community-based financial services company with \$1.5 trillion in assets. Founded in 1852 and headquartered in San Francisco, Wells Fargo provides banking, insurance, investments, mortgage, and consumer and

commercial finance through more than 9,000 stores, 12,000 ATMs, and the Internet (wellsfargo.com), and has offices in more than 35 countries to support the bank's customers who conduct business in the global economy. With more than 270,000 team members, Wells Fargo serves one in three households in the

United States. Wells Fargo & Company was ranked No. 25 on Fortune's 2013 rankings of America's largest corporations. Wells Fargo's vision is to satisfy all our customers' financial needs and help them succeed financially. Wells Fargo perspectives are also available at blogs.wellsfargo.com.

(By Our Staff Reporter) New York - To mark the spirit of the Diwali season, Wells Fargo hosted a series of Bollywood movie screenings of veteran director/producer Sanjay Leela Bhansali's "Romeo and Juliet" adaptation, RamLeela, starring Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone in the month of November. The Bollywood movie nights took place at theaters in communities around the country, including New York, New Jersey, Washington D.C., Houston, Dallas/Fort Worth, San Francisco Greater Bay Area and Los Angeles. The Wells Fargo customer appreciation events were one of the many ways to celebrate the "Festival of Lights" with the Indian community and bring in the New Year together. Wells Fargo Team Members at Movie Screening at Fun Asia in Dallas, TX About Wells Fargo (By

U.S. Center for Disease Control Awards Grant to Queens College

Goal of Research Project Is to Improve Working Conditions in Post-Disaster Settings

(Press Release) New York - The destruction of the World Trade Center has shown that conditions after disasters can be very dangerous, both short and long-term, for the workers involved in cleanup and reconstruction. Post-Superstorm Sandy workers may also be facing threats to health and safety. Now, thanks to a federal grant of \$547,000, the Center for the Biology of Natural Systems (CBNS) at Queens College of the City University of New York and the immigrant-focused organization Make the Road New York, that will be less likely to occur. This two-year grant, which began September 30, 2013, was awarded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health



(NIOSH) of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to conduct research on improving working conditions for immigrant construction laborers in post-disaster reconstruction. It is part of the federal government's response to the needs created by Sandy's

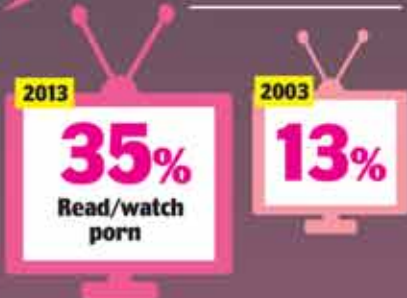
devastation. This project will fill important gaps in knowledge about the prevalence of unsafe working conditions in this post-hurricane environment and will develop and test methods of addressing those hazards. Says Steven Markowitz, M.D., director of the

CBNS: "Given what we all learned from the illness of workers engaged in clean-up of Ground Zero, it is critical to prevent post-disaster workers from becoming ill when we are uncertain about the hazards. We do this by educating them and providing them with proper protective equipment." Make the Road New York works with immigrant laborers in Queens, Staten Island, and Brooklyn, as well as Brentwood (Long Island). Once recruited for this project, the laborers will be trained and will conduct more than 200 worksite safety and health hazard assessments. Whatever is preventing, or helping to ensure, safe work conditions will be identified through focus groups and interviews.

PRUDISH MEN, RACY WOMEN

The first India Today sex survey in 2003 decoded female sexuality. The second in 2004 explored what men wanted. Over a decade, men have turned discreet while women are candid and experimental.

CHANGE IN WOMEN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS SEX 2003-2013

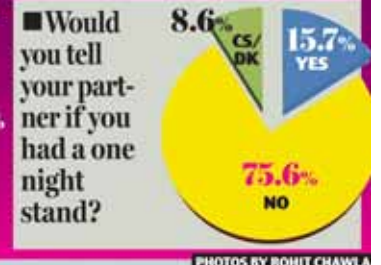
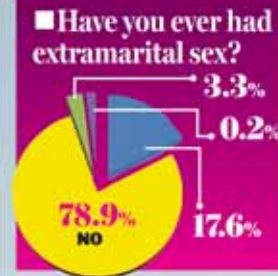


CHANGE IN MEN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS SEX 2003-2013



■ Do you think having sex with your wife is your marital right?
79.3% Yes | **14.9%** No | **5.9%** CS/DK

■ Do you insist on sex even if your partner is not in the mood for it?
48.1% SOMETIMES | **32.9%** NEVER | **13.4%** VERY OFTEN | **1.9%** YES | **3.8%** CS/DK



PHOTOS BY ROHIT CHAWLA

Sex and the CITIES

Short skirts invite rape & premarital sex is still taboo — the India Today sex survey gives you a reality check

(By Our Staff Reporter) THE wisdom of surveys often provides us insightful peeks at prevailing attitudes to different phenomena. In that light, sex surveys, saucy reads as they are, hold a mirror to the society, especially one as beset by patriarchy as India's.

Little wonder then that when the India Today Group, along with the marketing research organisation MDRA, set out to unmask Indians' changing attitudes to sex, their questions threw up some worrying answers even as they revealed how people in our country are getting more experimental with the art of intimacy.

The inherent tendency for victim-blaming is reaffirmed by the fact that of the 1,999 men surveyed across 19 cities, a staggering 36.3 per cent blamed a woman's revealing clothes for rape. While 33.3 per cent said rape could be attributed to the rapists' perversion, only 4.6 per cent believed male chauvinism played a role.

Marital rape, on the other hand, appeared to be no concern at all for most of the male respondents, an astounding 79.3 per cent of whom said it was their right to have sex with their wives. As many as 48.1 per cent even admitted to "sometimes" insisting on intercourse irrespective of whether their wives were in the mood or not.

More than 13 per cent confessed to doing so "often". The survey also brings into question the common perception that education is the panacea for all of India's ills, with results showing that the belief that revealing clothes invited rape was stronger among people who had completed higher levels of formal education. Around 45 per cent of people with postgraduate degrees in professional fields were found to hold this opinion, as opposed to 35 per cent among Class XII pass-outs.

The deep-seated orthodoxy evident in this response also seemed to be the determining factor for the respondents' attitude to premarital sex. Of the 2,015 women surveyed, again across 19 cities, a resounding 74.3 per cent admitted they expect the man they marry to be virgins. They fared only slightly better than men, 77.4 per cent of whom expect their prospective wives to have "saved herself", as the common euphemism goes, for after marriage.

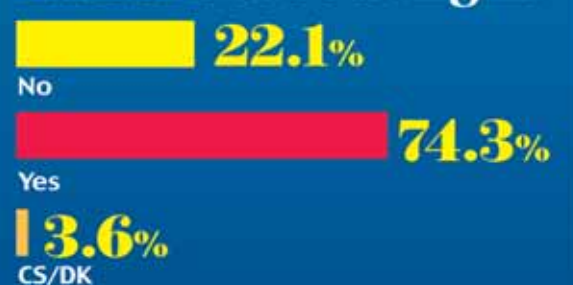
Among the male respondents, no less than 76.1 per cent said they would never marry a woman they know has had premarital sex. Of the entire pool of respondents, 44.8 per cent termed the entire concept of premarital sex "wrong". Paired with findings suggesting a more adventurous attitude to sex — 28 per cent of the female respondents admitted to masturbating as compared to 9 per cent in 2003, when the first India Today sex survey was conducted — the survey puts the verdict clearly on the wall.

Indians have a long way to go before women are allowed a say over their bodies and sex shorn of the stigma.

Till then, the status quo will be questioned, one sex survey at a time.



■ Do you expect your husband to be a virgin?



IOC to revoke India's suspension after IOA elections

(Agencies) Indian athletes have been cleared to compete in the Winter Games in Sochi after the country complied with the IOC's ethics rules and avoided becoming the first country expelled from the Olympics in more than 40 years. Still to be determined is whether the few Indian athletes who have qualified for Sochi compete for their country or under the Olympic flag.

The International Olympic Committee gave a reprieve to India's suspended national Olympic body on Tuesday after a long impasse that had threatened to lead to the expulsion of the world's second most populous nation. The move came two days after the Indian Olympic Association amended its

constitution to bar any officials charged with a crime from running for election, as demanded by the IOC. "We think that is a major step in the right direction," IOC president Thomas Bach said. "We are now looking forward to the implementation of the new rules by transparent and open and democratic elections in the Indian Olympic Association."

The Indian body was suspended by the IOC last December after electing secretary-general Lalit Bhanot, who spent 10 months in jail on corruption charges related to the 2010 Commonwealth Games in New Delhi. Mr. Bach said the IOA remains suspended pending the holding of elections under the new constitution. Although the new elec-

tions will not take place until Feb. 9, two days after the start of the Sochi Olympics, Mr. Bach said the IOC has "taken precautions for the athletes and made sure the athletes will not suffer from this procedure." In that case, Mr. Bach said, Indians would compete as "independent athletes" under the Olympic flag, with no Indian flag or

symbols allowed at the venues or opening ceremony.

If the elections can take place before the Sochi Olympics and satisfy the IOC demands, the suspension would be lifted and the athletes could compete with their national flag and anthem.

India is likely to send a three-member team to Sochi, led

by luger Shiva Keshavan, who will be participating in his fifth Winter Olympics. Keshavan, who set a continental record at the Asia Cup in Nagano, Japan, last December, is hoping to become the first Indian to win a medal at a Winter Games. India can also send one male and one female Alpine skier to the games.



Nassau County police Commissioner ousted



(News Agencies) Mineola-Nassau County Executive Edward Mangano has replaced Thomas Dale, the county's top law enforcement official after prosecutors found police Commissioner Dale personally directed his officers to board a

county bus in October and arrest a witness in a politically motivated election-year case. In a statement, Mangano said he met with Dale, who he hired as commissioner in January 2012, on Thursday morning and the commissioner tendered his resignation.

Dale, who will not be charged by District Attorney Kathleen Rice, will be replaced on an interim basis by Victor Politi, Mangano's deputy county executive for public safety. In a letter to Mangano Thursday outlining her office's findings, Rice said no laws were broken and Dale will not be charged.

"District Attorney Rice today brought a troubling matter to my attention regarding questionable influence within the Nassau County Police Depart-

ment," Mangano said in a statement. "Upon further investigation, the district attorney found no evidence to indicate criminality but the investigation itself indicates a fresh look at internal procedures is warranted. This approach is necessary to maintain the highest standards of police internal administration. New leadership sends a clear message that stringent administrative review and application is underway." Two other top police officials involved in the bus incident -- Chief of Detectives John Capece and Sgt. Sal Mistretta -- have left the department, according to officials. Capece retired and Mistretta resigned. Capece will be replaced by Narcotics Vice Squad Insp. Kevin Smith. The case involved

Randy White, 29, of Roosevelt, who testified that former Freeport Mayor Andrew Hardwick was paying him \$1.25 for each signature he got on petitions for Hardwick to get on the ballot for Nassau County executive. Petitioners legally can be paid per hour but not per signature. Hardwick has denied the claim. White was arrested Oct. 5 while riding a bus from Roosevelt to Hempstead. He had failed to pay a \$250 fine after pleading guilty earlier this year to selling bootleg DVDs. In the letter to Mangano, Rice said Gary Melius, owner of the Oheka Castle catering hall and a Hardwick campaign donor, called Dale to report that the campaign wanted to file a perjury charge against White. After conferring with police personnel, Dale told Melius to report his allegation to the First Precinct in

Baldwin, Rice said. Dale instructed Capece and a department lawyer to report to the First Precinct and meet with a Hardwick attorney and several campaign operatives regarding the perjury complaint. "While the political sensitivity of Mr. White's case may very well give rise to appropriate administrative and public scrutiny surrounding the decision to prioritize the search and arrest of Mr. White, the department's decision to target the subject of an open warrant was not a violation of criminal law," Rice said in the four-page letter. Melius said neither he nor Dale did anything inappropriate. "I did not ask Dale to do anything wrong and he did not do anything wrong," Melius said Thursday. Rice found that Mangano was not aware of Dale's actions.

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YOUR MOBILE ISN'T THAT HARMFUL

From exploding cellphones to fears that they can give you cancer, we separate myths from the facts for you



(Agencies) CAN our mobile increase the risk of cancer? Is it safe for children? What about those mobile shields then? Can they rescue us from the radiations of EMF (electro-magnetic field)? There are endless queries when it comes to mobile and its use: an time paramour for most of us, in this digital age. Would we ever know truth about our favourite gadget, we often wonder.

After all, over 4 to 5 billion mobiles are in use worldwide the evidences for and against the device are both just mounting. For every study finds your mobile to be a option, there are many dispelling it. All of which, leaves us unable to make the right interpretation and choice. Well, the verdict isn't out, but there is credible news to our reassurance: mobiles might not be as harmful as claimed to be. The cancer causing scare can be aside, say experts.

THE CANCER: Agency said fields classified cancercausing Repacholi that fields, shown the disease.

cancer
COMFORTING, FOR NOW latest WHO (World Health Organisation) study says that mobile phones are indeed safe.

Professor Michael Repacholi, radiation expert and the first coordinator of WHO's radiation environmental health unit, known for initiating the International EMF project at WHO in Geneva, was in the city recently release the book, " Mobile Phones and Public Health-Myths and Reality," compiled by veteran journalist and columnist

THE TRUTH ABOUT SOME SCARES

CANCER: Studies by the International Agency for Research on Cancer have said that that RF (radiofrequency) fields are possibly carcinogenic and classified them into group 2B (cancer-causing probability). But WHO expert Repacholi dismisses it. "Studies say that environmental exposure to RF fields, such as base stations have shown no indication that they increase the risk of cancer, or any other disease. Moreover, it was found that most cancer patients who were part of the study, tended to exaggerate their usage of mobile," he says.

OTHER HEALTH EFFECTS:

"Studies are underway to confirm these statements. But these effects are minor as speaking on cellphone increases the brain's temperature by less than 0.1 degree celsius," he says.



TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS: The danger is obvious but a slew of research studies have proven that there are 3-4 times greater chances of an accident, when mobile phones are used during driving.

ELECTROMAGNETIC INTERFERENCE:

According to the WHO, mobiles are used very close to medical devices like pacemakers and there is the possibility of causing interference with their operation. The risk is much reduced for 3G phones though.

RADIATION FROM MOBILE TOWERS:

"In fact mobile tower radiation is lower compared to RF emissions from radio FM. Wireless technology signals are too weak and effects occur at levels of much higher intensity. Indian standards of cellphone radiations are very stringent, and it turns out are one-fiftieth of the level at which there can be any health impact," says Prasad.



Ravi VS Prasad. The book addresses the misconceptions, fears and concerns regarding mobile radiations. The WHO has reportedly come with the conclusion after million dollars worth research and 6000 papers on the subject. " WHO has already proven that mobile phones don't affect human health. Cancer, or brain tumour apart, they can't study, usage OTHER EFFECTS: " underway confirm statements.

cause even headaches, or sleep disorders," he states.

THE BIGGER PICTURE There has been concern that having mobiles close to our head cause cancer. This had been further backed up by an alarming report done by the International Agency for Re-

search on Cancer in 2011, which labelled cell phones as " class B carcinogens" (cancer causing agents).

But the WHO expert says that the study indicates that there might be a link but the link is too weak to be definitive. " For that matter, even pickle, coffee, and the likes have been classified as class B carcinogens," points out Ravi Prasad, the author of the book.

The brain cancer study from 13 countries found that there is no increased risk to glioma or meningioma (brain cells and tissues) with mobile phone use for more than 10 years, according to Repacholi. He added that the mobile phone link with brain

tumour too needs

further evidence. During the 1960s there was a transistor boom. " Radio waves emit five times more radiation than mobile phone towers. But no one has cancer due to radio usage," says Repacholi.

YOU STILL CAN'T TAKE CHANCES So what can you make out of the mumbo jumbo of contradictory scientific studies? Even the researchers doubt if this gold standard study decriminalising mobiles will end the debate on them.

Our suggestion would be to take the news with a pinch of salt for different reasons such as: mobiles are a relatively new technology, scientific studies take time and brain tumours for example, grow slowly. Also, most

government agencies prefer to tread a safer approach.

Even the WHO calls for further research on the health risks of mobiles. While the body of research is extremely reassuring on the lack of its health consequences, the final word is awaited as scientific evidences aren't good enough to give mobiles a clean chit yet. But we can very well keep off scaremongering and falling for potshots on our favourite gadget.

Let's accept it: whether or not mobiles cause cancer, there is no moving back from the technology at hand. The ubiquitous device is indeed indispensable.

So, lets do ourselves a favour by using this marvel responsibly, without affecting our health and well-being.

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World Bids Farewell in the Land Mandela Freed

(Agencies) SOWETO, South Africa — For a day, the world came to Nelson Mandela's adopted hometown. There were celebrities: Bono, Naomi Campbell, Charlize Theron. There were kings-in-waiting: Crown Prince Haakon of Norway and Crown Prince Felipe of Spain. There were more presidents and prime ministers than at just about any other setting outside a United Nations General Assembly. It was a singular gathering to celebrate a life virtually unmatched in modern times, and the assemblage of allies and adversaries reflected Mr. Mandela's enduring legacy of forgiveness and reconciliation, as well the messy and sometimes clashing global allegiances of his party, the African National Congress.

President Obama gave a eulogy that stirred the crowd, only to be followed later by President Raúl Castro of Cuba. The two even shared an unexpected handshake. Old friends met happily in the V.I.P. area, while old enemies, like former Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain and President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, avoided each other.

"It took a man like Madiba to free not just the prisoner, but the jailer as well; to show that you must trust others so that they may trust you; to teach that reconciliation is not a matter of ignoring a cruel past, but a means of confronting it with inclusion and generosity and truth," Mr. Obama said in his remarks, referring to Mr. Mandela by his clan name. "He changed laws, but he also changed hearts."

Sheets of driving rain swept across this former segregated township — an urban sprawl within sight of the glittery high rises of downtown Johannesburg — keeping many mourners away from the vast soccer stadium where Mr. Mandela made his last public appearance, during the World Cup in 2010. Still, tens of thousands of other South Africans, swathed in their national colors, came out to celebrate Mr. Mandela, who died on Thursday at the age of 95, some stomping their feet as protesters did during the movement that led to his release from prison in 1990 after 27 years of incarceration. "Even heaven is crying," one woman in the crowd declared as the deluge continued. "We have lost an angel." The day began with a joyful noise. Nothando Dube, 31, left her home in Soweto at dawn, joining a throng to sing old songs of the struggle against apartheid, waiting for the memorial to the man who

brought democracy to South Africa and became its first black president. It was a moment for a country that at times still seems deeply divided by race, class, religion and tribe to join together once again as the Rainbow Nation of Mr. Mandela's dreams.

"It feels different when you sing it now as a free young person," said Ms. Dube, wearing an A.N.C. beret. "You try to reach that feeling, that emotion they were feeling when they sang that song in prison." But a few hours later, her mood had darkened. As jeers cascaded from the crowd aimed at South Africa's current president, Jacob Zuma, Ms. Dube was one of many rolling their arms in the gesture known the world over as a call to substitute a failing player in a soccer match. It was an unmistakable message to Mr. Zuma, who faces corruption charges and deep worries about his governing of the country.

"You don't want to be airing your laundry in front of ev-

erybody, but people wanted to send a message," she said. "The man on the street feels there's a lot that should have been done by now to fix the country." Like many around the world, the United Nations secretary general, Ban Ki-moon, praised Mr. Mandela's ability to look beyond past wrongs, bridge divisions and build a new nation, inspiring his own country and many others far beyond its borders. "He showed the awesome power of forgiveness — and of connecting people with each other and with the true meaning of peace," Mr. Ban said in his remarks. "That was his unique gift, and that was the lesson he shared with all humankind. He has done it again. Look around this stadium and this stage. We see leaders representing many points of view, and people from all walks of life. All here, all united."

But what had been planned as a moment to reunite a nation struggling with a slumping economy, widening inequality,



rampant corruption and deep political divisions ultimately showcased the broad discontent with South African politics today. Many attending the service booed and hooted at Mr. Zuma, who has for many come to symbolize all the lost promise of South Africa's peaceful transition from racist white rule to nonracial democracy.

"I don't own a house even though I am always struggling," said George Tshotlego Mikobeni, 27 and unem-

ployed, as he watched Mr. Zuma on stage at the memorial. "He is not like Madiba," Mr. Mikobeni said. "He only cares about himself. This man spent all our money on his house, so many millions," he continued, referring to \$27 million on so-called security upgrades to Mr. Zuma's home, which were paid for with government money but included things that had nothing to do with security, according to a preliminary investigation.



Horoscope



ARIES

A letter or phone call concerning potential positive changes in your financial situation could have your mind buzzing over possibilities for the future.

You might be a bit worried about being able to make the most of this break, but your practicality should enable you to face it objectively and efficiently. There's no need to worry. Give it some thought and make your decision when it all comes through.



TAURUS

Someone that you don't really know well may corner you at a social occasion and try to talk you into something. Get all the facts before you commit to anything. Your persuasive powers are high. If you have a project to pitch to someone, this is the day to do it, or at least map out your strategy. Success is strongly indicated for any project you start today.



GEMINI

Your writing and speaking abilities are operating at a high level today. If you've been thinking about pursuing either of these avenues, starting now gives you an advantage toward attaining success. Make a start and get your ideas down on paper, however rough they may be. The only downside is the stress that might result from the sudden stimulation.



CANCER

Success in a creative field and possible public acknowledgment could come your way. Close friends and romantic partners will be very happy for you and might even throw a little celebration of some kind. Phone calls with congratulations may come from distant states or even foreign countries. This could be something you've been working toward for a long time, so relax and enjoy it.



LEO

Good news about career success may have your home in an uproar. Visitors, particularly men and young people, could be in and out all day, and warm and loving calls could come periodically. You may want to do some work on your home, perhaps clean, decorate, or even minor repairs, but the interruptions may get in your way. Enjoy the company. You can always do what's necessary tomorrow!



VIRGO

Celebrating coming milestones could have you running around paying visits, shopping, or consulting with others. You might have some interesting news to tell that others enjoy hearing. There might be some changes coming in your area. Perhaps new neighbors or businesses are moving in, or a get-together is planned. This promises to be a busy but satisfying day.



LIBRA

You're swamped with paperwork regarding financial affairs. Bills need to be paid and checks deposited. There may also be a legal paper of some kind to deal with. Basically, everything looks great regarding money, so this is certainly welcome. Your circle of acquaintances may widen. Tonight you may receive an invitation to a social event that you choose not to attend.



SCORPIO

Have you been thinking about working toward a career as a writer or teacher? If so, this is the day to start. Perhaps you need to sit down and start writing, or you want to take some courses to improve your skills. A number of communications from out of state or even distant lands could come your way from people with information that might change your life in some way.



SAGITTARIUS

Being around others should be especially gratifying for you today. Most people should be friendly, and you'll enjoy their company. The downside is that your psychic faculties are acute, so you might pick up some unsettling feelings from those you talk to. You're likely to find that many smiles hide turmoil inside.



CAPRICORN

A group with which you've been involved could receive recognition for good work that you may have spearheaded. Or a friend could receive some sort of public acknowledgment that reflects on you. Long-term goals may suddenly come together for you, winding up months of hard work, bringing you well-earned success and recognition.



AQUARIUS

The current aspects indicate success. This might relate to your romantic life or to a creative project that you've been working on for a long time. Whichever it is, it comes at just the perfect time when your enthusiasm and optimism are at a peak. You'll be able to make the most of the fortunate event that comes your way.



PISCES

Today might mark a milestone for you in the form of public recognition. Your clear, quick thinking and powers of observation have impressed others, and you could reap the benefits of your hard work. These events might encourage you to seek other methods of advancing yourself, perhaps by taking a few courses or moving where there are more opportunities in your field.

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Nepal makes diplomatic efforts to remove EC's flight ban

(Agencies) Kathmandu: Nepal is making diplomatic efforts to persuade the European Commission to revoke its recent decision to ban all Nepali airlines from entering the European airspace, government officials said Tuesday. "The EC's recent decision could damage Nepal's aviation sector and this is the reason (why) we are using our diplomatic tools within this week to woo EC to roll back its decision," Xinhua quoted aviation ministry spokesperson Mohan Krishna Sapkota as saying. In a statement last Thursday, the EC had put all

of Nepali air carriers on the EU air-safety list -- a move that will effectively bar Nepali planes from flying into European countries. "Surprisingly, we have neither received confirmation from the EC so far nor have been informed as to on what basis our aircraft has been put on the air-safety list," the spokesperson added.

Ministry officials said it would be wise to use diplomatic channels to persuade the EC to reconsider or withdraw its decision before it sends the formal confirmation to the Nepali government.

"We will first discuss with our

foreign ministry about the sensitivity of the issue and ask it to mobilise its Brussels-based embassy to take care of the issue," Sapkota said.

Ministry officials claimed that it was unfair for the EC to blacklist Nepal's air carriers unilaterally without evaluating the country's air safety state shown by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) audit.

Nepal's non-compliance rate under the ICAO standards declined by 12 percentage points to 45 percent, while the global figure dropped to 39 percent

last year.

"While the IACO audit report is yet to come for this year, the EC has hastened to blacklist Nepal's aircrafts," said a ministry official who declined to be named. "The reason behind this is something else rather than the core safety issue."

Meanwhile, the ministry said the EC's decision would not affect Nepal's decision to purchase Airbus planes. In April this year, Nepal's national flag carrier paid \$500,000 to Airbus as the earnest money to buy two A320-200 aircraft.

India's Deputy Consul General Dr. Devyani Khobragade held & released

(Contd from 1) statements to be made, to the US Department of State in support of a visa application for an the Indian national employed as a babysitter and housekeeper at her home in New York.

Khobragade is currently employed as the Deputy Consul General for Political, Economic, Commercial and Women's Affairs at the Consulate General of India in New York.

"Foreign nationals brought to the US to serve as domestic workers are entitled to the same protections against exploitation as those afforded to US citizens," Manhattan US Attorney Bharara said.

"The false statements and fraud

alleged to have occurred here were designed to circumvent those protections so that a visa would issue for a domestic worker who was promised far less than a fair wage. This type of fraud on the United States and exploitation of an individual will not be tolerated," he said. Khobragade was charged with one count of visa fraud and one count of making false statements, which carry maximum sentences of ten years and five years in prison, respectively. She is expected to appear before US Magistrate Judge Debra Freeman.

According to the allegations in the criminal complaint unsealed today in Manhattan federal

court, Khobragade prepared and electronically submitted an application for an A-3 visa, which is a US visa for domestic workers and servants, through the website for the US Department of State's Consular Electronic Application Center for an Indian national who was to be the personal employee of Khobragade beginning in November 2012 in New York.

The Visa Application stated that the Indian worker employed by Khobragade was to be paid USD 4,500 per month. According to an employment contract, Khobragade would pay the domestic help the prevailing or minimum wage, whichever is greater, resulting in an hourly salary of USD 9.75. However, the domestic help worked for Khobragade as a household employee from approximately November 2012 through approximately June 2013. The domestic help

worked far more than 40 hours per week and was paid less than USD 9.75 per hour

Indian Embassy in Washington on Dec 13, 2013 also released a Press Statement on its website stating that " We were informed that Deputy Consul General of India in New York, Dr. Devyani Khobragade, was taken into custody by law enforcement authorities in New York in the morning of December 12, 2013 while she was dropping her daughter at school. Dr. Khobragade was later released that same evening.

Action was apparently taken against Dr Khobragade on the basis of allegations raised by the officer's former India-based domestic assistant, Ms Sangeeta Richard, who has been absconding since June this year. In this context the Delhi High Court had issued an-interim injunction in September to restrain Ms Richard

from instituting any actions or proceedings against Dr Khobragade outside India on the terms or conditions of her employment. The US Government had subsequently been requested to locate Ms Richard and facilitate the service of an arrest warrant, issued by the Metropolitan Magistrate of the South District Court in New Delhi under Sections 387, 420 and 120B of the Indian Penal Code. The Embassy of India in Washington DC had immediately conveyed its strong concern to the U.S. Government over the action taken against Dr Khobragade. The US side have been urged to resolve the matter with due sensitivity, taking into account the existing Court case in India that has already been brought to their attention by the Government of India, and the Diplomatic status of the officer concerned.

Bangladesh admits security a problem ahead of World T20



(Agencies) DHAKA: Bangladesh's cricket chief has said that next year's World Twenty20 is threatened by the country's deadly political violence, warning there may only be weeks to save the tournament.

The 16-team competition, due to take place between March 16 and April 6, should be the biggest sporting event ever staged by Bangladesh.

But the country has been gripped by violent protests in recent weeks, with opposition supporters insisting that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stand aside ahead of elections due next year. More than 74 people have been killed since late October. "If this situation prevails, then any big tournament or participation of any big country will be under threat," Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul

Hassan told reporters late Monday.

"This must end in January and preferably in December." A team of International Cricket Council (ICC) inspectors declared last week that they were "happy" with security arrangements but said they would continue to monitor the situation. However, the dangers posed to teams was underlined at the weekend when a small bomb exploded outside the West Indies' Under-19 team's hotel in the port city of Chittagong, prompting them to cut short their tour. Bangladesh is also due to host a tour by Sri Lanka in January before then staging the Asia Cup, a 50-over tournament starting in February. "The quicker this political situation improves the better because the Sri Lanka tour is in January and then we have the Asia Cup.

Obama Reaches Out to Cuba's Leader, but the Meaning May Elude Grasp

(Contd from page 1) But the image — captured by photographers and television cameras — instantly raised questions about its deeper meaning. Was Mr. Obama trying to signal a new effort by the American government to reach an accommodation with Cuba 50 years after the Communist revolution that put Fidel Castro, Raúl's brother, in power? Or was Mr. Obama simply trying to avoid delivering a diplomatic snub at a memorial dedicated to forgiveness? The president's aides would have known in advance which world leaders would be at the podium when the president approached for his own remarks. But White House officials declined to offer any explanation of the handshake or confirm that there had been a discussion about whether to offer one.

Still, Mr. Obama's own remarks, delivered just moments afterward, offer tantalizing possibilities about what was going through the president's mind when he approached Mr. Castro.

Mr. Obama talked about the need for trust and reconciliation and forgiveness. He was talking about Mr. Mandela — widely known by his clan name, Madiba — but his remarks might also apply to the diplomatically frozen relationship between the United States and Cuba.

The question is whether Mr. Obama was trying to signal a desire to change hearts by shaking Mr. Castro's hand. If so, the Cuban president would become the latest adversary that Mr. Obama has sought to turn into a friend — or at least a less dangerous opponent. Mr. Obama's efforts to negotiate a nuclear deal with Hassan Rouhani, the Iranian president, are another example.

A handshake like the one Mr. Obama offered Mr. Castro has the potential to become a political problem for the president, much the way that Mr. Obama's handshake in 2009 with Hugo Chávez, then the Socialist president of Venezuela, was criticized by Republicans.

Mr. Obama was also attacked for bowing to Emperor Akihito of Japan that year. That was 20 years after President George Bush generated criticism by bowing at the coffin of Emperor Hirohito, Japan's wartime leader. Mr. Obama was accused of bowing to King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia during a meeting of world leaders in 2009, something the White House denied.

But such a gesture can also mark the beginning of a thawing of relations, something many Cuban-Americans would be wary of. In his remarks, Mr. Obama hinted that he was seeking a world not defined by old animosities. It is not too much of a stretch to think that he was talking about the Cuban-American dynamic for the past half-century. "South Africa shows we can change, that we can choose a world defined not by our differences, but by our common hopes," Mr. Obama said at the memorial. "We can choose a world defined not by conflict, but by peace and justice and opportunity."

Sri Lanka rally to protest against disappearances

(Agencies) Hundreds of Sri Lankans have held a demonstration in Colombo, demanding to know the whereabouts of two activists who disappeared two years ago.

Lalith Weeraraj and Kugan Muruganathan organised rallies against political disappearances before being apparently abducted in the north of the country.

The rally was held on the second anniversary of their disappearance.

The crowd blamed the government and security forces, but they have always denied involvement. Another demonstration on human rights, in the east of the country, was attacked by government supporters leaving one of its organisers injured: he was admitted to hospital. Sri Lanka has one of the world's highest tallies of disappeared people - the United Nations says there are more than 5,000 cases, and that number refers only to those that have been registered.

Many of these date from the 1980s and 1990s but activists say hundreds of people, mostly ethnic minority Tamils, disappeared at the time of the government's war victory against the Tamil Tigers in 2009, including many who

apparently vanished after surrendering to government forces or crossing to government-held territory. "Release Lalith and Kugan and stop abductions and torture," the crowd shouted at Tuesday's demonstration outside the main railway station.

Lalith Weeraraj and Kugan Muruganathan vanished near Jaffna while preparing a demonstration to mark World Human Rights Day in 2011. Among placards held by the 500-odd protesters were depictions of white vans - a type of vehicle regularly associated with shadowy abductors - with the word "DON'T!" underneath.

"Lalith is my only son. I believe he is still alive," his father, Arumugam Weeraraj, told the BBC. "He did nothing wrong. He was helping suffering parents." He said his son, half-Tamil and half-Sinhalese, was well placed to help in such situations being fluent in both languages.

Pubudu Jayagoda, a spokesperson for a leftist group under which the two men were working, said that because the two had been abducted in a high-security zone "we believe the government should be responsible for this and the security forces are responsible for this". He alleged that their motorbike had later been found in a police station



and added "Stop all the abductions". But the police spokesman, Ajith Rohana, denied the men had ever been taken into custody. "We don't know what happened. No one saw it," he said, adding that a team of investigators was still operating. In the eastern town of Trincomalee, which was severely affected by the war, another demonstration against disappearances was attacked by a pro-government crowd.

One of its organisers was admitted to hospital after sustaining injuries. Mr Rohana said a search for the

culprit or culprits was going on. In Jaffna members of the newly elected Northern Province council, controlled by the opposition Tamil National Alliance, held a protest inside the council premises to mark Human Rights Day.

They held placards and shouted demands including justice for what they described as the genocide of Tamils during the final stage of the civil war; progress on tracing missing former Tamil Tigers; and an inquiry into alleged war crimes. The province's Chief Minister, CV Wigneswaran, took part as a silent protester.

Black money India

2011, Rs 4L crore went out, a 24% rise

(from front page) In 2011, over Rs 4 lakh crore worth of black money was illegally taken out of India, a new report by the international watchdog Global Financial Integrity (GFI) has revealed. This was 24 percent more than the previous year. This illegal outflow is nearly one third of the Government of India's total budgeted expenditure in 2011 of Rs.13 lakh crore. It is 14 times the money spent by the central government on health, seven times that spent on education and five times the amount spent on rural development in that year. The past few years in India have seen a series of exposures of mega-scams like the Commonwealth, 2G, Coalgate, Maha irrigation, Jharkhand mining, and others. This has led to a rising tide of public outrage, symbolized by Anna Hazare's movement against corruption and the dramatic rise of the Aam Admi Party led by Arvind Kejriwal. The GFI report is a sobering reminder that the creation and outflow of illicit wealth gained new heights despite all the outrage. In the decade 2002-2011, India lost a staggering Rs 15.7 lakh crore (\$344 billion) worth of black money created through crime, tax evasion, dodgy import-export practices and corruption. This works out to an average illicit outflow of about Rs 1.6 lakh crore in every year of the decade. A worrying feature of this loot from India is that it has grown every year in the past decade except in 2009, Clark Gascoigne of GFI told Media

"India's outflows increased steadily and dramatically for the whole decade, except for the one-year dip in 2009, during the height of the financial crisis, beginning at US\$7.9bn in 2002 and ending up at US\$84.9bn in 2011. That is a disturbing trend," he said. GFI estimates illicit flows by collecting two broad categories of data globally: changes in external debt and trade mispricing. For India, nearly the entire illicit outflow is through trade mispricing. This is how it works: an importer declares a higher import value to the customs department than the value of goods recorded by the exporting partner country. Similarly, an exporter understates the value of goods exported in relation to the imports recorded in the importing partner country. In both cases, the balance of funds is kept abroad. International trade data reveals this by comparing partner trading countries.

Indo-Pak nuclear war to 'end civilization' with famine: study

(Insider Bureau) WASHINGTON: A nuclear war between India and Pakistan would set off a global famine that could kill two billion people and effectively end human civilization, a study said Tuesday.

Even if limited in scope, a conflict with nuclear weapons would wreak havoc in the atmosphere and devastate crop yields, with the effects multiplied as global food markets went into turmoil, the report said.

The Nobel Peace Prize-winning International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War and Physicians for Social Responsibility released an initial peer-reviewed study in April 2012 that predicted a nuclear famine could kill more than a billion people. In a second edition, the groups said they widely underestimated the impact in China and calculated that the world's most populous country would face severe food insecurity.

"A billion people dead in the developing world is obviously a catastrophe unparalleled in human history. But then if you add to that the possibility of another 1.3 billion people in China being at risk, we are entering something that is clearly the end of civilization," said Ira Helfand, the report's author.

Helfand said that the study looked at India and Pakistan due to the longstanding tensions between the nuclear-armed states, which have fought three full-fledged wars



since independence and partition in 1947. But Helfand said that the planet would expect a similar apocalyptic impact from any limited nuclear war. Modern nuclear weapons are far more powerful than the US bombs that killed more than 200,000 people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

"With a large war between the United States and Russia, we are talking about the possible, not certain, but possible, extinction of the human race. "In this kind of war, biologically there are going to be people surviving somewhere on the planet but the chaos that would result from this will dwarf anything we've ever seen," Helfand said.

The study said that the black carbon aerosol particles kicked into the atmosphere by a South Asian nuclear war would reduce US corn and soybean production by around 10 percent over a decade. The particles would also reduce China's rice

production by an average of 21 percent over four years and by another 10 percent over the following six years. The updated study also found severe effects on China's wheat, which is vital to the country despite its association with rice.

China's wheat production would plunge by 50 per cent the first year after the nuclear war and would still be 31 per cent below baseline a decade later, it said. The study said it was impossible to estimate the exact impact of nuclear war. He called for further research, voicing alarm that policymakers in nuclear powers were not looking more thoroughly at the idea of a nuclear famine. But he said, ultimately, the only answer was the abolition of nuclear weapons.

"This is a disaster so massive in scale that really no preparation is possible. We must prevent this," he said.

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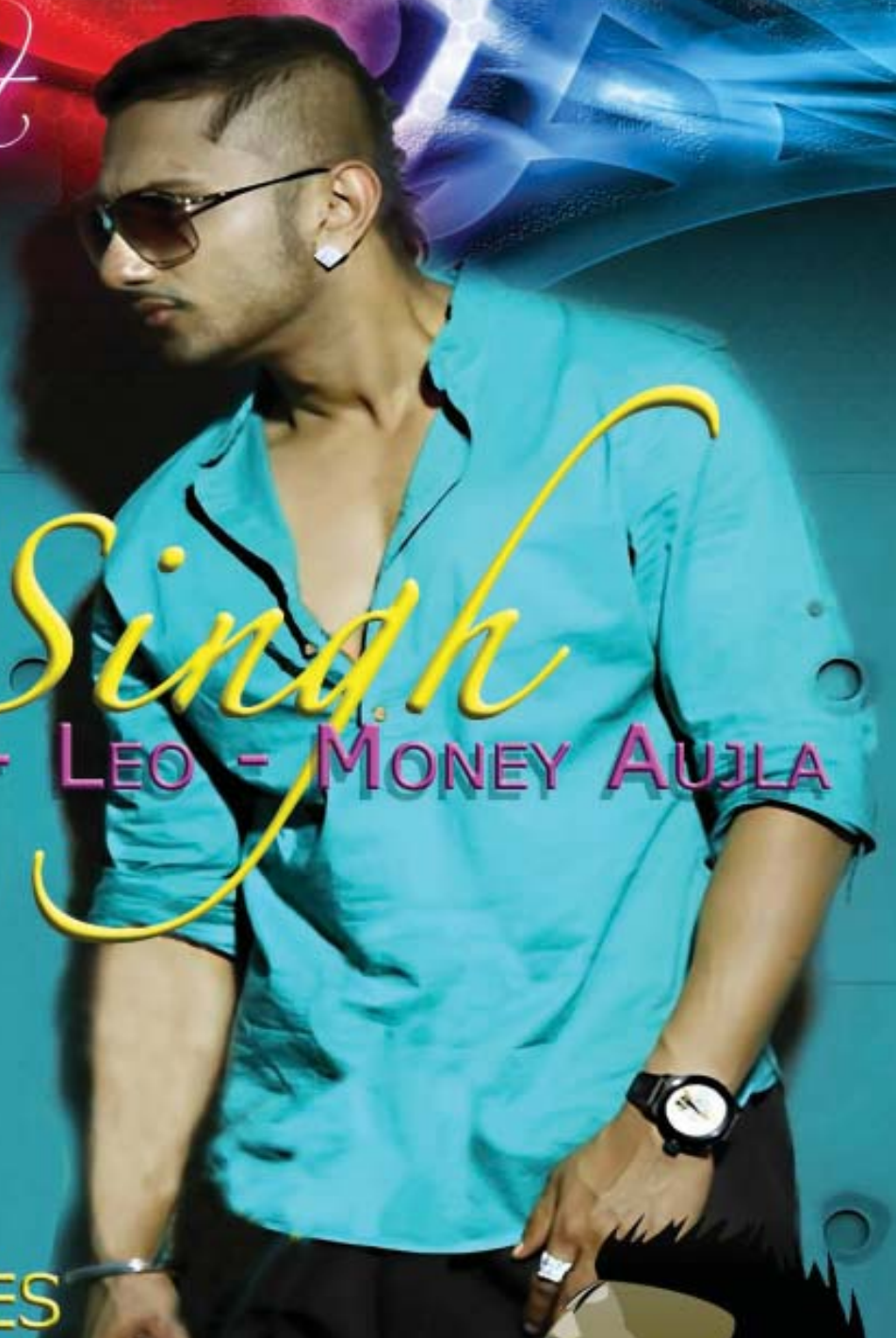
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North Korea announces execution of Kim Jong Un's uncle, Jang Song Thaek

SEOUL — North Korea announced Friday that it had executed the uncle of leader Kim Jong Un, calling him a "traitor for all ages" who opposed Kim's rule and plotted his overthrow.

Jang Song Thaek was executed after admitting to his crimes before a military tribunal Thursday, the North said in a statement released by the state-run news agency. The North said Jang, in attempting to realize his "wild ambition" of supreme power, was "despicable human scum" and "worse than a dog." Jang's execution comes just days after he was stripped of all his positions and removed from Kim's small inner circle of advisers. The purge, documented by the North with unusual detail, marks the most significant leadership change since Kim took power

of this nuclear-armed nation two years ago and suggests that he is willing to publicly go after rivals in ways that his more secretive father never did.

In recent days, the North had accused Jang of everything from graft to gambling to womanizing. But the North's account Friday narrowed to a more serious charge, saying that Jang had contested the country's system of passing power from father to son. In 65 years of Kim family rule, never has the North so explicitly described high-level dissent.

The North said Jang, a lifelong politician, had quietly followed marching orders under the nation's founder, Kim Il Sung, and his son Kim Jong Il. But after Kim Jong Il's death in December 2011, Jang made his move, "overtly and covertly

standing in the way" of the succession, the statement said.

Little is known about Kim Jong Un, who is thought to be 30 years old. But analysts say that compared with his father and grandfather, he has consolidated power far more quickly and done so in a manner that is much more openly confrontational. Although North Korea has always been known for its purges, executions have been traditionally ordered only for lower-level functionaries. Over the past few decades, high-level officials who have fallen out of favor with the Kims have been sent into the countryside and placed under house arrest, according to accounts from rights groups and defectors. The purges have almost always been done in secret. On Friday morning, the state

newspaper, the Rodong Sinmun, released photos of Jang in the courtroom, head bowed and flanked by two security guards. A front-page article described his demise. The U.S. State Department said Jang's execution, if confirmed, "is another example of the extreme brutality of the North Korean regime."

"We are in absolutely uncharted territory," said Andrei Lankov, an expert on North Korean affairs at Kookmin University in Seoul, adding: "Kim Jong Un has changed the rules of the game. He's willing to purge the leaders closest to him, and quite publicly. Behind this I see his personal character. He seems to be far more ruthless than his father. Kim Jong Un is more inclined to kill, and he seems more impulsive and emotional."

Pak cable hands defy HC ban on Indian content

ISLAMABAD: Thousands of cable television operators across Pakistan are continuing to show Bollywood films and Indian TV content despite the Lahore high court ban. The operators are citing their high popularity and demand in the country, with the unstated reason being that these are money-spinners.

The Lahore high court had issued an interim order on Tuesday to stop screening imported film unless these had proper documentation and sponsorship of a Pakistani national. The cable operators defiance would easily invite contempt of court notice, except that it would be virtually impossible for tens of thousands of cable operators to be simultaneously hauled up for the "offence".

While the Pakistani film industry has been struggling, Indian films are big hits at the box office ever since former mili-

tary ruler Pervez Musharraf eased restrictions on their import in 2006. But while owners of TV channels have made big bucks broadcasting Indian content, a few in mainstream channels believe India, too, should allow broadcast of Pakistani entertainment channels in India.

"It should be reciprocal. Indian TV shows and movies have deep impact on the language in Pakistan," said Jawad Hamid Raja, chief operating officer of AVT channels, a strong media group in Pakistan. "Hindi words such as 'namaste', 'maharani' and 'chinta' have entered into standard usage in Pakistan. The Urdu spoken in Pakistan is so rich that it can contribute in the same manner in India," he added.

Some Pakistani producers and actors are happy with the court's order but still many believe that only competition and open markets will raise standards of Pakistani film industry.

Bangladesh executes Islamist leader for 1971 war crimes, deadly clashes erupt on streets

DHAKA: Bangladesh executed Islamist opposition leader Abdul Quader Mollah on Thursday for war crimes he committed in 1971, in a move likely to spark more violent protests less than a month before elections are due to be held.

Mollah was hanged at Dhaka Central Jail after a dramatic week. He won a reprieve on Tuesday hours before he was to be sent to the gallows.

After two days of legal argument, the supreme court rejected his application for a review of the death penalty.

Hundreds of people in the centre of the capital Dhaka cheered and punched the air in celebration, underlining how Mollah's case has divided opinion in the impoverished South Asian nation of 160 million.

"Justice has been served, though we had to wait for

42 years," said university student Afzal Hossain.

At least five people were killed earlier on Thursday in clashes between opposition activists angered by the decision to execute Mollah and police near the port city of Chittagong. Police fired tear gas and vehicles were torched.

Mollah was assistant secretary general of the Jamaat-e-Islami party, which is barred from contesting elections but plays a key role in the opposition movement led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). He was the first person to be hanged for war crimes in Bangladesh, having been convicted by the country's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) set up in 2010 to investigate atrocities perpetrated during the 1971 war of independence from Pakistan. Four other Islamist lead-

ers are on death row for their part in the conflict, in which three million people died and at least 200,000 women were raped.

Critics of the tribunal say it has been used as a political tool by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who is locked in a long and poisonous feud with BNP leader Begum Khaleda Zia, as a way of weakening the opposition as Jan. 5 elections approach.

Jamaat's acting leader Moqbul Ahmed said in a statement on the party's website that people would revenge Mollah's "killing" by deepening the role of Islam in Bangladesh. He called for a general strike on Sunday. Many Bangladeshis support the ICT, believing that those convicted of war crimes should be punished, underlining how events of 42 years ago still resonate in a society uncertain over what role Islam should play.

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Hardev Singh

BJP, Aam Aadmi Party supporters in US celebrate victory

(Press Release) Washington/New York : The supporters held a series of victory celebrations across the US, in Houston, Long Island, Chicago, Jersey City and Tampa. Ecstatic Indian-American supporters of the BJP and debutant Aam Aadmi Party held a series of victory rallies across the US, celebrating the success of their parties in the assembly polls in India.

BJP supporters on Sunday pledged to volunteer their time and resources for the 2014 general election in support of Narendra Modi, the party's prime ministerial candidate.

The supporters held a series of victory celebrations across the US, in Houston, Long Island, Chicago, Jersey City and Tampa. "The good governance of BJP chief ministers and Narendra Modi's charisma worked in tandem for BJP's victory," said Overseas Friends of BJP (OFBJP) President Chandrakant Patel, who participated in the election campaign in Chhattisgarh. "Today we pledged to work to bring BJP to power and make Modi the next Prime Minister of India. The Assembly election results shows that this is now possible," said Vijay Pallod. BJP supporters also launched a group to garner support for Modi called Overseas Friends of Narendra Modi (OFNAMO). OFNAMO would



help "bring BJP to power on its own strength," American India Public Affairs Committee President Jagdish Sewhani told Media. OFNAMO would work to garner support across America for Modi as well as send volunteers to India during the elections next year to campaign for the BJP, he said. Supporters and US analysts also hailed the stunning debut of Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party in the Delhi polls.

"Aam Aadmi Party's

strong showing also signals the potential rise of a new kind of politics in urban India," said Sadanand Dhume of the American Enterprise Institute. "Indian politics will never be the same again. AAP's dramatic success in the elections is a sign that given a choice the people of India are ready to embrace an alternative political party beyond the traditional choices of the Congress and BJP," said Pran Kurup, a Bay Area entrepreneur. Experts

agreed that AAP's electoral debut is historic.

"The success of the Aam Aadmi Party, thought not unprecedented, is indeed historic," said Milan Vaishnav from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "It has broken the stranglehold the two national parties have over Delhi and has done so in a matter of months with an army of volunteers in the very centre of power in the country.

It provides an effective model that the party will now try and export to other urban centres, sending a shiver up the spine of the established parties across India," Vaishnav said. The mainstream American media too has taken note of the rise of the AAP. The Washington Post described it as an impressive debut while the Wall Street Journal said AAP far outstripped expectations.

Film Actress Meera in New York

(Press Release) New York : Meera, a brilliant Pakistani film actress associated with Bollywood for sometimes now, was on short visit in New York in connection with a charitable hospital that she is setting up in Pakistan. In New York, accompanied by her United States' Attorney, Anand Ahuja, she attended press conferences and community events. At a blood donation and bone marrow donation camp organized by the INOC (I) Tamil Nadu Chapter, in Hicksville, NY, Meera stopped by as a guest of Attorney Anand Ahuja.

Addressing the gathering in Hicksville, Meera emphasized on the community service and importance of camps such as blood donation and bone marrow. She also spoke about her own charitable works in Pakistan. Later in the evening, while addressing at a press conference in Jackson Heights, she reiterated the importance of charitable works particularly in the field of health care. On Tuesday, December 10, 2013, Meera also addressed media at Attorney Anand Ahuja's office. In response to a TV's reporter's question, she gave some details about her upcoming Bollywood movie "Bhaddas" which is releasing



in the 3rd week of December 10, 2013. "Bhaddas is a Bollywood's murder mystery movie inspired by Hollywood flick Basic Instincts", said Meera while addressing media at Attorney Ahuja's office. Further responding to media, she said, "Of course there are some bold scenes in Bhadaas. It's inspired by Hollywood, does not have songs like other Bollywood movies, out and out on Hollywood pattern, and naturally with some bold scenes". She was excited to inform the media that next Bollywood movie signed by her is with Akshay Kumar.

Meera, as the first Pakistani actress to be seen in India after a very long gap, did her first movie in India, named Nazar about 8 years back. Nazar was a film directed by Soni Razdan and it was the first Indo-Pa-

kistani joint movie venture in 50 years. The film introduced Pakistani actress Meera to Bollywood and it also featured a kissing scene. She became the target of many conservatives for doing a kissing scene with her Indian co-star. Her second movie was Kasak starring Lucky Ali. Her third film Paanch Ghantey Mien Paanch Crore managed a decent opening with its limited cinema release. However, The Times of India listed the film in Bollywood's Top 10 Bold Film category of 2012.

Born and raised in Lahore, Punjab, she studied at the Kinnaird College and started her modeling career in television in 1995. She briefly modeled for various multi-national companies, including Pepsi and LUX which helped her to come to national prominence.



She made her first motion picture debut in 1995, but she earned nationwide critical success in 1999 for her leading performance in Khilona, which was released in 1999. Khilona earned her first Nigar Award and earned critical acclaim for her work. With the release of

Inteha, another critical and commercial success, Meera won the second consecutive Nigar Award for Best Actress of the year for her break-out performance. In 2004, she played a prominent role in Salakhain which lifted her image internationally.

RAMESH SHARMA



(Insider Bureau) THE STREET outside former Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit's home bore a deserted look and an eerie silence hung around the place as counting of votes for the Assembly Elections started in the Capital on Sunday.

Soon after the counting began, Sheila Dikshit, foreseeing her defeat in the polls, resigned from the post of Delhi chief minister.

Dikshit suffered a humiliating defeat and lost her seat in New Delhi constituency to debutant Aam Aadmi Party's Arvind Kejriwal by a margin of 25,864 votes.

Congress's Dikshit, who ruled the national capital for 15- long- years, could manage only 18,405 votes and tabled her resignation to Lieutenant- Governor Najeeb Jung.

Downcast

A few Congress workers, who had got sweets to distribute in case of good results, were left dejected when the picture started to get clear by mid- day. Some other party workers, who had gathered outside the chief minister's residence in the morning to pray and to perform hawan for Dikshit's victory, had also deserted the area by early afternoon.

As results kept coming in throughout the day, some party workers tried to meet Dikshit to give her consolation but they were not allowed to meet her. A few cars of family and friends came to Dikshit's house to offer support and sympathy but



**Bewakoof hain na...
(we are idiots, right?)**

— SHEILA DIKSHIT
WHEN ASKED IF HER PARTY HAD FAILED TO READ THE MOOD OF THE CITY WHICH IT HAD RULED FOR 15 YEARS.

WHAT NEXT FOR SHEILA

SHEILA Dikshit's political fortunes came crashing in the Assembly elections, billed as a litmus test for the Congress ahead of the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, which witnessed the first-ever triangular contest in Delhi. The Congress and the BJP had been the traditional rivals since 1993. However, the Aam Aadmi Party's entry into the political arena changed the scenario in the Capital.

With Dikshit losing from her own constituency in New Delhi at the hands of AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, the future of the three-time chief minister appears to be uncertain. Dikshit was the lone face of the Congress in Delhi, except for a few fleeting appearances of Sonia and Rahul Gandhi, as she carried the burden of the poll campaign. She was among the few Congress leaders who ruled uninterrupted for 15 years. Political experts even said that she could have been the party's potential PM candidate in the future.

Though she bit the dust, analysts said credit cannot be taken away from Dikshit for ushering in reforms in the power sector, introducing e-governance in various departments and launching a series of social security schemes besides significantly enhancing the city's infrastructure.

Mail Today/New Delhi

SWEPT AWAY

Sheila Dikshit, who ruled over the Capital for three consecutive terms, was booted out by political newbie AAP

the newly resigned chief minister decided to stay inside her house and only came out briefly to address the media around noon.

Accepts defeat

Dikshit clearly looked disappointed as she briefed the media present at her 3, Moti Lal Nehru Marg residence. She accepted the Congress party's defeat and said that they would analyse the reasons behind their defeat.

"We accept the election results with due respect.

We respect what the people have decided and we are thankful to them for supporting us for the last 15 years," Dikshit said.

When asked if the Congress had failed to gauge the mood of the people of the city, which it had ruled for the last three terms, Dikshit retorted, "Bewakoof hain na (we are idiots, right)?" Incidentally, ahead of the elections, Dikshit had said, "Kejriwal is not even on our radar." The party could not have expected the scale of drubbing that came as a bolt from the blue as entry of the Aam Aadmi Party altered the political landscape in the national capital.

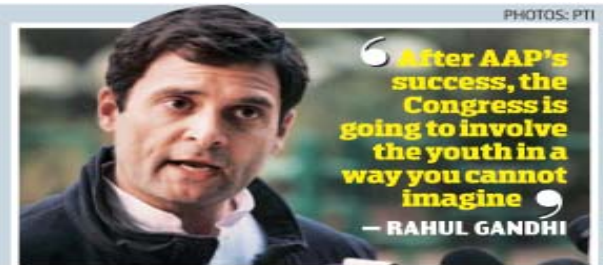
Dikshit (75), the longest- serving woman CM in independent India, could not win a fourth term in office.



Obviously people are unhappy. Otherwise they would not have given the results that they gave.

People need not worry as at an opportune time, the name of the prime ministerial candidate will be announced.

— SONIA GANDHI



After AAP's success, the Congress is going to involve the youth in a way you cannot imagine

— RAHUL GANDHI

PHOTOS: PTI

TIME FOR 'CHANGE'

WHAT was expected as a small statement from the first family of the Congress turned into a brief interaction with journalists at the AICC. Both Sonia and Rahul Gandhi accepted that the mandate was against them and acknowledged that the Congress had failed to understand the signal and new politics which emerged from the streets of Delhi.

But even then both Rahul and Sonia stood in contrast. Sonia Gandhi came across as someone more accepting of the defeat and non-combative unlike Rahul, though soft in his tone, his stand on reforming

the party gave him away. He insisted that he would try to change the party much more aggressively and ensure that it becomes more transparent and open to people.

However, two things became clear from their statements. One, that Rahul Gandhi would continue with his agenda to 'reform' the Congress and secondly, he believes he needs to further his plan to effect a change which is must. It has left the party perplexed as many leaders behind the closed doors have begun to ask as to what Rahul intends to do with the party.

Mail Today/New Delhi

Hear That Shebang?

(Contd from page 1) Be it of Suzette Jordan, a single mother of two who was gangraped in Calcutta, but refused to be referred to as the 'Park Street rape victim' and demanded she be identified by her real name, even though the law prohibits anyone from naming a rape victim; of the law intern who plucked up the courage to blog about retired Supreme Court judge A.K. Ganguly as the man who harassed her in a Delhi hotel; of the young journalist from Tehelka who spoke up against her powerful editor Tarun Tejpal and subsequently quit; of the women who exposed godman Asaram Bapu and his son Narayan Sai, landing both in jail on rape charges. A renewed feminist voice is rising from other quarters too.

As Zubaan publisher Urvashi Butalia says, "This is a new urban generation of women which is speaking up with newfound confidence." The women's movement has new members, ur-

ban and rural, and among them are women who may not have previously identified with the lofty ideals of 'feminism' as it were, but find themselves at a crossroads—standing up to prejudice and violation, or drowning under its weight forever.

For those who hesitated to speak up before, the revival of public interest and active debates around women's issues have provided the push. Whether it is a grassroots-level movement like the No Toilet, No Bride campaign, in which rural women in Madhya Pradesh refused to marry into houses which had no toilets, or an elite drive like the 'Moustache Campaign' in Bangalore, in which women sported moustaches to subvert stereotypes of femininity, the momentum is powerful, one that may be hard to reverse.

And refreshingly, those giving a fillip to this momentum are ordinary, small people like you and me.

Mumbai radio jockey Meera Damji, 34, had friends teasing her about turning into a hardcore 'feminist' when she walked the talk and brought a man to book for assaulting her on the stretch between her office and train station.

"If fighting for equality makes me a feminist, then I am one. Keyboard activism is important, but it's important to get out and do the real thing, get your hands dirty." With a group of three women and a young man, Meera has gone a step ahead and formed an activist group called 'War Against Railway Rowdies'. "We wanted to do something about the dozens of men who hang out of trains not due to lack of space, but because they like to touch women waiting to get on at the platforms. So we mobilised other women who used the local, and with the help of the railway authorities, the women's commission and the police, nabbed more than

a dozen men. We'll be carrying out this operation every few weeks," she says. Up north, in Jind, where violent crimes against women are a well-documented litany, Dimple, 28, an activist with the Haryana chapter of the All-India Women's Democratic Association, is witnessing a slow, but silent change in attitudes of women.

She herself refuses to attach either her father's or her husband's surname to hers, and says, "We've had nearly 10,000 young girls join the women's movement in the last two years. There is now an aggression among them, where they express anger at increasing restrictions and assaults.

But they are still not able to speak up in public spaces, in front of their fathers and husbands, though they open up within the confines of the women's forums we organise." The growing solidarity within the women's movement and outside of it has no doubt pushed the boundaries and allowed a lot more room for exchange of ideas. "There is a larger support system for women who

decide to speak up.

There is empathy and sympathy, but I think the one who complains still needs a lot more acceptance," says actress-politician Khushboo. She faced a lot of flak a few years ago and was dragged to court for saying in an interview: 'None of the educated people will insist that their bride be a virgin.' "There is a broader platform to voice concerns, which is great. We see the social media playing a good role here, women are blogging, writing posts on social networks. It's a new generation joining the conversation," believes women's rights activist Kavita Krishnan.

If the female voice feels more empowered, taking on a fiery, go-getter tone, the nature of debates, too, has shifted. "The discourse has moved on to include talk of gender neutrality, sexuality, the very definition of rape. The laws, however, despite the amendments, do not reflect the complexity of women's issues," says feminist scholar Nivedita Menon, who has been writing actively on ongoing issues of crimes against women.

Sahara offers part of Aamby Valley as collateral to Sebi

(Contd from page 1) Sahara said the properties submitted are spread across cities such as Mumbai, Cochin, Noida, Ajmer, Aligarh, Haridwar, Muzaffarnagar, Raipur, Amritsar, Jhansi, Kanpur and Faridabad. In its last hearing on November 21, the apex court said that its direction for submission of properties worth Rs 20,000 crore "has not been complied with in its letter and spirit".

Sahara had submitted documents for two plots of land: a 106-acre plot in Versova, a western suburb of Mumbai, which it estimated at around Rs 19,000 crore, and a 200-acre plot in Vasai, which it estimated to be worth about Rs 1,000 crore. The bench granted time to SEBI to verify the genuineness of the property deeds submitted by the company and posted the case for the next hearing on January 9. The court also rejected the Sahara's plea to de-freeze the bank accounts of its group companies as ordered by SEBI earlier. The apex court had earlier barred Sahara group from selling or "parting with" any of its properties and restrained the group's head Subrata Roy Sahara and three group company directors from leaving India after the

company failed to comply with the court's order to provide unencumbered title deeds of properties worth Rs 20,000 crore. The Supreme Court meanwhile also pulled up Sahara for issuing public advertisements accusing market regulator Sebi of being a "sarkari gunda" (government goon) for taking action against it for not refunding Rs 20,000 crore to investors. A bench of justices K S Radhakrishnan and J S Khehar took strong exception to Sahara's newspaper advertisements alleging "witch-hunt" by SEBI and asked it get apology published in same newspapers.

"We will take all this very seriously. Don't try to take us for a ride. You are not going to gain anything from this... You must understand you are facing contempt. Such acts will precipitate the matters. They (SEBI) are statutory authority, performing duties, implementing our orders. What is this?" the bench said. The counsel, appearing for the group, immediately tendered an apology. The case related to Sahara Housing Investment Corporation Ltd (SHICL) and Sahara India Real Estate Corp

Ltd (SIRECL) raising more than Rs 24,000 from an estimated three crore investors through issuance of certain bonds between 2008 and 2009.

SEBI, however, charged them of having raised these funds illegally and restrained them in November 2010 from

mobilising further funds. Subsequently, SEBI ordered refund of money through an order passed in June 2011. The matter later reached the Supreme Court, which passed an order on August 31, 2012 asking Sahara firms to deposit the money with SEBI for refund of investors' money.

Parole order for Sanjay Dutt sparks protests

(Insider Bureau) A MAJOR controversy has erupted over granting parole to Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt. The parole will allow him to leave prison for a second time in a little over a month. The decision has drawn stiff opposition from various quarters.

Pune Divisional Commissioner Prabhakar Deshmukh had on granted parole to the actor, undergoing the remainder of his five-year jail term for possessing illegal firearms, part of a cache of weapons meant to be used during the 1993 blasts, on the recommendation of prison authorities. Dutt had reportedly cited his wife Manyata's illness for seeking parole this time. However, newspapers had on Saturday published photographs of Manyata purportedly attending the screen-

ing of a film as also a celebrity birthday party, raising questions about Dutt's claim regarding her illness. However, a doctor who examined her said Manyata has been diagnosed with a tumor in the liver and a suspected heart ailment.

Dutt, 53, had availed of a month-long leave of furlough on medical grounds and was back in jail on October 30. Taking note of the controversy, Maharashtra Home Minister R R Patil has ordered an inquiry to ascertain the basis for granting parole to the Bollywood star. The parole has been granted by the Divisional Commissioner. We are looking into the matter and have sought documents which formed the basis for allowing his release on parole, Patil told reporters.

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AJAY KUMAR



A 1946 Mercury Sedan and an antique train compartment (top right) are on display at the museum, inaugurated by Haryana CM B.S. Hooda (right) on Saturday.



(Insider Bureau) THERE'S good news for vintage car lovers. As many as 60 antique vehicles will be on display under one roof at India's first transport museum, which was thrown open for public in the remote Mewat district of Haryana on Saturday.

Constructed by a private company, the first-of-its-kind Heritage Transport Museum is located 75 km from the Capital. The museum's collection includes a 1932 Chevrolet Sedan and a toy cart of 1500 BC. Besides these, a bus, a compartment of an antique train, a chopper and bullock and horse carts are also on display.

Inaugurating the museum on Saturday, Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda said it is a tedious job to collect such a large number of old vehicles and to see such a collection under one roof is a fabulous experience.

"The modes of transportation are an emblem of history, of how people commuted in the past. It is also a symbol of how infrastructure was developing during those days," Hooda said.

India's first transport museum opens in Haryana

Vintage cars All the heritage vehicles have been collected from different states in the country.

Talking about the museum, its founder and managing trustee Tarun Thakral said: "My journey towards collecting vintage vehicles started in 1994. I have visited almost every state in the country to collect 60 vehicles

so far and we are expecting to get 20 more vehicles.

The goal to start this museum, Thakral said, was to make people aware of the lives our ancestors lived and how they travelled from one place to another.

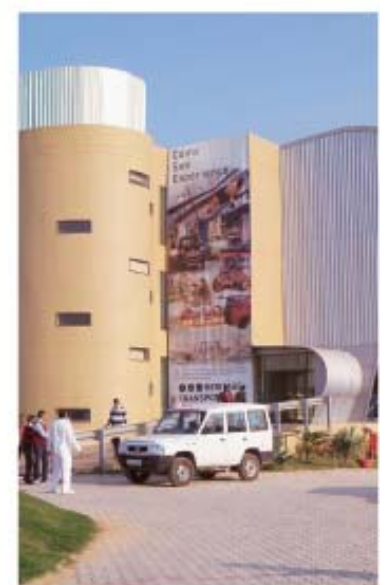
"H u - mans are mortal but vehicles are not. It is part of our history which I want to carry forward to our future generation so that they can learn about history," he said and added: "We want to

develop this museum as showcase of transportation in India, research, preservation and education.

The construction of the museum was started in early part of 2010 and took ` 12 crore. Fifty per cent of the construction cost was shared by the Haryana government's ministry of culture while the 3.1-acre land was allotted to the museum by the state government for ` 1 crore.

Apart from vintage vehicles, the museum comprises a library and reference centre, a miniauditorium, a souvenir shop, seminar rooms and a refreshment lounge.

The museum has set up ` 300 for an adult and ` 150 for the children as the fare.



Heritage Transport Museum is located in Tawru, Mewat.

The founder of the heritage museum wants to develop it as a showcase of transportation, research, preservation and education

₹12 cr

Amount spent on construction of the museum

3.1

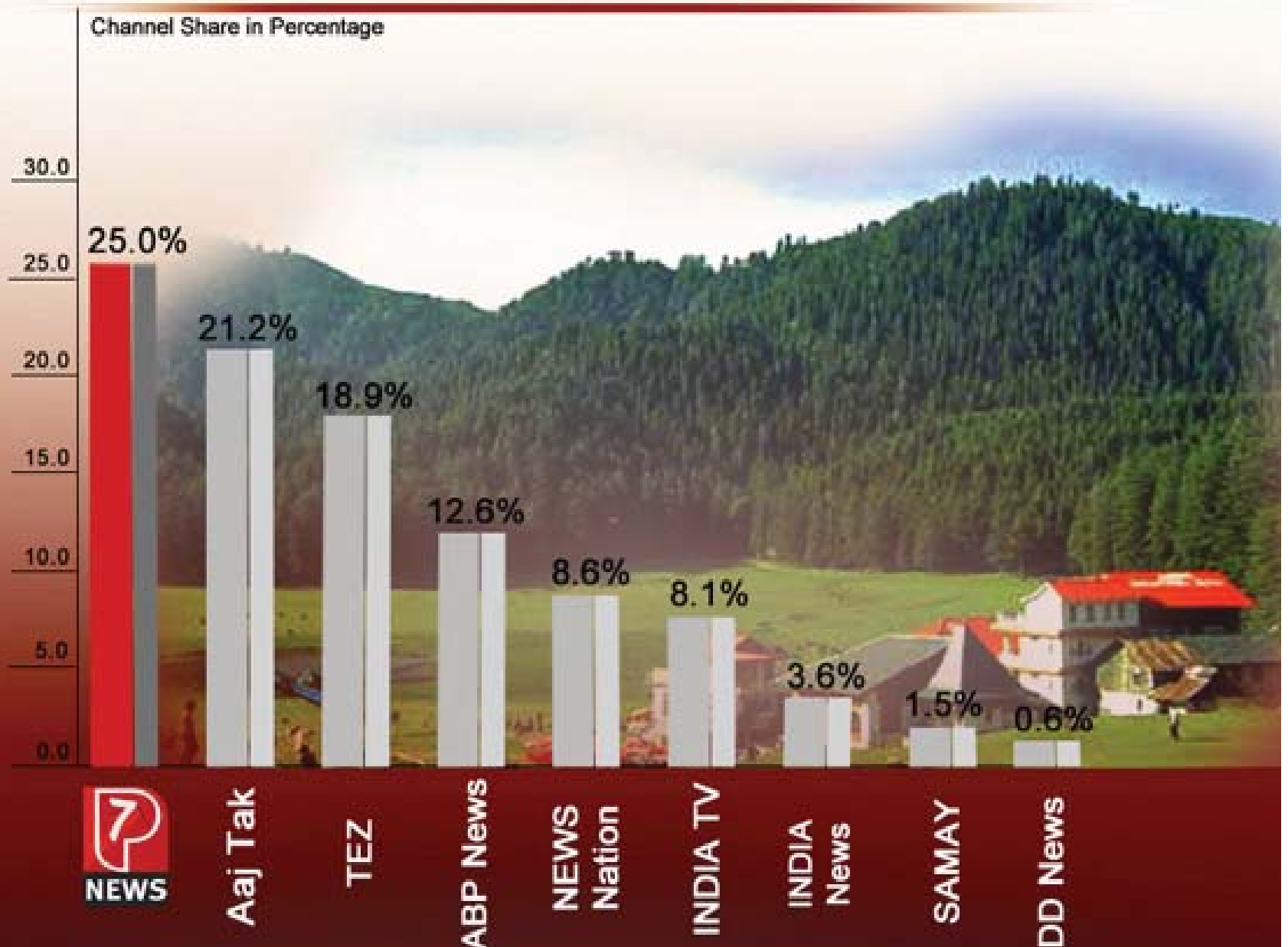
acres
Area on which it stands

₹300

price of ticket for adults; it's ₹150 for kids



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Star India bags team India sponsorship rights

(Insider Bureau) NEW DELHI: Star India has won the bid for the Indian cricket team's logo sponsorship rights from 2014 to 2017 for Rs 1.92 crore a match, a drop of 40% from Rs 3.34 crore, a match that current sponsor Sahara is paying but 28% higher than the base price of Rs 1.5 crore. The bids indicate that cricket sponsorship rates are regarded as overpriced, amid the rising popularity of several other forms of sports on television including football, hockey and badminton, experts said.

Sahara, which had decided

not to renew its sponsorship contract with the Indian cricket board, had nevertheless submitted a bid after picking up the tender documents along with others such as Sony, Games Unlimited, UB Group, Airtel and World Sport Group India.

The Board of Control for Cricket (BCCI) in India said only Sahara and Star submitted bids for the logo rights but "Sahara's bid was found to be ineligible," even though it bid Rs 2.35 crore per match, putting an end to a 12-year relationship between the two.

"Star is the title sponsor for BCCI international and domestic matches for the period October 2013-March 31, 2014, as well as the holder of the broadcast, internet and mobile rights of cricket in India, for the period July 2012-March 2018.

Star has a deep understanding of the game of cricket and what it means to the nation. We are pleased to extend our association with them," said BCCI secretary Sanjay Patel.

Sanjay Gupta, chief operating officer of Star India, said the rights offered an innovative mar-



keting opportunity.

"It is an important opportunity to reach out to the cricket-watching youth of this country. Cricket is the biggest connect," he said.

Star has the flexibility to use the various brands in its portfolio such as Star TV, Star Sports and Life OK as the logo on the team

uniform at an agreed time and frequency." "We can use it for a brand when it needs market support." Considering the drop in valuation for the title sponsorship rights in October, BCCI had reduced the base price for the logo rights from Rs 2.5 crore per match in 2010 to Rs 1.5 crore.

Boeing Looks Around, and a State Worries

(Insider Bureau) EVERETT, Wash. — Riveters once ruled here, as Boeing airplanes rolled off the line and into the sky from giant factories where rivers of aluminum were pounded into form and function. And Boeing, founded in nearby Seattle in 1916 in the era of the Sopwith Camel, returned the favor, building up the Puget Sound region as a blue-collar powerhouse from the 1940s through the commercial jet age. Almost half of the company's 171,000 employees still call Washington State home.

But the next chapter of that old relationship has become a cliffhanger of politics, economics and perhaps, some suspect, brinkmanship and bluff. Where the company will assemble its next generation of commercial airplane, the 777X — which only a few months ago looked locked-down certain to be right here — is now up for grabs, with a national scramble of states

and cities bidding for Boeing's hand with tax breaks, incentives and promises of labor congeniality.

With a deadline looming this week for best offers, and a decision promised by the company early next year, tens of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in wages and taxes are at stake, along with the identity of a region that long ago claimed the jet age as its symbol, in Seattle's revolving Space Needle.

"It would be the death spiral of aerospace in Washington State," said Ray Stephanson, Everett's mayor, contemplating the possibility

of Boeing's building the 777X in some other state. As he spoke in his office, a scale model 777-300, angled as though in takeoff, sat by a window. "There's a tremendous amount of anxiety."

Boeing had conditions from the beginning on the 777X: big incentives from the State of Washington and big givebacks by its largest union here, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. The state came through, delivering in a special session of the Legislature a package worth \$8.7 billion through 2040.

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A WAR HERO RETIRES

A MiG-21 FL takes off for a sortie from Kailaikunda in West Bengal on Thursday.



(Insider Bureau) THE curtains are going to fall on one of the Indian Air Forces' (IAF) most glorious chapters next week when Mig- 21 FLs (type 77) will be airborne one last time soaring their way into history.

It will also mark the beginning of the end of half a century old era of Mig- 21 operations in the IAF. IAF chief NAK Browne will be in Kailaikunda in West Bengal on December 11 to take salute from four Mig- 21 FL aircraft that will fly a " box formation" as their last sortie.

The IAF will say bid adieu to the aircraft that has flown over 50 years, which itself is a tribute to the machine and the men who kept it going.

The Mig- 21 FLs would fly in the company of another ageing platform from the Mig stable — Mig- 27 MI — and the latest Sukhoi- 30 MKIs.

The Mig- 21 FLs joined the IAF around 1965 but only saw action in 1971 Indo- Pakistan war. All the bombing missions

SOME OF THE MIG-21 VARIANTS IN IAF

- MIG-21 FL (TYPE 77)
- MIG-21 M/ML (TYPE 96)
- MIG-21 BIS
- MIG-21 BISON

in and around Dhaka were carried out by IAF pilots flying Mig- 21 FLs.

It went on to become one of the most flown aircraft which was later improvised.

The aircraft ushered in the supersonic era into the IAF. It was assigned secondary missions after the induction of Mirage 2000s in the 1980s which were now being used for training pilots.

An IAF statement said that the first ever air combat in the subcontinent took place in 1971 between a Mig- 21 FL and Paki-

stan Air Force's F- 104 Stratfighter.

In terms of kills in the 1971 war, the Mig- 21s scored with four F- 104s, two F- 6s, an F- 86 Sabre and a C- 130 Hercules of PAF. One of the high points of air operations in 1971 war was the attack on the governor's house at Dhaka which proved to be a decisive event forcing Pakistan to surrender.

After the 1971 war, the Mig- 21s were also used in the air operations during the Kargil war.

The Mig- 21 FL was followed by other versions of the aircraft including M/ MF (type 96), Bis and the most recently upgraded Bison. The IAF has begun phasing out of its Mig- 21 squadrons. The last surviving MiGs will be the Bisons which are expected to remain in service even beyond 2020 because of delays in replacements.

The IAF is looking to add 126 French Rafale multi- role combat aircraft negotiations for which were going on with Dassault.

'IT WAS LIKE DRIVING A SPORTS CAR'

(Insider Bureau) IT WAS like driving a sports car," said Air Commodore (retd.) Suren Tyagi talking about Mig- 21 FL which will go into aviation history next week after being phased out by the India Air Force (IAF). With 6,316 sorties and 4,003 hours of flying to his credit, no one in the world seems to have flown the Mig- 21s more than Air Commodore Suren, and a major chunk of these flying hours were logged on Mig- 21 FL. Speaking to Mail Today, Suren said the Mig- 21 FL was undoubtedly his most favourite aircraft. It was also the most tricky to control, he said talking about its character of being unsparing. The aircraft had come with modifications from its earlier version. It had a drop tank which was an addition and rocket pods, air commodore Suren said. The Mig- 21 FL was an interceptor but the IAF had modified it for ground attack role. All the famous strikes in and around Dhaka in the 1971 war was carried out by Mig- 21 FL, he said.

The handling of the aircraft was smooth as it re-

sponded well to the controls. It was like driving a sports car because of uninterrupted view from the front opening canopy. Air commodore Suren said in terms of capability, it was the finest variant of Mig- 21 the later versions, however, had better radars and more power. He said that the aircraft even got better off the Mirage- 2000 once in the late 1980s during an air combat mission. There was no room for messing up in the cockpit as there was no scope of recovery, said the veteran pilot. It is creditable that the aircraft has flown for 50 years. The IAF had to stop flying these aircraft because it was not possible to continue operations with lack of spare support. The aircraft is not flown anywhere in the world. IAF's squadron 28, which now flies Mig- 29s, was the first supersonic squadron. Air commodore Suren belonged to 4 squadron, one of the oldest in the IAF, which continued to fly Mig- 21 FLs. The veteran pilot is felt nostalgic about the phasing out of the aircraft which commanded respect.

VETERAN FLIER

■ The IAF celebrated 50 years of MiG-21s in service in April this year. The first MiG-21 arrived in 1963 and it is still going strong. It has been the mainstay of IAF fighter fleet.

■ Some versions of MiG are being phased out.

■ The upgraded version of the

aircraft, MiG-21 Bison, is expected to operate even up to 2020.

■ As many as 250 MiG-21s are operational as of today.

■ Since 1971, around 380 of the 872 MiG-21s inducted have crashed, in which 180 pilots were killed.

The shoreline
in Cannes.

FANCIFUL FRANCE

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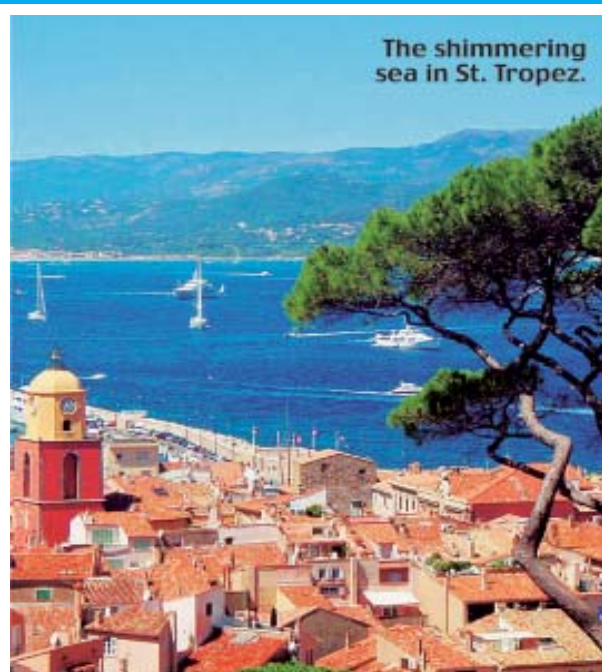
(Insider Bureau) THERE IS something about destinations which become famous, be it Goa for its spell of fun, be it Phuket in Thailand for its food, fun and the gentle Thai culture, or be it the French Riviera for style, for elegance. They all have the sea.

It's the word of mouth of millions who visited, travelled back with memories of happiness and joy, like Fa Hien the Chinese traveller they spread the word, far and wide.

Fairs and fashion weeks where we mingle with all or most from our tribe takes me to the fashion mecca Paris, less now than in the early years. Remember fashion wares, especially the French brands, are 30 per cent cheaper in France. In the past as a young girl in Paris, I remember being on the TVG with a few friends, on the way to Cap de Antibes in South of France and I was hooked. A memory one would never lose, and if given a chance to return, would always go back.

Of course like Goa, South of France has changed since the 90's, more traffic, busier roads, defined less open spaces, but still incredible. Nice which has the closest international airport, also has a greatly located Air India office (just in case) which I remember visiting to extend my stay aeons ago.

As you step out, you see lovely palm trees line the drive, azure-coloured sky, the sea in a perfect blue by the side and

The shimmering
sea in St. Tropez.

a great promenade. Museums are beautiful and if possible see the villa Ephrussi and the chapel designed by Matisse Vence.

The drive from Nice to Cannes is beautiful, dotted with great Michelin Star restaurants, be it La Bastide, St Antoine or the Bristol d'Antoine in Nice. Cannes, famous in India due to the film festival, is a beautiful town with an incredible marina, which can accommodate stunning vessels. It hosts great restaurants, Michelangelo nearby has pictures on the walls of famous Indian film stars including

The luxury Hotel
Negresco in Nice.

Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and Amitabh Bachchan. The croisette, much talked about in the Indian media is actually not that long as it looks. It has great boutiques — Hermes has quite a large space and behind Rue de Antibes is the more affordable yet usable fashion. Cannes has the Baoli, Club 55, and a lot of other cool night clubs, where super hot girls in little dresses, perma tanned float about as if in a dream.

It's eye candy all around.

Cannes to St. Tropez once a sleepy fishing village, is now the most talked about holiday resort in France. The air in Tropez

has an energy which can revive the dead. From Les Palmiers, Les Cave du Roy, Niki Beach, VIP Room, there is great Mediterranean cuisine. Medieval fortresses, shimmering sea and great people watching and enjoying the great ambience — here you find new money mixes with old in a timeless and flashy display of opulence. Pampered pooches prance along the sea side bistros. Restaurants, are dotted with all sorts — families, the wild ones, the wedding groups or just people having fun, whether Latinos, Italians or the Arabs, it's a multi cuisine story.

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JAY Z
9 NOMINATIONS



Keith Urban performs *Ain't No Sunshine* at The Grammy Nominations Concert in Los Angeles. The awards will be given on January 26, 2014.



POSTHUMOUS NOMINATION

MUSIC legend Pandit Ravi Shankar has received a posthumous nomination at 56th Grammy Awards with his album *The Living Room Sessions Part 2* in the World Music section. The sitar master, who died in December 2012, won the World Music album award last year for the first part of the album, besides being given the lifetime achievement honour.



TAYLOR SWIFT
4 NOMINATIONS

Race for Grammys begins

(Insider Bureau) ETERAN rapper Jay Z topped nominees for the 2014 Grammys announced on Friday with nine nods, while Taylor Swift and Daft Punk were also among those in the running in major categories. In second place with seven nods apiece were California hip hop star Kendrick Lamar and rapper Macklemore & Ryan Lewis, as well as Justin Timberlake and Pharrell Williams, while rapper Drake scored five. The nominees in key categories were announced during an hour-long concert at the Nokia Theatre in Los Angeles, including video-link performances by Swift from Australia and Katy Perry live from Canada. "This year's nominations reflect the talented com-

munity of music makers who represent some of the highest levels of excellence and artistry of the year in their respective fields," said Neil Portnow head of Grammys organisers The Recording Academy. In the coveted Record of the Year category songstress Swift's *Red* will compete with French electro duo Daft Punk's *Random Access Memories*, Macklemore & Ryan Lewis's *The Heist*, Lamar's *Good Kid, M.A.A.D City* and Sara Bareilles' *The Blessed Unrest*.

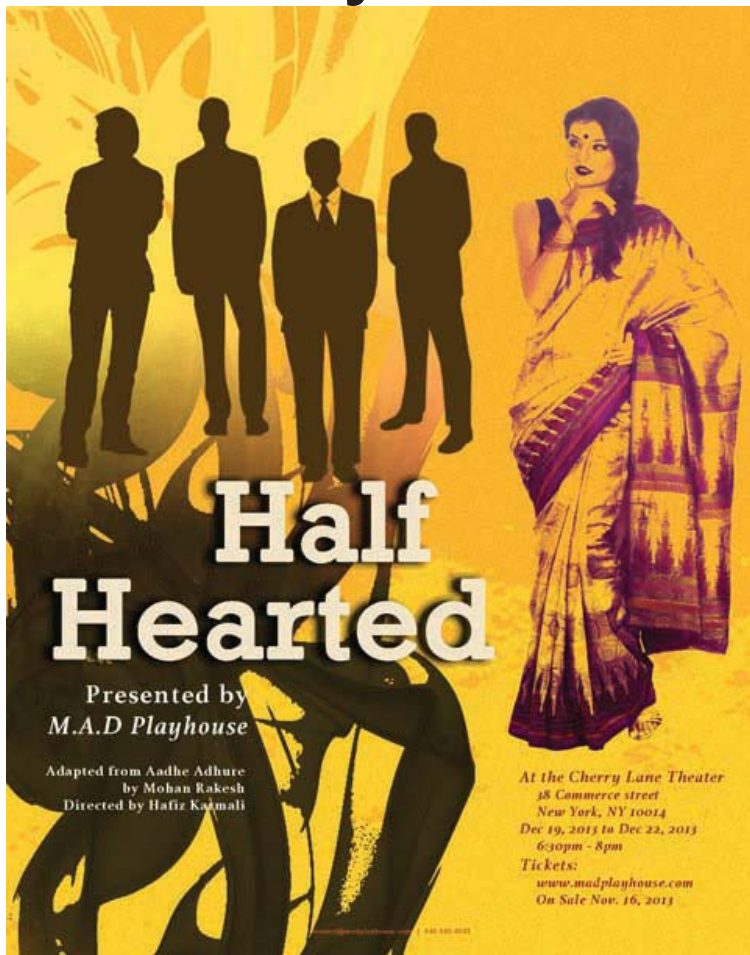


Katy Perry (above) has bagged a nomination in the best pop solo performance category for *Roar*.



JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE
7 NOMINATIONS

M.A.D. Playhouse Presents Half Hearted by Mohan Rakesh



Show times for this run are

Thursday, December 19 @ 6:30pm

Friday, December 20 @ 6:30pm

Saturday, December 21 @ 6:30pm

Sunday, December 22 @ 6:30pm

The creative team includes Sets by Laura Greenfield, Costumes by Sherry Martinez, featuring Music by Ashique Khudabuksh.

the youngest daughter is a spoiled brat.

Savitri longs to escape her half-hearted, unfulfilled, incomplete, regretful existence. She continues to receive gentleman callers as she attempts to balance the cultural needs of her family with her own desires for a better life. Her plight is the plight of all women at this time torn between tradition and modernity. The question remains: must one accept fate and shape desires to events, or can one fashion life's events to suit one's desires?

Cast: Aizzah Fatima (Dirty Paki Lingerie, The Good Wife) as Savitri, Ashok Kumar Chaudhary (Parts and Parts of Stitches, Hot L Baltimore) as Mahendra, Dipti Mehta (Honour, Golden Boy) as Binni, Akshay Reddy (The Passport, Italian American Reconciliation), Prince Vaghani (Chaos in Gotham Part I), Robin Johnson (The Four Seasons, The Death of William Poole) & Yarin Brosh.

Hafiz Karmali (Director) Most recently, Hafiz directed the Sufi fable, Conference of the Birds (Vancouver); War & Peace, an anti-war farce by Tawfiq al-Hakim and Rumi x 7 = Tales from the

Masnavi in circus style with clowns and acrobats at the ReOrient 2012 Festival held by Golden Thread Productions in San Francisco. To commemorate the Aga Khan's golden jubilee as spiritual leader, Hafiz co-wrote, designed and directed an international touring theatre production, Ali to Karim – A Tribute to the Ismaili Imams. At the ReOrient Festival in 2009, Hafiz directed three new plays (Abaga by Torange Yeghiazarian; The Review (a Skype play) and an Egyptian adaptation of Chekhov's The Marriage Proposal by Yussef el-Guindi. Hafiz was also a member of a panel on theatre and peace-building.

Directing credits include: Azaan – A Call to Prayer (an Islamic opera in the making with performers from Tajikistan); Rumi Vaudevilles x 7 (tales from the Mathnavi enacted by circus acrobats in Tashkent); Water for Life (in collaboration with a dance company from Gujarat); Legend of the Baltit Fort (Karimabad, Hunza). Buchner's Woyzeck; Leonce & Lena; Garcia Lorca's The Shoemaker's Prodigious Wife (Festival Avignon-Off, France); Cristobal & Rosita; Dia-

logues of Buster Keaton. Carlo Gozzi's Love of Three Oranges; The Raven (Montreal); Jamatkhana: A Journey (video documentary); at UNESCO in Paris, Caravane de la Paix — French and Afghan poets calling for peace. Following his M.F.A (Directing) from Carnegie-Mellon University, Hafiz trained at the American Repertory Theatre where he assisted Andrei Serban and Robert Wilson. While at the A.R.T. Mr. Karmali was also a Teaching Fellow for courses taught by Robert Brustein at Harvard.

M.A.D Playhouse is a young and determined, dedicated team bringing works of South Asian Playwrights to New York by showcasing the rich, classic and contemporary literature through thought-provoking performances & nurturing international artists by blending art across different cultures. M.A.D. aspire to perform as many times in a year & keep repeating this cycle forever and ever. More details can be found at www.madplayhouse.com

Half-Hearted runs from December 19 through December 22 Thursday-Sunday at 6pm, and Thursday at 2:30 pm at The Cherry Lane Theater located at 38 Commerce Street, three blocks south of Christopher Street, close to the 1 train. Also close to West 4 Train stop A/C/E, B/D/F/M subway lines. Regular tickets are \$31, and are available by calling 866-811-4111 or online at www.madplayhouse.com.

(Insider Bureau) (From our Correspondent) New York- After a successful run of their first play this summer, M.A.D Playhouse brings another South Asian family drama Half-Hearted written by Mohan Rakesh, and directed by Hafiz Karmali at The Cherry Lane Theater from December 19 through December 22.

Set in 1969 India, Half-Hearted depicts the story of a family in crisis with the sharp, multi-layered subtext of a Chekhov play, the ease and naturalism of a great film script, moments of farce that recall tra-

ditional Commedia dell'Arte, and characters that feel equal parts original and universal. Bringing this beautiful story to a New York audience for the first time is M.A.D. (making a difference) Playhouse.

Savitri, named after a mythical goddess who rescues her husband from death, is in this case doomed to a failing marriage and dysfunctional family. Of all her suitors, she happens to have married an unfortunate businessman. Her elder daughter eloped, and has returned disappointed; her son is an artistic soul trapped in domestic hell;

Kareena Kapoor's sister-in-law comment made in jest: Katrina Kaif

(Insider Bureau) Actress Katrina Kaif, who has been romantically linked to Ranbir Kapoor, has made light of Kareena Kapoor's 'sister-in-law' comment on a TV chat show and said it was made in jest and not meant to be taken seriously. Kareena had described Katrina as her would be 'sister-in-law' on the show Koffee With Karan, in reply to a question by its host filmmaker Karan Johar.

This particular episode of the show featured Kareena and Ranbir, who are cousins.

When asked about Kareena's comment, Katrina today said "I don't know...they are cousins...they were pulling each other's leg. It was all said in jest. They were not serious."The

model-turned-actress, in fact, went one step ahead and revealed she knew before hand that such a thing was coming.

"Before the shoot of the episode, Karan had kept a dinner where I and Kareena were there. Kareena said to me she will pull everyone's leg (on the show). She asked me if she can say it (sister-in-law remark) in a fun way...and that was OK with me," the 'Namaste London' actress said. Ranbir and Katrina, who was once linked with Salman Khan, have always maintained silence over their relationship. Their rumoured affair once again came to limelight when they were clicked holidaying in Spain a couple of months ago.



Fash show straddles the style spectrum from sexy to shy



Jacqueline Fernandez (right) and Urvashi Rautela in Jyotsna Tiwari outfits; models (left) walk for Tarun Tahiliani.



RISQUE MEETS DEMURE



THERE'S something for everyone this wedding season at the 5th edition of Aamy Valley India Bridal Fashion Week 2013 that kickstarted on a high note at the Grand Hyatt in Mumbai recently.

From sexy siren to demure bride, the two designers for Day 1, Tarun Tahiliani and Jyotsna Tiwari, presented a wide range of garments and silhouettes on the ramp.

Interestingly, couturier Tahiliani desisted from bringing in a Bollywood face and kept the focus on the ensembles instead. He stuck to figure accentuating styles for saris, cocktail gowns, lehenga combinations and anarkali s. The garments were in soft hues like gold, pistachio green, coral, saffron and pink along with floral patterns and intricate embroidery. Designer Jyotsna Tiwari, on the other hand, offered ample photo-ops with two showstoppers for her show. Jacqueline Fernandez sizzled in a pink lehenga- choli



Parvathy Omanakuttam (left) walked for Pallavi Jaikishan; Kalki Koechlin, Aditi Rao Hydari and Prachi Desai at the do.

ensemble with detailed needlework in silver thread. With voluminous hair, a diamond choker necklace and danglers, she looked gorgeous.

Urvashi Rautela of Singh Saab the Great fame also walked for Jyotsna in a flared white tulle gown with diamond earrings and bracelet. Tiwari's collection was a nod to ethnic elegance, as lehenga s and gowns with delicate embroidery and tulle accents in pretty shades like pink, orange and gold formed the major theme.



Designer Gaurav Gupta shocked everyone with a mesh dress with black and silver sequins that barely covered the body.

PHOTOS: YOGEN SHAH AND AGENCIES

Bollywood Stars Share Disappointment After Indian Court Reinstates Gay Sex Ban



India's gay rights activists described Wednesday as a "black day," following a judgment by the country's Supreme Court that overturned an earlier ruling decriminalizing homosexuality. In 2009, in what was considered a historic judgment, the Delhi High Court decriminalized homosexual intercourse between consenting adults following a petition filed by Naz Foundation, a non-governmental organization that works in the areas of HIV/Aids and sexual health. Naz had challenged the Indian Penal Code's Section 377, introduced during British colonial rule which criminalized sexual activity "against the order of nature" and stated a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. But Wednesday's Supreme Court judgment has set aside the 2009 Delhi High Court order, observing that Section 377 "is a valid constitutional provision." The judgment also stated that any changes in Section 377 can be made through legislation referring the matter to Parliament since "the judiciary has no role in it." The Supreme Court bench also said Parliament is authorized to delete section 377, but while the penal provision exists, "the court cannot legalize this

kind of sexual relationship." "What does this say of us as a culture, as a people? This is really very sad. It is taking us a 100 years back," Naz foundation member Anjali was quoted stating in local reports. "This is a black day for all of us citizens of modern India; we are very disappointed by the verdict," added Amnesty International India chief executive G. Ananthapadmanabhan, "It is going to be a long and uncertain route now. There's no doubt that

a historic move has been lost." But some religious figures and groups have welcomed the judgment, such as well-known yoga guru Baba Ramdev, who has strongly opposed homosexuality. "The court has respected the sentiments of millions of Indians and declared homosexuality a crime," he said. All India Muslim Personal Board member Zafaryab Jilani -- who was among the petitioners in the Supreme Court -- said the judgment "has been done to keep our culture

intact. This has been done to respect all religions." But leading Bollywood celebrities expressed disappointment at the verdict as they shared their views on social media. "Freedom is such a deceptive term. Rights are an ambiguous mystery," actress Anushka Sharma posted on Twitter. "Its frightening how someone else decides how when and who you should love - basically freedom of choice isn't legal anymore," posted actress Shruti Haasan. "Only a

highly uninformed mind can have [the] arrogance of assuming that consenting adults having sex is any of their business" tweeted director Anand Gandhi (Ship of Theseus). "The Supreme Court got it wrong today," tweeted actor-director Farhan Akhtar. Actress Mia Farrow also shared her views posting a series of tweets: "Canceled trip to India. My wife and I would not feel welcome there... Well-when I have a wife- we won't be going to India."

SUNNY WOWS IN PINK

SUNNY Leone walked into the India Today Mediaplex on Saturday afternoon to promote her new film Jackpot, looking every bit the glamorous doll she looks on screen.

The Kaizad Gustad film is the former porn star's second Bollywood release after her debut film Jism 2 failed to create much of an impact last year. Sunny is hoping the film lives up to its name and hits a jackpot at the box-office.

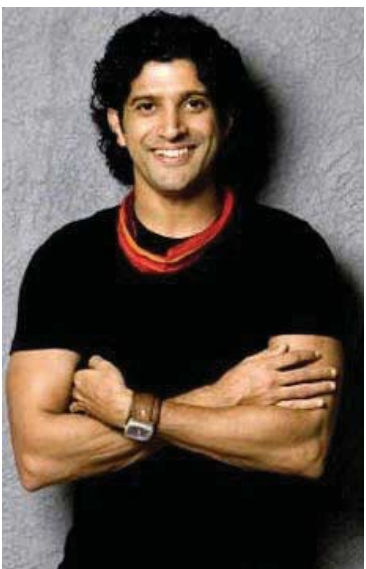
Accompanying Sunny in her promotional trip was director Gustad and the film's hero Sachin Joshi.

Sunny Leone at the India Today Mediaplex on Saturday.

She was in the city to promote her movie Jackpot.

Clad in a sleeveless sequined pink number that more than complemented her figure with its plunging neckline and low-cut back, Sunny eclipsed her co-star and director as she went about doling random soundbytes. The curiosity factor about her seems to be eclipsing the film itself.

Sunny spoke of her role of a temptress in Jackpot, a comic heist thriller and, of course, she hoped people would like the film. Jackpot incidentally marks the return of Kaizad Gustad as director in Bollywood for the first time in almost a decade after his last release, Boom. Gustad's new film also features Naseeruddin Shah in an interesting role. The film is slated to open on December 13.





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