HAPPY NEW YEAR 2016
Hyderabadi Film Stars in Chicago

"Hyderabad is Known Globally for Its Hilarious Comedy Films, Not Merely for Biryani" - Mast Ali, Aziz Naser, and Other Stars of Hyderabad Film Industry in a Press Conference in Chicago

Asian Media USA © Chicago IL: "The Hyderabad Film Industry, even though only about 10 years old, has churned out a series of comedy blockbusters and gained popularity not only in Andhra Pradesh and different parts of India but also among the large Diaspora in the Middle East and the US, thanks to the Internet and DVDs", said Mast Ali, a. k. a. Saleem Pheku, the king of comedy, who acted in over 20 high impact making films in different languages and brought laurels to Hyderabad, at a Press Conference held on December 23, 2015, 5.30 PM at Mysore Woodlands, Devon Ave, Chicago. The Press Conference was attended by a huge number of representatives from the Print, Electronic, and Internet Media.

"Our films entertained their audiences thoroughly, irrespective of their linguistic backgrounds, as the Hyderabad Urdu, the lingua franca of the streets of Hyderabad, which is a unique mix of Urdu, Hindi, Telugu, and some Marathi, is widely understood across the Indian Subcontinent, including in Pakistan", added Mast Ali.

Mast Ali said that the Hyderabad Film Industry is currently undergoing a metamorphosis; it is no longer confirming itself to making small budget films for its niche market. Instead, it is focusing on producing typical Bollywood films, which are rich in terms of exquisite quality, pan-India appeal, and high-end technology, said Aziz Naser, a. k. a. Jahangeer, another equally popular and powerful star.

"It is a moment of pride that Dawat-e-Ishque, a landmark Bollywood-type movie of the Hyderabad Film Industry, is being released by Rajshree Productions under its banner, with a big bang", said Syed Hussain, Director of the film.

"The release of our film by Rajshree Productions, which has produced a number of blockbusters in India, will take the Hyderabad cinema up a notch like never before and catapult it into the higher echelons of film appreciation, added Hussain, with a sense of accomplishment.

Feroz Khan, who has essayed a negative role in "Dawat-e-Ishque" said that Hyderabad cinema has come to attain the status of a genre unto itself, not just considering the typical lingo of the City of Pearls, but even given the culture and traditions of the Deccan.

"Our films, which deliberately shun vulgarity and item songs, considering the culture of Hyderabad, focus mainly on delivering authentic entertainment for the entire family", he added.

The Ensuing Hilarious Comedy Show "The stars of Hyderabad Film Industry will present a 90-minute Comedy Show, a charity-oriented event, on December 29th, 2015, 8.00 PM onwards at Northshore Banquet Hall, Devon, Chicago. The Show, comprising a unique combination of funny gags, mimicry, stand-ups, etc. will be laced with typical Hyderabad-style comedy", said Mast Ali and Aziz Naser.

"The Show will be our tribute to the worth-emulating success of people of Hyderabad in the US. Hyderabad has been the capital of comedy for decades and we hope that the Show will be instrumental in further improving the relations among the people of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka", they added.

"On the occasion of the Show, the trailer of the upcoming Hyderabad film, 'Dawat-e-Ishque', produced by an Australian-based duo, Samiullah Fayyaz and Syed Waseem Yaba, which features Mast Ali, Aziz Naser, and Adanan Sajid Khan a. k. a. Gullu Dada, and three beautiful leading ladies, Kavya, Madhavi, and Manisha, will be released", said Syed Hussain, Director of the film.

Mast Ali, Aziz Naser, Syed Hussain, Farhan Khan, and their team, including Layequee Ahmed, Shoukat, and Keerthi thanked Iftekhar Shareef, a prominent Businessman and Community leader, for sponsoring the Comedy Show and helping them out in a variety of ways in Chicago as well as in Hyderabad.

Iftekhar Shareef requested all the Indian Americans belonging to the Indian Subcontinent in general and Telengana State in particular to attend the Comedy Show, in large numbers.
Congress could have averted 2014 debacle if Pranab had become PM: Salman Khurshid

New Delhi: Mmohan Singh’s selection over Pranab Mukherjee in 2004 to head the UPA government came as a surprise not only to the Congress but also to outsiders and many argue the party might have averted the 2014 Lok Sabha drubbing if the choice had been otherwise, says former Union minister Salman Khurshid.

“It’s always easy to be wise after the worst has happened. We must not forget the whole nation had applauded Dr Manmohan Singh as the game-changer finance minister during the Narasimha Rao regime (June 1991 to May 1996).

“But when Dr Singh contested the 1999 Lok Sabha polls from what was thought to be the safest seat in the country for him, South Delhi, he was defeated by a candidate whose name many would scarce recall (It was Professor Vijay Kumar Malhotra of the BJP),” writes Khurshid in his new book "The Other Side of the Mountain" and describes it as a concise biography not of one person but of the many who were part of the UPA.

However, the former External Affairs Minister says that after some initial reluctance, not only was Sonia Gandhi’s decision to choose him to lead the UPA-1 widely welcomed but was “also proved correct by the electoral verdict five years later, when we were returned to power with a greater majority”. Khurshid, who had served as external affairs minister in UPA-I, says he was lucky to have the confidence of the incumbent prime minister though Singh once “gently chastised” him for a comment made before the media indicating India could not provide lethal weapons to Afghanistan.

“As external affairs minister, I had a pretty free run on most matters, with the prime minister taking special interest in the neighbourhood, our rediscovery of America, the millennium conversation with China and the excitement of keeping pace with Japan.

“I recall just once when Dr Singh gently chastised me for a press comment indicating we could not provide lethal weapons to Afghanistan. It came in the wake of repeated prodding by (Afghan) President Hamid Karzai, although he never did make an issue of it,” Khurshid says.

Khurshid felt there was “no harm in being candid about our principled position from which there was no likelihood of departure. This was despite the fact that military personnel had told me we had innumerable tanks in reserve that were unlikely to be used by the army again, which could be refurbished without great expense”.

“The soft-spoken prime minister advised me: ‘President Karzai is a suspicious man. You have to be careful as the foreign minister’. I mumbled and left the matter there, quite certain some busybody had carried the tale to the prime minister and he felt obliged to flag it,” writes Khurshid.

The book began to take shape soon after the results of the 2014 Lok Sabha elections were announced on 16 May and “we - the ministers in the UPA - returned to New Delhi from the electoral battlegrounds spread across the country as though we were phantoms in a twilight zone’. He says the then ministers were in substance, vanquished and repudiated warriors.

“We were the past and it only remained to become ‘shadows of the past’. Such was the sombre mood in the Congress then,” he says.

He also feels Congress is in the midst of a very serious existential crisis.

“Some people label it as ‘leadership in crisis’; others believe it is about political content that the country has outgrown; and yet others have the stock explanation of being out of touch with the grassroots.”

According to Khurshid, both Sonia and Rahul Gandhi are, however, popularly endorsed and elected leaders of the Congress and there is no one even remotely equipped to provide alternative leadership. He says through his book, he would like to set the record straight because the truth must prevail over the widespread falsehood spread over the past few years.

Allegations of scams like the 2G spectrum, the 2010 Commonwealth Games and Coalgate considerably tainted the UPAs image.

“But in all the charges that were made and investigated by various law-enforcement agencies, there was not a whisper of money exchanging hands or any disproportionate assets found in the possession of the accused politician or the civil servant accused of misdeemour or a similar offence.

“Simply because a decision was wrong or would have been taken differently by another person was enough to trigger a presumption of illegality and corruption,” he says.
New Year Greetings to all by
Sher Mohammed Rajput

Mr. Sher Mohammed Rajput, Trustee of East-West University Chicago receiving President of India Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam on his first visit to Chicago, IL USA in April 2011
Asian Media USA ©

Chicago IL: Top 20 organizations from all over Chicago, including Desi Junction Radio, FIA, Jeev Varghese, and Chicago for Chennai Group, organized a phenomenal Chennai Flood Disaster Fundraiser on December 20th, 2015, between 2:00 PM and 6:00 PM at the Waterford Banquet Hall in Elmhurst, IL. Over 800 persons, belonging to different regions and religions, attended the event to show their support and solidarity to the people of Chennai.

Jassi Parmar, CEO of Desi Junction Radio said that bringing all the communities of India together under one roof for a noble cause was not only a historical initiative, no one has ever done before, but also gave a great sense of achievement to the organizers. He added that fifty plus volunteers, vendors, performers, sponsors, and donors contributed in a big way to the stupendous success of the event.

Jeev Varghese, Community Leader said that Chennai and surrounding areas in the State of Tamil Nadu have been devastated by the torrential rains and massive flooding. “Damage has been enormous - 250 lives lost, 2 million people displaced, $ 3 Billion impact on the economy, and $ 15 Billion in infrastructure damages”, she added and made a fervent appeal to people to contribute to the relief operations.

Within no time, a whopping $ 45,000 was raised at the event, which will be donated to Association for India’s Development in order to enable it to take up relief-oriented initiatives in Chennai. The donors were not confined to India alone; a significant number of non-Indians too contributed to the cause. Following were the top 10 donors: Senthil Kumar Soundarapandian, Shobhashalini Chokalingam, Nirup Krishnamurthy, Shyam Krishnamurthy, Balaji Padmanabhan, Durai Ramachandran, Sri Rajini Sarabathy, Anand Srinivasan, and Suganya Prathap.

Raja Krishnamoorthi, an Eminent Community Leader, based in Illinois, said that the floods in Chennai have touched a chord among the Indian Diaspora in the U.S. “The Indian-Americans, even though thousands of miles away from India, are comrades-in-arms, and are ever ready to reach out to their fellow-Indians, whenever required”, he added.

Krishnamoorthi underlined the need for achieving the long-term solution to the problem of recurrent floods in different parts of India by following the environmental norms of construction and a more efficient urban planning with stringent implementation. “Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Smart City Mission is an opportunity to revisit the potential impact of haphazard development that is happening in the urban centers in India”, he added.

“What we did today was only a humble beginning; we are committed to engage in the long-term process of rebuilding of the communities once the relief agencies address their immediate priorities”, said Ravi Rawat from Bombay Chopsticks and Perl Banquet, with a sense of enthusiasm. “We have taken a pledge that our efforts will not end until the affected people back home get a new beginning”, he added.

“The print, electronic, and social media in Chicago, which gave sufficient attention to the Chennai floods, became the agent of mobilization and resulted in a huge crowd at the event today”, Chandrakant Modi, President of Asian Media USA pointed out. “Social Media is flooded with heart touching comments about the Chennai’s plight in general and the Fund Raising Event for it in particular”, he added.

Neetu Chandra - The Star Attraction:
Neetu Chandra, the highly sought-after Global actress from India, who graced the event as Guest of Honor, without any cost to it, at the invitation of Desi Junction, said that natural calamities like floods are the litmus test for the communities to show to the world that they can come together in times of great crises and can help each other.

“The acts of bravery demonstrated by Chennaites to rescue people caught in the floods by forming chains and multifarious instances of love, kindness, and resilience have become a source of inspiration to people, across the globe, in grappling with the natural calamities”, Neetu Chandra said. “On account of the innumerable tales of humanity that emerged from rain-battered Chennai, Chennaites have occupied a special place in my heart”, she added.

The instantaneous offer of Neetu Chandra to dance with everyone who donates $ 500 was not only a pleasant surprise for the audience but also turned out to be an instant hit. And many of them grabbed this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity without even batting an eyelid. This was followed by a dance riot on the stage by Neetu Chandra and her hardcore fans, a stream of donations, and, naturally, a big smile on faces of the organizers.

Jassi Parmar, Ravi Rawat, Neel Khot from FIA, Surender Mathur, Neela Patel, and Jeev Varghese jointly presented an Award to Neetu Chandra in recognition of her contribution to the Indian films. An Electrifying Entertainment Program:
A high-voltage entertainment program that followed the fundraising process was the biggest highlight of the event. The singers presented a large number of hit tracks from Bollywood and uplifted the mood of the audience. The dancers not only showcased their ability to perform different genres of dances but also conveyed a gamut of emotions.

The artists belonging to Yeh Cheez Group, Desi Junction, and Comedy Junction and a large number of professionals, including Rinki Talati, Nisha Saraswat, Rashik, Megha Mathur, Mahega Saraf, Sawnpa Balakrishnan, Sharanya Gururaj, Chandrakala Vijay, Ravi Shankar Subraman-yan, Noman Khan, Nisima Patel, Suman Sharma, Ruby Saraf, etc. participated in the entertainment program and captured the hearts of the audience.

The event commenced with one minute silence to pay tribute to those who perished in Chennai disaster, which was followed by ‘Vande Mataram’ sung by Sharanya, Ravi Subramaniam, Chandini Duivuri, and Suman, and “Ganesh Vandana”, performed by Megha Saraf. The event concluded by singing of the National Anthems of India.

The event was professionally managed by Jassi Parmar, Jeev Varghese, Ravi Rawat, Ravi Subramaniam, Senthil Kumar, Murugesh Kasilingam, Sharmila Varadarajan, Neil Khot, Shyamala, Nirup Krishnamurthy, Sri Lala, Pritesh Gandhi, Surender Mathur, Ranga Rajan, Vandana Walia, Chandini Duivuri, and 50 plus volunteers from various organizations.

A large number of Chicago-based eminent organizations, including Desi Junction Worldwide Radio, Jeev Varghese, Happiness Junction, India House, Waterford Banquet and Conference Centre, The Art of Living, Sai Saffron Chat House, TV Asia, TANÁ, Arya Sounds, Wintrust Commercial Banking, GLO, Massage and Spa, Asian Media, Mysore Woodland, Deccan and Spice, etc. sponsored the event.

Ten restaurants, namely, India House, Indian Harvest, Vishnu Vilas, Cuisine of India, Sai Saffron, Curry Bowl/ Mysore Woodland, Dalshin, Hyderabad Biryani, Deccan and Spice, and Vishnu villas, generously sponsored sumptuous dinner for all the attendees, which was relished by one and all.
Happy New Year 2016, and happy holidays

Iftekhar Shareef
President & CEO

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Chicago IL: The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA), Chicago held its Annual General Body Meeting to elect the new team of its office bearers for the year 2016-’17 on Sunday, December 13th, 2015 at North Shore Banquet, Devon Avenue, Chicago.

The elections were carefully supervised by the Trustees and professionally conducted by the Election Committee in order to ensure that the election procedures were consistent with the FIA’s by-laws and the entire proceedings and processes were transparent and fair.

More than 25 FIA Association-Members, who participated in the process, elected Minhaj Akhtar as President, Kanti N. Patel as Executive Vice President, Dr Sanhita Agnihotri as Secretary, Girish Patel, Satishan Nair, and Sher Muhammad Raiput as Vice Presidents, Vijay Ranjan as Joint Secretary, Ajit Singh as Treasurer, and Hemant Trivedi as Joint Treasurer.

The newly elected body had the support and blessings of a large number of prominent FIA Trustees, such as Babu Patel, Kanti S Patel, Sunny Gabbawala, Hina Trivedi, Sohan Joshi, Bhialal Patel, Anil Pillai, Sitaram Patel, Aaji Agnihotri, Keerthi Ravoori, the existing Executive Director, Syed Hussaini, Devon Avenue Merchants, and others.

The new team steps into the shoes of the outgoing office bearers, led by Dr. Inderjit Patel, who oversaw a vibrant period of growth at the FIA.

Minhaj Akhtar, who has been serving the FIA, Chicago, for a very long time, in different capacities, is one of the eminent persons who have been associated with a number of organizations in Chicagoland. Other office bearers too have got an excellent record of community service.

Minhaj Akhtar extended a deep sense of gratitude to all the FIA Association-Members, Trustees, and the community at large for reposing trust in him and his team and assured them of the democratic and transparent functioning of the FIA Chicago. “Even as we pledge to contribute our optimum best for the welfare of the Indian-Americans in Chicagoland, we seek their wholehearted and continued support”, he added.

“FIA Chicago is a 30-year-old umbrella organization led by many a doyen. I pay rich tributes to them for putting their best foot forward for bringing laurels to the Indian-Americans in the US”, said Minhaj Akhtar.

Minhaj Akhtar said that the top priority of his team would be to preserve, protect, and defend the integrity and credibility of FIA Chicago. He strongly underlined FIA’s commitment to the twin-objectives of not only empowering the Indian-American to realize their American dream but also preserving their unique culture and heritage. “We are determined to uphold FIA’s preeminent place in the Chicagoland and to enrich its brand value for the common good of one and all”, he added.

All the office bearers urged the Indian-Americans to come forward to contact FIA Chicago, on phone numbers of Mr Minhaj Akhtar 773 552 2000 / Mr. Kanti N Patel 847 571 5781, in order to enable it to achieve its cherished goals.

Photographs and Press release by: FIA Chicago
HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM
AZEEM ABDUL-QUADEER
Publisher Asia Times US

President APJ Abdul Kalam was presented with a copy of Asia Times US on his last visit to Chicago

Former External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid, Priya Dutt, MP, Cricketer Azharudin,


Chicago Alderman Ameya Pawar, Indian Member of Parliament Hussain Dalwai, Indian Consul General Dr Ausaf Sayeed
URDU ADAB DALLAS - MONTHLY GET TOGETHER

Left to right: Sameer Siddiqi, Habib Qadri, Abdul Rehman, Muhammad Raziuddin, Arif uddin Syed, Azeem Abdul Quadeer, Mohammed Siddiqui Taqui, Saleem Qadri, Mirza Perwaiz Baig, Riaz Qureshi, Azhar Bukhari, Anzar Lateef, Aroz Lateef and Iftaqar Bukhari.
“Happy Birthday Roshan and wish you all the best for the new year...The whole world celebrate your birthday being on Jan 1st.......”  Wali

HAPPY NEW YEAR to all friends and relatives from
A. Waliuddin and Roshan Waliuddin
Michael Noland for Congress

Elgin, IL - Michael Noland for Congress campaign announced that the Teamsters Joint Council 25 has endorsed their campaign for Congress.

"Mike Noland has developed a strong relationship with the Teamsters union over the years. As a state Senator, he is a strong voice for working families and I am confident he will do the same in Congress," said Teamsters Joint Council President John Coli.

"I'm proud to have earned the support of the Teamsters in this race and I'm honored to have their members joining our ever growing campaign," said Mike Noland. The Teamsters represent some of the hardest working people in America. We are united in standing up to the Bruce Rauner Turnaround Agenda and we will continue to stand arm in arm to fight for the Middle Class.

The Teamsters are the latest member of organized labor to endorse Noland's campaign. They join the American Postal Workers Union Local 3140's executive board, Bricklayers Administrative District Council of Illinois, Sheet Metal Workers State Council, SMART Transportation Division (formerly United Transportation Union), Fox Valley Building Trades, Elgin Trades Council, IFT Local 1211 (Northwest Suburban Teachers Union), Operating Engineers Local 399, and Painters District Council 30. Noland's campaign has also announced that over 75 elected officials have endorsed his campaign including Senate President John J. Cullerton and former Senate President Emil Jones Jr.

Noland is leading in the polls. A recent poll conducted by one of Noland's opponents showed him with a seven-point lead over his nearest opponent. After voters are provided more information about the candidates, Noland's lead expands even more.

Noland is a 30-year plus resident of Elgin, a veteran of the US Navy and was elected to the Illinois Senate in 2006. While serving in the Senate he has been one of its most progressive members and has been a strong advocate for working families throughout his time in the Illinois General Assembly.

Mufti Akmal Qadri visited Austin and Dallas

Mufti Muhammad Akmal Qadri Madani of QTV fame addressed several Milad gatherings in Greater Dallas and Austin areas. He spoke about the importance of Milad and answered questions. Mufti Muhammad Akmal Madani is a Islamic scholar from Pakistan. He is a mufti and currently he is working as the director of Al Furqan Scholars’ Academy, Karachi which he established in 2006. He also presents TV series. Ahkam-e-Shariят, a Faхih based TV Programme. He was born on 5 May 1968 in Karachi, Pakistan. He received contemporary education in Karachi and completed Chemical Engineering. In the beginning of his religious career he served in the preaching activities with Dawat-e-Islami. In beginning he got Islamic education from Mufti Ilyaas Razawi, Principali Nadra-ul-Uloom. Then he went to Lahore where he got enrolled in the Sunni Madarsa Jamia Nizamia Razawiyya, Lahore for seven years in acquiring traditional Islamic education. He appeared on TV for the first time in Ramadan 2004 in Sahri Time, a TV program on Pakistan based TV Channel ARY Qtv. Ahkam-e-Shariят, Tadabur-e-Quran, Al Hadi and Sharah Sahih Bukhari are some of his TV series on ARY. He also comes on UK based Unmaх Channel with a program ‘Your Questions Answered’.
We wish all the readers of Asia Times Season’s Greetings, and may the New Year 2016 bring you joy and peace.

We are going through some tough times, but I am sure with persistence and endurance we will all come out on top.

May the perseverance prevail.

We are thankful to Janab Azeem Quadeer Sahab for his commendable job in bringing news to the expatriates and to the south Asian diaspora. We wish him great success not only in the coming year but for the years to come.
“Pakistan Renews its Commitment to End Terrorism on the First Anniversary of Peshawar School Massacre” - Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Consul General of Pakistan in the US

January 2016

The first Constitution Day was solemnly celebrated at the premises of the Consulate General of India in Chicago on 27th November, 2015 (26th November being a closed holiday on account of Thanksgiving Day). The celebration was part of the decision taken by the National Committee set up under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister of India for the celebration of 125th Birth Anniversary (14 April 2016) of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The Constitution of India was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 26th November, 1949, the Committee decided to observe 26th November as “Constitution Day” every year.

The programme commenced by observing one minute of silence as a homage to the victims of the dastardly terrorist attacks in Mumbai, marking the 7th Anniversary of the Mumbai attacks in Mumbai, marking the 7th Anniversary of the Mumbai attacks as a homage to the victims of the dastardly terrorist attacks.

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Constitution Day was observed in the US on December 16th, 2014. GOI decided to celebrate this day annually as the ‘Constitution Day’. The celebration was attended by a cross-section of people from all walks of life, including representatives of 29 countries too to join hands to make a collective and comprehensive effort, involving further strengthening of the economic, commercial, sporting, and people-to-people linkages with a view to successfully eliminating terrorism from the region.

The opening remarks were delivered by Dr Ausaf Sayeed, Consul General. Consul General addressed the gathering and recalled the mammoth work done by the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly under the Chairmanship of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in drafting the Constitution of India. He mentioned that as the Constitution of India was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 26th November, 1949, this day is of considerable significance to modern India and aptly the Constitution both in its letter and spirit. The Consul General also read out the Preamble of the Constitution of India.

The Consul General emphasized that the Constitution of India does not discriminate anyone on the basis of religion, creed, sex or any other ground. It is the duty of every citizen of India, therefore, to uphold the Constitution both in its letter and spirit. The Consul General also read out the Preamble of the Constitution of India.

Go back to the main page.
Akhilesh removes Ompal Nehra after he made an appeal to Muslims to support construction of temple in Ayodhya

68-year-old Ompal Nehra, who was appointed as advisor to Uttar Pradesh Entertainment Tax Department with status of a minister just two months back. He was removed from the post by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav. The action on Nehra, who hails from Bijnore district of Uttar Pradesh and claims to be associated with SP Chief Mulayam Singh Yadav “for long”, came two days after he had made an appeal to Muslims to support construction of temple in Ayodhya and Mathura.

Nehra claims that he was informed about his removal and about all his facilities being withdrawn by Bijnore District Magistrate. Speaking to the press Nehra said that he had no regrets about what he had said and strongly believes in the “third option” provided by him as a solution to resolve the ongoing disputes.

Nehra had given this statement during an official program of Agriculture Department to mark Kisan Diwas on December 23 i.e. the birth anniversary of Chaudhary Charan Singh in Bijnore District of Uttar Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh Government was celebrating the day as Kisan Diwas.

“Chief Minister gave me the minister status two months back and took it back today. It is his decision but I stand by my statement and feel that I have not said anything wrong” Nehra told The Indian Express after being informed about his removal.

Clarifying his statement, Nehra said, “The dispute over construction of temple could not be solved through mutual understanding, even court procedure is becoming lengthy so I suggested this third option. BJP has been making it a political issue since 1992 and try to take benefit of it before every election, so for the benefit of the country and its people, I said that instead of fighting it out, secular and intellectual Muslims should come forward and support construction of temple in Ayodhya as well as Mathura”

Nehra further said, “I even suggested that our muslim brothers can be given place for mosque to offer Namaz at a distance of about 2-3 km so that they are not disturbed by the loud sound of rituals that are performed in the temple and Hindus can come forward to support the construction of the mosque instead.”

In 1991 Lok Sabha elections, Nehra had unsuccessfully contested against Ajit Singh from Baghat Parliamentary Constituency as Samajwadi Janata Party candidate. His statement comes at a time when Vishva Hindu Parishad and to regulate the practice of professional engineering in Texas.

Kannappan is a mechanical engineering graduate of Annamalai University in Tamil Nadu and received his MS in mechanical engineering at the University of Texas in Austin.

Previously, Kannappan also served as a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers Gas Pipeline Safety Research Committee, which defends Houston against bio-terrorism.

Additionally, from 2006 to 2011, he was on the Texas On-Site Wastewater Treatment Research Council.

Throughout his career, Kannappan has received a number of honours and awards, including an award from Crystal Dynamics group of NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland for improving laser measurement accuracy.

An Indian-American has been appointed as the Secretary of the Texas Board of Professional Engineers that licenses qualified engineers and regulates the practice of professional engineering in the US state.

Sockalingam “Sam” Kannappan, a professional engineer and senior design engineer for SNC-Lavalin Hydrocarbons and Chemicals, has been appointed as the secretary of the Texas Board of Professional Engineers (TBPE) in Austin.

Houston-based Kannappan also serves as a board member of the Society of Piping Engineers and Designers and an advisory board member of the Asia Society's Texas centre.

The Indian-American engineer will be signing all newly-issued licenses, TBPE said in a statement.

The board issues, monitors and renews roughly 57,000 licenses for engineers.

The board's role in the protection of the public is to license qualified engineers, enforce the Texas Engineering Practice Act to license qualified engineers, enforce the Texas Engineering Practice Act...
Indian Students denied US entry at Abu Dhabi Airport

A number of Indian students who landed at the Abu Dhabi airport for their US pre-clearance (immigration) were publicly shamed, locked up like criminals for 16 hours, hit by a volley of irrelevant questions and eventually unceremoniously deported on December 22. The students possessed admission letters from two California-based institutions (Silicon Valley University, San Jose and Northwestern Polytechnic University, Fremont) as well as valid visas.

Here’s why Indian students are being deported from US

Did you have a drink in the last 24 hours? How much did you drink? What was the air-hostess wearing? -- were some of the many uncomfortable questions allegedly thrown at these travellers by officials of the US Customs and Border Protection.

For some students, the ‘interrogation’ took a different colour altogether. "I was shocked when one of the officers asked me what the airhostess on the flight that I was travelling by was wearing. He even wanted to know the colour of her dress," said a harried student, requesting anonymity.

Incidentally, these questions did not figure on the printed questionnaires that the students were asked to read and sign thereafter. "They asked us several questions that were off-the-record. When we asked why the immigration authorities wanted to know such details, they dismissed us outright, " said Mohammad Asharaf, whose dream of pursuing a Masters in Computer Science from the Northwestern Polytechnic University (NPU) was cut short that day. He, along with 16 others, was dumped on a flight back to Hyderabad and his visa was cancelled.

"Strangely, the US authorities offered us no reason for cancelling our visas. In fact, they forced us to sign a document which stated that we were voluntarily giving up our offer of admission from the US varsity," said another distressed student, A Yashwant.

The document (a copy of which is with TOI) stated: "I understand that my admissibility is questioned for the above reasons (no reasons cited), which I have read or have been read out to me in the English language. I request that I be permitted to withdraw my application for admission and return abroad. I understand that my voluntary withdrawal of my application for admission is in lieu of a formal determination concerning my admissibility". Students claimed that they were “forced” to sign the declaration.

"It is a matter of extreme embarrassment for us and our families. Now that my visa has been cancelled, I do not even know if I’ll ever be issued a fresh US visa ever again. Studying there has always been my dream. But I am doubtful whether that’ll happen now," said a Silicon Valley University-bound student, trying hard to hold back his tears.

If overseas education advisors are to be believed, getting a new visa might indeed be impossible for these students.

Top Comment

This is really shameful for US. Please be little humane in dealing with students atleast. They are the building blocks of... Read More

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British MP says US stopped Muslim family from flying to Disneyland

Prime Minister David Cameron’s office says he will investigate a lawmaker’s claim that US officials prevented a British Muslim family from flying to Disneyland for a planned holiday.

Stella Creasy, a member of the opposition Labour Party, says US officials gave no explanation for refusing to allow her constituents to board a flight from Gatwick Airport on December 15. She told The Guardian newspaper this is part of a larger pattern affecting British Muslims, and that a lack of information from US officials is sparking resentment among Muslims who feel discriminated against.

The issue is sensitive in part because US presidential contender Donald Trump has called for a temporary ban on Muslims visiting the US due to concerns about extremist attacks.

Creasy’s office told The Associated Press Wednesday that she had written to Cameron seeking his intervention. She complained that US officials who kept the family from boarding provided no information and complained she had hit “a brick wall” seeking information about the case.

Creasy told the prime minister there is “growing fear” among British Muslims that aspects of Trump’s plans are coming into practice even though they have been widely condemned.

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For some students, the ‘interrogation’ took a different colour altogether. "I was shocked when one of the officers asked me what the airhostess on the flight that I was travelling by was wearing. He even wanted to know the colour of her dress," said a harried student, requesting anonymity.

Incidentally, these questions did not figure on the printed questionnaires that the students were asked to read and sign thereafter. "They asked us several questions that were off-the-record. When we asked why the immigration authorities wanted to know such details, they dismissed us outright, " said Mohammad Asharaf, whose dream of pursuing a Masters in Computer Science from the Northwestern Polytechnic University (NPU) was cut short that day. He, along with 16 others, was dumped on a flight back to Hyderabad and his visa was cancelled.

"Strangely, the US authorities offered us no reason for cancelling our visas. In fact, they forced us to sign a document which stated that we were voluntarily giving up our offer of admission from the US varsity," said another distressed student, A Yashwant.

The document (a copy of which is with TOI) stated: "I understand that my admissibility is questioned for the above reasons (no reasons cited), which I have read or have been read out to me in the English language. I request that I be permitted to withdraw my application for admission and return abroad. I understand that my voluntary withdrawal of my application for admission is in lieu of a formal determination concerning my admissibility". Students claimed that they were “forced” to sign the declaration.

"It is a matter of extreme embarrassment for us and our families. Now that my visa has been cancelled, I do not even know if I’ll ever be issued a fresh US visa ever again. Studying there has always been my dream. But I am doubtful whether that’ll happen now," said a Silicon Valley University-bound student, trying hard to hold back his tears.

If overseas education advisors are to be believed, getting a new visa might indeed be impossible for these students.

Top Comment

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FBI arrests Pharma CEO Shkreli who hiked prices of HIV drugs

New York: Martin Shkreli, a lightning rod for growing outrage over soaring prescription drug prices, was arrested by the FBI on Thursday after a federal investigation involving his former hedge fund and a pharmaceutical company he previously headed.

The securities fraud probe of Shkreli, who is now chief executive officer of Turing Pharmaceuticals and KaloBios Pharmaceuticals Inc., stems from his time as manager of hedge fund MSMB Capital Management and CEO of biopharmaceutical company Retrophin Inc., a person familiar with the matter said.

Reuters witnessed the arrest at the Murray Hill Tower Apartments in midtown Manhattan. Law enforcement including Federal Bureau of Investigation agents could be seen escorting Shkreli, who was wearing a hoodie, into a car.

FBI spokeswoman Kelly Langmesser confirmed Shkreli’s arrest. Shares of KaloBios fell about 50% to $11.75 in premarket trading. Lawyers for Retrophin and Shkreli did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Turing and KaloBios declined to comment.

Shkreli, 32, was expected to be charged on Thursday for illegally using Retrophin assets to pay off debts after MSMB lost millions of dollars, the source said.

Turing sparked controversy earlier this year after news reports that it had raised the price of Daraprim, a 62-year-old treatment for a dangerous parasitic infection, to $750 a tablet from $13.50 after acquiring it.

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The probe, by federal prosecutors in Brooklyn, dates back to at least January when Retrophin said it received a subpoena from prosecutors seeking information about its relationship with Shkreli.

That subpoena also sought information about individuals or entities that had invested in funds previously managed by Shkreli, Retrophin said in a regulatory filing.

Mother Teresa to Be Sainted After 2nd Miracle Declared: Vatican

ROME — Mother Teresa, who dedicated her life to helping India’s poor, will be made a saint in the Roman Catholic Church, the Vatican said.

She will likely be canonized in September to coincide with the 19th anniversary of her death and Pope Francis’ Holy Year of Mercy, according to an Italian Catholic newspaper report.

The pontiff marked his 79th birthday on Thursday by approving a decree that the nun had performed a second miracle 11 years after her death, the Vatican confirmed in a statement.

She was beatified in 2003 as Blessed Teresa of Calcutta for healing an Indian woman’s tumor through divine intervention, but full sainthood requires the declaration of two miracles.

Her Missionaries of Charity helped the poor on the streets of the city, now known as Kolkata. She won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979.

“We are all absolutely delighted about the news,” Sister Ita of the Missionaries of Charity told NBC News from its headquarters in the center of the city. “We are very happy to hear about the canonization and we look forward to hearing more details in due course.”

The miracle needed for her canonization involved the curing of a man in Santos, Brazil, with a serious viral brain infection, according to Father Brian Kolodiejchuk, a Missionaries of Charity Father who worked closely with Mother Teresa for 20 years and spearheaded the cause of her sainthood.

“The patient’s wife continuously sought the intercession of the Blessed Mother Teresa for her husband,” he said in a statement explaining the event.

The unidentified man was in a coma and about to undergo an emergency operation when a neurosurgeon “returned to the operating room and found the patient inexplicably awake and without pain,” the statement said.

The patient made an immediate and full recovery. Despite tests showing that prolonged drug treatment had made him sterile, he went on to have two children, Kolodiejchuk said.

Born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu in Skopje, Macedonia, Mother Teresa died on Sept. 5, 1997, aged 87.

Despite winning global acclaim for her life in helping the poor, some have criticized her approach to contraception and medicine.

Francis created six new saints in 2014 — two Indians and four Italians — praising their “creative” commitment to helping the poor.

When Mother Teresa is be canonized, no fewer than four countries will celebrate her as their own saint. She was born in what is now the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, to ethnic Albanians from Kosovo, and she lived most of her life in India, where she died and was buried.

Albania, which still claims her remains, named the airport, a square and a hospital in the capital Tirana after her, has made Oct. 19, the day she was beatified, a national public holiday.

Macedonia has opened a museum containing relics and memories from her early in Skopje, where she lived until she was 18, and built a several-meters high bronze statue of her.

Kosovo, meanwhile, named the main street in its capital Pristina in her honor.

Advisory note: www.AsiaTimes.US
Artist Hema Upadhyay murder: Prime suspect arrested, three others detained

Lucknow/Mumbai: Mumbai police detained a key suspect from Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh in connection with the double murder case of well-known installation artist Hema Upadhyaya and her lawyer Harish Bhambhani on the basis of information provided by three already under detention.

The suspect, identified as Shivkumar Rajbhar alias Sadhu, was tracked down and detained by a Mumbai police team which had rushed to the temple town yesterday following inputs that the culprits might have fled to Uttar Pradesh.

"We haven not arrested but detained Shivkumar Rajbhar alias Sadhu in Varanasi," Mumbai Joint Commissioner of Police (Law and Order) Deven Bharti said.

Police had on Sunday detained Azad Rajbhar, Pradeep Rajbhar and Vijay Rajbhar in Mumbai in connection with the sensational twin-murder.

Based on information provided by the trio, the police detained Sadhu, who is suspected to have played a key role in the murder of the artist and her lawyer, police said.

Three detained from Mumbai are in the business of manufacturing and selling fibre glass, which was used by Hema and her estranged husband Chintan Upadhyaya, also an artist, for their installations, said an officer privy to details of the probe. Those detained had known Chintan for the last few years.

One among them had called up Hema on her mobile phone before her murder, police said.

The bodies of Hema (43) and Bhambhani (65), their hands and feet tied with ropes, were recovered stuffed in cardboard boxes from a drain in suburban Kandivali on Saturday following which police were called in.

Their body samples have been sent for chemical analysis and autopsy reports are awaited, a senior police officer said. "As per our probe their bodies (in boxes) were transported in a tempo from suburban Juhu to Kandivali (W)," DCP (Detection) Dhananjay Kulkarni said.

Police have also quizzed the driver of the vehicle who dumped the boxes in the drain thinking they contained broken antiques.

The statement of the transporter has been recorded, police said.

Earlier, the police had on Saturday recorded the statement of the watchman at Hema's apartment on Juhu Tara Road and her domestic servant Lalit Mandal.

Hema's husband Chintan, who was in Delhi and arrived in the city yesterday, was also questioned by the Crime Branch. The Baroda-born artist, who was locked in bitter divorce proceedings with her husband, had in 2013 filed a case against Chintan, alleging he painted obscene pictures of women on the walls of their matrimonial home in Mumbai to harass her. Bhambhani had represented Hema in the case.

According to police, Hema's domestic help had filed a missing complaint at Santacruz police station on Saturday after she did not return home whole of Friday. Bhambhani's younger daughter Anita had also filed a similar complaint at Matunga police station the same day.

Hema was last seen by the watchman of her apartment building at 11 am on Friday. According to Anita, Bhambhani had left his King Circle home in Matunga to meet Hema at around 6.30 pm on Friday.

Investigators said Bhambhani met Hema at her art studio in Andheri around 8.30 PM on Friday before talking to his wife on phone. Thereafter the Bhambhani family could not establish any contact with him despite calling him several times.

Police suspect an unidentified person known to the duo had called the lawyer to give fresh evidence in a property dispute involving Hema, who was suspected to have been strangled with Bhambhani by the perpetrators of the crime.

Additional Commissioner of Police (North Region) Fatehsingh Patil claimed his team was "very close" to cracking the case.

Police said Bhambhani's car, in which he had left for the meeting, is still to be traced.

Black holes could grow as large as 50 billion Suns: study

London: Black holes at the heart of galaxies could swell to 50 billion times the mass of the Sun before losing the discs of gas they rely on to sustain themselves, according to a new study.

Professor Andrew King from the University of Leicester in the UK explored super massive black holes at the centre of galaxies, around which are regions of space where gas settles into an orbiting disc.

This gas can lose energy and fall inwards, feeding the black hole. But these discs are known to be unstable and prone to crumbling into stars. King calculated how big a black hole would have to be for its outer edge to keep a disc from forming, coming up with the figure of 50 billion solar masses.

The study suggests that without a disc, the black hole would stop growing; meaning 50 billion Suns would roughly be the upper limit. The only way it could get larger is if a star happened to fall straight in or another black hole merged with it.

"The significance of this discovery is that astronomers have found black holes of almost the maximum mass, by observing the huge amount of radiation given off by the gas disc as it falls in," King said.

"The mass limit means that this procedure should not turn up any masses much bigger than those we know, because there would not be a luminous disc," he said.

"Bigger black hole masses are in principle possible—for example, a hole near the maximum mass could merge with another black hole, and the result would be bigger still. But no light would be produced in this merger, and the bigger merged black hole could not have a disc of gas that would make light," said King.

"One might nevertheless detect it in other ways, for example as it bent light rays passing very close to it (gravitational lensing) or perhaps in future from the gravitational waves that Einstein's General Theory of Relativity predicts would be emitted as it merged," he added.

The study was published in the journal Monthly Notices Letters of the Royal Astronomical Society.
Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for an end to cross border terrorism while inaugurating a new parliament building in Afghanistan. Without naming Pakistan, Modi said in an address to the parliament here: "Afghanistan will succeed only when terrorism no longer flows across the border; when nurseries and sanctuaries of terrorism are shut and their patrons are no longer in business."

"Terror and violence cannot be the instrument to shape Afghanistan's future or dictate the choices Afghans make," he said.

Modi reached Kabul in the wee hours of Friday while on his way back from a two-day visit to Russia. He, along with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, inaugurated the new Afghan parliament building that has been constructed with Indian assistance of $90 million. One block of the building has been named after former Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

"Bahut dhanyavaad India for giving us a new house of democracy. Its a testimony to our unyielding friendship," Ghani stated in a tweet.

In his address, Modi said that there were "some who did not want us to be here". "There were those who saw sinister designs in our presence here. There are others who were uneasy at the strength of our partnership. Some even tried to discourage us."

He said that "those waging war from outside must seek a path to this building and this hall". The Indian prime minister said that Afghanistan's success would require the cooperation and support of each of its neighbours. "And, all of us in the region – India, Pakistan, Iran and others – must unite, in trust and cooperation, behind this common purpose and in recognition of our common destiny," he said.

Modi also expressed the hope that Pakistan would "come a bridge between South Asia and Afghanistan and beyond".

Stating that nothing was more important for a nation than its human resources, he announced 500 Indian scholarships for children of security personnel who have died. A joint statement issued after a meeting between Modi and Ghani said that Afghanistan needed to eliminate terrorism perpetrated from "sanctuaries and safe havens" for peace while identifying terrorism, narcotics and extremism as "serious challenges".

"Strongly condemning the barbaric incidents of terrorism in Afghanistan in recent months, the two leaders reiterated that peace in Afghanistan required elimination of terrorism perpetrated and supported from sanctuaries and safe havens," the statement said.

Modi also thanked Afghan authorities for ensuring the safety of the Indian embassy in Kabul, the four consulates in Jalalabad, Kandahar, Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif, and Indian nationals in Afghanistan, including those working on various development projects.

Earlier, after Modi reached Kabul, Ghani tweeted: "India and Afghanistan enjoy a friendship that dates back to antiquity. We have stood by each other in the best and worst of times."

The two leaders had delegation-level discussions over breakfast. After his address to Parliament, Modi met Afghanistan's Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah and former president Hamid Karzai.

He also interacted with Indian aid workers in Afghanistan, personnel of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), and embassy officials.

He left for Lahore where he will meet Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during a brief stopover.
Your vehicle may be involved in a safety recall and may create a safety risk for you or your passengers. Safety defects must be repaired by a dealer at no cost to you. However, if left un repaired, a potential safety defect in your vehicle could lead to injury or even death. Read this entire email to find out more and learn what you should do next.

What is a recall?
When a manufacturer or the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) determines that a car or item of motor vehicle equipment creates an unreasonable risk to safety or fails to meet minimum safety standards, the manufacturer is required to fix that car or equipment at no cost to the consumer. That can be done by repairing it, replacing it, offering a refund (for equipment) or, in rare cases, repurchasing the car.

The following recall may apply to one or more of your vehicles if your vehicle is listed below. Click on the NHTSA Campaign ID number below to read more about the safety issue and the reason for the recall. To find out if your vehicle is included in the recall, use our VIN Lookup Tool.

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NHTSA Campaign ID Number: 15V740
Manufacturer: PACCAR Incorporated
Make / Model Years: PETERBILT / 2009-2016
Subject: Trucks can Exceed Speed Rating of Front Tires

NHTSA Campaign ID Number: 15V741
Manufacturer: Forest River, Inc.
Make / Model Years: FOREST RIVER / 2010-2016
Subject: Incorrect Tire Size on Federal Placard/ Part 567

NHTSA Campaign ID Number: 15V742
Manufacturer: Forest River, Inc.
Make / Model Years: COACHMEN / 2016
Subject: Parking Brake may not Function Properly

NHTSA Campaign ID Number: 15V744
Manufacturer: Maserati North America, Inc.
Make / Model Years: MASERATI / 2016
Subject: Passenger Side Door Latch Not Heat Treated

NHTSA Campaign ID Number: 15V745
Manufacturer: Thor Motor Coach
Subject: Electric Entry Steps may be Unstable

NHTSA Campaign ID Number: 15V746
Manufacturer: Spartan Motors USA
Make / Model Years: SPARTAN / 2014-2015
Subject: Driveshaft may Disconnect

NHTSA Campaign ID Number: 15V747
Manufacturer: Newmar Corporation
Make / Model Years: NEWMAR / 2014-2016
Subject: Water Heater May Scald Operator

NHTSA Campaign ID Number: 15V748
Manufacturer: Goshen Coach
Make / Model Years: GOSHEN / 2006-2015
Subject: Wheel Chair Lift Link Arm Pivot Holes

NHTSA Campaign ID Number: 15V749
Manufacturer: Winnebago Industries, Inc
Subject: Wheel Chair Lift Link Arm Pivot Holes

NHTSA Campaign ID Number: 15V752
Manufacturer: Newmar Corporation
Make / Model Years: NEWMAR / 2004-2008
Subject: Engine Cooling Fan May Separate from Fan Drive

NHTSA Campaign ID Number: 15V757
Manufacturer: Champion Bus, Inc.
Make / Model Years: CHAMPION / 2006-2015
Subject: Wheel Chair Lift Link Arm Pivot Holes

NHTSA Campaign ID Number: 15V759
Manufacturer: Newmar Corporation
Make / Model Years: NEWMAR / 2016
Subject: Egress Window Not Installed Over DINETTE

NHTSA Campaign ID Number: 15V800
Manufacturer: Chrysler (FCA US LLC)
Make / Model Years: DODGE / 2013-2014
Subject: Power Brake Booster Contamination

What should I do if my vehicle is included in this recall? If your vehicle is included in this recall, it is very important that you get it fixed as soon as possible given the potential danger to you and your passengers if it is not addressed. You should receive a separate letter in the mail from the vehicle manufacturer, notifying you of the recall and explaining when the remedy will be available, whom to contact to repair your vehicle or equipment, and to remind you that the repair will be done at no charge to you. If you believe your vehicle is included in the recall, but you do not receive a letter in the mail from the vehicle manufacturer, please call NHTSA’s Vehicle Safety Hotline at 888-327-4236 or contact your vehicle manufacturer or dealership.

Thank you for your attention to this important safety matter and for your commitment to helping save lives on America’s roadways.

Frank S. Borris II
Director
Office of Defects Investigation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
Actress Sadhna passed away

One of the most prominent actresses of late 60’s and 70’s, Sadhana Shivdasani, popularly known as Sadhana, passed away today morning at Hinduja hospital. She was 74 years old.

The actress was previously in news for suffering from a tumour last year. She reportedly had a small lesion in her mouth that was cancerous and underwent a successful surgery for the same.

The cremation will take place from her Santacruz residence.

Known for films like ‘Mera Saaya,’ ‘Wo Kaun Thi’ and ‘Waq’, the legendary actress made the fringe hairstyle, inspired from Hollywood icon Audrey Hepburn, a popular look for a long time.

Born in a Sindhi family in Karachi, British India, Sadhana was named after her father’s favourite actress-dancer Sadhana Bose. Her father was the brother of actor Hari Shivdasani, father of actress Babita. The family fled from Karachi during the post-Partition riots and settled in Mumbai.

Sadhana aspired to be an actress since childhood. Her father helped her enter films. In 1955 she played a chorus girl in the song ‘Mur mur ke na dekh mur mur ke’ in Raj Kapoor’s ‘Shree 420’. When she was 15 years old, she was approached by some producers who had seen her act in a college play. They cast her in India’s first Sindhi film titled Abaana (1958), where she played the role of Sheila Ramani’s younger sister.

Known for her expressive and captivating eyes and strong acting, Sadhana played her remarkable double role in the first of the suspense-thriller trilogy, Woh Kaun Thi?. This white-sari-clad performance opposite Manoj Kumar earned her first Filmfare nomination as Best Actress. On the set of her first film, the Sindhi film ‘Abana’ (1958), in which she had a supporting role, she asked the films star, Sheila Ramani for an autograph. Ramani scribbled, “One day, I’ll come and ask you for your autograph.”

Sadhana had health issues due to her thyroid, which she got treated at a hospital in Boston. After returning from the US, she starred in the successful movies ‘Intaquam’, ‘Ek Phool Do Mali’, and ‘Geeta Mera Naam’, which she also directed. The actress kept a low profile all her life. She always believed that an artist should maintain a certain mystique. According to her, “An artist shouldn’t become too familiar to the public. One shouldn’t see them too often. The charisma grows in that way, and that’s what’s called star-power.”

She retired from acting in late 70’s as she did not want to be cast as a side-actress or do character roles. Later, she and her husband formed a production company. She also directed a movie starring Dimple Kapadia in 1989. The cremation will take place tomorrow from her Santacruz residence.

With Sadhana, an era of Bollywood comes to an end.

A number of veteran Bollywood stars were photographed dropping by her residence to pay the family their condolences. One of them included long time friend, actress Waheeda Rehman.

Speaking of Sadhna’s sudden passing, she said, “She spoke to me two days ago. I had just seen ‘Bajirao Mastani’ and she wanted to know all the details. And now she’s gone. She’s the second dear friend I’ve lost this year after Nanda. And the strangest thing is, Nanda passed away on 25 March. Sadhana too died on the 25th. That is scary. I guess one goes when one has to.”

Waheeda added, “Sadhana was a very dear friend. Like Nanda, Sadhana was a recluse. We could speak our minds and hearts to each other without fear. She was a fighter and spent most of her life struggling against odds. only did one film together. We shared a friendship far removed from the profession. I will miss her.”

Waheeda at the residence of late Sadhana to pay her last respects
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Director Rohit Shetty feels the initial ban on his latest film "Dilwale", starring Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol in the lead, has affected the opening collection of the action-comedy. The 41-year-old director said he was always prepared for the face off with Sanjay Leela Bhansali’s "Bajirao Mastani".

"We all were aware that 'Dilwale' and 'Bajirao Mastani' are coming together, so, I was prepared for that competition and the harm we will give each other. But I think what affected the Friday and Saturday collections were the ban in Rajasthan and MP. Almost 40 per cent of the theaters were not showing the film and we resumed on Sunday morning... It’s all mathematics, how many theaters we are running in we will get the collections according to that," Rohit told PTI.

The "Chennai Express" helmer thinks bans are the outcome of "misunderstanding" and if dealt with patience things can be settled out easily. "Bans do harm the business, but when you go and talk to the people opposing the film, it all gets sorted. I have come to the conclusion that all this happens due to misunderstanding. And the issue easily gets resolved if you go and talk to them nicely," he said. "Dilwale", released last Friday, stars Varun Dhawan, Kriti Sanon, Johnny Lever, Varun Sharma among others in prominent roles.

The film has bagged thunderous response overseas and that has left Rohit surprised. "With ‘Star Wars’ releasing at the same time this kind of response overseas is great. I never really thought this kind of response will come from international circuit as I always knew ‘Star Wars’ was coming. I think Shah Rukh is very popular overseas or may be the SRK-Kajol chemistry is working in favour of the film," he said.

Bringing back the iconic pair of SRK-Kajol after five years can look like a tough task, but Rohit said it was a cake walk as the “Fanaa” actress gave quick nod to the film. “Bringing Shah Rukh and Kajol together was not planned. I narrated the script to Shah Rukh, he heard the character I had written for the girl and suggested why not take Kajol as it is an important role. Then we narrated the script and the moment it got over she promptly said yes. It was very easy to bring her on board,” he said.

Rohit, who had been away from the promotions, said he was busy in the post production of the movie till a week before its release. "I was busy finishing the film. We have completed the film in five months. June 21st the film started. We were shooting and editing and working round the clock and were able to finish the film on Saturday for Friday release. I said I am not coming anywhere otherwise the film will not release."

Rohit is also planning to watch "Bajirao Mastani" as soon as he gets free from his own film. "Currently I am busy with 'Dilwale' only, once I am through with it will definitely see the film sometime early next year. I have heard great things about Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh. They are friends and will surely see the film."
Dilip Kumar receives Padma Vibhushan

Ailing legendary actor Dilip Kumar, known as the “tragedy king of Bollywood”, turned emotional today (December 11) when he was presented with Padma Vibhushan by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh at his residence in suburban Bandra for his contribution to Hindi cinema spanning over six decades.

Health did not allow me to travel to Delhi to receive the award from the President. Tearful moment when the award was in my hands. How happy and proud my family was. Indeed Allah’s mercy and blessing.

The 93-year-old veteran, who shot to fame with “Naya Daur”, “Jugnu”, “Andaz” and “Devdas” and went on to give sterling performances in over 60 Hindi films, was given the second-highest civilian award comprising a medal, certificate and shawl when Padma Vibhushan was presented to him in Mumbai.

When Padma Vibhushan was presented to the actor, Saira later told reporters that, “He has always been quiet about himself. He is happy, he smiled and there were tears in his eyes. He is an emotional and sensitive person. For him material things do not matter. He is a simple man, down to earth.”

While Saira feels proud of the honour bestowed on her husband, she says the biggest award is the love of audience. “I am very proud with the honour that the government has given him. I was emotional. I am the proudest wife. Apart from the award people always love and respect him, that matters the most. This is the biggest award,” she said.

She also appreciated the gesture of Home Minister, Maharashtra Governor and Chief Minister to come to their residence to present the award.

The Government of India honoured him with the Padma Bhushan award in 1991, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 1994 and the Padma Vibhushan earlier this year, for his exceptional and distinguished contribution to the Indian cinema.

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On December 11, Kumar celebrated his 93rd birthday with several of his well-wishers sending him flowers and gifts. “Mr Amitabh Bachchan had sent flowers and a note on his birthday. He is a great admirer of him, he wishes long and healthy life for him,” she added.

Bachchan told reporters here, “I have been a huge fan of Dilip Kumar since many years. It’s a very proud, happy moment for all of us… When the history of Indian cinema will be written, it will be before Dilip sahab and after Dilip sahab.”

Born as Muhammad Yusuf Khan in Peshawar (Pakistan), Kumar made his debut as an actor in the film “Jwar Bhata” produced by Bombay Talkies in 1944. He started in films of a variety of genres such as the swashbuckling “Aan” (1952), the comical “Azaad” (1955), the historical “Mughal-e-Azam” (1960) and the social “Ganga Jamuna” (1961).

"It is far better to live like a lion for a day than to live like a jackal for a hundred years" said a bold, brave and brilliant son of Mysore in India known as Tipu Sultan. Girish Karnad, a noted stage and film authority hailing from the same State as Tipu Sultan recently opined that if Tipu Sultan was a Hindu, he would have bestowed the same aura and mantle as Shivaji in Maharashtra.

Born on November 20, 1750 in Devanahalli (present day Bengaluru), Tipu hailed as “The Tiger of Mysore” will always be remembered as one of the most powerful rulers India ever had. Fascinated by Tipu's heroics in his high school history class, I undertook a visit to his summer palace in Srirangapatnam. An amazing scholar and a remarkably ambitious king his heroics are written all over the kingdom. As in life and after death, Tipu is draped in viewpoints that converge and diverge depending on one's political prism or mental prison. Collaborating with the French, Tipu fought valiantly against the British rule and was a thorn in their imperial peace. He always led from the front and any number of his bravery anecdotes generally inflate and inflate temps even to this day. As a Muslim king in a majority Hindu state, Tipu practiced communal unity. Only 10 percent of his officials were Muslim and the rest were from the Hindu majority. His currency carried images of Hindu gods, like Shiva, Parvati, Sharada and Krishna. He popularized “tiger” as the motif of his kingdom aligning the mascot to goddess Durga.

There have been very few examples of a soldier-scholar in one person. Tipu is known to excel with both qualities of brain and brawn. Dignity, compassion and humanity are traits documented by historians in subjective frames. As a leading international magazine once mentioned, "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" .....so is the case with Tipu Sultan. Legend has it that Tipu was hunting with a French friend when he came face to face with a tiger……..the tiger pounced on him. His gun failed to work but he killed the tiger with his dagger thus earning the title of "the Tiger of Mysore". Emphasizing the importance of communication and connections, he introduced the postal runners. He pioneered road building. Constructed a dam over Cauvery, developed agriculture, established trade routes overseas, supported horticulture, nurtured sandalwood, collected and treasured arts and crafts. The personal sword of Tipu Sultan was bought back from British collectors by Vijay Mallya the industrialist from Tipu's state. Another showman Saijay Khan from Tipu's state launched a magnificent TV series "Tipu Sultan". If I had the good fortune of interacting with Sanjay Khan while I worked with Lintas he ad agency in Bombay on marketing of the serial. "The sword of Tipu".

While there were rumours of filmstar Rajinikanth, doing Tipu's role in a biopic, Hindu Munnet leader Rama Gopal has expressed his request to the actor from starring in this role. Trumping against a secular philosophy is a fashionable statement in today's politics……and this disease plagues the East and the West.

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The Saffron Rainbow

by M.A. Waheed

When did you last see a rainbow? Radiant, multicoloured, glowing, pleasing, soothing, sending a wave of happiness, ripples in your heart. Enthused, you did call your beloved to share this visionary experience, a Naani’s heart flapped and she called her nawsas to bask in this glorious sight. Orlookers dyed their worries in this bliss for a few seconds and morphed into a flashback of their naaadan-bachpan. Fast-forward to the horizon in today's Bharat……..the rainbow dissolving into a single color, may be saffron? The cultural divide, the distorted lens on political camerass, quotations from a singular text book now converge on an illogical showcase of “intolerance”. Scientists, writers, artists, actors and sportsmen are in a race to propagate extravagantly the flames of hostility, wasting their talents in the domains of futility. Having ascended the Delhi throne with a massive mandate and high expectations of inserting “change” the ruling party has lost its GPS wandering in the lanes and by-lanes of rituals, rites and restraints. After years of visa denials the Prime Minister, now equipped with a “passport on steroids” is away from his corporate headquarters fulfilling a mission of a traveling salesman's aspirations adopting “mournant” on critical issues affecting a common man’s life. No deedar on Dada. Conducting a “Diversity Workshop” at NYU recently, I was boasting our practice of the art and science of multiculturalism in India. Centuries of amalgamation and assimilation are a tribute to our social fabric. Languages, customs, religions, complexion, cuisines have flourished in the deserts and dunes of India. Now the irony is, “if you are not my clone, then you are not my own”. In some quarters it has become fashionable to question the patriotism of our people as Is Prachi a super-judge? Is Shuruk Khan as an agent of Pakistan and banish him to the other side of the border? Such unpatriotic sentiments pollute and corrupt our creativity and sanity. Ghulam Ali recently echoed on the ban to perform in Mumbai as, “aise haalat se aap ke soor badal jaata hai”. When quizzed on the intolerance issue, Salman Khan says, “We are all humans and we should live in harmony”. He further adds, my mother is Susheela Charak and father is Salim Khan. I am reminded of my own experience during the Bombay riots in the 80’s, while I was working with that secular and creative genius Alyque Padamsee at Lintas we published an ad in all languages with headline, “Mazhab Nahin Sikhaata Aapas mein bair rakhna……..accompanied by a faithful colleague from the Hindu community, I roamed curfew ridden lanes interacting with Gautam Rajadhyaksha and Balwant Tandon to get this communication executed. ‘The evil communal snake constantly raises its head again and again! Just imagine a cricket team of eleven bowlers only, then who would score runs? Who would field? And most importantly does such a team stand even a slim chance of winning a single game. We need to harness the multi-talents of our society and make a winning nation, before we “make in India”. There is a $13 trillion middle class market potential in rural India waiting to be tapped by eager multinationals. Will they come to a country plagued by social ills and impractical political wills‘. Dialogue, dissent and dreams are indispensable ingredients for a healthy nation. Reserve Bank of India Governor Raghuram Rajan has called for “tolerance and mutual respect’. He reiterated that India would be “crazy to lose” its biggest advantage and emphasized the “need to keep an open society” and “resist all attempts at closing it down”. Thought leaders and the community must work together for a legacy that we will be proud to leave and the millennials will be happy to inherit. Should we not help create a “hub of happiness” for our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Every citizen in the country or an overseas citizen is a stakeholder in India and deserves a dividend of happiness by birth in India. Let us then see a rainbow of happiness in all its colors.

M.A. Waheed is a freelance journalist based in Upstate NY and can be reached at waheed48@yahoo.com.
One day, a cowboy rode into a Wild, Wild West town. The people in the town love to play jokes on visitors. After tying his horse to the pole outside a bar, the cowboy went in. “A cup of milk please,” he said to the bartender. After drinking, he went out, only to find his horse missing. Knowing that the villagers did it, he went back into the bar and said to everybody, “I am going to have another drink and when I finish it, I want to see my horse outside! Or else, I will have to do what I did in Texas - HERE!” The people were very frightened. When he finished his drink, he went outside and saw his horse. The villagers had put it back. Curious, the bartender asked the cowboy, “What did you do in Texas?”

“Building boats!”

“ And what would they be doing then?”

“Y es, sir! I’ d put all the men on one island and the women on another.”

“Y es sir. She made me exchange it two times.”

Little Johnny's kindergarten class was on a field trip to their local police station where they saw pictures tacked to a bulletin board of the 10 most wanted criminals. One of the youngsters pointed to a picture and asked if it really was the photo of a wanted person. ‘Yes’, said the policeman. ‘The detectives want very badly to capture him. ‘Little Johnny asked, ‘Why didn't you keep him when you took his picture?’

The factory foreman inspected the shipment of crystal vases leaving the plant, and approached his new packer. He put his arm around the man's shoulder and said, "Well, Ole, I see you did what I asked. Stamped the top of each box, "This Side Up." Handle With Care."

"Yes sir," the worker replied. "And just to make sure, I stamped it on the bottom too."

Mike, Jack, and Gary go for a hike in the woods. They are out about an hour enjoying the sights when they come around a sharp bend in the trail and spot a bear just in front of them feeding off some vegetation next to the trail. The bear lets out a menacing growl when it notices the hikers. Mike says "jump up and down, make some noise to scare it away." Jack says "that won't work, we need to play dead". They both ask Gary "what do we do?" There is no reply. Turning around they see Gary far down the trail behind them.

A businessman dragged himself home and barely made it to his chair before he dropped exhausted.

His sympathetic wife was right there with a tall cool drink and a comforting word. "My, you look tired," she said. "You must have had a hard day today. What happened to make you so exhausted?"

"It was terrible," her husband said. "The computer broke down and all of us had to do our own thinking."

A city slicker moves to the country and decides he's going to take up farming. He heads to the local co-op and tells the man, "Give me a hundred baby chickens."

The co-op man complies. A week later the man returns and says, "Give me two hundred baby chickens." The co-op man complies.

Again, a week later the man returns. This time he says, "Give me five-hundred baby chickens." "Wow!" the co-op man replies "You must really be doing well!"

"Naw," said the man with a sigh. "I'm either planting them too deep or too far apart!"

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“I don’t know…. I don’t see a bridge, and their ain’t no boat, and I don’t swim to well”

Guy number one picks up his flashlight, turns it on, and replies, ” Why don’t you walk across this here beam off light?”

Guy number two was outraged and replied “do you think am stupid? When I get half way you’ll turn it off!!!”

The judge check with his records, “But it says here you broke in three nights in a row!”

“Y es sir. She made me exchange it two times.”

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On the lighter side...
A grandson of Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini registered for February's election of the Assembly of Experts, the clerical body that chooses the supreme leader, state broadcaster IRIB reported.

Hassan Khomeini, 43, a politically moderate cleric, will be the first member of the family of Iran's revolutionary founder to test his popularity at the ballot box.

In a conditional endorsement of the move, incumbent Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei told Khomeini last week he should be careful not to bring his grandfather's name into disrepute, a source close to Khomeini said.

Hardliners close to Khamenei have voiced concerns about Hassan Khomeini's candidacy, warning of the risk of a reformist alliance emerging at the top of Iran's political establishment.

Iran's military chief attacks idea of council to replace supreme leader

Khomeini is close to centrist President Hassan Rouhani, whose popularity has risen since his government struck a deal on Iran's nuclear program with world powers in July.

Rouhani is hoping to cash in on that support to help like-minded politicians win a majority in the assembly and in a parliamentary election that will be held on the same day.

Khamenei is 76, so the new assembly is expected to play a significant role in choosing his successor since its members are only elected every eight years.

(Reporting by Bozorgmehr Sharafedin; Editing by Yara Bayoumy and John Stonestreet)