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How Con Artists Defraud The Insurance Industry

Mischief makers falling deliberately in front of your car so that they can extract some compensation from the motorist is a practice that we associate with the urban areas of the underdeveloped countries. Not so, it seems. According to a finding by the Insurance Bureau of Canada, the practice thrives even here in apna Canada!

Canada's home, car and business insurers released

this week their annual Top Ten Insurance Crimes list, highlighting some of the strangest and most audacious insurance frauds and auto theft cases uncovered by insurance investigators this year. This year's list includes the usual line up of con artists who try to make a fast buck by duping both innocent bystanders and insurance companies.

The list is intended to raise awareness of the most

ridiculous crimes concocted by insurance criminals.

"It never fails to amaze me the extent to which people will go to defraud the system," says Rick Dubin the Vice-President of Investigations, Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC). "Insurance crime is serious and costly and makes victims of us all.

A conservative estimate is that insurance crime costs

Continued on page 3

Your Cell Phone Numbers Yours To Keep!

Canada at last, of course, much later that the rest of the world has done so, might be opening the door to some real competition in the cell phone sector.

According to recent ruling by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) on Dec.19, the phone companies will have to let go of individual numbers if the customer so desires. Consumer groups have consistently attacked the sorry state of affairs in Canada where the phone companies pretty much kept their customer based tied to their apron strings by refusing to transfer the numbers to a new provider. The CRTC decision this week

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Child Marriage Wins Best Doc Award

Doc shows actual child marriages filmed secretly

Indian American filmmaker Neeraj Kumar's debut documentary "Child Marriage" has received the Best Documentary International award at the New York International Film and Video Festival (NYIFVF), 2005.

The 82-minute long documentary, according to Neeraj,

Continued on page 6



The World's Longest Lasting Terror Mystery

In December 1975, armed gunmen raided the OPEC headquarters in Vienna, Austria, and took 62 people hostage but 30 years later mystery still surrounds the identity of those responsible for the three killings that took place in what was Austria's worst terrorist incident.

On December 21, 1975, a six-strong terrorist commando team led by the leg-



Carlos, also known as "Jackal" seen during his trial in France

endary Venezuelan Illich Ramirez Sanchez, alias "Carlos", stormed the

Continued on page 6

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INSURANCE - from page 1

Canadian insurers and their policyholders about \$3 billion a year.

"We cannot fight these crimes alone. Many of the schemes on this list were brought to light thanks to tips from Good Samaritans. We applaud the efforts of individuals who refuse to sit back and watch others cheat the system."

To make it easier for Canadians to report auto theft, insurance fraud, staged auto collisions and other crimes related to insurance, Canada's home, car and business insurers have launched a national insurance crime TIPS line. Anyone with information about a possible insurance crime can call the toll-free TIPS line at 1-877-IBC-TIPS (422-8477) or submit a tip on-line at www.ibt.ca. All tips are kept confidential. Take the time and report insurance crime.

Insurance Bureau of Canada is the national trade association of the private property and casualty insurance industry. It represents the companies that provide more than 90% of the non-government home, car and business insurance in Canada.

The following are some of the 'highlights' from this year's Rogues Gallery:

1. Too Many Encores

His acting was quite good, and he also doubled as his own stuntman, but eventually his performance would earn him a very bad review. The man's act was simple and convincing. He would hang out in a parking lot until he spotted a woman or a senior backing out of a space. He would then step behind the car, bang the trunk with his fist and fall to the ground in apparent pain. At first, various insurers would settle his

"We cannot fight these crimes alone. Many of the schemes on this list were brought to light thanks to tips from Good Samaritans. We applaud the efforts of individuals who refuse to sit back and watch others cheat the system."

claim, so he gave a repeat performance every two weeks. He put on a total of eleven shows until a sharp-eyed adjuster gave him the thumbs down. After an investigation, his next appearance was in court, where he received a bad review and was ordered to repay his victims. His acting career is over.

2. Pirate Shipping

Stolen cars are one of Canada's fastest growing exports. Every year, an estimated 20,000 of them are loaded into shipping containers and sent overseas.

One crook thought he'd try to cash in on both ends of this illicit trade. First, he arranged to export his brand new high-end vehicle to his home country in Europe. Ninety days later, he filed an insurance claim in Canada saying his car had been stolen. Problem was, his car had already been seized at a port in Belgium along with two other stolen Canadian cars found in the same container.

Investigators were naturally suspicious of a theft report concerning a vehicle that had already spent weeks impounded in Belgium. They wondered why it had taken him so long to realize it was missing. So did the insurer. Claim denied.

3. Fender Bender Fraud

The man thought the damage to his car looked relatively minor. He'd accidentally scraped the left front quarter panel as he was pulling out of a parking space. So he was shocked to see the enormous bill and list of replacement parts - including a new front grill and cooling system - that the body shop was sending to the insurance company. The insurer agreed something seemed amiss. During the investigation, a sharp-eyed appraiser recognized that the damaged parts that the body shop employees claimed had been removed from the man's car were actually from another vehicle. Fooling around with somebody else's parts can backfire. The body shop is currently being investigated by police.

4. The Chop Shop King

He was a very wealthy man, and when insurance investigators and police looked into his car dealership and body shop operations it was easy to see why. He ran two bustling chop shops - illegal garages where stolen cars are stripped for parts - and he had a significant side business that altered vehicle identification numbers. When police moved in, they seized 40 stolen vehicles with a cash

Continued on page 4

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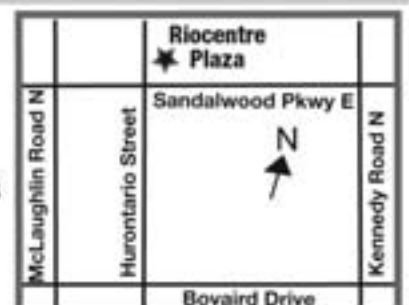
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COMMUNITY NEWS



Continued from page 3

value totalling \$1 million. In fact, the case was so big that the trial took 119 days and involved 190 witnesses. When the gavel came down, the Chop Shop King was

removed from his throne, sent to jail to serve a six-year sentence and ordered to pay a \$774,000 fine. As he pronounced the sentence, the judge referred to an IBC-commissioned study that

highlighted the social costs of car theft and said, in effect, that it's a crime that costs all Canadians.

5. Field of Schemes

It began as a routine auto theft claim. The man reported that his high-end pickup truck had been stolen, and he collected \$68,000 from his insurer. Months later, insurance investigators received a tip that led them to a farm owned by the

man's mother. There, in the middle of a field, they spotted the truck - what was left of it. The man was selling it off piece by piece. The wheels were already gone along with a range of other parts. The investigators seized what remained, the insurer launched a lawsuit, and the man was charged with public mischief, fraud and obstructing a police officer.

6. Phantom Injuries



The "victims" weren't even in the car when it crashed, but they filed injury claims totalling over \$200,000. Turns out the fraudsters had received some expert coaching. A paralegal had recruited them and led them down a crooked trail. They were sent to a clinic - also a partner in the crime - for assessments and treatment of injuries that didn't exist, and the claims

were sent in. The whole scam was working fine until one of the "victims" revealed the truth. In the end, the only thing that really crashed was a conspiracy of greed.

7. Too Good To Be True

It looked like a bargain to the car owners wanting a deal on insurance.

Salespeople at a few car dealerships and other businesses were offering an insurance special. They were charging \$500 - a "finder's" or "consulting" fee - to arrange insurance with a broker they claimed would save the car owners lots of money on premiums. The scam artists were intentionally putting bogus information on the applications so that customers would be put into a cheaper rate group. However, because the policies were purchased under false pretenses, they were invalid. IBC received a tip that led to the discovery and dismantling of this scam, which involved hundreds of policies and finder's fees amounting to about \$1 million. The insurance company has since offered new policies, based on the correct information, to the duped customers.

8. Persistence Doesn't Pay

The ringleader didn't have to go far from home to find recruits to join her gang of crooks. At first she persuaded friends and family to join her in staging car accidents and filing false claims. Business was good, so she decided to expand by signing up her neighbours. Some of them took her up on her offer to make a quick, crooked buck, but she got greedier and greedier and needed more and more recruits. Eventually, she got so desperate that she began repeatedly pestering neighbours

who had already turned her down. Finally, someone became annoyed enough to secretly record her pitch. It wasn't long before she was singing a different tune to police and Crown attorneys.

9. The Invisible Workers

Investigators noticed that the employees of one particular firm seemed to be very unlucky. A great many of them were getting involved in car accidents and filing injury claims. That was news to the company's owner and, when he was shown the long list of his unfortunate workers, the scam began to unravel. The owner scanned the names and said none of the people had ever worked for him.

In fact, he had never even heard of them. It turned out that a rogue paralegal was the driving force behind a staged accident ring and, to boost the compensation claims of his "victims," he had forged their employment forms.

The paralegal's out of work now, too.

10. Very Bad Advice

A man injured in a collision decided to get some cheap legal advice and assistance from a paralegal. He certainly got what he paid for. The paralegal had the man sign a pile of legal forms without explaining what they meant and, all the while, assured him that he would look after him. The paralegal went on to negotiate on the man's behalf with the insurance company without telling his client, then forged the man's signature on the resulting cheque and cashed it.

When confronted by his client, the paralegal shamelessly denied any wrongdoing. He continued to deny it during his trial and even after he was convicted. □

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CELLULAR PHONES - from page 1



Canadian wireless telephone companies to implement wireless number portability (WNP) by March 14, 2007, in most of Canada. The decision follows a public notice issued on September 16, 2005, in

which the Commission invited comments on several issues related to the implementation of WNP.

"This decision establishes the earliest feasible date for wireless number portability consistent with a smooth and reliable transition for wireless customers," says Charles Dalen, Chairman of the CRTC. "Consumers should be given the widest possible choice of service providers and should be able to switch telephone companies without unwarranted cost or inconvenience."

By March 14, 2007 Bell Mobility, Rogers Wireless and the mobility division of TELUS Communications Inc. will be required to provide WNP to their customers in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Québec. This means that customers in any of these provinces will be able to switch to any service provider in that province (wireline or wireless) and keep their phone number.

Throughout Canada, all wireless carriers will, by the same date, be required to release a phone number to another carrier (port-out customers) and by no later than

September 12, 2007, to accept a phone number from another carrier (port-in customers).

While WNP will remove a significant barrier to changing wireless service providers, consumers should bear in mind that handsets may not function on different wireless carriers networks due to different network technologies; customers may have binding long term service contracts with early termination fees; long distance services may not be transferable from one carrier to another; and not all the services that a customer has with one service provider will be supported or provided by another service provider.

In the February budget of 2005, the Government of Canada requested the Commission move expeditiously to implement WNP. In a 2005 Decima survey conducted for the CRTC 70% of wireless consumers surveyed indicated that keeping their telephone number when changing wireless service providers was important. Comments from individuals during the Commission's proceeding were unanimously in favour of WNP and asked that it be implemented as

soon as possible.

Despite the CRTC ruling, not many consumer groups expect to see the decision being implemented without a fight. Used as they are to doing business with no real competition, the phone companies have already said it's going to be a challenge to meet the deadline.

Britain's Virgin Mobile boss Richard Branson who has been in the forefront of criticizing Canada's system stated, "We're not pleased with the deadline of early 2007 for implementation of number portability set out in the CRTC's decision as we firmly believe it can and should happen next year." □

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	40	14	18	32	40	12	14	26
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50	20	38	68	50	17	28	47	
65	61	151	274	65	41	93	178	

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	40	16	30	53	40	14	24	37
	45	21	43	79	45	17	33	58
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CHILD MARRIAGE - from page 1

The documentary reveals horrifying details about a little bride getting engaged before she was even born.

was shot in guerrilla style as the marriages were held at secret locations since the practice is banned by law.

Still, Neeraj was able to film the marriage of 70 children in 40 days.

Neeraj says the award is recognition of the fact that this is a much-neglected critical issue that needs to be tackled immediately. UNICEF has already labelled this as a human rights issue.

The documentary reveals horrifying details about a little bride getting engaged before she was even born. The film also touches on other significant issues like women's rights, animal rights and discrimination against untouchables.

The film, according to Neeraj, has never-before-seen visuals, artistic folk music and dances from the remote western parts of India.

"After living for years in the United States, the Indian summer heat and dust was grueling," Neeraj said. I travelled on a motorcycle, day and night, up and down Rajasthan and Haryana. On the way, I met many fascinating people. I passed by crumbling, neglected monuments that have stood the test of time for thousands of years.

"One night, while sleeping in a courtyard I was bitten by an alley dog. That village had no doctors, so I had to resort to cleaning my wounds with wet wipes. Worst of all, after that incident, the dog slept right next to my cot," Neeraj added.

Nonetheless, he said he had a "great time" making the documentary and hoped his message will reach far and wide.

Neeraj is now working on two projects related to India, it's environs and society. □

TERROR MYSTERY- from page 1

OPEC building and fired a number of shots, killing three people. They took 62 people hostage including 11 oil ministers.

The dead were an Iraqi security official, a Viennese police officer, and a Libyan delegate whose body was only found 21 hours later after the terrorists had withdrawn with their hostages.

During the siege, the commando forced the Austrian authorities to have a statement by a so-called "Arm of the Arab Revolution" read out on radio every two hours.

They also demanded conditions including a getaway plane, and threatened that otherwise they would kill one hostage every 15 minutes.

After releasing Austrian hostages, and then hostages resident in Austria, the terrorists were allowed to depart from Vienna Airport and fly to Algiers with their remaining 33 captives on the morning of December 22.

In Algeria the remaining hostages were eventually released, and the terrorists temporarily detained before being allowed to depart for Libya.

In later years, some of the terrorists were brought to justice. "Carlos" was finally captured in Sudan by a French commando force in 1994, nearly 20 years after the OPEC attack. He was brought to France, and three years later sentenced to life imprisonment for other terrorist attacks on French targets.

Presently, aged 56, he is being held in a high-security jail near Paris.

A German woman member of

The siege on OPEC Ministers in Austria in 1975



the gang, Gabriele Tiedemann, was arrested at the Swiss border in December 1977 after shooting and wounding two Swiss customs men. After ten years in jail she was extradited to her native Germany.

During the siege, the commando forced the Austrian authorities to have a statement by a so-called "Arm of the Arab Revolution" read out on radio every two hours.

There she was charged with double murder and hostage-taking connected with the OPEC raid, but acquitted due to insufficient evidence. In 1995, Tiedemann died of cancer aged 43.

A notorious German terrorist, Hans-Joachim Klein, was seriously wounded by a police bullet during the attack, but managed to escape with the others. He renounced terrorism soon after the OPEC attack, and for years went into hiding.

In September 1998, after 23 years on the run, he was finally captured in Normandy, extradited to Germany, and in 2001 sen-


tenced to nine years' jail for his part in the OPEC raid. In December 2003, at the age of 55, he was pardoned and released.

The identities of the other three terrorists - presumably Palestinians - were never made known. Equally unclear was who was directly responsible for the three murders. Each of the arrested terrorists accused the others, and experts were unable to match bullets with individual weapons.

In the intervening years after the OPEC attack, Libya was gradually marked down as the organiser. Klein said during his trial that weapons and information about OPEC security had been given to the terrorists via the Libyan embassy.

Libyan revolutionary leader Muammar Gaddafi was directly accused in a 2002 book by German journalist Oliver Schroeem "In the Shadow of the Jackal".

Three decades after the OPEC attack, Gaddafi is now internationally accepted and has regular business relations with the outside world. He has renounced terrorism and compensated some of the victims with large sums of money. □



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Mississauga-Erindale Riding Grapples With An 'Islamic' Issue

In a press release issued on December 20, the Liberal Party of Canada called on the Canadian Coalition for Democracies to apologize for issuing what they have described as "a blatantly false, politically-motivated news release targeting Mississauga-Erindale candidate Omar Alghabra".

The CCD release, issued on Dec. 19, alleged Mr. Alghabra said in his nomination victory speech on December 1, 2005: "This is a victory for Islam! Islam won! Islam Won! ... Islamic power is extending into Canadian politics."

Mr. Alghabra has denied ever saying it. He said: "I categorically deny making this statement, and anyone who says otherwise is lying. I challenge anyone to produce proof that I linked politics and religion."

The Liberal press release quote reporters who were present for the speech, including reporters for Rogers Television, as saying that they did not hear the statements in question. The Liberal party is asking everyone to view the Rogers community channel tape of Alghabra's

speech to verify the facts.

The Liberal party has questioned the motives of the CCD. The release states: "The organization who issued the release is the Canadian Coalition for Democracies. The executive director is Naresh Raghubeer, a former executive assistant of former Conservative MPP, and Mississauga-Streetsville Conservative candidate, Raminder Gill. The group's board of directors include Michael Mostyn, the Conservative candidate in York Centre, and Georgeanne Burke, the Conservative Party's regional organizer in Toronto."

"My reputation has been tarnished, and I am demanding an immediate apology from this organization and from all those who have published this falsehood," said Mr. Alghabra.

Alghabra is a former president of the Canadian Arab Federation, and he is also a former member of the Toronto Star's community editorial board and a board member for the Canadian International Peace Project, a multi-faith effort to promote peace and understand-

ing in the Middle East.

"This release does not withstand the most basic test of scrutiny, and legitimate news organizations have rejected this story quickly," said Mr. Alghabra, "but the damage has been done on the internet and in blogs. I am seeking an immediate retraction to ensure smear campaigns such as this do not become the norm in Canadian politics."

Reacting to the Liberal press release, Naresh Raghubeer, clarifies, "My name has been unnecessarily dragged into it. I have been on a leave of absence from the organization and I cannot comment on it now." But he is sure that the CCD acted in good faith after receiving reports from others who claim to have heard similar Pro-Islam sentiments expressed at the meeting.

In a report on Dec. 22, the Mississauga News has quoted former MP from the riding Carolyn Parrish as saying that the Pro-Islamic sentiments expressed at the meeting didn't come from Omar Alghabra. But she did tell the News that there were others who expressed similar sentiment as

though it was an Islamic victory, which she found to be "inappropriate".

Commenting on the Mississauga Erindale situation, Tarek Fatah of Muslim Canadian Congress, wrote: "Carolyn Parrish is the Canadian Liberal politician who is known for her infamous stomping on a George Bush doll and referring to Americans as 'bastards.'"

"In addition, she has been the most vocal supporter of the Palestinian cause in the Canadian parliament, having led a parliamentary delegation to the occupied territories and publishing a revealing account of Israel's mistreatment of the Palestinians.

"In the current election, she stepped aside and the resulting nomination battle to fill her Liberal seat has now led Carolyn Parrish to implicitly

support the Conservative Party.

"My feeling is that she is getting back at some of our community leaders, who, I am told, said "F*** Off" to her during the Liberal nomination meeting where she was supporting Charles Sousa against Omar Alghabra, who won the nomination hands down, and is now the Liberal Party candidate.

"The incident of hundreds of Muslims chanting "Allah Akbar" inside an Egyptian Coptic Church at the conclusion of the nomination meeting, also must have left a bad taste. She is now telling her constituents that it is ok to vote for the Conservatives against her own Liberal Party.

"How could the Muslim community end up on the wrong side of such a prominent supporter of the Palestinians?" □

Court Changes Norm On 'Decency'

Two Montreal clubs that cater to group sex do not breach standards of decency, Canada's Supreme Court has ruled. Wednesday's ruling, written by Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin, said group sex among like-minded adults in private does not meet the test of indecency.

The decision might make it easier for "swinger" clubs or gay bath houses to operate without the threat

of police intervention or arrest.

The ruling dealt with two Montreal cases in which swinger club operators were charged with keeping a bawdy house.

Canada's criminal code defines a bawdy house as a location that is kept for prostitution or indecent acts.

James Kouri and Jean-Paul Labaye were both convicted, but the unsettled state of the law was demonstrated clearly when sepa-

rate Court of Appeal rulings upheld Labaye's conviction and overturned Kouri's.

The high court threw out Labaye's conviction and affirmed the Kouri decision.

"Entry to the club and participation in the activities were voluntary. No one was forced to do anything or watch anything. No one was paid for sex," McLachlin wrote in reference to the Labaye case. □

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Over \$100 Political Donations To Be Made Public

New Legislation that will strengthen Ontario's democracy by setting scheduled election dates, providing for real-time disclosure of political contributions, and protecting 11 ridings in the North has come into effect the Minister Responsible

for Democratic Renewal Marie Bountrogianni announced this week.

"With the passage of this legislation, we've taken a bold step forward in improving accountability and transparency in Ontario," said Bountrogianni.

"We've amended the province's election laws because citizens should know when elections will be held. They should know how political parties are financed. And they should be fairly represented in the legislature."

The new legislation:

- Sets scheduled election dates so they take place every four years. The next election will be held on October 4, 2007.

- Provides for real-time public disclosure of donations to political parties and leadership candidates, retroactive to January 1, 2004.

All contributions of over \$100 have to be reported to Elections Ontario within 10 business days. The public will be able to access this information on Elections Ontario's website within 10 business days after it is reported.

- Preserves 11 northern ridings and increases the number of southern ridings from 92 to 96, securing strong representation for all Ontarians in the legislature. "With these measures, we've taken the next step in the most ambitious democratic renewal initiative in this province's history," said Bountrogianni.

"I believe that the democracy that we're building together through this process will be rich, vital

and strong."

The real-time disclosure of political Contributions applies to political parties and leadership candidates in both election and non-election periods. It is the first system of its kind in Canada, and allows the public to track contributions through the Internet.

The new system applies to contributions over \$100. A political party or leadership campaign is required to report contributions over \$100 to the Chief

Election Officer within 10 business days of their being deposited into a bank account. Failure to file the report is an offence that, upon conviction, could result in a fine for a party of up to double the amount of the unreported contribution.

The Chief Election Officer is required to post contribution reports on the Internet within 10 business days of receiving a report.

The proposed system requires all such contributions dating back to January 1, 2004, to be disclosed if they have not already been reported. □



Parvinder Sandhu

Immigration Tips

I became a Permanent Resident of Canada six months ago and now I would be going back to India to get married in January 2006. What are the necessary steps, which need to be taken so that when I sponsor my wife there is no problem in her getting a visa?

Since you have decided to get married it is imperative to take care of all the necessary formalities both before and after the marriage.

When a person is getting married outside Canada he/she should ensure that the marriage would be valid as per the laws of the country where it is going to take place and as per Canadian laws.

As you are a Canadian immigrant you need to be in Canada to sponsor your spouse, but had you been a Canadian citizen you could have sponsored your wife while you were outside Canada.

In order to be eligible to sponsor your wife you should:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Sign an undertaking promising to reimburse the Government of every benefit provided as social assistance to your wife from the date she becomes a permanent resident until three years.
- Not be in the process of being removed from Canada.
- Not be detained in any penitentiary, jail, reformatory or prison.

- Not have been convicted for certain type of criminal offences
 - Not be in default of any undertaking that you signed or any support payment obligations ordered by a court
 - Not be in default in respect of the repayment of certain type of debts payable to Her Majesty in right of Canada.
 - Not be an un-discharged bankrupt
- You should submit the following supporting documents with your case when you sponsor your wife:
- A marriage certificate duly registered by the registering authority in India.
 - Proof of engagement- engagement photographs and video
 - Proof of marriage - wedding photographs and video, photographs and video of reception.
 - Bills of the clothing, jewelry and gifts bought for the wedding.
 - Bills of expenses incurred for the wedding such as the banquet hall for reception etc.
 - Proof that you stayed with your wife after the wedding - honeymoon

- pictures, hotel bills etc.
- Proof that you have stayed in touch with your wife after the wedding - telephone bills, emails and/or letters exchanged, cards etc.
- Proof of any gifts exchanged after the wedding.
- Proof of your income - employment records etc.- but you can sponsor your wife even if are not earning anything.

Over all you and your wife have to prove that the marriage is genuine and was not entered into primarily for the purpose of her gaining admission into Canada.

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Canada Wants India's Cirus Reactor Opened To Inspection

Canada has urged India to allow nuclear inspectors access to a Canadian-supplied reactor where experts say the country produces a significant amount of its weapons-grade plutonium.

Lack of independent access to the CIRUS reactor, located north of Mumbai, is one of the issues slowing implementation of a nuclear cooperation deal that the US announced with India on July 18.

The deal has come under fire from the US Congress and from non-proliferation experts who say the case of the 40-mw reactor raises questions about India's trustworthiness.

Canada said on Monday it has urged US and Indian officials to designate the reactor a civilian facility open to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The US is directly affected because it supplied CIRUS with "heavy water", which is used in some reactors to moderate nuclear fission.

India-US talks on nuclear issue today

India and the US are expected to spell out the steps taken by them on implementation of Civil Nuclear deal when Foreign Secretary, Shyam Saran, and his American counterpart, Nicholas Burns, have finished their talks in Washington this week.

Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran in press meet challenged the critics including the the nonproliferation lobby on the Indian nuclear plants to be listed as civilian or military.

In a question and answer session that followed his speech on 'Transforming India-US Relations: Building a Strategic Partnership,' at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Saran, said, "There will be as many wish lists and as many separation plans as there are experts.

"[But] it is not our intention to negotiate this through the media or the think-tanks. We will be addressing the separation plan on the basis that this has to be an efficient, credible one ... It should not - at least as far as we are concerned - impact adversely on our strategic program."

He did not respond immediately to questions about the nuclear nonproliferation lobby's statements about India having diverted plutonium from its Canadian-supplied CIRUS reactor, meant for peaceful purposes only, over to its nuclear weapons program. This was prompted Canada to urge New Delhi and Washington to "place the CIRUS reactor on the civilian side of the fuel cycle and under IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] safeguards."

Saran said these issues would be addressed at the appropriate time, asserting that India had "not departed from any of our international commitments."

When asked why India would not put a moratorium on

Missing Indian Doctor's Body Found In Car

The body of an Indian-American doctor in San Jose, California, missing for over a month, has been recovered from inside a car pulled out from the estuary off a boat ramp at Alameda.

The police on Wednesday confirmed that the body was that of 55-year-old paediatrician Zehra Attari, missing since November 7, the day she disappeared after leaving her Oakland office, presumably to attend a medical conference.

Police divers began searching the area after a tip on Sunday from a woman, who reported seeing her on that day. The tipster said she had seen Attari driving in Alameda as if she were lost.

On Tuesday night, police divers found her 2001 Grey Honda Accord buried deep in the water's muddy bottom about 30 to 50 feet off the end of the boat ramp.

Though the police have not ruled out foul play, family friends and relatives believe it might have been an accident. San Jose community activist and family friend Annie Dandavati told reporters that the road ends in an incline, which Attari may have thought was a ramp to a bridge. She said there was no way of knowing the road led directly into the estuary.

"I think it's shameful that there is no barrier," said Ruby Ali, one of Attari's children. The victim's family had offered a \$20,000 reward for information leading to her safe return. A spokesperson for the Alameda County Coroners office said the coroner was awaiting lab reports to determine the cause of death. □

fissile material production as other major nuclear weapons states have done, Saran argued these were issues not covered by the US-India Joint Statement that specifically dealt only with the issue of civilian nuclear cooperation between the US and India.

"The important thing to remember here is that the July 18 statement is not about India's strategic program. It is an agreement about civilian nuclear energy cooperation between India and the United States," he told the audience.

"Pursuing that civilian nuclear cooperation with the United States, what India is willing to do is to give assurances to its partners that whatever is coming as technology cooperation from partners will not be diverted to India's strategic pro-

gram and will not be diverted to third countries," he said.

As far as the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty is concerned, Saran said, "We are committed to the negotiation of a multi-lateral, certifiable Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty in the Conference of Disarmament."

On the issue of full-scope safeguards on India's civilian nuclear reactors once the separation was completed and agreed to by the US, Saran said India had absolutely no problem with that, as long as "there is a guarantee or assurance of lifetime supply of fuel. Then we would not have a problem with lifetime safeguards."

"Bringing India into the fold," he said, "is not only a gain for international non-proliferation efforts but indispensable for the emergence of a new global consensus on nonproliferation in response to current challenges." He added, "Any objective assessment of efforts to counter WMD proliferation would surely put a high value on Indian participation."

He added: "One may as well suggest that the US should only reward those who stray from nonproliferation norms, not those who observe them! I might

add, particularly for the benefit of those who are partial to this line of reasoning, that by strengthening its export control regime and committing to non-transfer of reprocessing and enrichment technologies and to international efforts to limit their spread, India has actually undertaken additional commitments that place it in an 'NPT plus' category."

Saran argued that "if India's past record and current policies are not recognized, and, worse still, if it is to be equated with those whose record in this respect is more than suspect, then our nonproliferation objectives may enjoy the comfort of noble intentions but not the efficacy of practical action."

Saran said, "Indo-US relations are at a crossroads. We have two clear choices before us. One is the road that we have traveled before - one that will maintain the status quo and the distance between our two democracies."

"The other," he said, "not without its challenges, recognizes the enormous changes of the last decade, appreciates the resulting opportunities, and is prepared to depart from established positions to realize a genuine strategic partnership." □

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Honda Civic Tops Canada's Most Stolen Vehicles

Canada's car insurers announced that the 1999 and 2000 Honda Civics SiR 2-door hold the dubious distinction of topping this year's most stolen vehicles list. The two models also had the highest theft claims cost per vehicle. In addition, the Honda Civic 1994, 1995, and 1993 models are also found in the 4th, 6th and 10th spots respectively on the list of most frequently stolen vehicles.

The Top Ten Stolen Vehicles are:
1 2000 Honda Civic SiR 2-door

2 1999 Honda Civic SiR 2-door

3 1996 4 wheel drive Chevrolet/GMC Blazer/Jimmy S Series 2-door

4 1994 Honda Civic Si Hatchback 2-door

5 1993 Volkswagen Corrado 2-door

6 1995 Honda Civic Si Hatchback 2-door

7 1992 Chrysler/Dodge Caravan and Voyager

8 2002 all wheel drive Subaru Impreza WRX, 4-door

9 1999 Volkswagen Golf GTI Hatchback 2-door

10 1993 Honda Civic Si hatchback 2-door

Of particular note, none of the vehicles making the top ten most

frequently stolen vehicles list had an Insurance Bureau of Canada-approved immobilizer system.

"Now that IBC-approved theft deterrent systems or immobilizers are commonly in place in newer vehicles, auto thieves have been turning increasingly to older vehicles," says Rick Dubin, Vice-President, Investigations, IBC.



"We've seen this trend developing for several years, and these results confirm it," adds Dubin.

Electronic immobilizers are systems that prevent a vehicle from starting unless a specific electronic code is used. IBC, along with vehicle manufacturers, after-market manufacturers, and other interested stakeholders, developed a Canadian standard for automobile theft-deterrent systems that was approved by the Standards Council of Canada in 1998. Many insurance companies provide premium discounts on automobile policies to customers whose vehicles are equipped with an IBC-approved, factory-installed or aftermarket immobilizer system.

"Immobilizers are highly effective at deterring car thieves. In terms of this year's stats, you have to go down the list to the 81st most-frequently stolen spot to find a vehicle, the 2001 Audi Quattro 4-door, that registered thefts despite the fact that it is protected by an immobilizer. It just underlines the reality that theft is much more likely when a vehicle is not equipped with an immobilizer," Dubin adds.

In contrast, vehicles that were least stolen last year included models that featured immobilizer systems. Those vehicles that were best insurance bets as far as auto theft is concerned included the following:

- 1998 Lincoln Continental
- 2001 Pontiac Bonneville
- 2002 Oldsmobile Silhouette

The data on stolen vehicles is taken from this year's release of IBC's How Cars Measure Up, which compares the insurance claim records of the most popular models of cars, passenger vans, SUVs and pickup trucks across the country. This information can be extremely useful to consumers before they actually buy either a new or used car. The brochure is designed to help consumers understand how theft, collision and other claim costs affect insurance premiums. Theft of vehicles (and their components) costs Canadian policyholders more than \$580 million annually in insurance premiums. □

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COMMUNITY NEWS

NRI Antakshari Live In Toronto

The first ever NRI Antakshari Live in Toronto has been declared a tremendous success. The evening was abuzz with anticipation, excitement and a fierce sense of competition. Huge enthusiastic crowds turned up to watch one of the best shows of the year. The event held at the John A McDonald Collegiate Institute in Scarborough on Sunday, December 4 drew a houseful crowd and delivered great music, fun, and a stellar performance by one of India's best-known TV hosts - Annu Kapoor. Annu charmed the participants and audiences with his wit, talent and knowledge of Indian music and history. The participants demonstrated a keen sense of music and singing ability. And the audiences loved every minute of it. Everyone joined in the sing-a-long and danced the evening away. The show carried on for 4 hours non



stop! Adapted from the popular Indian game, Antakshari that has been played for decades, NRI Antakshari Live is an excellent, interactive event that involves participants and audiences, organized and promoted by Georgy Bhaala, Anil Bhasin, Satish Thakkar, Sanjay Makkar and Vibhu. Its Toronto promoter, Vibhu, said, "We are simply thrilled with this event and the public's response to it." Annu Kapoor said, "I loved

being here the participants and audiences were phenomenal. It is crowds like these that inspire me to perform." The atmosphere at the Event was festive, lively and celebratory. Pritha Majumdar of Mohabbatein fame belted out chartbusters and got the crowds to their feet. All about friends and family, NRI Antakshari Live captured the essence of love, family, togetherness and a passion for music. □



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Ayyappan Worship In Oakville



About 350 people gathered at the Vaishnodevi Temple in Oakville on Saturday to participate in a program dedicated to Ayyappan, the presiding deity at Sabarimala Temple in Kerala. This is the season when hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from all over India and the world, trek to the shrine of Lord Ayyappan in the high ranges of the Western Ghats. The organizers Aravind and Mukundan of Mississauga have been conducting this program at various Toronto temples for the past several years now. □

Tom Varughese Named "Ambassador of Goodwill for Israel"

Businessman Tom Varughese has been appointed a Goodwill Ambassador for Israel. In a citation, Israeli Minister of Tourism Avraham Hirschson said: "I am honoured to recognize you as a true friend of Israel...your arrival at this particular moment in history is an expression of support and solidarity that is deeply appreciated..."

Tom Varughese, who is Managing Director of Admiral Travels, is emerging as a market leader in promoting group tourism to Israel from Canada. His 'Holy Land' Tours have become very popular and "I find that there is a renewed passion here for this spectacular part of Christian history. There is really nothing else like it in the world," Varughese told the Voice.

Tours to Israel are already sold out until May. □



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Music institute showcases talent at packed show

BY BALA MENON

Swar Vihar rocks! This was the verdict of a packed house at Meadowvale Theatre in Mississauga on Saturday, when its singers and musicians got together to drive away the winter blues with some memorable Bollywood music for a good three hours.

The debut performance by Toronto's newest South Asian music academy proved to be a true showcase for the wealth of

local talent. Singers Sachin, Raina, Molly, Chandrima and Devarti literally soaked the audience in soulful music during the show aptly called "Yours' Forever".

"It has been a long, hard road for us." Swar Vihar (which translates and House of Music in Hindi) president

sters. To this end, we are inviting talented people to approach us - we can provide the platform they need," Bhatnagar said.

The evening began with Raina rendering Aaj jane ki zidd na karo followed by Tu jahan jahan chalega. With the audience put into the



kar ke 'from the comedy film of all times Padosan.

Sachin sang duets with Raina, Molly and Devarti and several fast numbers, including a West Indian chatni song.

Wilfred Abraham, Vice-President of Swar Vihar said the concerts were intended to act as a grooming ground for young talent. Swar Vihar conducts classes in Hindustani classical and Indian and Western instrumental music. The school -

plans to add Carnatic music classes as well. The principal Sachin learnt classical music under Ustad Zafar Ali Khan of the Gwalior Gharana and at Prayag Samiti. He trained under Shri Suresh Gopal Shrikhandey. Sachin has been performing professionally for the past 15 years and is the winner of Zee TV's prime time music contest Hero Honda's Sa Re Ga Ma Pa in Bombay in 2002.

Member of Parliament Dr. Ruby Dhalla, presented cer-



Arun Bhatnagar told The Voice. "Thankfully, we have arrived. And we appreciate the support we have been given by the media and the community." Swar Vihar concerts are intended to act as a grooming ground for young musical talent, and will help local artists hone his /her skills under the guidance of Sachin Sharma, who is the institute's Principal.

"We are a unique venture. We are committed to making traditional Indian music accessible to the community, presenting superior performances and grooming young-

right mood, Molly followed with the melodious Agar tum na hoty and then main to tum sang nain mila ke.

Chandrima stepped in with Dil cheez kay hai aap meri followed by the ever-green song from the movie Guide Kanto se kheench ke ye aanchal. Devarti turned out to be a sizzler with Asha Bhonsle numbers like 'Bahon mein chale aao' to create the atmosphere for Sachin's entrance. Sachin began with an enchanting ghazal medley, and brought down the house with Kishore Kumar's masterpiece...Ek chatur naar,



Sachin gives notice of his talent

located at Airport Road and Queen Street in Brampton - started just 2 months ago and has links with the Maneka Thakhar School of dance (for dance students). There are

certificates to all the singers and musicians. Master of ceremonies for the evening was blonde Monica, draped in a traditional Indian saree. □

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Deepa with daughter Kavya

'Smart Cookie' is an American colloquialism for 'an adorable, clever, witty, cheeky kid' and Smart Cookie!, the product is what you will need to beget your own little smart Cookie at home! At least that's what its originator Deepa Rajagopal is claiming. Parents who have introduced the DVDs to their kids might agree.

Smart Cookie! was conceived with the goal to provide quality educational and entertaining movies for toddlers and preschoolers. It distinguishes itself by seamlessly weaving elements of preschool learning into identifiable storylines and by using children to teach children as the most effective means of information transfer. The movies not only aim at teaching preschool fundamentals but also focus on reinforcing good manners and valuable pro social skills that largely make the personality of a person. It largely targets an Indian audience by presenting Indian faces and familiarity that encourages participation, interactive learning and active assimilation.

"When my 2 year old watches Smart Cookie! he sees himself; his family; his cousins; his environment - and there is an immediate connection. No wonder he loves it and learns so much from it!" comments Manisha Vati, mother of 2 yr old Amrit, about Smart Cookie! Monkey See Monkey do - Smart Cookie! draws on the research that says children under 5 learn quicker when emulating older kids. By stimulating their imagination using familiar situations, the Smart Cookie! series will help children learn in new ways and give parents fresh ideas for facilitating exploration and make learning subtle and fun for toddlers and preschoolers.

Smart Cookie! series seek to:

- * Teach fundamentals of preschool curriculum
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- * Reinforce valuable pro-social skills, manners, sharing and togetherness
- * Increase confidence and
- * Enhance the child's natural desire to learn

Deepa Rajagopal is a proud mom and an ex-Software engineer, is based in Virginia, USA. She graduated from Ethiraj College for Women (Chennai, India) in 1993 with a Bachelor's in Mathematics and from Indiana State University, Indiana, USA with a Master's in Mathematics and Computer Science. She worked at General Motors, Indiana from 1993-1996 and then at PeopleSoft Inc, California from 1997-2000 as a software developer. She is currently a stay-at-home mom whose prime focus is her daughter Kavya and whose vocation by default has become the creating of quality edutainment material for children.

Deepa also believed that the best way to match the energy levels of a child was through children. And that learning is at its optimum, when the teachers are children themselves.

So she experimented with video education, using home video productions, played to her own little critic, and soon discovered that this was something that she enjoyed immensely and wanted to contribute to professionally.

And that's how Smart Cookie! came about.

"Making Smart Cookie! has been totally exhausting, completely enjoyable and extremely satisfying. I make learning Fun for the little ones - I make moms and dads smile with pride - I love my job!" says Deepa who is currently working on children's books that will be sold under the same brand name.

For more information Email: deepa_rajagopal@yahoo.com

Harper Vows To End Corruption In High Places

Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper delivered his message of hope and change in Vancouver during the French-language federal election debate, clearly giving Quebecers an alternative to the corrupt Liberal party and the separatist Bloc.

"Canadians have grown tired of a Liberal government that has no new ideas and that is mired in corruption. Canadians want a government

that is focused on real issues that matter to real Canadians - cutting the GST, cracking down on crime, and cleaning up government," said Harper. "Canadians want a government that understands families are working longer, paying more in tax, and finding it harder to save."

Stephen Harper laid out a specific plan to end corruption and the influence of big money in Ottawa, while cracking

down on a lobbying culture. "The Conservative Party is the only party that will clean up government, cut the GST, and crack down on crime. On January 23rd, Canada faces a clear choice. A choice between stagnation and vision, between old and new, between entitlement and accountability, between benefits for some Canadians and benefits for all Canadians. Only the Conservative party can deliver

the change of government that is needed to bring political accountability to Ottawa."

Commenting on the Bloc, Harper said the separatist party is a powerless spectator in the effort to end corruption. "The Bloc was there for 12 years but they couldn't stop the corruption then and they can't now because they can never form a government." □

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Secrets To Staying Healthy This Season

'Tis the season to be merry - and healthy - according to Jim Watson, Minister of Health Promotion.

"The holidays are a time of celebration and indulgence, but with a little planning, you can balance the excess of the season with easy ways to keep healthy and fit," said Watson.

Here are some tips for a healthy holiday season:

- Drink water before attending holiday parties. This will help to fill you up and reduce the temptation to overeat. Choose healthy foods at holiday parties, such as vegetables and dip or fruit. Stay away from alcohol and choose spring water or fruit juices instead.
- Reduce your stress by planning ahead and getting your shopping done early.
- Turkey has fewer calories per ounce than ham, is low fat and filled with essential vitamins and iron.
- Top vegetables with chives, parsley or lemon juice instead of butter or margarine



- Consider adding cranberries to your vegetable lineup. According to a recent study, cranberries contained the highest source of disease-fighting phenols, an antioxidant that is thought to reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as cancer, stroke and heart disease.
- Keep food safety top-of-mind - avoid the risk of food poisoning by keeping hot things hot and cold things cold. Make sure you disinfect kitchen counters and utensils after handling poultry. Wash

hands frequently.

- Keep the conversation flowing at the dinner table. This way, you won't rush through your meal and eat more than you should.
- Make time for regular exercise. Use the stairs instead of the elevator and park at the farthest end of the parking lot. Plan a daily walk or jog with family or friends. Or, try something new, like cross country skiing, snowshoeing or ice skating. Join a gym or sign up for dance or yoga classes, take the family for a walk and make regular exercise a priority for the new year.

The Ministry of Health Promotion was established in June 2005 to improve and deliver programs that contribute to healthy living and wellness in this province. Key priority areas include Ontario's anti-smoking strategy, nutrition, physical activity, injury prevention and mental health.

For more tips on healthy food choices and lifestyles, visit: www.healthyonario.com



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Singing Competition Winners Headed For India



Kala Group Delhi and Kala Sangam Canada on the successful completion of the Mega Event organized by them for the first time in North America..

The winners of the competition in Toronto were Ravi Dattar, (sub junior) Abhshek Aiyer (Junior) and Shweta Subramaniam (Senior).



A special prize was given to 5 year Preeti Tamhane, who won the hearts of the audience by her melodious rendering of Ganesh Vandana. The winners are being given free passage to India to participate in the Surtarang, being held in New Delhi on 11th February 2006. The prizes were given away by Harinder Takhar. □

Talented young singers of South Asian origin from all over North America dazzled and delighted a large audience with their masterly performances at Lester Pearson Auditorium in Brampton recently. They were participating in "SURTARANG", the first ever North American singing Talent Hunt organized by Kala Sangam Cultural Association, Toronto. Kala Sangam is ably supported by the famous Sangam Kala Group of Delhi who has been conducting this program for the past 28 years in India.

chance to participate in the All India national singing talent hunt competition of "SURTARANG" in New Delhi on 11th Feb. 2006, organized by the parent organization Sangam Kala Group. Sonu Nigam, Sunidhi Chauhan and Shreya Ghoshal are some of the famous Bollywood singers who were discovered through the prestigious annual event since 1977 instituted in the memory of Master Madan, a court singer who left an indelible mark on the Indian musical scene at the young age of 13.

Brampton Mayor, Susan Fennel lit the traditional lamp to declare the function open, in which 18 boys and girls ranging from ages 5 to 25 competed in their respective categories of film songs and non film songs to win the

The show was organized by Kala Sangam, and sponsored by the MRF the Indian Tire company. The President of Kala Sangam, Rajiv Punj touched the hearts of the people with his emotional vote of thanks on behalf of Sangam

SAMA Princess 2005, Miss Sonam Dudeja

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March Of Dimes To Raise \$1 Million

January is Ontario March of Dimes month and the organization's largest fundraising campaign of the year is underway.

For over 50 years, the organization has been holding its annual Door-to-Door Campaign to raise money to help increase the independence and community participation of people with physical disabilities. This year, the organization has recruited over 13,000 volunteers across Ontario to brace the winter weather and raise funds for its essential programs and services.

The organization is counting on the local community support of areas like Mississauga, which currently has over 130 volunteers helping with this year's campaign. Many of these dedicated volunteers are long-time supporters of Ontario March of Dimes.

"Our goal is to raise over \$28,000 in Mississauga," said Mary Monk, Area Coordinator for the Mississauga Campaign. "With such a supportive community, I know that everyone will do what they can so we can exceed our goal."

This year, Ontario March of Dimes hopes to raise \$1 million across the province.

Monies collected through the Door-to-Door Campaign will help the thousands of Ontarians with physical disabilities, many of whom have been waiting months or even years for the programs and services they need.

Ontario March of Dimes is the largest charitable rehabilitation organization in Ontario, providing a wide variety of programs and services to almost 37,000 people annually in 70 communities across the province.

For those interested in volunteering or donating to this year's campaign, please contact 1-800-263-3463 ext. 705. □

NDTV Now On Rogers



Rogers Cable Communications Inc. announced it will be adding New Delhi Television (NDTV) to its extensive list of multicultural programming on Wednesday, December 21st. Rogers Digital Cable customers will be able to watch NDTV on channel 586 in Ontario.

New Delhi Television Ltd. (NDTV Ltd.) is India's leading 24 hour news channel with well balanced news, views and updates from India and around the world. Apart from the news, NDTV Ltd. also covers subjects as diverse as business, health, sports and entertainment.

With the addition of New Delhi Television, Rogers continues to offer the most multicultural programming in 20 different languages on 41 multicultural channels.

"As our communities continue to grow and diversify, Rogers strives to provide the most multicultural programming to its customers with programs like New Delhi Television," said David Purdy, Vice-President and General Manager, Television for Rogers Cable. "With more choice, our customers have the freedom to watch what they want when they want with Personal TV."

Rogers Digital Cable customers can order New Delhi Television for \$14.95/month or \$10.00 per month when ordered with ATN Zee TV. □

Peel To Have New Police Chief

Deputy Chief Michael Metcalf, a 35-year veteran of the Peel Regional Police, has been selected to serve as the fifth Chief of Police for the Peel Regional Police, says Emil Kolb, Chair, Regional Municipality of Peel Police Services Board. The appointment takes effect on January 1, 2006, the day after the retirement of the current Chief, Noel Catney.

"The Board is extremely pleased to have Chief Designate Metcalf, with his experience, depth of knowledge and passion to lead the Peel Regional Police," says Mr. Kolb. "The fact that he is a long-serving member is an additional benefit as he has seen our police service and community grow and has proven himself an adept leader in meeting the challenges of that growth."

Mr. Kolb says that Chief Designate Metcalf was the unanimous choice.

However, the Board noted the calibre of all the candidates, reflecting the merits of the succession plan process put into place by Chief Catney.

"I am proud and honoured to have the



opportunity to serve as Chief of Police for the Peel Regional Police," says Chief Designate Metcalf. "I am committed to maintaining a highly professional, ethical and effective

police service. I am also committed to continuing the good work of Chief Catney in partnering with our many neighbourhood and ethnic groups in building a safer community."

"I especially want to acknowledge and recognize all the members of the Peel Regional Police for the outstanding work they do. As Chief, I could not ask to work with a finer group of people."

Mr. Kolb says Chief Designate Metcalf commenced his career as a police officer in January, 1971. Among other assignments, he has worked as Officer-in-Charge of the Criminal Identification Bureau, Officer-in-Charge of the Morality Bureau, Superintendent, 21 Division, Staff Superintendent, Field Operations and Deputy Chief, Operations. He is the recipient of numerous awards and commendations, including the 'Thirty-Year Exemplary Service Award'; 'Queen's Gold Jubilee Medal', and the 'Francis Xavier Fernandes Memorial Award' for outstanding achievement in the field of criminal identification. □

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Dreams Flow in the Paintings of Meena Chopra

An art exhibition of paintings and poems "Residual Dreams" by Meena Chopra are on display in Central Library, City Center Drive, Mississauga till 30th of December (9am to 9pm, or Library timings). Meena has exhibited about 12 paintings and 12 poems with sprinkling of verses around them.

The first thing that strikes you about Meena Chopra's works is precisely a sense of quest; there is a

search, a yearning, which reaches out to you from the canvas. Accompanying her paintings are her verses, and these two complement each other. In fact, they often seem to flow from and into each other, making one wonder which came first, the word or the image. The heightened passionate quality of her verses imbues the images with strong emotional power.

A recent immigrant to Canada

Meena says, "Serene Surroundings of my birth place in India 'Nainital' a hill station have been a source of inspiration to me always. Strangely enough the beauty of Canada reminds me of that a lot. Specifically the immenseness of the sky, the glory of the setting sun with its ever-changing colors and the unlimited wide expanse of the earth stills my nature within"

Meena has held more than 25



organizations.

She was running an advertising agency in New Delhi, India before she immigrated to Canada about two years back now lives in Mississauga.

After coming to Canada she along with some artists and art lovers started a not for profit organization by the name of CROSS CURRENTS- Indo Canadian International Arts, which has a mission of embracing diverse cultures and origins and bringing them on a common platform through arts



solo and group exhibitions nationally and internationally.

She represented India in the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Artists Meet, New Delhi in December 2002

Her first book of verse titled 'IGNITED LINES', published in 1996 and was released in London U.K. Her poems have been translated & published in German as well. They have also been published in various literary journals, magazines and internet sites.

A recipient of Honorable Mention for her poem 'Stillness Moves' at Poetry Writing Contest 2003 held by the Mississauga Library System Canada

Meena has also been Secretary Poetry Club of India and held many volunteer positions in many national and international art and business

there by 'taking arts beyond boundaries'. The organization has had several successful art events in past one and a half year. This includes a Canadian Visual Arts Exhibition to India as well.

Her paintings are with many Corporates, Government Bodies, Hotels and Private Collections in India, Canada and many other countries.

www.geocities.com/meenachopra2000

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"I wanted to do something practical, therefore taking inspiration from the western world and combining it with India's rich culture and heritage; I use a variety of colors

"My designs range from modern to contemporary to antique Victorian style. You can wear them with Jeans and a T-shirt, a dress, a Saree or a Salwar suit. You really get to wear them unlike gold jewelry and big sets which end up lying in bank lockers and safes. Silver jewelry on the other hand is inexpensive; you can keep it at home and wear it anytime without any worries.

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with our jewelry to be a good one and we craft our jewelry to withstand the strains of time. We believe you will appreciate the quality built into each piece of our Silver Jewelry.

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"I use to get many requests from all around the world to do a website so people could see my designs and purchase from any country so For the benefit of our clients we have created a website - www.romikajewels.com

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SOUTH ASIA NEWS

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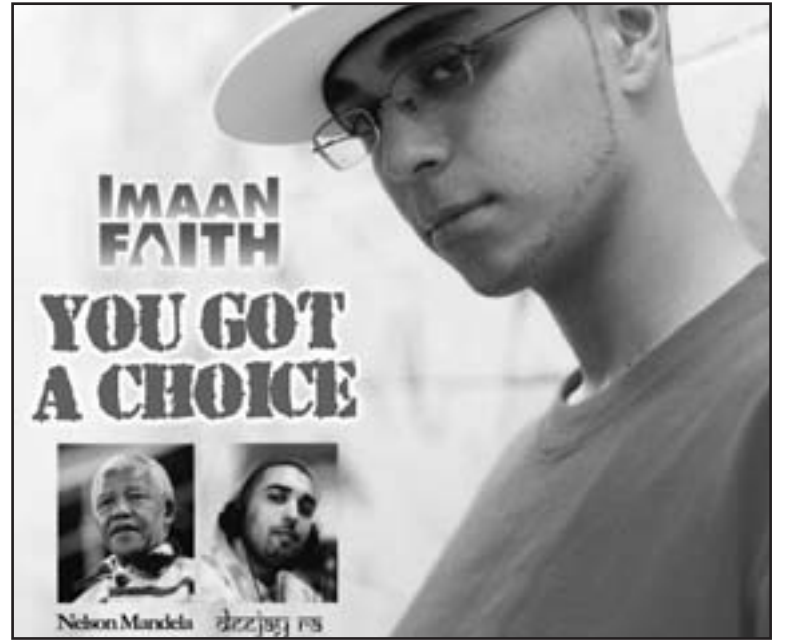
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Juneja's You Got A Choice Released

"You Got A Choice", the debut EP by Tehran-Canadian emcee Imaan Faith and Sikh-Indian producer Raoul Juneja (a.k.a. DeeJay Ra), has been initially released online through an independent alliance between Juneja's Lyrical Knockout Entertainment, Imaan's GUTS Records and the Vancouver based MixtapeMP3.com distribution imprint.

Juneja informs us that the full profits are being donated to the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund Canada (NMCF), who arranged for the EP to feature an exclusive President Mandela speech at Toronto's SkyDome in addition to Imaan's acclaimed 'Aids Awareness' rap song and radio PSA.

"Mandela at SkyDome", an original documentary produced by the NMCF about the assembling of 40,000 Canadian students for



Mandela's 1998 launch of his Fund's Canada branch, is also being released next year on DVD by Juneja's Lyrical Knockout

Entertainment to raise donations for the Fund, coinciding with Imaan's early 2006 in-store EP placement. □

ICICI Bank Partners with Mercantile Bank, Expands Money Transfer Service to Bangladesh

In its endeavor to provide Money Transfer services to South Asian countries, following successful Money Transfer launches to India and Sri Lanka, ICICI Bank Canada has now launched Money Transfer service to Bangladesh.

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Canada to Bangladesh.

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SOUTH ASIA NEWS

Delhi blocks Nigeria oil deal

A plan by India's state-run oil company ONGC to acquire a stake in a Nigerian oil field has been blocked by cabinet. The decision comes after ONGC had won an auction for Akpo, a planned oil and gas field outside Nigeria.

An offer of between \$1bn (£565m) and \$2bn won the auction for ONGC, an official said in New Delhi. "We had consulted the government at every stage. We were expecting an approval," the official said. "It

is a huge embarrassment."

India is currently reviewing its strategy for acquisitions of energy assets abroad, and as part of the process the Nigeria investment was deemed too risky, officials told Reuters. "It has not been approved," said finance minister Palaniappan Chidambaram. "Nigeria is a very risky country to invest in, especially for state-owned companies like ONGC," said Jaspreet Singh, a senior analyst with Prabhudas Lilladher. □

AP Court strikes at illegal constructions

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Wednesday struck in a big way at illegal constructions in the twin cities. It directed the government and municipal corporation not to regularise any illegal construction whether by administrative action or otherwise. It also set up a mechanism to speedily deal with all pending cases on illegal constructions.

The bench comprising Chief Justice Ganpath Singh Singhvi and Justice R. Subash Reddy was dealing with an appeal filed by M.V. Srinivas seeking the court's intervention to stop illegal construction on a vacant site abutting Manasa Apartment at Begumpet.

There are believed to be over 30,000 unauthorised constructions in the city. In 1998, the MCH received 20,000 applications for its Building Regularisation Scheme (BRS) and cleared 4,000 of them, turning down the remaining 16,000. The High Court halted the scheme in 1998. The number of illegal structures have doubled since then. The MCH standing committee recently passed a resolution recommending that the government restart the BRS.

The court issued a series of directions to

curb illegal constructions. It directed the MCH to provide by December 26, the list of cases challenging its action on illegal constructions that are pending adjudication before the civil courts. The list is also to be given to the chief judge of the city civil court who will transfer all the cases, including those filed by MCH and those filed against the MCH, to two judicial officers.

The bench directed the judges who would be assigned with the task to dispose of the cases within 60 days on merits. It directed the chief judge to report within six weeks about the pendency and disposal of such cases and file a compliance report.

The bench felt that it would be appropriate to restrain MCH authorities and the State government and officials concerned from regularise illegal construction whether by any administrative action or otherwise. When the matter came up for hearing the bench wanted to know from MCH standing counsel Jyothi Kiran regarding the action taken by the authorities against the officer who was responsible for the illegal constructions. □

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Venkaiah drops out of BJP presidential race

BJP vice-president M. Venkaiah Naidu has opted out of the race for party president's post. Mr Naidu told the party that he was "not willing" to replace Mr L.K. Advani, who will relinquish his post on December 31. Also, a section of the RSS is against Mr Naidu taking over as the BJP chief since he was being regarded as a "proxy candidate" for Mr Advani.

The RSS, which has been insisting on getting a man steeped in the Sangh ideology, was keen on Dr Murlu Manohar Joshi. Former prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee has indicated that he would agree to the Sangh choice, a senior party functionary disclosed.

However, most of the second generation leaders were trying to block Dr Joshi's candidature. Following Mr Naidu's reluctance, they are trying to persuade Mr Vajpayee to back BJP general secretary Rajnath Singh for the

post. According to sources, after the latest sting operations in which the BJP was on the top of the corruption meter, the RSS was insisting on a person with clean record and committed to the Sangh. The Sangh using reports of Mr Naidu's relatives' involvement in a Rs 22-crores scam against his selection.

For a majority in the Sangh, Dr Joshi has emerged as the leading candidate. Although BJP general secretary Pramod Mahajan indicated that the Sangh was "not playing a proactive role," sources disclosed that the RSS would have a major say in the choice of the party president. The RSS and other Sangh outfits were of the view that during the past few years "the BJP not only digressed from its ideological plank, but also lost its credibility." The Sangh is waiting for Mr Vajpayee's reaction as he "is known for his flip flop," said an RSS functionary. □

Aid group warns of harsh winter in quake areas

The British aid group Oxfam warned on Wednesday that the harsh winter could cause a new wave of casualties in quake-hit northern Pakistan unless international donors honour pledges for millions of homeless survivors.

"With the onset of winter, thousands of people remain vulnerable," Oxfam Director Barbara Stocking said at the start of a two-day tour of camps in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan Kashmir, where a large number of about 3.5 million survivors have been living in tents.

"The international community has still not

responded with urgently needed resources," she said in a statement.

The 7.6-magnitude quake on October 8 killed about 87,000 people and left about 3.5 million homeless.

Uprooted survivors have been mostly relying on donated food, clothes, blankets and other essential items as aid workers worried about the onset of snow and rains.

Oxfam has urged the world community to continue providing money so UN aid agencies can continue flying helicopters to ferry aid to survivors living on the highlands. □

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SOUTH ASIA NEWS

Students battle bandits in Waziristan

At least seven people have been killed in what officials say was a battle between Islamic students and bandits in Pakistan's north-western tribal region. Reports say five bandits and two students were killed in the village of Shawal in North Waziristan, along the border with Afghanistan.

Earlier this month, at least 15 people were killed in similar clashes.

North and South Waziristan have been at the centre of the hunt for Taleban and al-Qaeda militants. Hundreds of militants and more than 250 Pakistani soldiers have died in the tribal areas along the border with

Afghanistan in the past two years. The identities of those taking on the bandits is not clear. Some reports have describe them as Islamic students.

Others say they are members of the Taleban that governed neighbouring Afghanistan until toppled by the United States. In the clashes earlier this month, the bodies of two bandits were hung from an electricity pylon near the main town of North Waziristan, Miranshah.

One was beheaded and his head stuck on top of a bamboo pole. The clashes are said to have taken place after the suspected bandits tried to extort money at a roadblock. □

Huge aircraft deal 'transparent' says minister

Union Civil Aviation Minister Praful Patel on Wednesday defended the proposed Rs 48,000 crore aircraft deal for Indian Airlines and Air India and assured the Rajya Sabha that the entire process was transparent and properly negotiated.

He also said the two airlines would raise money for these deals through market borrowings and the Government would back the airlines with sovereign guarantees. Moreover, efforts were on to achieve more synergy between the two airlines, the minister informed the Elders and ruled out any merger of the two entities.

Replying to a question posed by JD (U) member Sharad Yadav, Mr.

Patel said the process of acquiring new aircraft for the two airlines had already taken 16 years and there was complete transparency in the deal which was in final stages of negotiations.

Mr Yadav, a former civil aviation minister, asked the Government to reconsider the decision on purchase of aircraft saying this would impose a burden on the exchequer. He said the Government should opt for wet leasing of planes as there was immense technological manpower available in the country and planes were available from the west.

The civil aviation minister, however, differed with Mr Yadav and said

that the JD(U) probably meant dry lease and not wet lease and said the Government was committed to strengthening the fleet strength of national carriers.

He informed the House the deal for purchase of 43 Airbuses for the Indian Airlines would cost Rs 9,888 crore as against Rs 10,237 crore. As regards acquisition of aircraft by Air India and Air India Charters Limited, the Public Investment Board had approved a proposal for acquisition of 50 aircraft by Air India at an estimated cost of Rs 33,198 crore and 18 B 737-80 aircraft at an estimated cost of Rs 4,952 crore. □

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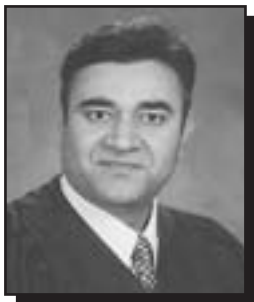
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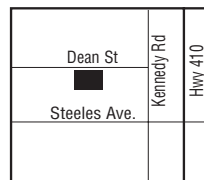


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Hitler's Art On eBay

Original watercolor paintings by Adolf Hitler are going for a few thousand euros on the Austrian page of the auction website eBay, press reports said Wednesday.

A painting titled "Muenchen," (Munich) bearing the signature of the former Nazi dictator and described by the seller as a "rarity", was put up for auction on Monday

at an asking price of 2,100 euros (2,495 dollars) on eBay.at.

Another watercolor by Hitler, titled "Bad Gastein," received at least 25 bids before selling for more than 4,500 euros (5,340 dollars) on Tuesday, according to the daily Der Standard.

Austrian-born Hitler famously had ambitions to become an artist

and was turned down by the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, before leading the Nazi Party to power in Germany in 1933.

His production of paintings and sketches was prolific but experts see little artistic merit in them and major auction-houses shy away from them because of their author's bloodstained career. □

Toxic leak reaches Russian city

Residents of Khabarovsk are still urged to drink bottled water

A slick of chemicals from a toxic river spill in China has reached the Russian city of Khabarovsk after weeks of anxious waiting for residents.

Officials say the levels of the deadly benzene toxins were at acceptable levels and water supplies, which are being filtered, will

not be cut.

The benzene spill into the Amur river was caused by an explosion at a Chinese chemical factory last month.

Khabarovsk residents have been stocking up with drinking water for weeks.

Charcoal filters and dams of sandbags have been used to prevent toxins entering Khabarovsk's

water supplies. The authorities say samples from the river are being constantly assessed.

The contamination is estimated to cover 190km of river, and will take several days to pass through the city.

Water supplies to 3.8 million people in China's Harbin city were cut off for five days after the leak. □

Egyptian Groom's Worst Nightmare!

An Egyptian man discovered on his wedding day that his fiancée of three years was a man who had been concealing his identity behind a veil, the daily Al-Gomhuria reported Wednesday.

The 26-year-old groom-to-be, Tamer Shehata, was notified by a female guest attending his wedding that his would-be wife was a man in women's clothing.

When Shehata confronted his fiancée, the latter broke down and revealed that 'she' was actually an 18-year-old man called Ahmed Abo Zeid, the newspaper said.

Abo Zeid confessed that he had tried several times to undergo a sex change but had failed to secure doctors' approval.

The man, whose face was obscured to Shehata by a niqab or

face veil was quoted in the paper as saying that he had intended to tell his husband the truth after they were married, and had hoped to convince him to consummate the marriage.

He was held for 45 days on charges of swindling and posing as a woman. □

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Rumsfeld Hints at Cutting Forces in Iraq Japanese minister calls China a 'threat'

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, on an unannounced holiday season visit to Baghdad, hinted on Thursday that the U.S. military soon will begin a modest, additional reduction in troop levels by canceling the scheduled deployment of two Army brigades.

The decision would be the first Pentagon move to drop the American troop presence below the 138,000 level that had been considered a baseline prior to the temporary addition of about 20,000 troops to provide extra security during the Oct. 15 referendum and the Dec. 15 election. Rumsfeld had previously said those 20,000 would be leaving soon.

But in an interview with reporters traveling with him on an Air Force cargo plane to Baghdad, Rumsfeld hinted that a preliminary decision had been made to go below the 138,000 baseline by not deploying a brigade of the 1st Infantry Division from Fort Riley, Kan., and a 1st Armored Division brigade now in Kuwait. Other officials have said small parts of each brigade were likely to go anyway.

Asked whether he'd made the decision to hold back those two brigades, Rumsfeld made a distinc-

tion between his decisions as defense secretary and final announcements by the U.S. government.

"Until it's announced, the government's decision hasn't been announced. Therefore it's not final," he said. Rumsfeld also said he hoped that the Iraqis who will be putting together a full-term national government in coming weeks will take into account the risk of losing international support if they stumble.

"It's a big, big, enormous thing for them to try to accomplish in a relatively short period of time," he said, referring to the job of selecting a president, a prime minister and cabinet ministries.

"We also can't ignore the fact that the world - the rest of the world - has a vote," he said, referring figuratively to other countries' choices about the extent of their future support for Iraq. "The degree of support will be, to some extent, a function of the critically important decisions they (the Iraqis) make during this period."

Rumsfeld said he hopes the government leaders who emerge are "people who are going to pull that country together toward the center and not pull it apart - people who are competent and capable of lead-

ing a government, a wartime government."

It was the second such surprise visit in less than a week. Vice President Dick Cheney appeared here last Sunday. Earlier, Rumsfeld said that while the administration is planning troop reductions in Afghanistan, removing forces too quickly would impede the long-term hunt for terrorists.

"If we were to withdraw from Afghanistan precipitously, or from Iraq, the terrorists would attack us first somewhere else and then they would attack us at home, let there be no doubt," Rumsfeld said at Bagram Air Base.

In a holiday season pep talk, Rumsfeld spoke to several hundred soldiers in a heated tent at Bagram that serves as the main airfield for U.S. forces in Afghanistan. "The momentous changes here could not have happened without your service," he said.

On Wednesday, Rumsfeld reassured the Afghan government that planned cuts in the number of U.S. troops will not weaken the U.S. campaign to capture and kill Taliban fighters and al-Qaida terrorists. □

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso said on Thursday that China's military build-up was a "considerable threat" to the region.

"A neighbouring country has nuclear weapons and its military spending has been rising for 12 consecutive years. That is becoming a considerable threat," Aso told

reporters.

Long-chilly relations between Tokyo and Beijing have become fraught this year due to a series of disputes over issues mostly relating to Japan's invasion and occupation of parts of China in the early 20th century. □

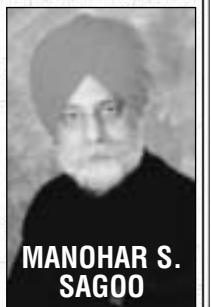
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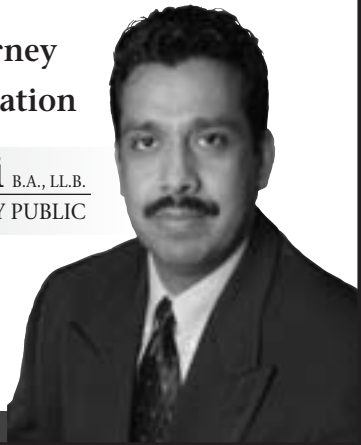
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New York transit strikers threatened with jail-time



A New York judge on Wednesday threatened the leaders of a two-day-old transport strike with jail, as hundreds of thousands of commuters braved low temperatures and mind-numbing gridlock to simply get to work and back home.

Judge Theodore Jones ordered union leaders to appear before him on Thursday and said jail was a serious possibility if they did not order the end of the stoppage, a city official said. The Transport Workers Union is already being fined one million dollars for each day of the action, and the city has threatened to deduct three days of pay for each day a worker is on strike.

City authorities estimate that the strike cost \$400 million on the first day, and believe New York could lose \$1.6 billion in Christmas business if the strike lasts one week.

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who joined the throngs hiking across the Brooklyn Bridge to get to work, said that more people than on the first day walked, rode bikes or crammed into cars to struggle to their Manhattan offices.

"The people of this city are dealing with a situation that is intolerable," Bloomberg fumed at a press conference, as he blasted the union workers for "shamefully and illegally" ignoring the law. The city's nearly 34,000 subway and bus workers started the city's first mass transport strike in 25 years over demands by city authorities for a higher retirement age and greater contributions toward health costs.

Bloomberg said there could be no

negotiations until the strike ended. In final negotiations late Monday, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority improved its wage offer and dropped a demand to increase the retirement age from 55, but insisted that workers contribute more toward their pensions.

The proposal would save the MTA less than \$20 million over the next three years. In a Tuesday press conference, TWU leader Roger Toussaint said that the subway workers would be back on the job "provided the pensions come off the table. That would be a basis for us to go back to work and continue the negotiations."

Toussaint also lashed out at Bloomberg, describing his criticism as a "lack of respect for the transit workers." "We're not thugs," he said, reminding him of the key role union members played in rescue operations following the September 11, 2001 terror attacks.

The strike has forced the New York Blood Center, the biggest US blood bank, to declare a "state of emergency" because of shortages of blood and platelets for transfusions. The city streets choked with cars, despite Bloomberg's emergency order that any vehicle entering Manhattan must carry at least four people.

In the afternoon commute home, vehicles jammed the bridge exits as a flood of bundled up pedestrians marched by, shivering in the cold as they made their way home. More than 400 subway stations were locked up as the daily commuter army jostled to share cab rides or crowd onto

Long Island Rail Road and Metro North trains, two of the rare lines not on strike.

Volunteers stood on street corners handing out cups of hot chocolate to commuters in the freezing temperatures.

"It's not pleasant, but that's life in a big city," said Michael Padden, a federal lawyer who endured a two-hour commute by regional rail and on foot to get to the courthouse in Brooklyn.

"Once in a while, something like that happens. All this luxury mustn't be taken for granted. You have to adapt. We've had 9/11, the blackout — we've been through much worse."

The White House urged the two sides to "resolve their differences so that the people in New York can get to where they need to go." While the federal government cannot intervene in transit strikes, spokesman Scott McClellan acknowledged that it could offer help in mediating talks. Resourceful New Yorkers walked and used everything from bikes to skates and skateboards to make their commutes into and around Manhattan. The previous transport strike, which lasted 11 days in 1980, cost the city's public and private sectors an estimated 1.1 billion dollars.

"This strike is crazy," said student Mirna Sodre, 17, who took two hours to get to her school on bicycle. "I don't know if they could do it in another way that wouldn't affect people this way." □

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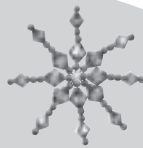
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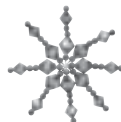
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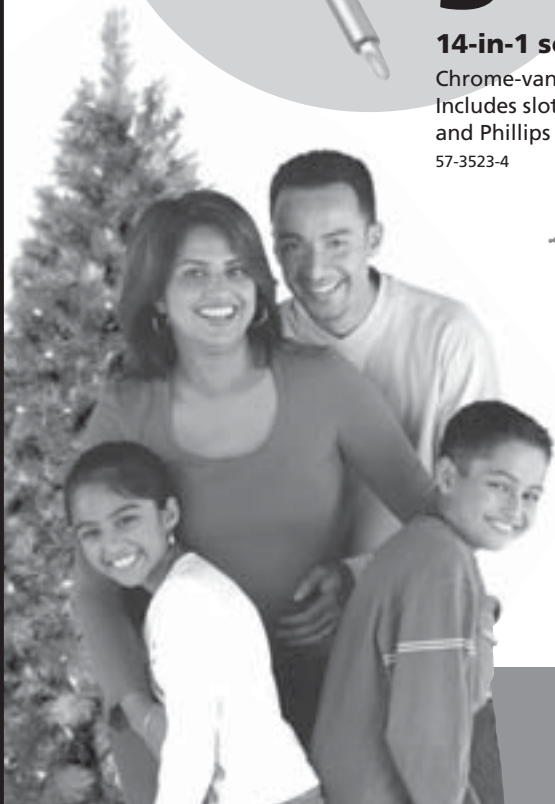
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'Big Brother' will soon watch over all British roads

Every car journey in Britain will be monitored from next year under a nationwide scheme covering all motorways, main roads, towns, cities, ports and petrol stations, a report said in London on Thursday.

The surveillance system, which will use a network of cameras able to read number plates, will store data for up to two years, allowing the police and security services to better target criminals, including would-be terrorists.

The massive database of 35 million number plates per day will be installed in Hendon, north London, by March 2006 with plans already afoot to increase the storage period to five years, the newspaper said.

"Every time you make a car journey already you'll be on CCTV somewhere," said Frank Whiteley,



from the Association of Chief Police Officers, which is behind the Automatic Numberplate Recognition (ANPR) scheme.

"The difference is that, in future, the car's index (number) plates will be read as well."

Whiteley told reporters the system would be used for everything from tracking mobile burglars and even car tax or insurance dodgers but was also likely to be of use to Britain's internal security service MI5.

"Clearly there are values for this in counter-terrorism. The security services will use it for purposes that I frankly don't have access to," he explained. "It's part of public protection. If the security services didn't have access to this, we'd be negligent."

The ANPR scheme - which has government backing and follows its gradual introduction over the last two years - was likely to attract opposition from civil liberties campaigners.

Human rights organisations have already voiced strong opposition about the proposed introduction of identity cards in Britain. Research was already under way to create cameras capable of automatically recognising human faces, raising the prospect of "Orwellian street surveillance", the paper added. □

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'Tehran has 12 potential Nuclear missiles'

Iran has obtained 12 cruise missiles that can be fitted with nuclear warheads, the head of Israeli army intelligence told a parliamentary committee in Jerusalem on Wednesday.

The missiles were obtained in "an unorthodox" way from a shipment of 18 missiles from Ukraine to Russia, Maj Gen Aharon Zeevi-Farkash told the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, parliament spokesman Giora Pordes said.

Twelve of the missiles, with a range of 3,000 km, ended up in Iran and six in China, Pordes cited Zeevi-Farkash as saying. The missiles in Iran are within striking distance of Israel.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad recently called for Israel to be "wiped off the map".

Israel, like the US, accuses Iran of working to build nuclear weapons, though Tehran denies such plans. Israeli officials have said Iran's nuclear programme can be crippled in a military strike, but insist it has no plan to stand in the vanguard of such an attack. □

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US warns of terrorist attacks in Indonesia

The threat of terrorist attacks targeting Westerners in Indonesia over the Christmas and New Year holidays is very high, the US embassy in Jakarta said on Thursday, warning of possible kidnappings, shootings or suicide bombings.

Maps and explosives obtained in a police raid on a terrorist's hideout last month indicated the Al Qaeda-linked militant group Jemaah Islamiyah was in the advanced stages of planning attacks, the embassy

said in an e-mailed message to citizens.

Indonesian authorities also warned recently that extremists may be planning to kidnap foreigners over the holidays, and a recently discovered Web site provided step-by-step instructions on how to gun down Westerners in the streets of Jakarta.

"The embassy reminds Americans that in recent years terrorist attacks have occurred in

Indonesia during the Christmas and New Year's holiday season," the US message said, calling on citizens to remain vigilant and to vary the routes and times of their daily activities.

"The possibility of terrorist attacks appears even higher this year." Indonesian military chief Gen. Endriartono Sutarto said on Thursday thousands of troops would join police in providing security over the two-week holiday.

Additional guards and patrols also were being deployed to protect high-ranking officials, diplomats and foreigners from potential kidnappings, said police deputy spokesman Anton Bachrul Alam.

The US embassy said terrorists appear to be changing their tactics.

"They are likely now planning to attack Westerners riding in cars or walking on streets, sidewalks or pedestrian overpasses in Jakarta." □



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WORLD NEWS

Australia finds footprints dating back 20,000 years

A mosaic of human footprints showing adults and children running and walking across a flat area some 20,000 years ago has been hailed by scientists as the oldest in Australia and largest of its kind in the world.

The more than 450 remarkably preserved footprints have provided a unique glimpse into the lives of Australia's original inhabitants at the time of the last ice age, researchers said in Sydney. "It brings these people to life in a way no other archaeological evidence can. You can see how the mud squelched between their toes," said Professor Steve Webb of Australia's Bond University.

Some people appeared to be hunting, with one tall man judged to have been running at around 20 kilometres an hour (12.5 miles an hour), while other footprints showed family groups walking together. The first of the footprints was spotted two years ago, Webb's team said in an online posting

ahead of print publication in the Journal of Human Evolution.

"It's a little snapshot in time," said another team member, archaeologist Matthew Cupper of the University of Melbourne. "The possibilities are endless in terms of getting a window into past Aboriginal society." The footprints were found in the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area of New South Wales state in eastern Australia.

They were preserved for so many thousands of years because they were made in silty clay containing calcium carbonate that hardened like concrete as it dried out. The dried prints were then covered by a further crust of clay and finally by metres of sand from shifting dunes, which had since blown away.

A young woman, Mary Pappin Jnr of the Mutthi Mutthi people, and Webb found them in August 2003 while exploring the area as part of a project to educate young Aboriginal people in archaeology. "They found a clay pan area up in

the dunes near one of the lakes and found the first of what's turned out to be about 450 footprints over 700 square metres (7,500 square feet) or so," Cupper said. The footprints provided an insight into the height, age, gender and behaviour of the people who left them.

The group likely included men up to 1.8 metres tall (five foot 11) running as well as young children, ambling along at three to five kilometres an hour. "They're possibly a little band of people moving around the site and they may have only walked across it once or twice before the area was covered and preserved, Cupper said.

The prints are between 19,000 and 23,000-years-old, dating from the height of the last glacial period. "It's quite remarkable. We haven't found any footprints from the Pleistocene (geological epoch) in Australia before," Cupper said. □

Mexicans oppose US proposal for border wall

Mexico has called a US proposal to extend walls along the US border unacceptable and is seeking the international community's support to block the measure.

Mexico raised the stakes in the battle against the Bill, approved by the House of Representatives last week, by hiring a US public relations firm and encouraging a separate US lobbying campaign against it.

"Mexico is not going to bear, it is not going to permit and it will not allow a stupid thing like this wall," Foreign Relations Secretary Luis Ernesto Derbez said on Wednesday.

He added the government will do "whatever is needed" to stop the Bill, which would also criminalise undocumented migrants. He has already received some support from the international community.

"What has to be done is to raise a storm of criticism, as is already happening, against this," he said.

Amnesty International's Mexico office said a border wall would be "a historic setback for human rights" and "will multiply the loss of life" by



making border crossings more dangerous.

More than 10 million Mexican citizens are believed to be living in the United States. US authorities believe that about half of them do not have papers.

Mexico is also encouraging US church, community and business groups to oppose the US proposal, and has hired Allyn & Company, a public relations company, to help improve the country's image and stem the immigration backlash. □



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MATRIMONIALS

MALE



Hindu Punjabi Arora boy, Canadian immigrant, 27 yrs, height 5'5" is seeking a suitable match. Only those families may contact who can assist in getting a suitable Canadian match for his brother in India who is 22 yrs, 5'8".
Call: 416-568-0457 011406

Hindu Punjabi Khatri parents seek match for their son, 23 years, 5' 9". Currently in Canada on Student Visa. Family well settled in Canada. Immigrant, Citizen girl required. Caste no bar. Contact: 905-457-0102; 647-892-6498. 020406alt

Established Punjabi Brahmin boy, 38, 6'1", owning and renting business, issueless divorcee, seeking caring & honest girl for lifelong commitment. No kids, slight physical handicap accepted, from established family. Send bio-data & photo to hariom@sasktel.net
Ph: 306-949-3996 122405

Suitable match for Brahmin boy 5'11", B.tech, M.sc (London), presently doing M.B.A in England. Visiting Canada end of December. Family based in Jalandhar City. Elder brother settled in Toronto.
Contact:s_s_humber@yahoo.ca 011406

Ramgharia Sikh family seeking suitable match for their son, 28 yrs, 6'1". Working as a Pharmacist in Toronto. Caste no bar. Please respond with bio-data (photo if possible) to: computer@look.ca 010706

Parents seek professional beautiful Jat Sikh girl for their Canadian born very handsome medical doctor son 28/5'-8". E-mail bio data, phone number and photo (must) to: jsm2005.md@gmail.com 123105

Hindu Punjabi Khatri family looking for a homely girl for their nephew on Student Visa, 28, 5'10". Graduated-MCSE from Chandigarh. Caste no bar. Only Immigrant/Citizen may contact at 905-450-1270. E-mail: n_dhir@rediffmail.com 12/24/05

Hindu Male- age-46 yrs old. Professional, 5'9", Slim built. To meet lady, age between 35 yrs to 45 yrs old, for serious relationship. Please call Sat & Sunday: 416-725-6135 122405

MATRIMONIALS FEMALE



Hindu Punjabi Brahmin family looking for a suitable match for their only daughter, 28 yrs, slim, smart, well mannered and very nice person. College graduate, raised in Toronto, Canadian citizen, well versed in both cultures. Boy should be around 5'7", non-smoker, non-drinker, handsome, well-mannered, sincere, caring and family oriented. Boy on student visa can be considered if pursuing professional education. Contact with recent photo and bio-data at: valentina_match14@yahoo.ca 905-738-0243 / evenings 01/07/06

Canadian Citizen Girl, Age- 25, 5'4", computer programmer & Business administration done. Professionally working, slim, fair, beautiful & co-operative nature. Looking for Khatri Sikh, Clean shaven boy, educated, Canadian citizen or immigrant preferred settled independently in Toronto. Contact: 416-294-6872 012806

Sikh Khatri Punjabi (Clean shaven) parents seek match for daughter, 30, slim, fair, pretty, decent (veg.) educated. Has values for both cultures. Caste no bar. Please reply with recent picture and biodata at: rkmp2005@hotmail.com 123105

Jat Sikh parents seek a suitable match for their lawyer (final year in Law School) daughter. We are looking for a tall Jatt Sikh, professional, educated boy. Please call: 905-783-5560. 020406

MARRIAGE SERVICES SHAHEEN MARRIAGE CONNECTIONS

has professional Muslim Proposals from USA & Canada of all ages, Single, Converted, Divorced or Widows are welcomed. Parents, Visitors, Independents and Immigrants, Born/Raised. Call (905) 279-7486. 10 years exp. Website: http://ca.geocities.com/shaheen_imc/

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Wanted men & women, Part time and Full time jobs at factories in Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton areas. (Loading, Unloading, Packaging, Production Lines.) Payment: Cheque or Cash. Tel: 416-222-0871; Fax: 416-222-4864 12/31/05

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

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SALE OF BUSINESS: Well Established Clothing Store plus Travel Money Transfer Store on Gerrard India Bazaar. High Volume of Sale. Asking \$ 49,000 plus Stock. Convenience Store at Danforth & Greenwood Subway, Good Sale, Low Rent. Asking \$ 30,000 plus Stock. Good Opportunity for New Immigrants or Entrepreneurs. Please contact: Shimul Datta, Salesperson, Sutton Group Tower Realty Inc. Ph: 416-783-5000 122405

RESTAURANT FOR SALE: Well running restaurant for sale in the heart of Mississauga. Serious buyers- Call: 905-897-7767 010706

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CAREGIVERS

WANTED A FULL TIME LIVE-IN CAREGIVER for 5 years old girl and 2 1/2 yr old boy, F/T, Duties includes: Pick/ Drop off school, Housekeeping, Light Cooking. Please call: 416-438-9013. 010706

NEED A FULL TIME LIVE IN CAREGIVER. Knowledge of First Aid, CPR, Nursing education and experience required, trusting and reliable person to take care of four children. Pay: \$ 9.50 per hour. Contact: 647-882-7722 Fax: 905-451-3124. Send resume at: christie9999@hotmail.com 122405

WANTED EXPERIENCED CAREGIVER for a 2 1/2 year old child. Room & Board provided. Fax Resume: 416-293-8997. 122405

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NEED IMMEDIATE FULL TIME LIVE-IN CAREGIVER for 7years old son, 5 years old daughter and disabled father. Should be able to speak English and Punjabi. Please contact Rajinder Singh at 647-988-7258 123105

NEED IMMEDIATE FULL TIME LIVE-IN CAREGIVER for 2 years old son & 4 years old daughter. Should be able to speak English. Please contact Baldeep Singh Hayer at 905-654-4880 122405

LIVE-IN OR OUT CARE GIVER REQUIRED: starting July 2006 for care of 6 month old child in Oakville. Should be able to speak English. Phone: 905-338-8187 between 4-7pm. 123105

NEED IMMEDIATE FULL TIME LIVE-IN CAREGIVER for 7, 4 and 2 years old daughters. Should be able to speak English. Please contact RoopKamal at 416-452-3136 122405

WANTED A FULL TIME LIVE-IN CAREGIVER for three daughters of age 4, 9 & 10 yrs., F/T, Duties includes: Pick/ Drop off school, Housekeeping, Light Cooking. Good package Please call: 905-513-7258. 122405

ACCOMODATION

Walkout Basement for rent: Newly built one bedroom main level (walkout) basement apartment for rent. Separate entrance, facing ravine, very spacious & bright. Close to bus stop, Shopping Mall, Park & highway. Utilities included. One car parking. Available January. Contact: 905-794-9111 or 905-654-7307 122405

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