

news notes



The winsome Kulinda

Dream Girl

Trikone is thrilled to congratulate its own **Hema Malini** aka **Kulinda** who became the first South Asian to come in, as second runner-up in the Miss GAPA (Gay Asian Pacific Alliance) contest in San Francisco August 17. Hema Malini called it a "night I will never forget in my life, full of excitement and glamor, the night I became a princess. I was proud and happy to represent Sri Lanka and TriKone at the Miss GAPA Beauty Pageant. And I also want to send my love and thanks to all my friends who attended the pageant and gave me beautiful bouquets of flowers. And special thanks to **Voltaire Gungab** and **GAPA** for giving me this opportunity." Here's wishing Hema Malini tons of glitz, glitter, and as many Dharmendras as her heart desires!

DiversCite

In July TriKone was happy to co-sponsor **Queer Expressions** in Montreal—an exhibition that "reflects a multitude of representations from oddity to sexuality in an attempt to make Queer a household word." Congratulations to fashion-designer and promoter **Salman Husain** for pulling off a fabulous event with artists from all kinds of media—video to photography to graffiti to ornate paintings of the Rajasthani mini-

ature school. Queer Expressions was dedicated to TriKone founder **Arvind Kumar** whose "constant advocacy for social change through visibility and inter-community development makes him [in organizer **Husain's** eyes] a living legend."

Press Clippings

The *Economic Times Mumbai* (May 5) ran a story by **Arthur Pais** on organizations "that have been able to galvanize Indian gays in America." The article focused on TriKone, SALGA-New York, and Shamakami and featured interviews with **Arvind Kumar** of TriKone, **Harish Advani** of SALGA, and **Shammi Islam** of Shamakami. While very positive in tone, it did seem a bit of a rehash of old interviews since some of the people interviewed have long moved on from the organizations they were said to represent.

The *Observer* (June 15) talked about "Male Radhas in Krishna Bhakti" where **Yogi Sikand** discussed how many Krishna devotees like **Sri Chaitanya** imagined themselves as the feminine companions of Lord Krishna in order to worship him.

Meanwhile the *Economic and Political Weekly* has been having a running debate on gay issues. It started with a February 3 article on "Gay Rights in India" by **Vimal Balasubrahmanyam** who lamented that "even within 'progressive' circles there appears to be ignorance and prejudice on the subject of homosexuality. None of the civil liberties groups have so far listed gay rights as an item on their agenda."

On April 13, **H. Srikanth** in a response "Natural Is Not Always Rational," alleged that **Balasubrahmanyam**, "far from solving the problems of the homosexuals ... only helped in rationalizing the archaic and decadent sexual practices in society." Srikanth went on to say that it is pointless to keep bringing up how homosexuality existed in ancient societies since "multiple forms of heterosexual relations, such as incest, polygamy, and polyandry also enjoyed social sanctity at one time." Srikanth felt that "what happens to people in abnormal situations, as in prisons, bar-

racks, harems, etc., cannot become a justification for practice in normal conditions." He also struck out at the "globalization of the communication media [whereby] villagers in India can also get 'inspiration' by watching the demonstrations of the gays and lesbians in the Western countries."

On June 1, **Sharmila Rege** in an article entitled "Homophobia in the Name of Marxism," called **Srikanth's** essay "one more piece in a mainstream homophobic tradition." She pointed out that though **Srikanth** is "not too sure about the existence of 'homosexuals' in primitive clan societies, he reaches conclusions which fix homosexuality as 'archaic,' 'decadent,' and emerging out of 'denial of healthy heterosexual relations.' To put it briefly, he views homosexuals as products of incomplete or faulty socialization." And she went on to say forcefully, "Lastly, to answer **Srikanth's** question as to why civil liberties organizations should back gay and lesbian movements: Simply because gays and lesbians as a minority group are being discriminated against."

Kudos

Trikone congratulates poet-activist **Ifti Nasim** on being inducted into the **Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame** for his "considerable contributions to Chicago's gay and lesbian community." Meanwhile **Nasim** is also the featured speaker at the **Stonewall Center of University of Massachusetts** at Amherst on October 10.

Kudos to **Urvashi Vaid** for receiving the 1996 American Library Association's Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Book Award for *Virtual Equality*.

Congratulations also to Calcutta's gay publication *Naya Pravartak* which *India Today* in its June 23, 1996 issue called the "metro's hottest selling media offering to gays."

Sakhiyani

Too late for review in this issue, TriKone received a long anticipated book by **Sakhi** founder, lesbian activist and researcher **Giti Thadani**, titled *Sakhiyani: Lesbian Desire in Ancient and Modern India* (Cassell Books).

Replete with rare color photographs of temple carvings and paintings depicting lesbian desire (much of which has been since painted over or destroyed), this book delves into mythology, cosmology and exegesis of ancient Sanskrit texts to explore erotic bonding between women in ancient as well as contemporary India.



Calcutta's gay play "Alien Flower"

Alien Flower

The June 30 issue of *India Today* reported that a misunderstood gay man was the central theme of a 40-minute ballet called *Alien Flower* choreographed by Calcutta-based dancer-choreographer **Sudarshan Chakraborty**. "I have many gay friends and I want the world to understand them as I do," **Chakraborty** said. His riveted audience apparently agreed because "said a visibly moved **Ashish Mullick**, a medical representative; 'They are humans after all, not devils.'"

Silence of the Lamb

Filmmaker **Pratibha Parmar** insists her latest film *Jodie* which premiered at the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Film Festival is not about outing the actress, **Jodie Foster**. **Parmar** told *India Today* (August 15) that the film, which intercuts comments from critics and performers with "iconic moments" from **Foster's** films, is more of a toast to her career from the "early tomboy roles to recent edgy-aggressive-female films." While admitting **Foster** was a "desirable icon for lesbians," **Parmar** was firm that until **Foster** herself says "I am a lesbian," nobody has the right to say what her sexuality is."

Postscript

Headline in the *Deccan Herald* (July 4) about the travails of ex-chief minister of Tamil Nadu, **Jayalalitha**, since her electoral rout:

"Former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister **Jayalalitha's** Bosom Pal **Sasikala Natarajan** Fails to Get Bail."

Bosom pal—indeedy! ▼

