

India born, LA-based filmmaker's short film screened in Cannes

New York: As the Indian media raised a toast to 'Gangs of Wasseypur', 'Miss Lovely' and 'Peddlers' which made it to the prestigious Cannes Film Festival this year, an Indian documentary highlighting the situation of one of the marginalized sections of the society - the deaf - caught the eye of the festival selection committee for being featured in the short-film corner.

Made by India born, Los Angeles based Vidyut Latay, the documentary was screened on May 25th, also its world premiere.

Currently working as the executive director of Filmmakers' Alliance - a community of film artists dedicated to the advancement of true independent films through community action - Latay did her Masters in Communication Studies from

University of Pune and then worked under various production houses in Mumbai before moving to the US.

She studied radio and television with an emphasis on documentary production from Broadcast Electronic Communication Arts department in San Francisco State University and says that the idea of making a documentary on deaf people struck her when she saw an interpreter using sign language to interpret an address by the president of the university. "In all my years of living in India I had never ever witnessed any scene like that! This experience was truly new and intriguing for me. I was a bit disturbed and very inquisitive at the same time to know more about why India had no acknowledgement of this language and the community called DEAF. That was one of the trig-

ger points to take up this topic," she says.

The documentary is made with the intention of understanding the perspective of the deaf in a country where there is still no infrastructure nor social awareness to accommodate their "voices." "India has arguably the largest deaf population in the world, around five to eight million, and during the shooting of the documentary in 2008, the number of practicing interpreters could be counted on finger tips! Even today there has been no substantial change in the number of interpreters available to Deaf on a regular basis. Sign language is not a recognized language in Indian society. The country has no captions on television, no instructions at public places, no TTY; the medium of instruction in deaf schools is primarily oral



'Beyond Silence' is made with intention to understand perspective of deaf in India

communication and no separate college or a university for deaf people," she says.

The documentary was shot on the premises of Ali Yavar Jung

National Institute of Hearing Handicapped, Mumbai and at the Ishara Foundation in Thane and at almost all well-known locations in Mumbai.

Udaipur royal scion bags prestigious UN award

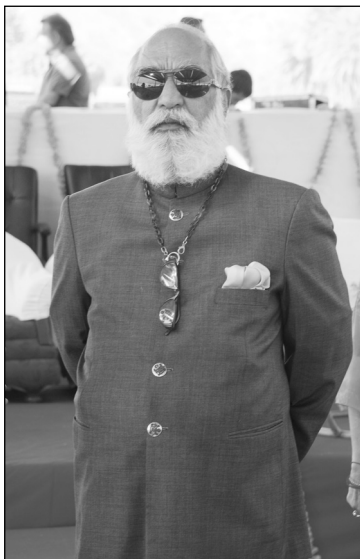
United Nation: Maharana Arvind Singh Mewar of the erstwhile royal family of Udaipur has become the second Indian to be named for the eighth Women Together Award for "Contribution to Universal Culture of the United Nations", an official spokesperson said here Wednesday.

The award, a recognition for his work through the Maharana of Mewar Charitable Foundation (MMCF), Udaipur, would be conferred on Singh June 5 at the UN General Assembly in New York.

The MMCF, founded by Maharana Bhagwat Singh Mewar, was unanimously selected for the award by the Women Together (WT) in association with the UN. The WT, a non-government organisation, is part of the Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC), enjoying a consultative status.

"It is a unique case study of governance at the highest level that mankind can aspire to, both in personal and business environment, mainly those constituting a relevant contribution to universal culture and help achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals to help make the world a better place," the official said.

Some of the past awardees include Ela Bhatt (the first Indian), Queen Rania of Jordan, Wangari Maathai, Isabel Yanguas, Shirin Ebadi, Barbara Probst Solomon, Louise Bourgeois, Violy McCauslant, Mario Testio, Silvia Earle, Shakira, Antonio Banderas, Katie



Maharana Arvind Singh Mewar

Ford, Agatha Ruiz de la Parada, and Gaetana Enders (Mary Robinson).

Besides, companies and institutions like Grameen Bank, La Caixa Foundation, Aveda, Banco Santander, Toyota, Mango and Mario Santo Domingo Foundation have also bagged the award in the past.

The MMCF, of which Maharana Singh is the chairman and managing director, is the largest of nine public charitable institutions set up in 1969 to sustain the responsibility of the House of Mewar towards humanity after the amalgamation of the state of Udaipur into the Republic of India in 1947.

It has a dedicated 260-member team which has so far invested nearly \$2 million into 32 projects in sectors like academics, environment, philanthropy and heritage conservation.

Nat'l Academy of Sciences elects 3 Indian American members

Washington, DC: The National Academy of Sciences has elected three Indian American academics among its 84 new members and 21 foreign associates from 15 countries who were recognized for their distinguished and continuing achievements in original research.

Membership in the academy is one of the highest honors given to a scientist in the United States. Among its most renowned members have been Albert Einstein, Robert Oppenheimer, Thomas Edison, Orville Wright and Alexander Graham Bell.

The newly-elected Indian American members and their affiliations are Jagdish N. Bhagwati, Arthur Lehman Professor of Economics and professor of political science, School of International and Public

Affairs, Columbia University, New York City; Sabeeha Merchant, professor, department of chemistry and biochemistry, University of California, Los Angeles; and Subra Suresh, MIT Vannevar Bush Professor of Engineering and director of the National Science Foundation, Arlington, Va.

The National Academy of Sciences was established in 1863 by a congressional act of incorporation signed by Abraham Lincoln that calls on the academy to act as an official adviser to the federal government, upon request, in any matter of science or technology. The academy is a private organization of scientists and engineers dedicated to the furtherance of science and its use for the general welfare.

Scholarship Program for Indian diaspora children

New Delhi: The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has announced the Scheme of "Scholarship Program for Diaspora Children (SPDC)" for 2012-13. Following are the highlights of the scheme: 100 scholarships for undergraduate courses in several disciplines; Engineering and Technology/Architecture, Humanities/Liberal Arts, Commerce, Management including Hotel Management, Journalism, Agriculture/ Animal Husbandry, Science, Law etc; Program is open to "Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs)/Non Resident Indians (NRIs). Those already studying in India on a self financing basis or under any other arrangement, are not eligible for this scholarship scheme.; Admissible amount of scholarship would be 75% of the Institutional Economic Cost (IEC) which includes Tuition and Hostel fees and other institutional charges

or up to US \$ 4,000 (US dollars Four thousand) per annum, whichever is less.; Details including terms and conditions of the

scheme along with application format is available at www.edcilindia.co.in. The last date for applying is June 10, 2012.



Ambassador Nirupama Rao welcoming and addressing the guests at a reception hosted for members of the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, at the Embassy residence in Washington, DC on May 21, 2012.