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By Surya Praphulla Kumar

**Colouring it right**

It is the season for all things Indian. The latest offering to western palettes is a contemporary art show held by Gallery ArtsIndia in New York called Ashta Nayak: Eight Pioneers of Contemporary Indian Art. It featured 35 paintings by artists like M.F. Husain, F.N. Souza, S.H. Raza, Ram Kumar, Tyeb Mehta, Akbar Padamsee, V. Gaitonde and J. Swaminathan; painters who were associated with the Progressive Artists' Group that was formed on the eve of India's independence to create a new national aesthetic removed from the revivalist and ethnic trends present then.

Husain, who was the chief guest, was also honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award. Needless to say, the barefoot artist, draped in his signature red scarf and wielding a long black paint brush, enthralled the audience.

**Under the Big Top**

His parents had dreamt of sending him to IIT, but Yatish Yadav sold his entrance coaching books to buy a video camera. His passion to make films on social issues was recently rewarded when his documentary, Ropes in their Hands, was selected for the prestigious New York International Independent Film and Video Festival. The film looks at the seamier side of circus life where girls brought from Nepal are sexually exploited. "It gives a first-hand account of the morbid realities," says Yadav, 27, who received several death threats while making the film.

**Flight of love**

What is it about airports that get the creative juices flowing? (Think Spielberg's recent hit *The Terminal* and author Rana Dasgupta's acclaimed *Tokyo Cancelled*.) Now it is the turn of film journalist-turned-director Samar Khan. His debut offering *Kuchh Meetha Ho Jaye* has a bunch of stranded travellers exchanging stories, all of which have the same message: love can be found at 16 or 60.

"The idea came to me when [film-maker] Santosh Sivan was stranded in Rome and his visa expired," says Khan. "I realised an airport is a location where people get a lot of time to think over their lives." His only fear is rejection. Perhaps that is why he roped in Shah Rukh Khan. "My film is like a meal," he says. "SRK is the dessert."

**Q&A****Springboard of hope**

America's most decorated gymnast, Bart Conner, 58, is as synonymous with gymnastics as his wife Nadia Comaneci. He entered the Olympics Hall of Fame after he won two golds in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. Today, he is a sports commentator, public speaker, owner of a television production company and a gymnastics academy.

He is also on the executive board of Special Olympics International, where he actively takes part in sports programmes for the disabled. He was in India recently to launch a special campaign to strengthen

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the Special Olympics Movement in the country. Excerpts from an interview:

How was it when you interacted with the children?

Whether you are in a developing nation or New York city, the dreams of kids and their families are the same everywhere. A woman had come to the event with her 20-year-old son. She said that for many years she was ashamed about his mental disability. Then she realised she had to do something about it. Today her son is involved in every aspect of her life. I was reassured that we are all the same.

How did your association with the Special Olympics Movement start?

I was invited to a gymnastic clinic 26 years ago to teach a couple of kids basic gymnastics. I helped a young man to do a simple forward roll. The look of accomplishment on his face was wonderful. I'll never forget that moment because it solidified to me why special Olympics works.

Do you feel positive about your visit?

We'll do research to see how much momentum was generated. But we have a good feeling about it. We can help improve health and education of children in rural areas. Sonia Gandhi told us to do our programmes in rural areas where we can help the most number of children.

Sensual innovation

She is the only designer from the south at the Lakme India Fashion Week. But instead of feeling lonely, Deepika Govind, 31, has made it work in her favour. For her fifth year at the LIFW, Govind has made sure that her creations retain the 'southern sensuality'.

"Coming from the silk hub of the country, I love to experiment with textiles," says the Bangalore-based designer. Her experiments have resulted in a collection called 'Layers Within—a study of contradictions', which includes fabrics that are "aromatic, anti-perspiring and give a wet and cool feel to the garment!" It will surely pique interest at the fashion week, where everyone will be trying to beat the Delhi heat.

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