

VIEWS



This is injustice. My father is not guilty... There is no evidence against him — JAGAT SINGH, SON OF NATWAR SINGH

bloggers' park

Our daily column on what the world wide web is talking about

NACH BALIYE

(THE BEST REALITY SHOW ON TV?)



■ I'm really enjoying this show... and it's with relief that I see Delnaaz and Rajiv chucked out... a four to five rounds too late I would say... and I do get irritated by the hosts... So, they should be chucked out too... I have a feeling that Sachin and Supriya might win this... they are not bad... but Rajeshwari and Varun are better... more experimenting... and I've always liked them both... individually too... Rajeshwari in her song *Mukhda piya ka...* and Varun in tele... definitely not gonna miss the next two shows!!!  
<http://ilikecentaur.blogspot.com/2005/12/nach-baliye.html>

■ Here some TV celebrity couples dance and get voted. This concept is nice. But again here the judges (Saroj Khan especially) is very much critical. Come on, you can see that these couples have come here to have fun and they are so much in love.  
<http://www.lordboomboomsdominion.com/blog/2005/11/29/the-entertainment-called-tv/>

■ Really, of all the reality shows on air nowadays, *Nach Baliye* is the best. The way the couples have been performing... it's unbelievable. ...It's very difficult to decide... who is better Sachin or Varun.  
<http://ankurraheja.com/weblog/?p=136>

Strategy gone wrong

Chidambaram's legal talk had its flaws, while Matherani's disclosure left a bitter taste for the Left; Govindacharya used his sense of timing to get an upper hand

He has the ear to the ground on all that's going on in Delhi's power circles. He'll get all the *gup* but we can't reveal his identity for he is **The Insider**



The other day Union Finance Minister P Chidambaram—a brilliant lawyer that he is—made an excellent defence of the government in the Parliament about the Volcker Report. He was so good that not just the Treasury Benches but even the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, LK Advani, felt he had done a competent job. Chidambaram, of course, took pot shots at Advani for relying on media reports. He suggested that if Advani could not wade through the report, he could have at least got junior party members to study it for him.

However, euphoria over Chidambaram's performance was short-lived. The Volcker issue returned to rock Parliament with a vengeance. This time because a minnow like former Croatia ambassador, Aniel Matherani, decided to squeal against his former benefactor K Natwar Singh to save his own skin.

And guess who is being blamed for this? Chidambaram, of course! Now everyone in the government is blaming him for using the Enforcement Directorate in the first place.

Official sources say it is the ED probe into Hamdaan Exports—the firm owned by Andaleep Sehgal and Jagat Singh—that made Matherani sing like a canary. The ex-envoy's interview to a news magazine revived the Volcker issue and also renewed the demand for Natwar's resignation.

Congress circles point out that Matherani began squealing only because the ED probe was getting closer to him. Chidambaram may be a good lawyer but a very poor political strategist. According to Congress leaders, it was not a good idea to track foreign exchange inflows into Hamdaan Exports at all. Sooner or later, it was bound to boomerang on the Congress. "We should have just have stopped with the Pathak probe. What is the need for ED probe? If you ask the ED to track inflows, you will naturally have to track outflows. The Rajiv Gandhi Foundation is alleged to be one of the beneficiaries of Hamdaan. So



Chidambaram's (left) defence of the government about the Volcker report was appreciated, but it forced Matherani (right) to squeal against Natwar Singh



this ED business will naturally boomerang on the Congress," says a senior leader.

Maneka Gandhi did make feeble attempts to establish the link between the RGF and the Iraqi oil-for-food-scam during the Volcker debate, but was shouted down.

COMMUNISTS ON THE BACKFOOT

For once the Communists are on the back foot. Matherani's disclosure has left a bitter taste in their mouth. They had been defending Natwar Singh like a legacy. They had been fighting for him as if he was their big ideological bulwark against the US. But after Matherani made his allegations, they too decided to keep a safe distance from Natwar.

But then, a pertinent question is how come Saddam Hussein never thought of bribing the Commies—the ones who are truly anti-American? Says a CPI(M) Central Committee member, "Of course, Subodh Kant Sahay used to invite us often to his Non-Aligned Students' Youth Organ-

isation meetings. We stayed away because we knew there was hanky-panky on." Then, there were politicians like Bhim Singh of J&K Panthers' Party who got the oil coupons but returned as they could not carry on forward trading.

SENSE OF TIMING

If anything, he had a sense of timing. Just an hour before BJP was to expel the fiery *sanyasin* Uma Bharti, her long-time friend and one-time BJP ideologue Govindacharya called a press conference at his abode—318, VP House. The announcement duly upset the BJP big-wigs. Phones began ringing.

Everyone wanted to know if Govind was launching a new party, new forum or something. He had, of course, the usual broken hearts from the BJP like Uma and Babulal Marandi in his new forum. But the purpose of the forum was to wage battle against the WTO and not to capture power, Govind announced with a chuckle.

letters to the editor

Ash does orchestrate

This is with reference to the article 'People think I orchestrate write-ups abroad' (December 5, 2005). Aishwarya is a manipulative actor. She does not indulge in it directly, but it is her international agent, Simone Sheffield, who does this work for her abroad, while her manager, Hari Singh, does it for her in India. Why would the media devote so much space to her despite the fact that she has delivered only two hits in her entire career spanning nearly 10 years?

No one is interested in her face being splashed in obscure magazines, the

names of which we haven't even heard of. As for the *Time* magazine, it should be noted that it was the Asian edition and that too only for India and Pakistan that had her photograph on the cover.

Jerome Rodrigues, Mira Road

Acid cure for ascetic

Apropos to the article 'BJP expels Uma 'THE BJP'', (December 6, 2005). Although belatedly, the BJP Parliamentary Board has taken the right decision in expelling the cantankerous, rabble-rousing and whimsical *sanyasin*, Uma

Bharti, from the party. She should be well-advised to extend her Ram-Roti *padyatra* from Ayodhya to West Bengal, where she can join the once-fiery Mamata Banerjee who is sailing in the same sinking boat.

Had Uma been shown the door in November 2004 for challenging LK Advani's authority and badly damaging the party's image, the party could have avoided her current temperamental tantrums. By the way, don't you think the right place for an ascetic is not Bhopal or Delhi, but a remote cave in the Himalayas?

KP Rajan, Borivli (W)

Raj: Wrong move

With reference to the article 'For a bucket of hot water' (December 6, 2005). One thing's amply proved by Raj Thackeray's unsolicited interference in the JJ hostel issue: Charisma is one thing; channelling that charisma into provocative, militant designs deals a serious blow to his cause. The act of pitting a Maharashtrian against a non-Maharashtrian doesn't go with his image.

Rohit, Mumbai

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Just like that!



History will always judge him as a person with a firm grip on his Ministry, even while quitting