

Now Houston Has A Mahatma Gandhi District

Houston, Texas: A part of southwest Houston, Texas, home to a large number of South Asians, including Indians, has been officially renamed



M a h a t m a Gandhi district to honor the leader on his 141st birth year.

An ethnic conclave, Hillcroft was renamed this

month, fulfilling the seven-year long demand of over 100,000 strong Indian-American population living in the Greater Houston area.

City Mayor Annise Parker announced the change of name along with Consul General of India in Houston, Sanjiv Arora.

Officials of the India Culture Centre have been working relentlessly for renaming the area that is popularly known as "Little India" due to the high concentration of south Asian shops and restaurants.

"Persistence alone paid off in the end as it was just getting no where, till the culture center and business leaders settled for adding the signs designating it a district, a USD 10,000 expense," India Culture Centre Spokesperson Manisha Mehta said.

Renaming the Hillcroft area required 75 per cent of commercial property owners on a street to sign a petition in its support, according to the municipal law. Only then the City Council can consider the change of the name.

But Indians earlier failed to gather required number of signs as it was difficult to agree the non-south Asians there.

The project was proposed during the tenure of former Mayor Bill White as the Indian Culture Centre and Indian merchants in the area wanted to rename Hillcroft Avenue to Mahatma Gandhi Avenue.

It was a moment of joy for the Indian-Americans in Houston as the change in name brings a feeling of recognition and they hope renaming the area would attract more tourists.

US Issues Fresh Advisory, Warns Of Terror Attempts In India

Washington: (IANS) The US State department has warned that terror groups may be planning attacks against India and has issued an advisory asking its nationals to be alert while visiting the country.

"The Department of State alerts US citizens to ongoing security concerns in India," the state department said.

"The US government continues to receive information that terrorist groups may be planning attacks in India," it said.

The advisory goes on to add that terrorists and their sympathisers have demonstrated their

A.R. Rahman Wins Double Grammys

New Delhi: (IANS) Indians went "Jai Ho" once again when music maestro A.R. Rahman scored a double triumph at the Grammy Awards in Los Angeles, a year after bagging two Oscars for his foot tapping music for "Slumdog Millionaire".

The composer bagged the best compilation soundtrack for a motion picture and another one for "Jai Ho" for the best motion picture song at the 52nd Annual Grammy Awards.

He won the award with veteran lyricist Gulzar and Tanvi Shah who wrote the Spanish lyrics for it.

"This is insane, god is great again," a beaming Rahman said after receiving the award at the biggest show in the music world. The other Indian contenders, Zakir Hussain and Amjad Ali Khan, could not manage to win the golden gramophones.

"Insane eh? I never even dreamt about winning all these awards," Rahman posted on his Twitter page shortly after receiving the award.

Just a year ago, Rahman's music for "Slumdog Millionaire", a screen adaptation of Indian author and diplomat Vikas Swarup's novel "Q & A", had propelled him to the record books as India's first



double Oscar winner.

Besides the Oscars and now the Grammys, the Chennai musician's composition for the film has also won him other prestigious international awards like the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA), Critics Choice Award and the Golden Globe.

"We all are very proud of him. This magical musician has brought more honour to India, his family, fans, friends and his entire team. Such a young man has made his mark on the music map of the world. All of us should put him on our shoulders," said Gulzar who shares the prestigious award

with him.

"I am proud of Rahman as a special friend and composer who made India proud in the world of music. It's his true dedication towards innovative music and his connection with divine energies. Bravo Rahman!" exclaimed filmmaker Subhash Ghai who roped in the composer for his films "Taal", "Kisna: The Warrior Poet" and "Yuvvraaj".

Director Imtiaz Ali added: "It fills me with pride. Also makes me think if he is getting this much accolade for 'Jai ho', wonder what the reac-

tion of the West will be when they discover the rest of Rahman? I'm waiting to see the man go from strength to strength."

The composer's sister Reihana said winning awards was "a way of life" for her 44-year-old brother.

"It's a good start of the year. It was Rahman's birthday on Jan 6 and now he wins Grammys. It's a way of life now since he has won so many," Reihana told NDTV after her brother won the award.

"When he was going for the Golden Globes last year, he was doubtful about his win and so were we, but after he got that, it has been awards and awards for him, so we were quite sure that he will get the Grammy as well," she added.

The song was crooned by Sukhvinder Singh, Mahalaxmi Iyer, Vijay Prakash with support from Rahman and Shah.

Global honors may have come his way only since "Slumdog Millionaire", but the unassuming composer has been contributing to world music for quite a while. He composed music for the "The Lord of the Rings" theatre production, for instance, as well as for Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Bombay Dreams".

His talent first came to the fore with "Roja" in 1992, and there has been no looking back since for the musician, who has just been awarded the Padma Bhushan, India's third highest civilian award.

The accolades have not stopped.

Satyam's Raju Declared Pauper By US Court

New York: (IANS) A US court has declared former Satyam Computers chairman Ramalinga Raju, who last year was jailed after admitting to falsifying his company's accounts by over \$1 billion, a pauper, thereby exempting him from paying court costs.

Besides Raju, New York judge Barbara S Jones also approved 'pauper' status for his brother Rama Raju, Satyam's former chief executive officer, and Srinivas Vadlamani, the company's former head of finance.

In October 2009, the three men had filed for an "in forma pauperis" - in the character or manner of a pauper - designation given to someone who is without the funds to pursue the normal

costs of a lawsuit or a criminal defence.

According to court documents, the accused stated they are "unable to engage an attorney in the US to defend (themselves) in the class action litigation and to pay any court fees or to meet any financial obligations which might be imposed by this court".

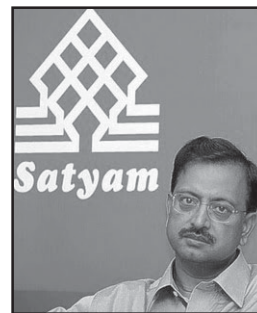
"The court finds that defendants have adequately demonstrated that they are unable to pay costs as described in the federal law," US District Judge Jones said in her order Wednesday.

The judge however denied the request for a pro bono counsel as the "defendants are incarcerated in a foreign country and it would be unusually difficult for the appointed counsel to meet and otherwise competently represent Defendants under the circumstances".

On Jan 7 last year, Raju, 55, admitted that Satyam's accounts had been inflated by over \$1 billion, in what became India's largest corporate scandal. In November, the CBI said that fraud was 40 per cent larger than originally estimated.

"It was like riding a tiger, not knowing how to get off without being eaten," he had said, after the scandal broke.

The IT company has since been taken over by Tech Mahindra.



President Obama Hails Partnership As Indians Celebrate Republic Day

Washington: (IANS) President Barack Obama has in a message of greetings on India's 61st Republic day Tuesday hailed the growing partnership between the US and India and the friendship between the two peoples.

"And as our peoples continue to build upon that friendship, let our governments continue to work together to advance peace, prosperity, and stability

around the globe," he said in a message issued by the White House.

"I send my warmest wishes on behalf of the American people to the people of India and to those here in America and around the world who are celebrating Republic Day," Obama said.

The Indian American community across the US celebrated the Republic Day with enthusiasm, Indian Ambassador Meera Shankar in Washington unfurling the national flag at a colourful function at the Indian embassy.

President Pratibha Patil's message was read out to the assembled members of the Indian community.

The function concluded with children from Gandharva USA, a local music school, singing "Vande Mataram" (I pay homage to the mother) in Sanskrit and patriotic songs in Hindi, Gujarati, Kannada, Bengali, Assamese, Khasi and Urdu.

