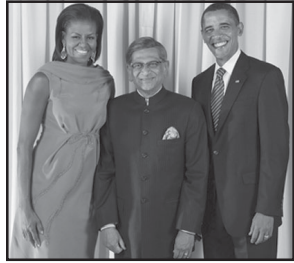


I Am Proud To Go To India: Obama

Washington: (IANS) President Barack Obama says he has to go to India to experience “all that India and its people and its incredible ancient culture have to offer”.

Announcing his plans to visit India in early November at a reception hosted by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna at the state department, Obama cited a quote from a European scholar who travelled to India more than a century ago.



“Whatever sphere of the human mind you may select for your special study, whether it be language or religion or mythology or philosophy, whether it be law or customs, primitive art, or science, you have to go to India, because some of the most valuable and instructive material of the history of man are treasured up in India, and India only,” he quoted the scholar.

“So I look forward to advancing our partnership, to experiencing all that India and its people and its incredible ancient culture have to offer,” Obama said.

“So when it comes to the sphere of our work, building a future of greater prosperity, opportunity and security for our people, there is no doubt; I have to go India.

“But even more, I am proud to go to India, and I look forward to the history that we will make together, progress that will be treasured not just by this generation but by generations to come.”

Indian-American Teen Wins 2010 Spelling Bee Crown

Washington: (IANS) Spelling ‘juvia’ and ‘stromuhr’ correctly, Indian American Anamika Veeramani has won the 2010 Scripps National Spelling Bee crown to retain the honor for the ‘desis’ for the third year in a row.

“I’m really, really happy. This is one of the best moments of my life,” said the 14-year-old from North Royalton, Ohio, who defeated another Indian American, Shantanu Srivatsa of West Fargo, North Dakota in the nationally televised final round Friday night to become the bee’s 83rd champion.



Anamika Veeramani

Her win earns a \$30,000 cash prize and engraved trophy from the event’s sponsor, The E.W. Scripps Co., along with a \$2,500 US savings bond and a complete reference library from Merriam-Webster, a \$5,000 scholarship from the Sigma Phi Epsilon Educational Foundation and a package from Encyclopaedia Britannica totalling \$3,499.

Friday’s final rounds began with 10 contestants, who were eliminated one by one by words such as ochidore, a shore crab, and terribilita, a term applied typically to the art of Michelangelo describing the power and grandeur of his work.

Veeramani, who finished fifth in last year’s bee, also survived a marathon four-and-half hour semi-final round earlier Friday that contained a little bit of controversy.

It started when another early favorite, Neetu Chandak, 14, of Seneca Falls, New York who finished eighth last year, appeared to stumble over ‘paravane’,

an underwater glider device, in the fifth round.

But the judges reversed the decision eliminating her, blaming the “ambiguous nature of the answers” when she asked about a root word. But given a second chance in the sixth round, she misspelled ‘apogalacteum’, the point at which a celestial body is furthest away from the Milky Way.

For the most part, this year’s spellers proved to be intrepid. The semi-finals were supposed to last three hours covering two rounds. But the contest was extended to a sixth round because too many spellers — 19 — were still on board to qualify for the finals, usually limited to 15 or less.

With NBA star Shaquille O’Neal on hand watching, the sixth round proved brutal. Nine of the first 13 were knocked out, leaving only 10. Judges cancelled the remainder of the sixth round to provide 10 finalists for the evening competition, though a fortunate six had not spelled a word in the round.

The contest began with 273 spellers ranging in age from 8 to 15, some from as far away as China and New Zealand. They included eight-year-old Vanya Shivashankar of Olathe, Kansas, the youngest sister of last year’s champion, Kavya Shivashankar.

Kavya too had her own moment of glory when President Barack Obama met her in the Oval Office and congratulated Kavya on her extraordinary achievement and reiterated the importance of a top-flight education for success in the 21st century economy.

Racial Slur Against Nikki Haley



New York: (IANS) Indian-American Nikki Haley, who is contesting governorship in South Carolina, was attacked racially by a state lawmaker who called her a “raghead”, media reports said recently.

Republican state Senator Jake Knotts also made critical statement about President Barack Obama on an internet political show called Pub Politics.

Haley, who was born a Sikh, said she was “attacked” because she’s leading in the polls, nbcagusta.com reported.

A “raghead” is usually used against Arabs or other ethnic groups who wear turbans.

“We already got one raghead in the White House and don’t need another in the governor’s mansion,” a South Carolina newspaper quoted Knotts as saying.

He also commented about Haley’s parents’ religion and her family.

Haley spent Saturday afternoon campaigning at the City Hall in Aiken, just two days before the primary.

“This is no longer about picking someone because they look good in a picture or because they hold a baby well,” Haley said.

Haley told the crowd she wants to make South Carolina an independent state.

“I went from ‘Nikki-who?’ to suddenly going double digits in the polls, and all of a sudden there were all these attacks. But when you go after corruption, power and money, you’re going to get attacked,” Haley said.

India Gets Access To LeT Operative Headley

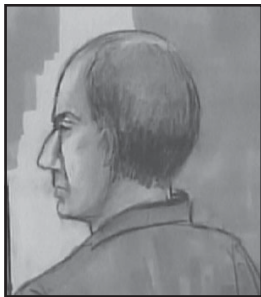
Washington: (IANS) India has finally been given access to Pakistani-American Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operative David Coleman Headley, who has confessed to his role in the 26/11 Mumbai attack, according to US National Security Adviser James Jones.

“Yes access (to Headley) has been given. We have fulfilled our commitment,” he said Saturday, a day after Indian External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna left for home after making a public plea for access to Headley, 49 who changed his given name of Daoud Gilani in 2006 to scout targets for the November 2008 attack.

However, Jones did not spell out how and when the four-member National Investigation Agency (NIA) team, which is already in Chicago to question Headley, was given access.

“This is an ongoing process and I don’t have any detailed information that will be helpful except to say that it is in the hands of right professionals from both countries,” Jones said.

Leading the Indian team is Loknath Behera



“a meticulous detective with a knack for obtaining information from criminal suspects”, who was recently awarded the President’s Medal for Distinguished Service, according to ABC News.

The Indian team is being accompanied by special public prosecutor Dayan Krishnan to sort out any legal roadblocks that could be put up by Headley’s lawyers, it said.

Arrested by the Federal Bureau of Investigation last October, Headley confessed to his role in a plea bargain to avoid the death penalty.

The Indian team will focus on finding out details of Headley’s undercover trips to several places in India and whether he had put in place sleeper terror cells.

The team also hopes to interrogate him about his role in the bomb blast at the German Bakery in Pune, his dealings with terror leaders in Pakistan and officers of the Pakistani Army, the ABC said.

Also, Justice Department officials in Washington have promised to provide details of the conspiracies that Headley is suspected to have hatched.

US Congress Clears C-17 Sale For India

Los Angeles/New Delhi: (IANS) The US Congress has cleared the sale of C-17 Globemaster III strategic lift aircraft for India.

The Obama administration had notified the Congress April 23 of the potential sale of 10 aircraft to India and sought out objections or approval.

The aircraft are being sold to India under the US government’s Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program, with the maximum package value of \$5.8 billion. That includes the 3.8 percent administrative fee the government charges to ensure timely delivery and guarantee the supplies.

Government-to-government deals may not necessarily be cheaper but ensure a hassle-free

environment and a near-zero scope for corruption. In legal terms, such deals also ensure sovereign guarantees.

The actual cost of the C-17 aircraft for India would be less as India would not be buying all the options and the 3.8 percent fee would be payable only on the actual amount of the deal. In some countries, the administrative fee ranges up to 18 percent.

Boeing India’s Vice President for Defense, Space and Security, Vivek Lall, told India Strategic from Washington: “We are pleased that India’s intent to buy 10 C-17 Globemaster III has received US Congressional approval. With this, the Indian government is one step closer to acquiring the C-17 which we believe is ideally suited to meet India’s airlift needs for military and hu-

manitarian purposes.

“The submittal of the Letter of Acceptance to the government of India will be the next step towards finalizing the Foreign Military Sale.”

The Indian Air Force (IAF) Chief of Staff, Air Chief Marshal P.V. Naik, said last year that IAF was looking for 10 plus 10 C-17s, described in its parlance as VHTAC, or Very Heavy Transport Aircraft, as a replacement for its ageing fleet of Soviet vintage IL-76 transport jets.

The US Air Force has ordered a total of 223 C-17s, out of which 198 have been delivered. The 199th, shown to the Indian media team at its Boeing manufacturing facility at Long Beach, is set to join its designated squadron.