

Kidnapped Canadians in Iraq Released

In the S.R. April 2006, we reported the sad predicament of the victims of terrorist kidnappings in Iraq. Among them were two Canadians, including Sr. Harmeet Singh Sooden (32). They have since been released, apparently unharmed, after 118 days and should have returned to rejoin their families in Canada.

The peace campaigners were rescued in an operation led by Britain's SAS, but their captors – who had threatened to kill them unless all Iraqi prisoners were released – had already fled. Fears for the group grew when a fourth hostage, American Tom Fox, 54, was found murdered in early March.

[Courtesy: *Time*]

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Royalty at Hola Mohalla in UK

Camilla would have preferred to be blindfolded for the event. After decades of witnessing dramatic events all over the world, it will take a lot to surprise Prince Charles or make him tense. The same cannot be said about his new wife Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall. She put her hand to cover her eyes as blindfolded Uptej Singh raised his sword to slice through a melon placed on a trusting colleague's chest at the Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha in Hounslow.

Camilla made it obvious that she was afraid to look at what was about to happening. But the wonder was that even Prince Charles gripped the arm of his chair as roll of drums reached the crescendo and the scimitar flashed.

Uptej Singh, a 42-year-old IT engineer was taking part in a spectacular martial arts to mark Hola Mohalla, when Sikhs practise military exercise and stage mock battles, characterizing their warrior heritage. It also marked Commonwealth Day in London.

The slicing was however perfect, to the relief of the Royal couple. Prince Charles could not help laughing when Uptej Singh later told him, "Don't try this at home." The Prince too joked, "I'm so glad that the Health and Safety Executive have managed to clear the way for this extraordinary demonstration."

[Courtesy: *The Hindustan Times*]

Morbid Humour on TV

STAR TV apologizes to Sikh body

STAR TV last March apologized to a Sikh body for "hurting the sentiments" of the community, and assured to make the judges of the program, Great Indian Laughter Challenge, to express an apology on air.

Mumbai-based Sikh Media and Culture Watch had protested against certain portions of the March 17 episode of the program and had written to STAR India Private Limited in this regard. TV Network's senior vice-president (Internal Affairs) Suhel Buddha, while referring to the Sikh body's letter said STAR was always sensitive of the sentiments of its viewer and anything that was carried in the said episode was "not intended to hurt your religious sentiments."

"Without prejudice to our rights, we apologize for hurting the sentiments of the Sikh community and assure you that we shall take due care to ensure that such occurrences do not happen in future and as discussed we will also endeavour to get the judges of the program to express their apologies on-air in this regard by April seven, 2006," he added.

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Commonwealth Games The Punjabi Touch

Melbourne: The British Prince Edwards swayed to Punjabi bhangra at a star-studded Indian Night at the Commonwealth Games last March, the likes of which is rarely seen outside the country.

