

National Post salutes successful South Asians



■ Bob Dhillon



■ Deepa Mehta



■ Ruby Dhalla



■ Steve Gupta

AJIT JAIN
in Toronto

In its March 15 issue, *the National Post* carried a four-page special on successful South Asians, calling them the 'next wave of power players.'

Calgary-based Bob Dhillon, head of real estate developers Mainmarket Equity

Corporation, is included in the list, which was headlined 'Brown is the new White.'

On the cover of the special is a photograph of young Liberal Member of Parliament Ruby Dhalla with restaurateur Hanif Harji, cofounder of Kultura and Nyood.

Deepa Mehta, maker of such acclaimed films as *Water*, is also listed, and she is

quoted as saying: 'It is like my father used to say: The two things you could never predict were the day of your death and the success of a movie.' The daily profiled Mehta with her photographer and author daughter Devyani Saltzman, calling them 'the mother-daughter double team.'

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Dhalla was described as Canada's 'youngest member of parliament' — actually, Liberal Member of Parliament Navdeep Bains is the youngest MP — 'with the best hair, to boot — a chiropractor turned Question Period attendee (in Parliament) who also once dabbled in Bollywood movies.'

Dhalla participated in the Miss India-Canada beauty pageant in 1993 when Ruby Bhatia won the title and relocated to Mumbai for a career in the Indian entertainment industry.



■ David Davidar

But surely Dhalla has no regrets about losing the pageant, because she is playing an important role on the Canadian political scene. Liberal prime minister Paul Martin personally nominated her to be the Liberal candidate from the Brampton-Springdale riding.

'I look all the advances we're making in the arts, politics and culture and think, we're just getting started! It's the people we're influencing who are going to do the really great things,' Dhalla is quoted as saying.

Dhillon, a dapper, 42-year-old real estate developer widely reported in the Canadian media as the first Sikh likely to become a billionaire soon, owns an island in Belize where he is developing golf courses, town houses, high-end homes, condos, etc. No wonder Belize has named him its honorary consul-general in Canada.

"One advantage of that," Dhillon told *India Abroad* earlier, "is I am able to drive with a red [diplomatic] number plate" on his Mercedes 500. Dhillon calls it the 'people's car' in oil-rich Calgary.

The *National Post* also profiled David Davidar,

president and publisher of Penguin Canada; Nav Bhatia, a successful Hyundai car dealer and self-confessed 'basketball junkie'; standup comedy king Russel Peters; Nadir Mohamed, president and chief operating officer of Rogers Communications; ice-skating star Emanuel Sandhu (the *Post* called him The Ice King); Husain Amarshi, president of Mongrel Media (labeled 'The Tycoon'); and guitarist Dave Nizaam Baksh, who the *Post* nicknamed 'Brownsound.'

There's a list of 'others you know about' which includes authors Rohinton Mistry and M G Vassanji, *Anokhi* magazine founder and publisher Raj Gira, journalist and activist Irshad Manji, hotelier Steve Gupta, and philanthropist Suresh Bhalla.