

In the Name of the Father

Activist **Ashok Row Kavi** caused an uproar by telling the host of the **Nikki Tonight** chat show on **STAR TV** that he once lost a job 15 years ago for referring to Mahatma Gandhi as a "bastard Bania." **Nikki Tonight** has been axed and Home Minister

Shankar Rao Chavan has said Parliament will take up the matter.

It seems incredible that this much heat has been generated for just referring to something that happened 15 years ago. After all, even

revered figures like **B.R. Ambedkar** have criticized Gandhi in no uncertain terms.

Meanwhile, **Tushar Gandhi**, the Mahatma's great-grandson, has sued **STAR TV** for Rs 500 million. The great-grandson of the Apostle of Non-Violence has also said that if Kavi had made similar comments about the Hindu right-wing leader **Bal Thackeray**, "not a single homosexual in India would have been left alive." The **Bharatiya Janata Party** has seized this as an example of "cultural terrorism" resulting from letting in foreign agencies like Rupert Murdoch's **STAR TV**.

Meanwhile Kavi is recovering from a physical assault by actor **Saif Ali Khan**, apparently in retaliation to the **Bombay Dost** comment on the gay overtones in the film *Main Khiladi Tu Anadi* in which he starred with **Akshay Kumar**.

Hijras Up in Arms

Some 2,000 eunuchs in a gathering at Garbeta, 125 miles from Calcutta in West Bengal, alleged that the West Bengal government ignores them, and demanded a rehabilitation program to better their social and economic status, according to the Agence France Presse. "The conference decided to launch an agitation if the demand was not met," said **Sita Rani**, who presided over the February 26 meeting. "We should be treated as handicapped and given necessary facilities and allowances."

Book News

The Very Inside, a collection of Asian-American lesbian and bisexual women's writings, is up for a Lambda Award. **Minal Hajratwala**, whose poetry is featured in the book, also appears in the new South Asian-American anthology, *Living in America*, edited by **Roshni Rustomji-Kerns**. Up for a Lambda Award in the Gay Men's Biography/Autobiography Section is **Abraham Verghese's My Own Country**. The new anthology from Alyson, *My First Time*, edited by Jack Hart includes a piece by **Sandip Roy**. Also check out the new collection of South Asian women's writing, *Aurat Durbar* (Second Story Press).

The Big Mango

In a feature on Bombay in the March 95 issue of *National Geographic*, **John McCarry** writes: "For such a large, muscular city, Bombay has a touchingly tender soul. As **Ashok Row Kavi**, founding editor of *Bombay Dost*, the only publication for Indian gays and lesbians, remarked to me, 'Bombay is Manhattan with a heart; it's what I like to call the Big Mango.'" A muscular mango, no doubt.

Pinup Man

Hunky Indian actor **Akshay Kumar** was voted the ultimate gay male fantasy by *Bombay Dost*. When **Rohini Iyer** of *Stardust* magazine asked him about that, he replied, "Hey, it feels really nice to be a gay fantasy. Great, absolutely great." Ms Iyer confesses that she was almost ready to hit the car roof and was so discomfited that she lost her tongue. Her editor, however, decided to use it as the headline: "I feel nice about being a Gay fantasy!" akshay admits!" in the June 1995 issue. Well, we hope Ms Iyer gets used to learning to share her men. ▼

Heartthrob Akshay Kumar

