

Trouble at home for Berlusconi...



achchan, right, son Abhishek, law Aishwarya Rai, second from last, casting their votes in Mumbai

ism key in polls



Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan arrives with wife Gauri Khan at a polling booth

able to dominate the elections. Polls indicate neither Congress, nor the main opposition BJP, will win enough seats in the 543-seat lower house of Parliament to rule on their own.

That means the election will likely leave India with a shaky coalition government cobbled together from across the political spectrum – a situation giving the next premier little time to deal with a growing number of challenges like the economic crisis.

Meanwhile, Bollywood stars turned out in force to vote yesterday, urging people to exercise their democratic right and make their voices heard.

summer

istol,” a Russian-made semi-auto-

the state prosecutor’s office said.

attan building collapses

A five-storey building collapsed at a nattan construction site yesterday, but s said it appeared no one was inside. crews with a dog were sifting building’s rubble and were going neighbouring building as a precaution. hood businessman said he was wor-homeless man who often slept out-

er guerrilla released

leader of the Palestinian guerrillas ed the Italian cruise liner Achille 985 and killed an American Jewish has been released from prison early, rces said.

nged Al Molqui was released from ison on Wednesday, and told he Italy.

ROME: SILVIO

BERLUSCONI may be one of Italy’s most popular politicians, but the Italian Prime Minister’s approval ratings are sinking fast with at least one Italian – his wife.

VERONICA LARIO publicly voiced her rage over reports that Berlusconi’s party was lining up a troupe of TV showgirls and starlets as candidates for June’s European Parliament elections.

A spokesman for the conservative Freedom People party said the reports were unfounded.

Berlusconi contended the reported plans were a fabrication of the opposition and left-leaning media.

Berlusconi has already faced trouble at home and widespread criticism for flirting with women and filling his

political ranks with female stars, including a Cabinet minister.

Two years ago, Lario received a quick and public apology from Berlusconi when she wrote to a newspaper complaining about a compliment her husband had paid to TV starlet Mara Carfagna, now the minister for equal opportuni-

ties. Lario released a statement to the *Ansa* news agency, slamming the party’s alleged election plans as “shameless rubbish” that offended her, her children and women in general.

She praised politicians such as former British prime minister **MARGARET THATCHER** and German Chancellor **ANGELA MERKEL** and then added: “But what’s happening today

Wife raps ‘showgirl candidates’ for EU polls



Berlusconi and Lario

(in Italy) behind a front of bodily curves and female beauty is grave.”

“Somebody has written that this is all for the entertainment of the emperor,” she said. “I agree.”

Lario’s public rage came after days of debate in which even Berlusconi’s allies raised eyebrows over reports by left-leaning newspapers that the party’s candidates could include a Big Brother contestant as well as actresses and models.

ALESSANDRA MUSSOLINI, a right-wing politician, dictator Benito Mussolini’s granddaughter and a former actress herself, ironically suggested the leading coalition should also have male models run for office.

Lario, also a former actress, is Berlusconi’s second wife and the couple have three children.

Speaking during a visit to Warsaw, Poland, Berlusconi said that he was sorry that Lario “believed what the papers said.”

In her statement to *Ansa*, Lario also reacted to media reports that the premier had attended the late-night birthday party of an 18-year-old woman in Naples. “It surprised me very much,” she said. “Also because he never came to the 18th of any of his children.”

Rihanna to get back jewellery

LOS ANGELES: Los Angeles police have agreed to return the \$1.4 million (BD529,200) worth of jewelry that pop star **RIHANNA** was wearing the night her R&B singer boyfriend **CHRIS BROWN** is accused of assaulting her, Rihanna’s lawyer said.

The earring and three rings that Rihanna was wearing were on loan to the *Umbrella* singer, who had attended a pre-Grammy party with Brown hours before the February 8 incident. They were taken by police as evidence in the case.

‘Sex’ star to have twins

LOS ANGELES: “Sex and the City” actress **SARAH JESSICA PARKER** and her husband **MATTHEW BRODERICK** are

expecting twin girls via a surrogate mother, their representatives have said.

Parker, 44, and Broderick, 47, “are happily anticipating the birth of their twin daughters later this summer with the generous help of a surrogate. The entire family is overjoyed,” a statement from the couple said.

The couple have a six-year-old son, James, and have long wanted to add to their family but had no luck, a friend was quoted as telling *Entertainment Weekly* magazine.

They turned to a surrogate last year, the magazine said. “They had a lot of unsuccessful tries in the past,” the friend said.

▲ **Broderick**

‘Harry Potter’ tipped to top charts

LOS ANGELES: Movie fans expect Harry Potter will magically rule box offices in the upcoming summer blockbuster season. Thirty-nine per cent of respondents in an online poll released yesterday by *MovieFone.com* named “Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince” as the summer movie they most want to see. Sixty per cent of the 280,000 respondents said they expect the movie, which opens on July 15, to be the top box office draw.

Tyra Banks’ stalker convicted

NEW YORK: A New York judge has convicted a man of stalking **TYRA BANKS**. Criminal

Court Judge James Burke convicted 39-year-old Brady Green, of Dublin, Georgia, yesterday of stalking, harassment, criminal trespass and attempted aggravated harassment. Green faces as many as 90 days in jail when he is sentenced in June.

Country legend dies at home

NASHVILLE: Singer **VERN GOSDIN**, who recorded country music hits like the award-winning *Chiseled in Stone* during a 30-year career, has died aged 74. The singer’s admin-

istrative assistant, Dawn Hall, said he had a history of strokes and suffered his latest one three weeks ago. “We were quite hopeful there for a while because he was showing signs of coming back,” Hall said.

Sean Penn files for divorce

LOS ANGELES: Oscar-winning actor **SEAN PENN** has filed for a legal separation from his wife **ROBIN WRIGHT PENN** after an attempt to reconcile apparently failed. Penn asked for the legal separation from his wife of 13 years on April 23.



Beekeeper Wang Dalin stands with a mantle of more than 50,000 bees covering his body with the help of his wife at Chenjiawan village of Zigui County in Yichang, China

Inmate can't take name 'Sinner'...

HE MAY have broken the law, but a Nebraska inmate still can't change his name to “Sinner Lawrence Bilskirner.” US Court documents say 23-year-old Jonathan L Thomas cited his Norse religion in seeking the name change to Sinner Lawrence Bilskirner. He says he “is a heathen and Thor is his ‘High God.’” But Lancaster County District Judge Steve Burns denied the request. He said government agencies will need to closely track Thomas because of his criminal record and three child-support cases against him. Thomas is serving time for attempted burglary, receiving stolen property and methamphetamine possession. He is due to be released in 2014.

Dead son in fridge

A JAPANESE woman has been arrested on suspicion of hiding the body of her four-year-old son in a refrigerator for nearly two years, police said yesterday. Miyuki Otsuka, 33,

turned herself in to police in western Hyogo prefecture and police later found a decomposed body in a plastic bag in her fridge, a police spokesman said. “We believe it was the body of her son,” who was aged four in 2007, the official said, adding that police were conducting a DNA test. Her husband, who was the child’s stepfather, 34-year-old truck driver Ryu Otsuka, was also arrested. The woman said that her husband had abused the boy and that he died after being put in a box.



FOR THE RECORD