

Don't add insult to Injury

By Soniya Kirpalani November 2010

As the year comes to an end and we set our resolutions and gleefully wishing each other good luck and great cheer, let's spare a thought for the 17 Indians on death row in Sharjah UAE. Let's start by stopping insulting the innocent. It's touching to see the Sharjah courts simply referring to them as 'the accused' not as 'bootleggers'; it seems strange to me why certain sections of the media have persistently added insult to injury and continued to call them bootleggers? Why have they openly disregarded the proof of their being gainfully employed? Do they lack the sensitivity to understand that by tarnishing them as 'bootleggers' they are further alienating these 17 accused from both the local and the Emirati communities in UAE?

<http://www.notrequiredindians.com/clipping-pu/proof.html>

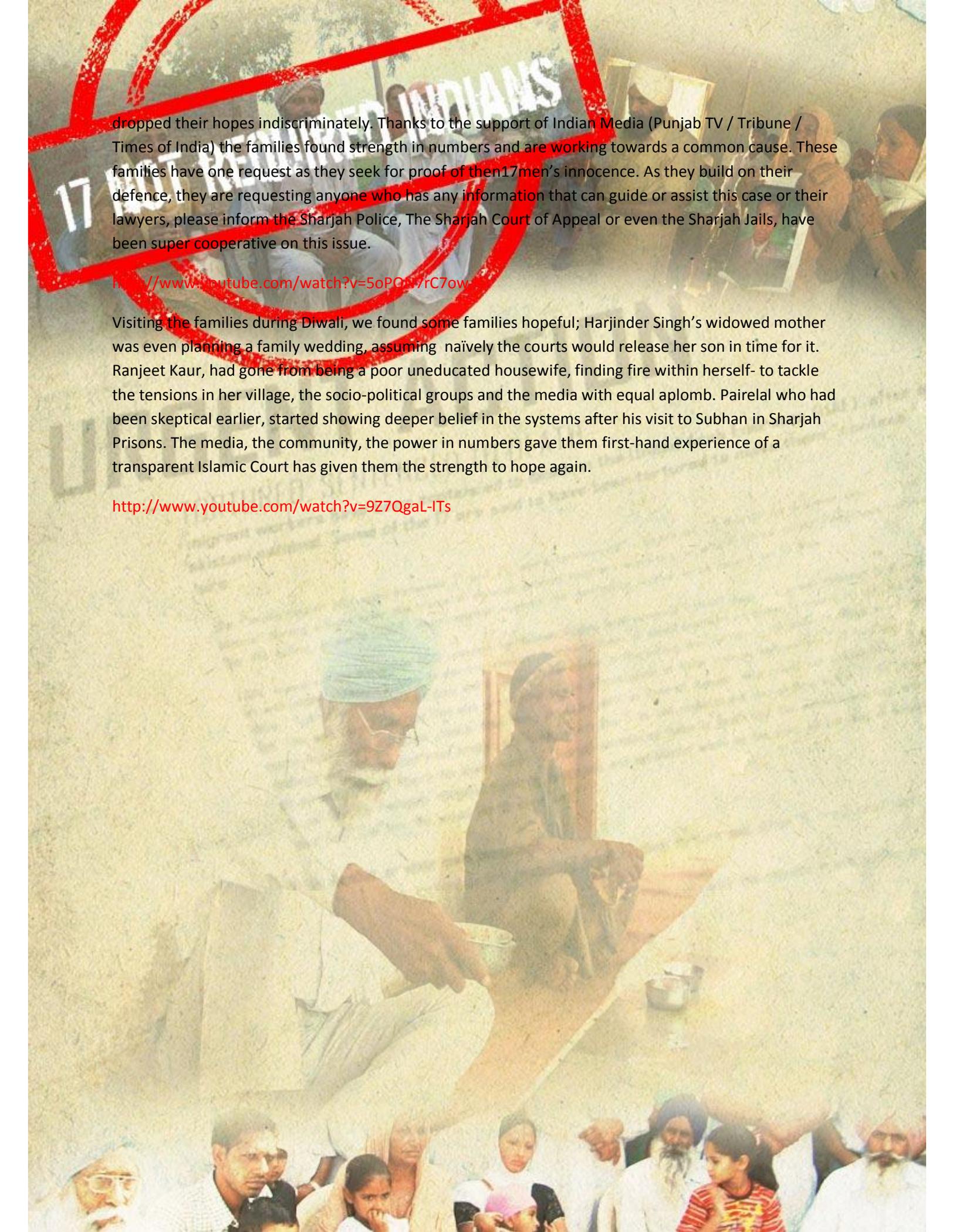
There is visible proof that four / five of these Sikh boys had been working 14 hour shifts –either as drivers or daily wage earners. Some of them were still working in on valid visas, in companies as employees. Some were forced out of work due to recession and had taken up jobs as 'daily wage laborers'. As a mark of respect for the 17 men and their families, we are posting visible proof. Arvinder and Daljit were both drivers working in Dubai Nova. Frustrated by the name calling, their brothers decided to collect proof of their innocence; meeting the company's Directors Mr. Ajay Sharma, who provided documents of their employment and even mentioned that both Arvinder and Daljit were good employees of Dubai Nova and Dubai Care respectively.

Going deep into the Sajaa Camps, we meet their colleagues who vouched for their whereabouts on that fateful night; apparently Arjinder was leaving for India on 12th January (three days after the crime occurred near those camps on January 9 2009). Arrested along with his roommate Daljit Singh- who had been driving a Grade 4 vehicle for Care Dubai that particular night, we learnt that Daljit's card was punched out at 6.00 pm on the fateful Friday. Jaswinder Singh a co-worker explained "If Daljit got off at 6.00 pm in Dubai; he would have had to charter a private helicopter to make it back to the camps by 8.00 pm, which is the estimated time of the murder". He also reiterated that both boys were non-drinkers and Daljit was a vegetarian.

Procuring Mr. Sharma's documentation of 'employment' the brothers of Arvinder and Daljit, they handed it over to the legal teams, to assist them in swiftly build up their defence. Going into the corners of Punjab, we spoke to co-workers arrested alongside the 17 for the same crime- they too vouched for their innocence. The defence teams are also seeking information from friends and colleagues for Harjinder Sital Singh who worked on the ships, Dhrampal and Ram Singh trained masons who also worked as daily wage labourers. If anyone can find proof to support the boys, we request you to provide this to the Sharjah Police or Shajah Jail Authority, who are going beyond the call of duty to assist.

The Boys are not Bootleggers -<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tk4i8oVAXjY>

Sharing spaces with 17 families in rustic villages of North India, living their countdown has been heart-breaking. Watching them as mere yo-yos in the hands of politicians and institutions who picked up and



dropped their hopes indiscriminately. Thanks to the support of Indian Media (Punjab TV / Tribune / Times of India) the families found strength in numbers and are working towards a common cause. These families have one request as they seek for proof of then 17 men's innocence. As they build on their defence, they are requesting anyone who has any information that can guide or assist this case or their lawyers, please inform the Sharjah Police, The Sharjah Court of Appeal or even the Sharjah Jails, have been super cooperative on this issue.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5oPQw7rC7ow>

Visiting the families during Diwali, we found some families hopeful; Harjinder Singh's widowed mother was even planning a family wedding, assuming naïvely the courts would release her son in time for it. Ranjeet Kaur, had gone from being a poor uneducated housewife, finding fire within herself- to tackle the tensions in her village, the socio-political groups and the media with equal aplomb. Pairelal who had been skeptical earlier, started showing deeper belief in the systems after his visit to Subhan in Sharjah Prisons. The media, the community, the power in numbers gave them first-hand experience of a transparent Islamic Court has given them the strength to hope again.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Z7QgaL-ITs>