

INDIA

The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, organizer of groundbreaking visits by U.S. activists to Russia, has announced a film festival and conference to be held in India.

The lesbian and gay Asian organization Trikone, and Frameline, the producer of San Francisco's Gay Film Festival, are co-organizing the event.



India's Council of Medical Research has announced clinical trials to test the ability of ancient herbal drugs and root extracts to fight HIV.

Ten drugs will be tested on HIV-positive people to see if they slow or halt the replication of the virus.

The drugs come from the pharmacopeia of the ancient school of Ayurvedic medicine.

INTERNATIONAL

The 1994 World AIDS Day theme, "Focus on the Family," embraces a definition of family quite distinct from that used by the "pro-family" groups that oppose queers around the world.

In a press release, the World Health Organization, sponsor of the annual Dec. 1 event, stated: "[Our] concept of family is not limited to relationships of blood, marriage, sexual partnership or adoption. It extends to a broad range of groups whose bonds are based on feelings of trust, mutual support and a shared destiny.

"This means," the agency said, "that groups of street children, sex-worker collectives and self-help circles of drug injectors are 'families.' So are religious associations or support groups of people living with HIV and AIDS."



About 13 million people worldwide are thought to be HIV-positive or to have AIDS.

Typical World AIDS Day events include concerts, marches, workshops, media programs, theater performances and condom promotions.

MEXICO

Three thousand people marched against AIDS in Mexico City on May 28 in conjunction with the 11th International AIDS Candlelight Memorial and Mobilization.

The group walked from the Chaypultepec Lions Esplanade, down Reforma and Hidalgo Avenues, to a rally at the Juarez Semicircle.

At the rally, writer Carlos Monsivais denounced the AIDS "disinformation promulgated by right-wing 'phobes' and condemned homophobia as "intolerance that...negates the humanity of those who are different."

Marco Antonio Osoria of the Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS called on candidates in the Aug. 21 presidential election to state their positions on AIDS issues.



About 40 gay activists gathered in Mexicali for three days last month for the Second Gay and Lesbian Conference in Northwest Mexico.

Talks centered on networking with smaller cities, Stonewall 25, human rights abuses, transsexualism, and the recent murders of some 25 gay leaders and transvestites in Chiapas.

Since the revolt in Chiapas earlier this year, the state government has turned over many new

leaves, and Interim Gov. Javier Lopez Moreno recently invited persecuted gays and lesbians who have left Chiapas to come home, promising protection from hate crimes.

Conference delegates came from the states of Baja California, Sinaloa and Chiapas, as well as Mexico City. Gay groups represented included Grupo ¿Y Qué?, Club Oyeme, Grupo Hipocampo, Grupo Lesbico di Tijuana, Grupo Gay Culiacan, El Closet de Sor Juana, and Hombres Homosexuales de PRT.

Mexicali, a border city, is the capital of Baja California Norte.



Queer and AIDS groups in the Baja California cities of Tijuana, Ensenada and Mexicali marked the 11th International AIDS Candlelight Memorial and Mobilization on May 22 with distributions of condoms and pamphlets in city centers.

AIDS Project Tijuana head Enrique Alejandro Garcia told reporters Baja has at least double the 550 AIDS cases counted by authorities.

"Everyone knows the numbers kept by our authorities are out-of-synch with reality," he said. Seven thousand condoms and 10,000 pamphlets were distributed statewide.



Activists in Tijuana confirmed May 25 that drag queens are routinely arrested when they walk on the street in any section of the city except the red-light district.

"If they go on Revolution Avenue (the main tourist street), they'll be apprehended before walking a block," one activist said.

Transvestites are tolerated in the red-light district, the activists said, because police can't always distinguish them from female prostitutes. Prostitution is legal in Tijuana.

RUSSIA

Gay and lesbian activists in Moscow and St. Petersburg will hold a week of queer pride events, June 16 to 22, in St. Petersburg.

Activities will include classical music, dance and theater performances, sightseeing tours, video screenings, workshops, and a march on Nevsky Prospect, the city's main street.

SCOTLAND

The Church of Scotland said May 26 that it still considers queer sex "contrary to God's will for humankind."

The announcement followed heavy debate at the church's General Assembly.

However, attendees did agree that gay men and lesbians should not be discriminated against.

SLOVENIA

Kekec is a new monthly gay newspaper published in Ljubljana, Slovenia, by the gay men's group Magnus.

It offers news, lifestyle features, counseling, fun, horoscopes and cartoons, editors say.

SPAIN

An employee of Iberia Airlines has lost a lawsuit against the company for its refusal to provide spousal flight passes to his male lover.

The case was dismissed by an industrial tribunal in Madrid, which said a marital relationship "can only exist between a man and a woman."

Compiled by Rex Wockner

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My pledge for 1994: To donate/invest at least 10% of my commissions back into the lesbian and gay community.