

Renu Mehta meets Shivani Singh, the new Miss India-Canada

AS far as beauty queens go, she was to the moment born. When her name was announced as the new Miss India-Canada, Shivani Singh smiled broadly, put her hands to her face in disbelief, and then gracefully bent her head to accept the crown from the chief guest, film actress Raveena Tandon.

The 24-year-old Mississauga, Ontario, resident says she entered the contest to be able to tell her grandchildren one day that she had participated in the pageant. "My only goal was to accept the challenge, have fun, meet new people and to do my best," she says. Shivani competed for the title with 16 other contestants in the glamorous 12th Annual Miss India-Canada pageant held at the International Plaza Hotel. But it was the judges who were put to the test to decide who was first among equals, as each contestant went through the Indian costume and evening gown rounds.

It was the talent contest that brought out Shivani's uniqueness. Breaking away from the usual 'Kathak' and Bharat Natyam routines and

the latest film music and dance sequences, Shivani did dance — but in a very unusual way. Borrowing songs from popular films like 'Mr Natwarlal' and 'Silsila', she dressed as a man in a white 'kurta-pyjama' with a coloured scarf tied around her waist, and went on to give a spectacular impersonation of Bachchan dancing to the songs. She had the thousand-odd audience clapping, cheering and reminiscing. And so, it came as no great surprise to them when Shivani was crowned the queen for 2002.

HUMILITY AND PURPOSE

Shivani is a recent business graduate from the Schulich School of Business at York University and speaks five languages. She has volunteered extensively as a teaching assistant, summer camp volunteer and with the Afterschool Homework Program at the Mississauga Community Centre. She is now studying for her second degree in education. She wants to balance her responsibilities by being a role model for young South Asians and becoming more involved in community events. Shivani will also actively participate in promoting the goals of the Canadian Cancer Society and the

INDIAN BEAUTY AMONG THE MAPLES



Association of Women of India in Canada.

The entertainment industry beckons as well, and she plans to try her hand in this field — just like many former queens like Kamal Sidhu, Ruby Bhatia, Rishma Malik.

Her message to future contestants: "Join the pageant with a relaxed attitude and have fun. A positive outlook will help you enjoy each step of the way. Then it will be an experience you will remember for the rest of your life."

GOT COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS? E-MAIL US AT renu@timesgroup.com WITH 'SPOTLIGHT — SHIVANI SINGH' IN THE SUBJECT LINE