

Union City school hosts conference on Kashmir

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By Sara Dunn

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UNION CITY – No one who attended the conference "Global Terrorism and Kashmir in its International Context," sponsored by the Indo-American Community Federation at James Logan High School, expected to find the answer to the long-term conflict between India and Pakistan over the region of Kashmir in one afternoon.

The idea, according to organizer Jeevan Zutshi, was to continue the search for a solution to the conflict between the two countries, the effects of which are a rising death toll and tide of terrorism.

The conference opened with comments from Congressman Pete Stark, who used his time to comment on the diversity of his constituency.

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"We have a president who probably thinks Kashmir is a sweater," Stark said.

The congressman didn't give the conference audience of close to 50 individuals any definitive comments on the conflict or propose a solution to the fighting, but he said he would lend his "consistent objection (in Congress) to provide weapons" to foreign countries.

"We can't broker weapons and then broker peace," he said.

Even though the epicenter of the conflict over Kashmir is half a world away, Dave Zeigler, who serves on Fremont's Human Relations Commission, felt it was important to attend the conference because of the large Indo-American and Pakistani-American populations in the city.

The commission "periodically will discuss interethnic issues," he said, adding, "We tend to think of the Indian population as monolithic, but there is an ethnic breakdown."

Zeigler said going to conferences like this can help form "a unified American community – we can maintain our own identities but be united for good things."

After Stark finished his comments, Professor D.R. SarDesai, who has taught in the Indian History department at the University of California, Los Angeles, for the last 35 years, gave a history of the conflict, which has resulted in two wars between India and Pakistan.

Other speakers included San Francisco State University Prof. M.M. Zaki a former brigadier in the Indian Army, who gave a 15-minute presentation titled "The Many Faces of Terrorism in

Jammu and Kashmir" and another presentation, titled "Kashmir – a Multiethnic State; Kashmiri Hindu Point of View," by organizer Zutshi.

Before the conference began, Zutshi said the tension between Pakistani-Americans and Indo-Americans inside the United States is not as intense.

Both these groups, he said, "are very reasonable and would like to see a solution."