

Sixth Unity Dinner a big draw

April 6, 2007
India Ahead

A CORRESPONDENT

The Global Organization of Persons of Indian Origin-San Francisco Bay Area joined hands with the Indo-American Community Federation to host the annual Unity Dinner, a sold-out event held at Hilton Newark/Fremont.

This sixth annual event was sponsored by a host of Indian-American and mainstream organizations including Chinese, Hispanic, Philippine and Vietnamese organizations. Community activist Jeevan Zutshi conceived after 9/11 to celebrate and promote unity among diverse groups in California.

Other organization sponsors included the National Federation of Indian American organizations, Federation of Indian Associations, American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin, Citizens for Better Community, Fremont Chamber of Commerce, Fremont Education Foundation, Ohlone College Foundation, Citizens for Better Community, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Alameda County, and the Hispanic Community Affairs Council.

The keynote speaker and chief guest was John Garamendi, lieutenant governor of California.

Many public officials attended, including state Senator Ellen Corbett, state assembly members Alberto Torrico and Mary Hayashi; Alameda county supervisors, mayors of Fremont, Union City, Newark, Milpitas and Hayward, council members and elected and appointed board members from almost all areas.

"The event aims to bring policy makers together with the diverse community leadership," said IACF founder Zutshi, who stressed the need for all citizens to get involved in bringing community together.

Six people were honored at the event for their

achievements and contributions to the community. Anmol Mahal, director of California Medical Association, was chosen for the leadership in medicine award.

Anmol Mahal, a prominent gastroenterologist, is the first Indian American to become the president of this organization that has more than 35,000 mainstream physician members.

Garrett Yee, an Ohlone Community College trustee and a Chinese leader, was honored as the Citizen of the Year. Yee, a lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve who recent-

ly returned from Iraq, was presented with the award for his commitment to public service.

Other honoraries were Cathy Howard and Sandi Soliday (education); Roger Bakshi (business); Gaby Machuca (small business promoter); Burrito Loco, Gary Robinson (community service) Garamendi commented the commitment of the organizers for unity in a diverse society. As the diversity in the community increases, the need for such events also increases, he pointed out.

Other speakers included Doug Treadway, Ohlone College president. Newark Unified School District trustee Nina Moore spoke about creating a hate-free community.

The performances of Chinese folk dances, Chinese martial arts, Mexican folk ballet, classical Indian dances and Bhangra thrilled the audience.

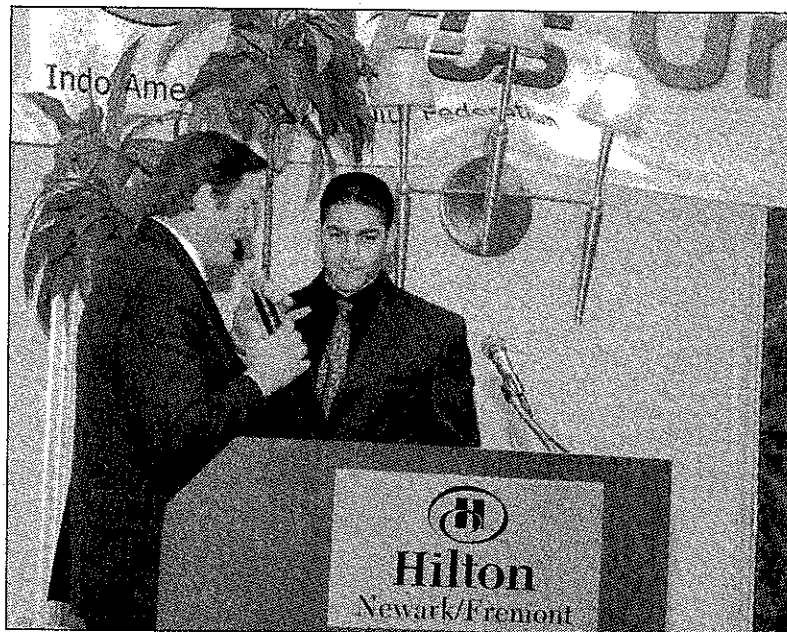
"The event was a grand success, beyond our imagination," Zutshi said, adding that the event might inspire similar events in their areas.

The first Unity Dinner was held in January 2002; it has since attracted several public officials each year.

"After 9/11, I saw a need for an event like this which can bring diverse public officials together with diverse community leadership. It gives the community an opportunity to understand different cultures come closer and also meet their elected representatives in a social setting," Zutshi said earlier.

"We need to look at things that are happening in our backyard," Zutshi said. He stressed the need for Indians to be more involved in issues like homelessness, hospitals and schools that need community cooperation.

Holding Unity dinners is a way of reminding us that we need to be involved in this community," he said.

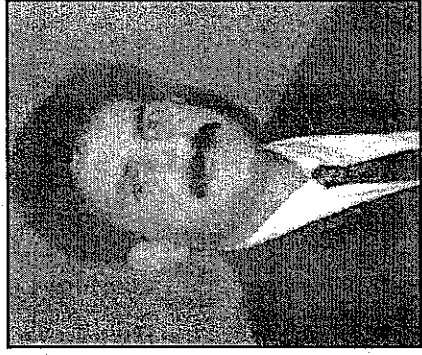


■ Rahul Zutshi, IACF youth vice-president, with California's Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi, left

2/2007

World Hindu Conference discuss global Hindu issues

Contributes towards awakening of Hindu Society



BY SANJAY KAUL

Boston (USA)

It was a very successful World Hindu Conference in Prayag. Over 200,000 delegates from over 100,000 villages, towns, cities of India representing all Indian languages, religious traditions / practices, including leaders in religious, social, business and other walks of life participated in this conference. Also, NRIs from over 100 cities abroad participated in this global conference. This was the biggest congregation of Hindus in recent times.

The previous two World Hindu Conferences I and II were also organized by Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) the first in January 1966 and the second in January 1979.

The conference was unique, perhaps once in a life time, opportunity future course of action.

Agenda 1: Global Hindu Youths and future generations of Hindus

Goal: WHC to be able to provide the necessary global network to support personal, family and social life of Hindus

Agenda 2: Global Hindu Heritage Education

Goal: WHC to be able to become the resource center to provide authentic educational materials to Hindus

Agenda 3: Status of Hindu Communities

Goal: WHC to be able to collect & dis-

to meet, interact and collectively think about the Global Hindu issues as well as hear some accomplished Hindu world leaders at the Triveni Sangam in Prayag at the time of Ardhra Kumbha. This was a unique opportunity to participate and contribute towards awakening of Hindu society.

Today's Hindu Society, particularly in India and surrounding countries, faces numerous problems. Increasing Islamic and Maoist terrorism, ongoing cultural invasion by Western nations / cultures, unethical and unlawful religious conversions, threats of secession and further division of the country and internal strife and conflicts aided by unscrupulous politicians among various segments of Hindus are but a few examples. The misappropriation by the State Governments of the Real Estates of temples and the funds received by major Hindu temples, and channeling of the major portions of these funds to support non-Hindu causes like running madarasas and providing Haj subsidies, has left many of the temples and their priests in bad shape.

The cow-slaughter continues unabated in many states despite legal ban on such slaughterers because of the willful neglect and poor implementation of the laws by the Government. The dream of building a beautiful Ram temple at Ram Janma Bhoomi bourse accurate information about Hindu issues, as well as collected and disburse resources to help Hindus in trouble

Agenda 4: Hindu human Rights

Goal: WHC to be able to take up the issues of Hindu Human Rights violations to the appropriate government and international agencies dealing with human rights violations.

Agenda 5: Raising Community Awareness for Hindu Identity

Goal: One of the most important goals for WHC is to make every Hindu feel proud of his/her Hindu Heritage (Hindu Parampara)

still remains unfulfilled and Shri Ramlala continues to be housed in a small hut.

Under such circumstances, VHP had resolved to hold this Hindu Conference with a view to awaken the Hindu society and rekindle its self confidence so that Hindus can truly understand and assert their collective power in re-establishing Hindu values in India.

Hindus have to secure their survival at all costs. They have to face up to the threats to their holistic way of life. This conference will address questions like: Who can save the society? How to face the challenges?

Accordingly, the conference theme was chosen to be "Yato Dharmasfato Jayah" meaning: "where there is Dharma, there is Victory."

Also, on this occasion VHP International hosted special sessions of all the delegates coming from different countries. Following subjects very relevant to the needs of Hindus living abroad were discussed:

1. Hindu Identity and the importance of Hindu cultural experiences for international youth community

2. The role of Global Hindus in repositioning India among the leaders of the world.

The International delegates had an opportunity to deliberate on the following Global Hindu Agenda during the conference and chart out the

Agenda 6: Religion Conversions

Goal: WHC to be able to work with the Hindu community to provide necessary support to avoid being the victims of their ignorance or helplessness.

(Mr. Sanjay Kaul, resident of Boston, Massachusetts, USA was invited by the VHP to attend World Hindu Conference III from February 10-13, 2007 at the Triveni Sangam in Prayag (Allahabad, U.P), India. Sanjay Kaul is the past president of Kashmiri Overseas Association of USA and Governing Council Member of VHP of America.)