



SAMVAD

SHRI VISHWA NIKETAN

श्री विश्व निकेतन

No. SM-1713/2074 Ashwin Shukla 11, Vik.Samvat 2074, Yugabda 5119, 1 October, 2017

FESTIVALS are reflection of our social values. Celebrating them together is a way in which to imbibe values related to the welfare of our people. Let each of us resolve that by 2022, we will contribute as a citizen to the welfare of our country and I assure you, we will achieve great heights together. - Pradhan Mantri Narendra Modi in one of the Ramleelas in Delhi on Dushahra Day.

1. RASHTRAPATIJI VISITED DEEKSHA-BHUMI AND JAIN SITES IN AND AROUND NAGPUR



Rashtrapati Ram Nath Kovind in his maiden Nagpur tour on September 22 visited

Buddhist and Jain sites in and around Nagpur. Situated in West Nagpur's sprawling fields in Bajaj Nagar, Deekshabhumi is the place where Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, the architect of our Constitution and pioneer of human equality, embraced Buddhism way back in 1956 along with thousands of his followers. This day which falls on Dusserah festival, is celebrated every year as 'Dhamma Parivartan Divas'. Lakhs of Buddhists come to Nagpur from far and near and pay their respects to this 'Bodhisattva' of modern times. Pouring out his emotions in a message, Rashtrapatiji wrote in the Visitor's Book: "Param Poojaniya Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar laid the foundation of equality and social revolution here on this sacred land. This pious Deekshabhumi inspires the entire world for sacrifice, peace and humanity. I am deeply satisfied after visiting this place." Rashtrapatiji was accompanied by Maharashtra Rajyapal Ch Vidyasagar Rao, Mukhya Mantri Devendra Fadanvis and Kendriya Mantri Nitin Gadkari and Ramdas Athavale.pg2

2: VIJAYADASHAMI 2017 UDBODHAN BY SARSANGHCHALAK DR. MOHANJI BHAGWAT



Rashtriya Swyamsevak Sangh celebrated its 92rd birth anniversary with udbodhan of Sarsanghchalak Shri Mohan Bhagwat to the swyamsevaks assembled in Resham Bag after a five kilometers pathsanchalan around Nagpur. At start, Shri Bhagwat remembered Swami Vivekananda, his renowned disciple Bhagini Nivedita and eminent Kushak Bakula Renpoche for their contribution in establishing a national vision of Bharat towards global humanity. Shri Bhagwat said that our Sanskriti, that binds us together in a common thread despite our different languages, regions, sects, religions, castes, customs, etc; and the source of this Sanskriti, our eternal life values that envision humanity as a global family, is our collective bonding spirit. That life vision of nationhood takes shape through collective experiences we have gained on this land from the time immemorial, collective efforts we have taken and collective understanding and realisation of the Truth obtained from those experiences. Due to our initiative, there is a recognition and acceptance of Science of Yoga and our approach towards environment, which gives a feeling of great satisfaction and pride about our ancient heritage. ..pg2

RASHTRAPATIJI VISITED DEEKSHA-BHUMI



Another Buddhist site Rashtrapati Ji paid visit to was Dragon Palace temple at Kamptee. Kovindji inaugurated the Vipassana Meditation Centre here built by Ogawa society of Japan that runs this famous temple. Rashtrapati Ji said that Vipassana is form of meditation that purifies one's soul and enables one to lead a tension-free life giving a sense of fulfilment. He also visited the historical Shantinath Digambar Jain temple during the ongoing Sanyam Swarna Mahotsava commemorating the 50th anniversary of initiation of Acharya Vidya Sagarji Maharaj in the Jain sect. The Jain seer advised Rashtrapati Ji to spread 'Bharatiyata' to make the people of the country and the world to know the age-old culture and traditions of our ancient nation. The Jain seer urged him to insist on using the name

"Bharat" instead of India. "Rashtra ki bhasha Hindi ho, India nahi, Bharat Kaho" he said.

VIJAYADASHAMI 2017 UDBODHAN BY SARSANGHCHALAK



In the space science brave achievements by our scientists one after another are proving our intellectual power. Through initiatives like Swachhata Abhiyan a sense of duty among citizens is inculcated, ensuring their participation. The provocative actions and propaganda of the separatists is effectively controlled by curbing their illegal financial sources and exposing their linkages with anti-national terrorist forces.

There is an urgent need to take the benefits of development to the masses in the entire State of Jammu and Kashmir, including the Jammu and Ladakh regions, with-

out any discrimination and through transparent and clean governance. Nation already has been facing the problem of illegal Bangladeshi migrants and now Rohingyas who are chased away from Myanmar have infiltrated and many more are ready to migrate illegally. They are being driven out of Myanmar mainly due to their continuous violent and criminal separatist activities and linkages with the terrorist groups. Any decision regarding them should be taken by keeping in mind that they will definitely be a threat to national security and integrity.

For controlling corruption, bringing speedy economic development, introduction of welfare schemes to the last person standing, like Jan Dhan, MUDRA, Gas Subsidy, agricultural insurance etc and some bold decisions are taken at the government level. Yet, the requirement of an integrated and holistic policy, which will take into consideration the diversity and various requirements of the nation; will address the needs of industry, trade, agriculture and environment together, will safeguard the interests of all from big, medium and small industries, to small retailers, farmers and landless labours, is very much felt. Our Niti Ayog and economic advisers of the States will have to come out of the same old economic 'isms', and will have to integrate the most up-to-date economic experiences with the ground reality of our nation....pg3

“Through initiatives like Swachhata Abhiyan a sense of duty among citizens is inculcated, ensuring their

VIJAYADASHAMI 2017 UDBODHAN

Agriculture is the large sector in Bharat. Our farmer, who is by nature, feeds not just his family but the entire nation, is in pain today. New technology and traditional non-polluting methods should be amalgamated for farmers so that they can do farming with less investment and without getting into debt trap. The purchases of crops based on the support price will have to be ensured by the Government. Organic farming, mixed farming and farming with cow-based animal husbandry should become a new trend.

New education policy should be carved out in such a manner so that education becomes affordable and accessible even to children and youth living in remote jungles and villages. The education should inculcate the qualities of self-confidence, desire for excellence, knowledge, studiousness and hard work in each and every student along with the values of character, politeness, sensitivity, discretion and responsibility. To achieve the desired results, entire society will have to get rid of the contradictions of evil practices and conduct and imbibe the virtues of cognate and egalitarian behaviour. We all will have to commit ourselves and be active after refining all aspects of our life with this approach.

A message from Sant Nirmal Das ji from Jalandar who was to be the Chief Guest for the program was read out. Notable among the dignitaries present were, for Deputy PM Shri LK Advani, Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis and Union Minister Nitin Gadkari. While entering the 93rd year of its inception, Sangh is trying to build a nation-wide conglomeration of Karyakartas (activists) who have the clear understanding of our Rashtra, who are daring enough to articulate that with the same clarity, who are cherishing the devotion for this sacred and unified motherland and sensitive and affectionate towards each and every member of this family, the courage and sacrifice of our ancestors is the foundation of whose heart, and taking this nation to the pinnacle of its glory is the only inspiration of his collective aspirations and actions.

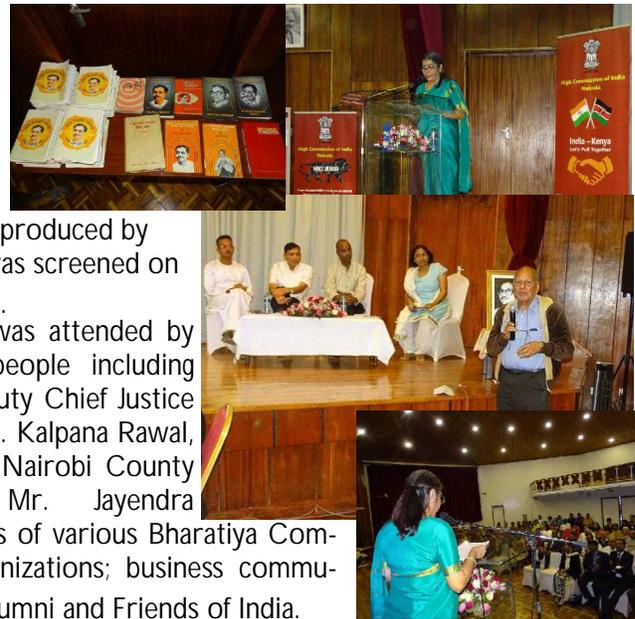


3. BIRTH CENTENARY YEAR OF PANDIT DEENDAYAL UPADHYAYA IN NAIROBI

High Commission of Bharat in Nairobi organized a grand event to celebrate the 100th Birth Anniversary Year of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya at Apa Pant Auditorium in Nairobi on 24 September 2017. A panel discussion on "Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya: His Life and Message, His Doctrine of 'Integral Humanism' & its Relevance" was moderated by Ms. Anita Patel and panelists were Mr. Kavingo Matundu, Dr. Prakash Heda (both from Nairobi) and Mr. Divyesh Parmar from Mombasa. Panelists focused on the relevance of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's philosophy of 'Integral Humanism' and its significance and application in India as well as other parts of the world.

A short documentary on "Life and Times of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya" produced by DD News was screened on the occasion.

The event was attended by over 120 people including former Deputy Chief Justice of Kenya Ms. Kalpana Rawal, Member of Nairobi County Assembly Mr. Jayendra Malde; heads of various Bharatiya Community organizations; business community, ITEC alumni and Friends of India.



4. CELEBRATION OF BIRTH CENTENARY OF DEENDAYAL JI AT INDIA HOUSE



High Commission of Bharat in the UK celebrated the 100th birth anniversary of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya at India House on September 25. High Commissioner Y. K. Sinha spoke to those present at the special ceremony about Pandit Deendayal ji's philosophy of 'Antodaya' which literally means the "rise of the last person". In his special address, Chandrakant Sharma spoke of Pandit Upadhyaya's contribution to socio-political philosophy in the form of his idea of 'Ekatma Manavad Darshan' – the philosophy of integral humanism.

5. PM NARENDRA MODI RELEASES POSTAGE STAMP ON LORD RAM



Pradhan Mantri Narendra Modi on September 22 released a postage stamp on different aspects of Lord Ram's life at the historic Tulsi Manas Mandir Varanasi, and said he was a source of inspiration for every individual. "There have been many stamps on Lord Ram, but this is the first of its kind stamp, which depicts different aspects of his life. This has not been done in the past. I am happy that I have got the opportunity to do this from the holy soil of Manas," he said. High Commission



of Bharat, London organized the UK launch of commemorative stamps on 'RAMAYANA' at India House on 22nd September. This followed immediately after Pradhan Mantri Narendra Modi released the special stamps in Varanasi.



6. DURGA PUJA – UAE

Festivity and gaiety continue to mark the Durga Puja festival as expatriates from Bharat and Bangladesh celebrate the homecoming of their deity Durga. The festival reached its high point on Shashti day on September 26 with the community observing the Saptami, Ashtami and Navami days of auspiciousness. The festival culminated in Dashami on September 30 which is also called Dussehra, when the deity is bid farewell. One of the most vibrant aspects of the final day celebrations is the Sindhur Khela ritual which marks the return of the deity to her marital home. An occasion that symbolises exultation mingled with sadness, the deity is offered auspicious vermilion as a symbol of her married status. Women take the vermilion as a blessing from the deity and smear each other with the vibrant colour — a manifestation of their married status. Sunando Mukhopadhyaya, general secretary of Bharatiya Bangiya Parishad that organises a gathering of more than 1,500 multinational visitors at the Sindhi Ceremonial Hall, Dubai, said: "Durga Puja is an occasion for us to integrate communities. We have been celebrating this festival for 31 years. We have 200 Bengali families who are integral to the festival, but our auditorium is open to everyone. We receive Bharatiyas from all states of Bharat. At least 15-20 per cent of the people who visit us during puja are from Bangladesh as this is a place where they get to relive their culture."

Women take the vermilion as a blessing from the deity and smear each other with the vibrant colour ..

7. BHARATIYAS SHOULD SPEAK IN MOTHER TONGUE - VP



Bharatiyas should speak in their mother tongue more often, Upa-Rashtrapati M Venkaiah Naidu said

at a ministry of culture event to commemorate the birth centenary of music legend M S Subbulakshmi on Septmebr 19. Advising Bharatiyas to take pride in their native language and attach less importance to English, Naidu also said

'Amma' and 'Ammi' were far more evocative ways to address one's mother than the English 'mommy' preferred by many. Naidu, who had prior to his appointment as Upa-Rashtrapati advocated learning 'Rashtra Bhasha' Hindi claiming it was spoken by the majority, said more people should take pride in their native tongue and only speak English when interacting with foreigners.

8. RARE SIXTH CENTURY STONE SCULPTURE OF SHIVA FOUND IN KASHMIR

Workers dredging a water reservoir stumbled upon a rare one-faced stone sculpture of Lord Shiva dating back to the 6th century CE in Harwan area in the outskirts Srinagar. The oval-shaped bust is nearly 2.5 feet in height. Harwan area is a known heritage site and has archaeological importance. One of the oldest Budhhist sites is also located there.

9. NO MORE BOATS! SOON ROAD TO LEAD PILGRIMS TO GUJ'S KRISHNA SHRINE

In less than three years from now, pilgrims visiting Lord Krishna's kingdom in Beyt Island in Gujarat will be able to reach by road. The highways ministry will build a four-lane cable-stayed signature bridge over the Arabian Sea and improve the approach roads at a cost of Rs 765 crore. Dwarka is located about 140 km from Jamnagar. The mythical palace of Lord Krishna is believed to be located on Beyt Dwarka which is equally famous for its archaeological, historical and spiritual importance. This palace was believed to be the residence of Lord Sri Krishna and is better known as Dwarkadhish Temple.

10. APPEAL TO GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH FOR SAFETY OF HINDU REFUGEES FROM MYANMAR

A delegation of Human Rights Defense International (HRDI) met the Deputy High Commissioner of the Bangladesh High Commission, Mr. Rokebul Haque at Delhi on September 29. The delegation consisted of Justice (Retd.) M.C. Garg, Advocate Rajesh Gogna, Secretary General (HRDI), Prof Bidyut Chakrabarty and Advocate Rijul Singh Uppal gave a representation on the safety of Hindu refugees from Myanmar and requested the Government of Bangladesh to create safe zones for the Hindu refugees from Myanmar as they are in very small numbers and have become soft targets for the Rohingya Muslims present in these camps in larger numbers. The Deputy High Commissioner assured the delegation that Government of Bangladesh is taking steps to locate Hindus and that Government of Bangladesh will take all necessary steps to ensure that no atrocities are allowed to take place on Hindus.

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11. ON A TANDEM, BLIND GIRL PULLS OFF HIMALAYAN FEAT

All of 15 years old, Manasvi Baheti recently rode a tandem with her father from Manali in Himachal Pradesh to the Khardung La Mountain pass in Jammu & Kashmir. The tough 500-kilometre expedition through the Himalayas would be a formidable challenge for all but the most ardent adventure enthusiasts, but it proved a liberating experience for the Class X student who beat her 100% visual impairment to accomplish it. Manasvi and her father Kailash's adventure was part of an initiative that has been touted as Bharat's first blind-and-sighted tandem

expedition in the Himalayas, and they were one of 10 pairs who rode through Manali-Leh-Khardung La in less than two weeks. Manasvi was the youngest participant. The expedition was organised by an organisation named Adventure Beyond Barriers Foundation (ABBF), which aims to promote inclusion by enabling people with disabilities and those without to participate in adventure sports together. Founded in 2014, ABBF works across five verticals — trekking, scuba diving, paragliding, and mountaineering.

"Our purpose is to establish a connect, build empathy and, most importantly, remove the awkwardness associated with 'disability'," ABBF founder Divyanshu Ganatra said. He was all praise for the expedition's youngest participant, saying, "Manasvi is a spirited girl. This is a tough ride even for professionals, but the way she overcame the challenges was phenomenal." Manasvi's mother Sanjeetha said, "Cycling was something Manasvi enjoyed as a child. We had to look for a tandem for a very long time."

12. HINDUS HOLD CEREMONIES FOR ACTIVE VOLCANO MT. AGUNG TO PRAY THAT ISLAND IS SPARED

Balinese Hindus have been conducting a number of ceremonies at Mt. Agung, trying to prevent a deadly eruption from the volcano, while Muslims across the island have been getting together and likewise praying that the island is spared from a great natu-

ral disaster. Agung, a volcano located in Karangasem, Bali, has shown increased activity with its alert status getting upgraded two times in the past week. Local residents living near the volcano have been evacuated in anticipation of a possible eruption.

Late on September 20, a Tilem -- or new moon -- ceremony was conducted by Balinese Hindu communities around the island, while a larger ceremony was also held at Bali's mother temple, Besakih, on the slopes the volcano.

13. FOREX KITTY HITS \$400BN FOR FIRST TIME

Bharat's forex reserves crossed the \$400-billion mark for the first time on September 15. The latest \$100 billion has been added to the reserves in three and a half years after they crossed the \$300-billion level on April 2014.

14. IIT-MADRAS' NO WEAR & TEAR TECH TO SOAR GDP

Scientists of the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras and National Thermal Power Corporation Ltd, the country's power giant, have succeeded in developing a path breaking and innovative material capable of rejuvenating considerably the country's Gross Domestic Product. "This innovation will help us to minimise the wear and tear as well as damages caused to components of the machines," Dr Sundara Ramaprabhu, Head, Alternative Energy & Nanotechnology Lab, IIT-Madras who led the team of research scholars in the three-year long research said. Beilstein

Journal of Nanotechnology, an international peer-reviewed journal has published the findings of the IIT-Madras team in its latest issue. Nano – lubricants may soon replace all kind of lubrication oils in various engineering applications like motor vehicle engines and other mechanical systems. "This is an ongoing research. Right now we have developed nano-lubricants for power generators. More such products are on the anvil," explained Dr Sundara Ramaprabhu, who had developed nano materials for treating effluent water and purifying polluted river waters.

15. FIVE 'S' FOR PROSPEROUS NATION

Two-day Sewa Sangamam showcasing the service activities of various voluntary organisations associated with the Rashtriya Sewa Bharati was organised at a Nalli Kuppusami Vivekanandan Vidyalaya from September 18-19. Lt. Governor of Puducherry Dr. Kiran Bedi and Swami Vimurthananda of Ramkrishna Mutt inspired the workers engaged in the sewa activities. Swami Vimurthananda said the Sewa Bharati workers are not only selfless volunteers but also self-disciplined. RSS Akhil Bharatiya Sewa Pramukh Parag Abhiyankar said sewa is not the new thing to our country, in every heart of citizen it has been there. Sewa attitude is not inculcated through Veda reciting; it is the Hindu dharma tradition that has developed this attitude. Ups and downs in the society will be there, but discrimination should have no place, he said. Dr Kiran Bedi threw light on five thoughts which are needed for the nation. She stressed on five 'S' – sanskar, sewa, swachata, sangathan and satsang. When sanskar enters one, he or she will not cheat and one will earn a place in the society. Second 'S' is sewa-action. If any action is done with prerna, then a healthy nation is possible. Third 'S' is swachata. Cleanliness is must for personal, community, society and nation. Fourth 'S' is sangathan – to see results we need sangathan (organisation). Transformation comes from sangathan. Every member can make the sangathan strong or weak. Sangathan is based on sanskar. Fifth 'S' is satsang, which begins from home. Praying together is satsang. Families which eat together, pray together always stay together. To make a healthy nation we need five S and it should start from us. On practicing five 'S' one 'S' will follow that is shanty – that brings together.

'S' – sanskar, sewa, swachata, sangathan and satsang. When sanskar enters one, he or she will not cheat and one will earn a place in the society. Second 'S' is sewa-action. ...

16. BHARATIYA-AMERICAN COUPLE DONATES USD 250,000 FOR HARVEY RELIEF

Houston residents Amit Bhandari and his wife Arpita Brahmabhatt Bhandari donated USD 250,000 to Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner, on behalf of the Greater Houston Community Foundation for #HurricaneHarvey relief at a private event on September 24. Bhandari is the owner and CEO of the BioUrja Group, an energy and agricultural commodity trading company based out of Houston. The Bharatiya-American community united in its fund raising efforts to carry out relief and rehabilitation after the catastrophic damage caused by hurricane Harvey.

17. ANCIENT BHARATIYA TEXT PUSHES BACK HISTORY OF ZERO BY 500 YEARS

This means that the manuscript predates a 9th century inscription of zero on the wall of a temple in Gwalior, Bharat, which was previously considered to be the oldest recorded example of a zero.

The symbol "0" is a familiar sight, but its origins are far from certain. A recent batch of carbon dating is causing the history of mathematics to be rewritten, as it has discovered zeros dating back to a period 500 years before previously seen. The numbers appear in an ancient Bharatiya text called the Bakhshali manuscript, which consists of 70 leaves of birch bark, filled with mathematics and text in the form of Sanskrit. "It seems to be a training manual for Buddhist monks," says Marcus du Sautoy at the University of Oxford. The manuscript was first discovered by a local farmer in 1881, and was named after the village it was found in, in what is now Pakistan. It's been housed by the University of

Oxford's Bodleian Library since 1902. Now, the manuscript has been carbon dated -and this has immediately upturned commonly held beliefs. It was originally thought that the manuscript was from the 9th century, but the dating methods revealed that the oldest pages are from somewhere between 224 AD and 383 AD. This means that the manuscript predates a 9th century inscription of zero on the wall of a temple in Gwalior, Bharat, which was previously considered to be the oldest recorded example of a zero. Across the text there are hundreds of zeros denoted using a dot. It's this dot that later evolved to be the symbol with a hole in the middle that we know today.

18. MARSHAL ARJAN SINGH: TOUCHING STELLER



In the death of Marshal Arjan Singh (98 year old), on 16th September, a glorious era of the Indian Air Force came to an end. The only IAF officer to have been conferred the rank of the "Marshal of the Indian Air Force", Arjan Singh was also the first IAF officer to have been ranked Air Chief Marshal after he had displayed exemplary leadership to neutralise Pakistan's air offensive in the 1965 war when he was just 46. In the most trying period of the

Indian Air Force he led the force with elan for five years as the IAF chief between 1964 and 1969. Born in 1919, in Lyallpur (Pakistan) he had his education in Montgomery before getting selected for the Empire Pilot training course at RAF Cranwell at a young age of 19 years. After his outstanding services in the 1965 Indo-Pak war his post was not only elevated to that of the Air Chief Marshal, but he also received a Padma Vibhushan.

19. 12TH HINDU MANDIR EXECUTIVES' CONFERENCE

The theme for the conference was: "Hindu Temples and Institutions: Challenges of the 21st Century."

The twelfth HMEC was held in Indianapolis, Indiana from September 15 to 17, 2017. Some 200 adult and youth delegates drawn from over 70 organizations and 4 countries participated in the conference. The theme for the conference was: "Hindu Temples and Institutions: Challenges of the 21st Century." In the inaugural session on 15 September, Swamini Svatomvidyananda Saraswati of Arsha Vijnana Gurukulam provided blessings and painted a vision for HMEC. Dr. Raman Khanna from Hindu American Foundation presented a perspective on Hindu Activism highlighting the theme of 'Who Controls the Past, Controls the Future.' In his inaugural address, Swami Pratyagbodhananda of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam inspired all with a call to action to face the 'Challenges of the 21st Century.'

The plenary sessions on 16 September, set the stage for the rest of the conference. Sessions addressed key challenges through a great line up of speakers: Temple & Institutions of the Future, Fulfilling Our Hopes and Needs, Youth, Young Adult Engagement and Seva as an Inter-Generational Bridge. On 17 September, a Hindu Activism panel called for a united effort by all institutions followed by an Indic Faith panel discussion promoting solidarity of all faiths.

20. US DIPLOMAT BATS FOR BUILDING ON BHARATIYA DIASPORA CONNECTS

American diplomat Jeffrey Sexton on September 22 batted for building on the Bharatiya Diaspora in the US to bolster relations, noting it is becoming more and more active in promoting cross cultural ties. "The biggest connection that we have now is the size of the Indian diaspora in the US. All of the Bharatiyas who have connections with the US now... relatives, friends studying in the US and if we just keep building on this wonderful positive connection between the two countries, it adds such an important dimension to our relationship," Sexton, Acting Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy in New Delhi, said on the sidelines of the inauguration of the Badamtola Ashar Sangha Durga puja and the Great Kolkata Autumn Heritage Festival. The pandal (marquee) represents a slice of America in Kolkata.

HOW BHARATIYA-AMERICANS SHOULDERED HURRICANE HARVEY RELIEF EFFORTS

Excerpt from reporting by Ramesh N Rao

Sewa International coordinated efforts to bring together over 800 volunteers for the critical rescue effort, which has now transitioned into a relief effort. Sewa is active in 20 countries,...

Hurricane Harvey, the costliest natural disaster in US history, slammed the Greater Houston area on 25 August 2017 inundating homes, roads, and buildings, and affected one in four Houstonians, as rain poured in a deluge for almost a week. Thirty-three trillion gallons of water got dumped on the region! The damage was so severe that more than 200,000 homes were destroyed (50,000 in Houston alone), a million cars wrecked, and metro stations, schools, highways and other public facilities flooded. Caught in the hurricane were 150,000 people of Bharatiya origin, with one in six marooned, evacuated or needing rescue. Among them were 247 students from Bharat studying at the University of Houston. Many of these students, motivated

by the rescue efforts by Bharatiya-American teams, joined as volunteers, making their first American experience a truly life-affirming experience. Sewa International coordinated efforts to bring together over 800 volunteers for the critical rescue effort, which has now transitioned into a relief effort. Sewa is active in 20 countries, and has been involved in disaster relief and development work in countries around the world including Colombia, Guyana, Sri Lanka, India, Kenya, and Pakistan. Twenty-five national and local Bharatiya-American organisations have partnered with Sewa as it was the only Indian-American organisation first off the starting block and working on the ground at this scale. Sewa volunteers sprung into action even

though some of their own homes had been flooded and they and their families had to move into friends' homes and hotels. Sewa International raised \$250,000 in the first 10 days. In many areas of the city, volunteers reached distressed people much earlier than a big organisation like the Red Cross did. Volunteers worked shoulder-to-shoulder with the US Coast Guard and other agencies in rescue and relief. With a 24/7 telephone hotline, and a band of dedicated volunteers monitoring social media, Sewa International pitched in with more than its expected weight. Volunteers served hot meals; provided food, water, supplies and medical support; arranged temporary housing; and began helping in cleaning up homes of the underserved and ... pg 10

Pravaas: Shri Saumitra Gokhale Samyojak, Vishwa Vibhag is visiting Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad. Shri Ravikumar sah samyojak will be visiting Singapore.

Visitors: Dr Ritvij from Mauritius.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Ram Setu became a reality because everyone in the Vanara sena collaborated in building a bridge. As a nation, we too have to collaborate and work together for the welfare of our society. – Mahamahim Rashtrapati Ram Nath Kovind in one the Ramleelas in Delhi on Dushara.

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Shubh Deepawali

HOW BHARATIYA-AMERICANS SHOULDERED HURRICANE

economically-challenged minorities – Hispanics, African Americans, Cambodian Americans, senior citizens, and single mothers. Sewa International received support from 17 local Bharatiya organisations which collaborated with, supported and guided the important work of rescue and relief.

Speaking to Kavita Tewary, project coordinator, Houston Chapter, who herself had to be evacuated with her family, and who spent a week in a friend's home, it became clear about how much emotional and physical energy have gone into these rescue and relief efforts. Many of Sewa Houston's volunteers were evacuated from their own homes but continued to work even though their families were in hotels, or staying with relatives or friends. Motivated by the work of Sewa, garba events in this season of Navratri around the US have turned into self-inspired fundraisers. Each of these teams is going around Houston to help homeowners clean up. Sewa International has started counselling services and opened medical clinics to help families cope with the disaster. To ensure that the families are not forgotten in this time of stress and worry, the volunteers organised activities to keep children engaged as the parents struggled to put their homes and lives back in order. In times of crises, people can do amazing work. Shailaja Dixit, living in California, shared her experience on Facebook: "I am sharing this because I am grateful this happened. And I am grateful to the people who made this happen.

Ramesh Rao, professor, Department of Communication, Columbus State University, is a member of the Sewa media team.

- Swarajyamag.com, Sep 22, 2017.