

NEWS IN BRIEF

Missing doctor's family hires Ed Vasquez



Dr Zehra Attari

■ **SAN JOSE, CALIF:** The family of Dr Zehra Attari, the medical doctor who has been missing since November 7, has hired Ed Vasquez as a media consultant to keep the issue public. In addition, the family is now offering a \$20,000 reward for any information about the missing 55 year-old lady pediatrician.

Urdu Writers Society to hold *Mushaira*

■ **LAKEWOOD, CALIF:** The Urdu Writers Society, Inc. is arranging a *Mushaira*. The highlight of the evening will be the inauguration of poet Arif Imam's poetry book *Kashkoal*. The event will be held at the Shahnawaz Restaurant in Lakewood on January 21, 7.30 p.m.

For more information email: urduwriterssociety@hotmail.com

Mumbai included in Christmas parade

■ **LOS ANGELES, CALIF:** The 74th Annual Hollywood Christmas Parade which cruised along the famous Hollywood Boulevard was of special significance to the Indian America community—it featured Mumbai which is one of the 21 sister cities of Los Angeles. There were representatives from all 21 cities including former Miss LA India and *Showbiz India* television host, Reshma Dordi.

Los Angeles veteran Dr A.S. Marwah served as the chair of the LA Mumbai Sister City Affiliation. Mira Advani is now the chairwoman and in her term, the affiliation has been offering two trips each year for non-Indians to visit 'Little India' and get a taste of India and to further the bond between US and India.

Hanuman Chalisa at school function

■ **IRVINE, CALIF:** A Classical Indian dance, theater and musical performance featuring 'Tulsidas' and '*Hanuman Chalisa*' was presented by the Jyoti School of Art. Radha Carmen, the director of the school is well-known in the Los Angeles Arts community for her liking of the Indian classical dance.

The concert featured 11 dances and a drama presentation depicting Tulsidas. With a dance ensemble of 50 artists and an audience of about 250, the two and half hour program was a visual and audio treat. Usha Sathe and R Jeya Krishnan (vocal), Hemant Ekbote



Indian American children dressing up for ready for a cultural event in Freemont, Calif. Sam Rao

A scene from *Hanuman Chalisa* being performed by the students of Jyoti School of Art. Sam Rao

and Ravind Kumar (Tabla), Shivadas Kulangara (Chenda), Aparna Ranganathan (keyboard), Arjun Narayan (Mridangam) and Shiva Ramamurthy (Violin) were among the performers.

The '*Hanuman Chalisa*,' which was written by the 16th century poet, Tulsidas, in praise of the monkey-god Hanuman, was depicted as a poem in 40 verses. Chanting *Hanuman Chalisa* is believed to give the strength needed to overcome all difficulties.

In the poem, Hanuman was described in all his various aspects: his beauty, intelligence, heroic acts, and above all, his supreme devotion to Lord Rama.

The second segment of the concert depicted Tulsidas, the author himself, as he composes his poem, verse by verse, within the halls of an

ancient Hanuman temple. When the temple doors close, the deities in the temple come to life by the sheer power of his poetry.

Second generation helping quake victims

■ **CALIFORNIA:** A network of second-generation Kashmiris have come together to contribute to a two-phase relief project in order to help the Kashmir earthquake victims. Calling themselves Kashmir Earthquake Relief (KER), they have partnered with the 'North Face' and 'Global Giving' to put into action their mission of rebuilding lives. A team of mountain climbing veterans have already been deployed to lead the expedition for extending aid to remote areas.

A massive gear drop was put in motion in the last week of November where regular drops of jackets, caps and tents were made. UPS has offered to ship donations free of cost and therefore more aid is going to the victims.

For more information visit: www.kashmirrelief.org or call 714-928-7937 in order to volunteer your services for the relief efforts.

Coachella Valley desert inspires poet

■ **CALIFORNIA:** The Coachella Valley desert is the inspiration behind the Sri Lankan poet Charles Perera's recent success at the Annual Sri Lanka Foundation awards ceremony. The spectacular desert topography has won the heart of this young poet who is also a member of the Coachella Arts Alliance and has been nominated for the title of 'Poet Laureate for California.'

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