



Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

Holi Mahotsav 2013 Report for Media

Over three autumn days Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia celebrated the 11th anniversary of the Holi Mahotsav starting on Friday 5 April and finishing on Sunday 7 April 2013 at Tumbalong Park in Darling Harbour, Sydney. An estimated 12000-15000 people attended the Sunday festivities. Saturday festivities were attended by 4000-5000 people. Our expectation were much higher 20,000 people on Sunday and 10,000 people on Saturday. The whether conditions(rain) seems to have effected the people turn up for the festivities.

Cooking demonstrations were conducted by three of the participating Indian restaurants: Taj Mahal Tandoori, Sweet Basil and Taj Sweets & Restaurant. People enjoyed and learned useful tips on Indian cooking. Demonstrators liked the enthusiasm of the people to learn new style and taste of food and gave useful tips to enthusiastic participants. People tasted the food and asked for quick tips to try at home. Looking at the enthusiasm of the people in sydney to taste and learn new food, cooking demonstrations will now be a part of Holi Mahotsav each year.

Over five hundred artists performed during the festival days and represented a rich mixture of culture, spirituality and entertainment. The cultural performances included: Indian, Bollywood, Classical, Bhangra and belly dances, fusion and folk music, Punjabi songs, Balinese and Chinese performances and a surprise flash mob which engaged into dance the standing audiences. The music and dance, yoga, prayers, meditation activities and dance and art workshops lasted for all three days. The visitors could enjoy delicious vegetarian Indian food and craft stalls.

The first day of the festival was dedicated to schools, young people and children. Thanks to the great support of the Department of Education and Communities of Government of NSW and Sydney Region India Calling Program many school groups participated with group performances and in art workshops. At the VIP session for school day Dr Phil Lambert, Regional Director of Department of Education and Communities of Government of NSW expressed his delight for the mutual cooperation and engagement of school children in stage and workshop activities. Seven school regions, namely Mascot Public School(PS), Cronulla PS, Carlton Sth PS, Ashbury PS, Canterbury PS and Janali PS were to participate but due to whether conditions only two schools, namely Botany PS and Carlton Sth PS made to the festivities. The special school day has become an annual tradition since last year.

Saturday was the day of spirituality. At noon time people had started to gather at Martin Place enjoying ISKCON Sydney stage performances while waiting for a street procession of more than 500 participants to start. Departing from Martin Place people passed through Sydney CBD and Sydney Town Hall and culminated into Tumbalong Park. The procession included Rath Yatra (hand pulled Chariot) of Lord Jagannätha. The ISKCON devotees chanted prayers and praises of the lord while pulling the chariot together with procession participants.



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On Sunday the traditional practice of colour throwing took place in the designated area in multiple sessions throughout whole afternoon. This joyful activity brought many people of different cultural background together and was celebrated with happiness and harmony among the participants and viewers.

During the special VIP session held on the last day of the festival the special guests expressed the importance of such events as Holi Mahotsav and demonstrated their support and pleasure of being part of the celebrations. Among the respected speakers who graced the festival there were: Michelle Rowland MP representing Senator the Hon Kate Lundy, Parliament of Australia; The Hon Geoff Lee, Member for Parramatta, Parliament of NSW (representing The Hon Victor Dominello, Minister for Citizenship and Communities); The Hon Amanda Fazio, Opposition Whip, Parliament of NSW (representing The Hon John Robertson - Leader of the Opposition); and Dr Phil Lambert, Regional Director, Department of Education and Communities, Government of NSW. Among other visiting VIP guests there were present: Hon. Arun Kumar Goel, Consul General of India, Sydney, Government of India; Dr Stepan Kerkyasharian, Chair, Community Relations Commission for a multicultural NSW; Thuat V. Nguyen, President, Children's Festival Organisation Inc; Shanker Dhar; Amarinder Bajwa, Hashim Durrani; Harmohan Singh Walia; Neera Shrivastav; Dr Yadu Singh and Linda O'Brien.

The success of Holi Mahotsav could not have been possible without the selfless untiring support of nearly thousand artists and performers from a large number of dance academies and cultural groups. We bow before and salute them with humility and greatest gratitude. The crowd passionately danced and sang with the performers and enjoyed every bit of the multicultural program. Our special thanks come to all performing artists – Indo-Aust Bal Bharathi Vidyalaya-Hindi School Inc; Sahaja Yoga Music of Joy; Botany Public School; India Jiva; Om Multicultural; Aparna Dixit; Aziff Tibal Belly Dance; Chinese Traditional Dance; Samskriti School of Dance; Shyam Dance; Akriti Gupta; Mayur Academy; Maya Youth in Performing Arts; Mayur Academy; Priya Dewan Bollywood Dance Academy; Alisha Singh; Rythmic Squad; Nanhi Kalyan; Global Gypsies; Taal Dance Academy; Geetanjali School of Dance and Performing Arts; Gatka; Ghawazi Caravan; Mango Dance; Nupur Dance Group; Chiknis; Seema Bharadwaj; Folk & Fun.

The stage performances were provided with direction by our great masters of ceremonies: Seema Bharadwaj, Monalisa Grover, Vijay Jogia, Reena Koak, Divya Sriram, Shalini Varmani, Soiam Raja and Sophil Raja.

The food stalls during the Holi Mahotsav pepped up the festival by adding variety to the event. A wide selection of delicious Indian vegetarian meals, beverages and sweets was offered by renowned Indian restaurants: Govindas Pure Vegetarian, Swaad-Taste of India, Sweet Basil, Taj Sweets & Restaurant and Taj Mahal Tandoori. Stay Cool Tropical Sno, Sugar Cane Juice and Tall Grass Cane Juice brought cooling and calming drinks.

Merchandise stalls and marquees offered great bargains such as traditional dresses, tops, fashion accessories, fancy bangles by Simply Gorgeous and artistic Henna art tattoos from Zenat Art Henna Tattoos. Lebara Mobile offered special SIM cards and discounted service plans for overseas calls. Vision Asia gave out discounted prices for their popular Indian channels package. Among other stalls there were: UAE Exchange Australia PTY LTD, India

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Tourism, Desi Kangaroos TV, Bank of Baroda, Donate Life, Money Gram and Sahaja Yoga Meditation marquee.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to our main sponsors and supporters: Lebara Mobile; NSW Government: Premier of NSW, Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW and Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority; City of Sydney; LAC City Central & The Rocks, NSW Police; Australian Government: Department of Immigration; India Tourism, Sydney; State Bank of India, Sydney; AFL Multicultural Program, Sahaja Yoga and ISKCON Sydney.

We are grateful to our media supporters Sydney Morning Herald, ZEE TV, Easter Suburn Newspapers, Desi Kangaroo, The Indian Telegraph, Indus Age, Indian Link, The Indian Down Under, Punjab Times, Masala Newslines, Navtarang Newspaper & Radio, Nepalese Times and the Epoch Times, SBS TV who join us in making this 2013 festival even brighter and diverse.

We appreciate the help of the volunteers Ottavia Tonarelli, Nathan Nathakumaran, Denisse Pazita Codocco, Xiao Li, Angela Darke, Andy Khai Duy Pham, Vishal Joshi and Vaidehi Joshi, Tom Li, Aaron Qin, Michelle Cheung, Micaela Agosteguis, Jonathan Peticara, Karina Flores Sasse, Shruti Arya, Haerim Han, Yang Hu, Mi Christian, Serina Hajje.

We are grateful to Alison Jenny, Clare Clarks, Scott Eager, Brendan Burke, Desiree Lane, Graham, Peter Malony, Peter Baker and other staff from Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority for their valuable contribution in hosting this festival.



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