



SUGAR LAND: Shri Sita Ram Foundation, USA set precedence with a record crowd of 8000 guests that thronged the spanking new, state-of-the-art Constellation Field in Sugar Land on Saturday, Nov. 10th.

Sponsors (Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze & Grand) of the Dusshera Mela 2012 were honored by Dr. Arun Verma, (8th from left), President, Shri Sita Ram Foundation. Voice of Asia was the Media Sponsors of the event.

They were there to witness the grand celebrations of Dusshera, the Hindu festival that highlights the victories of Lord Sri Ram as told in great Indian epic 'Ramayan' .

For the past seven months, organizers and volunteers have been meticulously planning on the celebrations. Coupled with the ballet 'Ram Leela 2012', which was presented earlier on Oct 28th at the Wortham Center with tumultuous success. Over 200 performers put up a memorable performance complete with extravagant costumes and settings.

Visibly exhausted after producing two successive winning shows, Dr. Arun Verma, president of Shri Sita Ram Foundation, USA expressed that it was purely the will of God and the relentless service of the volunteers that was responsible for the success. He was very thankful to all the sponsors who supported him throughout. Koshy Thomas, Voice of Asia, greeted the gathering a Happy Dusshera and Diwali and thanked the organizers for an opportunity to be a part of the historical event.



Emcees Uma Mantravadi and Dr. Ratna Kumar

Uma Mantravadi, cultural co-coordinator of the event is a leading Houston attorney who put together a impressive cultural show, which included a children's costume competition and a series of classical and semi-classical dances along with the parts of the play Ram Leela 2012. Dr. Ratna Kumar, founder and director of Anjali Center of Performing Arts, showcasing her students' talent, served as the Mistress of Ceremonies for the event. Students of other leading dance institutes like Shiva Mathur's Shivangini School of Dance, Indrani Parthasarthy's Abhinaya School of Dance, and the Kalangan School of Odissi Dance, Uma Bharati's students performed in the six hour Mela.



Left: Dance performances by the finest talents of local dance schools. Right: Costume contestants.

Highlights included the series of dances, a costume contest, Shubha Yatra, the procession when Lord Rama returns to Ayodhya, burning of the effigies of Ravana, Meghnath and Kumbhakaran, the ballet Ram Leela, and brilliant display of fireworks. Afterwards the guests were free to join in the Dandia Raas.



Maha arati by hundreds of guests at the stadium towards the end of the program.

Dr. Nik Nikam, Technical Director, handled the entire Dusshera Mela's technical and stage management along with Abha Diwedi. The original three effigies that were custom designed in New Delhi, India could not be used as they towered over 10 feet tall and thus were not permissible. As a result, a set of three more effigies were made (10" tall) to burn at the finale. A grand arati by the 8000 strong audience, who held out their lighted lamps, was a spectacular sight that added a personal touch to the event.

Apart from a host of community leaders, Congressman Pete Olson was a welcomed guest. He presented Dr. Verma with a proclamation and spoke on the occasion. A proclamation from Congressman Al Green was also presented on his behalf by Sam Merchant. Shri Sita Ram Foundation, USA is a non-profit organization which produced and has introduced the two mega events 'Ram Leela' and now Dusshera Mela to the Indo-American community in Houston. The organization is engaged in several philanthropic activities directly and indirectly, and assists religious and educational institutions in promoting Sanatan Dharma. More information on the foundation is found on www.ShriSitaRam.org.



Shubh Yatra: The procession of the victors leading to Ayodhya.
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