



Sita Devi's swayamvar with Sri Ram. Ram Leela.
Courtesy Pic from archives of Shri Sita Ram Foundation, USA

by Nik Nikam, MD, MHA

Shri Sita Ram Foundation, USA announces the Dusshera Mela 2013 to be held on Saturday, October 19, 2013, from 4 to 10 PM, at Skeeter Stadium, in Sugar land, Texas.

The highlights of the Dusshera Mela 2013 will include:

- Divine Bhajans
- Devotional Dances
- Children Costume Contests
- Ramayan Live Multimedia
- Two Hour Ram Leela Drama
- Burning of Ravan, Meghnath, and Kumbhakarn effigies.
- Parade of Floats.
- Laser Show
- Fireworks

Dusshera Mela 2013 is being held in association with the Orissa Culture Center and the India Studies Program at the University of Houston

Dusshera Mela 2013 will be a spectacular evening of entertainment, education, networking, spiritual uplifting, and culturally inspiring. It v a fun filled experience to the Mind, Body, and Soul. Bring your family, grandparents, parents, children, neighbors, and friends, and folks. the entire family.

Come and experience the Indian culture, food, costumes, music, dance, sweets, drama, hospitality, effigy burning, & fireworks. You may even catch a glimpse of yourself on the giant screen!

This event has been supported by over 50 Indian organizations and associations. The India Culture Center of Houston, the India House, the Hindus of Greater Houston, the Houston Gujarat Samaj, the Hindu Worship Society, Banke Bihari Parivar, Meenakshi Temple, Indian Senior Citizen's Association, Shri Swaminarayan Temple, Ashtalaxmi Temple, Govindji Gudla Math, Ashirwad Blessing, Anjali School of Dance, Indian Doctors Association, the Indian Senior citizen of Houston, the Association of Indian Engineers, and many others.

Dr. Uttam Tripathy, the President of the Indian Doctors Association will have a health fair during the Dussehra festival. There will be many doctors on the premise to answer your questions.

Ashirwad Blessing, a Vedic school headed by Geetha and Sridhar Ravula, will have Ramayan Live, a multimedia presentation and competition. They will have the seven kaands of Ramayan on display where the participants will have posters and presentations. They will also be dressed in costumes to represent various characters from Ramayan. There will also be a contest among the seven kaands, and the winner will be announced on the stage during the Dussehra Mela.

Kiran Verma will be in charge of running the children's Costume contest. The children can dress up as any character from the Ramayan or even as Durga mata, etc. If you would like to enroll your children in the contest, please contact Kiran Verma at 832-282-0980.

Bhajans will be provided by groups from renowned classical groups, and they will set the stage for a spectacular cultural extravaganza.

RAM LEELA, a two-hour stage show will be one of the feature presentations of the Dusshera Mela 2013. This year we will have the entire RAM LEELA played out on the stage. It has been directed by the internationally renowned Dr. Rathan Kumar of Anjali School of Dance. There will be English text at the end of each act to let you know what's coming-up in future acts, so you will be able to follow the story easily. The Mayor Pro-Tem of Sugar Land will be inaugurating the RAM LEELA stage show.

The RAM LEELA stage show will be followed-by a parade of number of floats. These floats represent various parts of India, and thus bring to you a glimpse of Dusshera from several parts of India to Houston. We will be providing a running commentary on these floats, along with a discussion from the people who created the floats. It will be first of its kind in Houston. You will experience diverse aspects of Hindu culture from these floats.

The highlight of the Dusshera Mela will be the burning of Ravan, Meghnath, and Kumbhakarn effigies. Burning of these effigies signify the Triumph of Good over Evil. It is a major celebration in the northern parts of India, especially New Delhi, Rajasthan, and Bombay. They will bring back those reminiscent memories for those who had experienced these in India during their childhood days.

In addition, we are planning to add a continuous laser show to accent the entire cultural experience.

We will have more than fifty vendor booths, in addition to booths by several cultural associations. There will be plenty of vegetarian foods served by local Indian caterers.

The best part is the tickets are only \$3. The parking is free. If you are a Mercedes Benz owner, you will get a valet parking, courtesy of Mercedes Benz of Sugar land.

There will be several media partners including Voice of Asia, Hum Tum Radio, TV Asia, and many local TV channels covering this grand event.

The entire preceding of the Dusshera Mela will be projected on the 90 X 200 feet electronic screen, so any seat in the stadium will be a prime seat. There will be plenty of places for children to play.

Last year the stadium was filled to a capacity of more than 7500 people. We have already majority of the tickets allocated and sold. We strongly encourage you to buy your tickets as the capacity is fixed by the Skeeter's management. There will be no re-entry.

Dusshera Mela is going to be a cultural enlightenment because of the dedication by hundreds of volunteers.

We expect to have an exciting and unforgettable evening just because of your presence, your contribution, and your participation.

In addition, you may see several people dressed in costumes on the concourse. Feel free to take pictures with them and capture those magnificent memories that you can and cherish for years to come.

If you would like to get involved in the Dusshera Mela now or in the future in please contact us at www.shrisitaram.org.

The tickets are available at East West Video, Patel Brothers in Sugar Land and on Hillcroft, Keemat Grocers, Maharani Music, and www.Sulekha.com.

We would like to capture your experience and emotions on the camera or perhaps you may see yourself on the big electronic screen answering trivia questions. In our view everyone who comes to the festival is a celebrity.

You also can enter into a draw to win two FREE tickets to anywhere in India from Houston, courtesy of Turkish airlines and Riya Travels.

Listen to our latest news and updates on Dusshera Mela 2013 special radio program on 1480, on Saturdays, between 9 and 10 AM. The call-in phone number is 713-784-1480.

For group tickets, media, and information contact Dr. NIK NIKAM at 281-265-7567 or drniknikam@gmail.com