

I-Day celebrated at Mahatma Gandhi Memorial

India Post News Service

DALLAS, TX: More than 700 people consisting of many children, visiting parents and NRIs from all walks of life gathered to celebrate India's Independence Day on August 15 at Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Plaza in Irving, TX hosted by Mahatma Gandhi Memorial of North Texas (MGMNT)

Dr. Prasad Thotakura, MGMNT Chairman, hoisted the Indian flag. Vice-Consul from Indian Consulate Ashok Kumar was the Chief Guest of Honor while Irving City Mayor Rick Stopfer, Sunnyvale City Mayor Saji George, Coppell City Councilmember Biju Mathew and former Director of Irving City Parks and Recreation Ray Cerda attended as Special Guests. Local musical teacher Swathi presented a couple of patriotic songs with her students at this event.

Rao Kalvala, MGMNT Secretary welcomed all and intro-



Children at India Day celebrations

duced guests to the audience. Dr. Prasad Thotakura, Chairman, in his message said "We pay rich tribute to all freedom fighters and national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Subhash Chandra Bose, Chandra Sekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh, Lala Lajpat Rai, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and many more who surrendered and sacrificed everything in attaining independence from British rule".

"We all need to realize that hatred, bigotry, outrage, racism will create an enormous gap among the mankind. Only patience, alliance, tolerance and coherence will bring all people together," Dr Thotakura added. Vice-Consul Ashok Kumar



MGMNT Chairman Dr Thotakura addressing a jubilant crowd during India Day celebrations

and Dr. Anupam Ray congratulated the gathering for celebrating India's Independence Day with huge enthusiasm. He said that it is very fortunate to participate in this event and India continues to be on the right path in the right direction towards the development of the nation.

Irving City always welcomes many immigrants and city officials are always there to help and build a strong relationship with the Indian American community.

Mayor Rick Stopfer said he was pleased to have Gandhiji Memorial in the center of the City. It is very joyful to see thousands of visitors across the globe visiting the Plaza every month.

Former Director of Parks and Recreation, Irving City, Ray Cerda mentioned that this Gandhi Memorial stood out as a memorable project not only in the state of Texas but also in USA. Cerda appreciated the efforts of MGMNT Board for raising over \$700,000 within a short span of time to build this memorial.

Sunnyvale City Mayor Saji George appreciated MGMNT Board for organizing the Independence Day Celebrations event with great patriotic fervor. India became the largest and best democracy in the world. Mayor George reminded

that India got its independence through non-violence and civilian disobedience. "We are all proud to celebrate India's Independence Day in the land of USA."

Coppell City Council member Biju Mathew conveyed greetings from the city of Coppell officials and said he



MGMNT team with guests and dignitaries

was honored to be at the event. He congratulated all team members for their tireless efforts in building the largest Gandhi Memorial in the USA. He stated that our home land India

and adopted land USA are not different and both the nations have many things in common.

Kamal Kaushal, MGMNT Co-chair in his remarks stated that it was very joyful to see a huge crowd near Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhiji's memorial. He said India was an under-developed country at Independence but today it is a developed and the fastest growing economy in the world. India's economy is higher than any other country in the world.

Irving City Mayor Rick Stopfer released a book titled "Explorify" authored by a local writer Vivek Acharya. MGMNT Team felicitated all guests.

B.N Rao, MGMNT Treasurer thanked Chief Guest, all special guests, Irving City officials, TV5 Media, Dallas Morning News, TV Asia for their media coverage, Bombay studio for photography, DJ Manesh for Audio Video arrangements, FunAsia for the promotion and scores of

volunteers for making the event a grand success. MGMNT Board of Directors John Hammond, Piyush Patel, Shabnam Modgil, Kuntesh Chokshi, community leaders MVL Prasad, CR Rao, Abhijit Railkar, Jack Godhwani attended the event. MGMNT Board distributed the Indian and American flags and refreshments at the event.

Besides MGMNT, University of Texas at Richardson also celebrated India's Independence Day. Dr. Prasad Thotakura, President, Indian American Friendship Council, attended as Chief Guest of Honor at the Independence Day celebrations event organized by the Indian Students Association.



A section of attendees at MGMNT celebrations