

# Year-long celebrations mark Fremont golden jubilee

SAM RAO

Fremont, Calif.

12-GRADER Anum Habib handed out pins to Fremont residents to mark a map of the world, asking people to pin their place of birth and origin on the map. Soon the map was dotted by pins all over the world. The map project was a part of a school project by the Irvington High School for Fremont's 50th anniversary celebrations. The event was held under a "Big White Tent" at Fremont's Central Park, on January 20.

On January 22 evening, more than 700 people attended an open house followed by an official cake cutting ceremony. The open house saw speeches by several local politicians and a live Jazz band. Mayor Wasserman presided over the cake cutting late in the night where town resident Kathi Inholtz Mathys too joined in to celebrate her 50th birthday. Paul Bhatia, an Indian-American Sikh who volunteered with a group of friends to hand out water at the celebration told Vice Mayor Dominic Dutra: "I had moved to San Jose for a few years but could not live outside Fremont so now I am back."

The kick off of year-long cele-



Anum Habib with her project to identify place of birth on the World map; The birthday cake. Sam Rao



brations was marked by a special resolution by Fremont city council at 12.01 a.m. to commemorate the city's first City Co who were subjugated and the area was populated by waves of immigrants coming in from the East Coast. Soon the missionaries came and set up several missions along the Pacific West Coast, including Mission San Jose in Fremont-which is still standing.

At population- each constitute about 10% (20,000) each. The Afghani population is also the

largest community in the USA.

Early in history, California- also known as the Golden State, was part of Mexico and the area was dominated by Ohlone native Ameriuncil meeting, held at the same time exactly 50 years ago.

In the past 20 years, Fremont has indeed changed from a farming community to a "bedroom one" known for its IT professionals. Today, 53 percent of Fremont's 2ion is of color with Asian-Americans forming 37 percent, Hispanic about

13 percent, African-American about percent and Caucasians 47 percent. The Indian origin and Afghani originni originions. The Inthe turn of the century, several townships were formed along the route to the pacific coastline and along the wagon trail paths leading to the south.

Present day Fremont comprises of Centerville, Irvington, Mission San Jose, Niles and Warm Springs districts, which merged to become the city of Fremont, in part to pre-

vent it from becoming part of city of Hayward. The city was named after John Fremont, an explorer.

Remnauding old brick buildings, cobbled roads etc. Reflecting the rich cultural diversity of Fremont- the neighborhoods of the townships also reflect more recent immigrations- with Centerville sharing a line of Afghani shops. The Niles area is home to Charlie Chaplin's early film making days and the old railroad and buildings seen in the old silent movies are still visible. Recently, Fremont is also the home of Olympic figure skater Kristi Yamaguchi and Rap singer MC Hammer. The city also hosts one Hindu Temrly filmmaking days, you can still find the old railroad and buildings seen in the old silent movies. Among other prominent people living here are Olympic figure skater Kristi Yamaguchi and Rap singer MC Hammer.

Fremont has several Indian-Americans in the city commissions. Human Relations commissioners Vijaya Aasuri and Ashok Bhatt and Council member Anu Natrajan all wish to see more ways to get the Asian-American and Indian-Americans involved in the city's year long anniversary festivities.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Indian-American shot dead in Richmond

■ **BERKELEY, CALIF:** An Indian-American resident of San Pablo was murdered in the violence prone city of Richmond, north of Berkeley.

Ashok Malhotra (43), was shot dead around 7.18 p.m. on January 21 at an apartment at 2380 Aberdeen Way, said Richmond Police Department and the Coroners office.

Richmond Police Lt. Mark Gagan said officers are looking for suspects, 38-year-old Ishtiaq Hussain and 22-year-old Jose Antonio Barajas. Witnesses have come forward to identify the car used by the suspects to flee the scene of the crime.

Hussain is described as a Pakistani man standing 5 feet 7 inches tall and weighing 160 pounds and Barajas is described as a "heavy set" Hispanic man standing 5 feet 11 inches tall and weighing 225 pounds. Gagan said police have reason to believe that Hussain may try to flee to Pakistan and Barajas may try to flee to Mexico. Contact Richmond Police Department at (510) 620-6622 or (510) 233-1214

### Concert raises \$85,000 for Sankara Eye Hospital



Vijaya Aasuri with the performers.

■ **HAYWARD, CALIF:** A concert marking Sankranti celebrations by Bay Area Telugu Association (BATA) and the Sankara Eye Foundation (SEF), raised about \$85,000 for a hospital run by the latter in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. The concert, "Roshni Telugu", featuring local talent of the Bay area was held at Chabot College in Hayward.

The concert opened with a prayer by Madhu followed by a classical devotional song *Ghana ghana sundara* sung by Raju Idury of Roseville, CA. Accompanying Madhu on stage was Usha, who sang *Lali lali ani* and *Manohara*. The band comprising singers Arathi, Gayatri, Raju Idury, Prabhu, Sridevi, Kavitha, Ravi and Madhu, performed old hits as well as contemporary numbers like *Yamuna Theeram*, *Aa neeli gaganana*, *Nalla nallani*, *Sakhiya Vivarinchave*.

While MC Vijaya Aasuri and volunteer Srilu Veligeti encouraged parents to dedicate the song to their children by donating money, Usha encouraged the kids to come onto the stage and dance to the dedicated songs. Aasuri also encouraged the audience to dedicate songs to their favorite movie stars and singers. "Donations started pouring in big numbers after this," said Venkat Maddipati, coordinator of the SEF Eye Hospital project.

While Chinranjeevi's *Chinnaga chinnaga* and *Kodite kottali* raised close to \$10,000, the blind orchestra collected around \$15,000 in docations. Five-year-old Saketh collected around \$10,000 when he performed like a true professional the classic song *Vivaha bhajanambhu* from the film *Maayabazar*.

"It was an amazing show of talent and variety—from nostalgic memories down the memory lane to the latest fast numbers," said BATA president, Ramesh Mandalapu.

"This was one of the most enjoyable show that we have attended in a long time. Our local talent is extremely good and can easily out perform many of the visiting artists from India," said Nallamala and Rajani Rao of San Jose.

Murali Krishnamurthy, chairman of SEF shared the SEF vision and thanked the community for the support. A video played testimonials of the various needy blind that had benefited and were able to reshape their lives once shattered with curable blindness.

### Raz's directorial debut gets first Hollywood screening

■ **HOLLYWOOD, CALIF:** The directorial debut of actor Kavi Raz, *The Gold Bracelet*, held



Kavi Raz and Ari Barak in a still from the film

its first screening at the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, in North Hollywood, CA, on January 28. The film deals with the trials of a Sikh family in the aftermath of the 9/11 tragedy.

Speaking at the screening, Raz, who has also written and produced the film, said it took 18 months to complete the film. "I suffered many heartbreaking disappointments. Made many trips all over California to get investors for my project with no luck, no help even from the Sikh community around. Some even said it sounded like a personal video. It took a Sindhi businessman and a Gujarati hotelier to tell the story of a Sikh family."

Besides Raz the film stars Sonny Mandal, Archana Puran Singh, Mehrunissa Hassan, Arsh Singh, Joseph Whipp and Ari Barak.

Herself a product of a Pakistani father and an Indian mother, Mehrunissa Hassan—who plays Raz's daughter Simran in the film—said that the film had a special meaning for her as she lost her father when the shooting began.

For Arsh Singh (Ranjit), a senior at the University of California, Fullerton a role in the film gave him a chance to display his talents and look forward to a film career. For Sonny Mandal, who plays Simran's love interest, his subdued performance provided a perfect foil for the naughty ways of Simran.

"Simply fantastic! A long overdue film," commended Anshu Sood while Ashok Patil, an award winning Kannada film director said, "Great concept. The film has some exceptional moments of brilliance. But the scenes after the death of Arjun Singh could have been more compacted for maximum impact."

## LA celebrates Republic Day

KALYANI VASAN

Los Angeles, Calif.

THE burgeoning Indian community and expansion in topographical parameters led to need for multiple festivities to mark the Indian Republic Day in Los Angeles. Each of these events saw nearly 400 people in attendance along with several Congressional dignitaries.

The Indian Association of the San Fernando Valley held its celebration at the Punjab Palace in Northridge wherein the late evening heralded entertainment items by youngsters from the valley. Among the honorees was John Chiang, Chair of the Board of Equalization and member of the Franchise Tax Board.



John Chiang presents a plaque to Kumar Jawa. Kalyani Vasani

The Knotts Berry Resort was the venue for the United Federation of Indian Associations (UFIA) celebrations. Congressman Ed Royce, Orange County Supervisor Chris Nurdy and Councilman Tony Mendoza were among the dignitaries present. However, the star attractions were actors Purva Bedi and Chris Atkins. The entertainment for the evening included a stunning fashion show by Atirma Jewels and Bhangra presentation by the University of California, Irvine team.

The Federation of Indo American Associations of Southern California held their event at the Bombay Club with Congresswoman Linda Sanchez and Anaheim Councilman Harry Siddhu in attendance.

