

# India Herald

VOL. 13 NO. 44 • FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2007 • 6610 HARWIN DR STE 120 • HOUSTON, TX 77036 • PERIODICAL PERMIT USPS 017-699 25c

## Swami Ramdev's first overseas center comes to Houston

### HOUSTON

The reach of his breathing exercises is literally breath taking.

Swami Ramdev, who commands millions of followers in India and abroad with his breathing made easy approach, will have his first overseas institution in Houston.

During a "Pranayam" (controlled breathing) camp in Toronto from Oct. 12 to Oct. 17, Swami Ramdev announced that he would lay the foundation for the Pathanjali Yog Peeth in Houston next year.

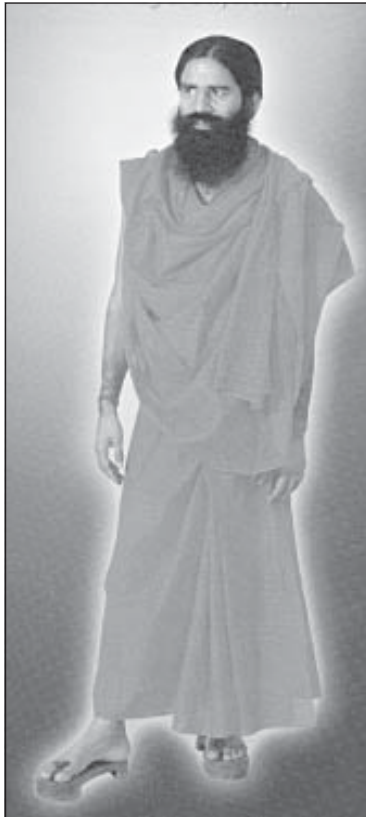
Shekhar Agrawal of Sugar Land, along with Ramesh Bhutada of Houston, has joined hands with the PYP Yog Foundation Trust in the US to build the center.

The Houston center will be modeled after the Pathanjali Yog Peeth in Harwar, India, an institution for treatment and research in Yog and Ayurved, Agrawal said.

The Hardwar project, along with a university, is nearly half complete. It is a Rs.600-crore project.

Agrawal said the Houston center will be built on 30 acres of land and the first phase is expected to cost about \$3 million.

"We are looking at a few sites



Swami Ramdev

and have not chosen any particular site yet," he said.

The Houston center will impart training in Yog, help conduct research in Ayurveda and Yog, maintain a herbal garden, and provide treatment to various ailments,

Agrawal said.

The first camp of Swami Ramdev held in the US in July this year underscored the overwhelming demand for the swami's breathing techniques.

Over 3,000 people attended the Toronto camp, showing once again the popularity of Swami Ramdev in North America, Agrawal said.

While Swami Ramdev has already agreed to conduct a camp in Houston in July 2008, the decision to build a center here is an added bonanza.

It would benefit millions of people not only in the Indian community, but in the mainstream in Houston and in the US as well, Bhutada said.

"We are fortunate to have received this boon," he said.

The Houston camp will be held from July 16 to July 20, 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. at the George R. Brown Convention Center which can accommodate up to 4,500 people, he said.

Ramdev has devised very simple techniques for practicing the Pranayam which are very easily picked up by any common

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## Roopa Gir to address the UN expert group on women



Roopa Gir

Houstonian Roopa Gir, currently Director, Corporate Technology Watch, is one of only 15 women from around the world to be invited by the United Nations' Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, to give a speech, at a UN Expert Group Meeting.

The meeting on *Measures to Accelerate the Improvement in the Status of Women in the United Nations System* will be held from Nov. 14 to 16.

Gir has a very impressive academic and work background. She has worked for over 25 years for Schlumberger, starting in Houston, as a Senior Development Engineer in Product Development.

She worked in Operations for 17 years in South East Asia, in various capacities, including Business Development Manager for the Asia Pacific region. From 2000-2004, she worked as Busi-

ness Development Manager for North America in Data and Consulting Services.

From 2004-2007, she has been in the Corporate Communications Group as Scientific Advisor and Editor, Oilfield Review. She has published over 35 papers in international journals.

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## U.S. Congress recognizes Diwali festival

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

A bill recognizing "the religious and historical significance of the festival of Diwali" passed in the full House of Representatives by a mammoth margin of 358 to 0 on Oct. 24.

House resolution 747 was introduced jointly by Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC) and Jim McDermott (D-WA) and with its passage becomes the first bill to ever pass the House recognizing a Hindu festival that is also marked by Sikhs and Jains.

Intending to have the bill passed prior to Nov. 9, when Diwali will be celebrated this year, the bill was introduced and passed in the Foreign Affairs Committee last week and moved quickly to the successful full vote last week.

"My resolution acknowledges the international, religious, and historical importance of the festival of Diwali as well as the religious diversity in India, the United States, and throughout the world," said Wilson in a statement that was read on the floor of the House prior to the vote today. "It shows our support for the strong and growing partnership and dialogue in international efforts between the United States and India." Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) also took the floor to speak on behalf of the bill.

Wilson acknowledged the Hindu American Federation's key role in promoting the bill and for working closely with his office to get the bill passed. Ishani Chowdhury, HAF Executive Director, hailed the bill passage as a momentous event in the history of the Hindu American diaspora, and reaffirmed the HAF's commitment to see a matching Senate resolution, S.R. 299, also passed.

## Diwali festival at Sugar Land Town Square

Masala Radio and Tara Energy will host Festival of Lights—Diwali 2007 on Sunday, Nov.4 at the Sugar Land Town Square from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m..

The Houston Grand Opera will present an exclusive number based on the theme of India and provide have a preview of the Indian segment of The Refuge.

The overall theme of the opera is that of a journey to Houston. The stories told are created from countless interviews with individuals who have immigrated to Houston, including those from

India and Pakistan.

Masala radio host says "Don't miss this spectacular light and sound Indian music and dance experience as the special lighting arrangements will dance to the beats of music."

The festival features henna, Indian fashion show, jewelry, Indian cuisine, and Indian dances. Indian cuisine will be provided by local restaurants.

Indian cultural dance presentations by Anjali School of Dance, Kalaangan, Natya Upasana Dance Academy, Shivangini

Dance School, Shri Natraj School of Dance, Urban Gypsy Dance Troupe, and many others. A

Also present will be local businesses and non-profit organizations.

The entire audience will be encouraged to participate in the grand finale with DJ partying and dancing from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.

For more details, to participate in the program, to volunteer, or to sponsor the event, visit www.musicmasala.com, and contact us at info@musicmasala.com or 281-277 – MUSIC (6874).

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