

# **GOPIO NEWS BULLETIN**

## **NOVEMBER 2005**

NEW YORK CITY HALL

November 2, 2005 marked the second annual Diwali Celebration in the Council Chambers of New York City Hall. The event was sponsored by the New York City Council and was open to all members and friends of the South Asian community. The large crowd in attendance was a mix of first, second and third generation immigrants from India and elsewhere. Distinguished city officials including Council Members John Liu, Alan Gerson, and Gale Brewer, along with the Commissioner of Design and New York State Assemblyman, contributed to the celebration of this memorable event.

A traditional invocation prayer dance was performed by two young students of the Sadhnalaya School of Dance, followed by the traditional diya lighting ceremony by city officials. The speech by NYC Council Member Liu focused on Indians in New York and his bill to suspend alternate side parking rules in New York City in honor of Diwali, a step towards official recognition of a major Indian holiday. Although the bill has been vetoed by Mayor Mike Bloomberg, Mr. Liu stated that the New York City Council is confident it will override the veto. Professor Madhulika Khandelwal, the Director of the Asian/American Center at Queens College, spoke about the history of Deepavali and its significance to millions of people. She acknowledged the holiday as a widely celebrated event enjoyed by people of different backgrounds all over New York

The Diwali Celebration at New York City Hall is another step the city has begun to further recognize the sizeable Indian Community within the city of New York. Other events such as the Diwali celebrations at South Street Seaport and in Jackson Heights, are additional ways that the community has come together and established a strong presence in New York. These events have been given extensive local and Indian media coverage.

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