

RECEPTION DINNER IN HONOUR OF MINISTER FOR OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS

Honourable Mr. Vayalar Ravi, Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs (NRI's) arrived in Sydney, Australia, on Sunday 15 October, 2006. United Indian Associations held a Reception Dinner in his honour at Parravilla Function Centre, Parramatta, which was very well attended and was a grand success. Several dignitaries including the Joint Secretary Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs Mr. Malay Mishra, Consul General of India Mr Sujan Chinoy, Officers of the Consulate and Lord Mayor of Parramatta attended the reception. Several Member of Parliaments who were keen to attend extended their apologies as the parliament was in session.



Mr. Vayalar Ravi was welcomed by the President of United Indian Associations, Dr. Prabhat Sinha, the Secretary Mr. Devendra Kumar and other members of UIA and the Indian community. The Master of Ceremonies for the evening was Ms. Pallavi Sinha who compered the proceedings in a very professional and eloquent manner. The program began by a traditional invocation song sung by the well-known singer Pushpa Jagdish in her melodious voice. The Consul General, Mr. Sujan Chinoy, introduced the Minister to the Community. The Ceremonial Lamp was lit by the Minister to inaugurate the function. A short documentary on Pravasi Bhartiya Divas 2007, to be held from 7-9 January 2007 at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi, was shown to give an insight into its key objectives and theme. Mr. Malay Mishra gave a Presentation on Conference Content, Focus Areas and Registration Details of the Pravasi Bhartiya Divas. The Lord Mayor of Parramatta formally welcomed the Minister and presented him with "the Key to the City of Parramatta".

The UIA President, Dr. Prabhat Sinha, welcomed the Minister on behalf of the Governing Council of United Indian Associations and the Indian Community. He outlined the achievements of the Indian Diaspora and went on to say that the Minister's visit to Australia would provide him with an insight into the concerns of Non-Resident Indians and emphasised the need for a continued interaction between the Indian Australian Community and the Indian Government to foster better cooperation and understanding. He recited a self-composed poetry in Hindi to honour the Minister's visit to Australia. It was very well received by all including the Minister. Dr. Sinha presented the Minister with a Plaque on behalf of the Indian Community. Mr. Jose, the President of the Sydney Malayalee Association presented a Trophy to the Minister. Dr. Sinha then invited the Chief Guest, Mr. Vayalar Ravi to address the community.



In his address, Mr. Vayalar Ravi said that the overseas Indians have made a great contribution to the progress and development of India. The Government of India specially recognizes their help in tidying over India's Foreign currency issue in the past. In recognition of this significant contribution, the Government of India has taken several measures and is continuing to take more measures to address the problems and issues of the overseas Indians such as Dual Nationality, Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas and has even set up a special ministry for overseas Indians. He encouraged all Non-Resident Indians to take benefit of these and make more contribution to their motherland. He extended an invitation to all overseas Indians to attend the forthcoming Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas to be held from 7 to 9 January 2007 and participate in India's further development.

After a hearty dinner, a marathon of question and answer session began which gave an opportunity for all those present to air their views and concerns. All the questions were addressed by the Minister in a very informative and enlightening manner.



To end the programme a Vote of Thanks was given by Vice-President, Dr. Rohitas Batta, acknowledging the presence and participation of the Indian Community, Sponsors, Media and especially the Indian Consulate for their financial assistance and contribution towards the general organisation of the function.

The Minister mingled with the community by going round each table. The evening ended on a happy note and was enjoyed by all."

Dr Prabhat Sinha
President
United Indian Associations



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