

ROYAL HARBINGER

Reporting Fact of the Matter Weekly

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DIWALI

Celebrated enthusiastically by all the by sects of Hindus, the five-day Diwali fiesta is one of the longest festivals. Houses and market places that have been spruced up well in advance, wear a festive look with attractive colourful 'rangoli'. In the evening, Ganpati, Laxmi the giver of wealth and Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge would be worshipped with deep reverence. All the places would be lighted up. In the middle of the night a special 'puja' during a highly auspicious period would be performed in privacy. Businessmen would perform 'puja' at their workplace. There would be scintillating fireworks.

Various temples spread all over the city, would celebrate Diwali in their own

community. There are special celebrations from Dhanteras to Annakoot. Dhanteras began with early morning 'abhishek' and the 'poshaks' offered by the devotees was changed four times and devotees kept coming till midnight. Similarly, on Roop Choudas there was early morning 'pujan' and 'aarti' and dresses were changed four times during the day. According to Vijai Shrimali, President, Shrimal Trust, the 'darshan' in Sinha Lagna on Diwali midnight is considered to be most auspicious and brings prosperity in the family. On Annakoot, 'prasad' would be prepared in huge quantity, and offered to Mahalaxmi while the doors would be closed. For the next three days, it would be distributed to among devotees.

At the Shrinath temple in Nathdwara the five-day long festival is celebrated in a unique way. Right from Dussera started the preparations for Diwali. For Annakoot, 'bharti' 'pujan' was done, provisions were collected and cooking started. Fifteen to twenty artists started making attractive paintings in different colours. At the Shriprabhuj Gaushala in Nathuwas, the singing of 'heed' started and the preparation of material such as Teepara and Patia for decorating the cows also began. On Dhanteras, Shriprabhuj was beautifully decorated and offered Khichdi as 'bhog'. On Roopchoudas, the cows of Shriprabhuj in the Gaushala were bathed and decorated with 'mehandi'. On Diwali about 150 beautifully decorated cows would be brought to the town. In the afternoon a group of Gwalbals would go round the

temple and sing 'heed'. Then there would be Gaukrida in the bazars of Nathdwara. Thousands of devotees including those from Gujarat and Maharashtra would congregate to watch the highly fascinating event. In the evening, the Tilakayit of the Mandir would invite his favourite Nandvanshi Gaumata to Goverdhan Puja. At night, there would be 'darshan' of Lord Krishna's Balswarup. Laxmi Pujan would be performed in Shrikrishna Bhandar at night. A highly fascinating ceremony would be performed on Annakoot when about 150 maund of cooked rice and other food items would be placed in the form of a small mountain as 'bhog' for Shrinathji in Dol Tibari. Later on at midnight a group of Adivasis would loot the prasad. In the afternoon next day there would be Goverdhan Pujan in the Haveli.

In the temples the old traditions are still followed religious but this ancient festival that started in the time of Lord Ram has seen several changes in the way it has been celebrated. In the fast changing scenario of Diwali in Lake City, the scintillating glow of the earthen 'diyas' is being replaced by small electric bulbs of different colours. Due to the diminishing demand of 'diyas', the potters of

Kumharwada area of Udaipur who used to get busy weeks in advance of Diwali in making 'diyas' and earthen pitchars, are having a rough time and are on the point of starving. Out of dozens of fami-

sion of Diwali. When people lived in small places, they were able to wish others easily. When distances increased greeting cards were used for the purpose. In some cases they were made at home that showed creativity and individuality. But now even printed greeting cards are going out of fashion. So much so that some shops at Chetak Circle have stopped

450 as compared to Rs. 600 charged in the market 'Besan chakki' was priced Rs. 230 against market price of 300, 'makhan bada' at the rate of Rs. 250 was cheaper by Rs. 70 and 'doodh besan ke laddu' at 240 were cheaper by Rs. 80. The raw material was bought in bulk at wholesale price. Cooks were engaged at reasonable labour charges. Sweets were prepared under the supervision of some experienced members of the societies. Orders from customers were booked about 10 days in advance. Fifty percent of the amount was to be paid in advance. Looking to the adulteration of 'mawa' it was not used in any sweet. Some of the societies decided to use their profit for the benefit poor children by helping them in their education and providing winter clothes.

Another change that is related to accounting by shopkeepers is the use of computers with the result that the paper made Khatabahi has become obsolete. According to the Khatabahi makers in Bada Bazar, the quantity of their product has gone down considerably. After the initial investment in the purchase of a computer, its use saves a lot of time, money and energy. Earlier at least one Muneem, accountant, was needed by one firm but now a single computer trained person can complete the work in a couple of hours every day and then move on to the next shop. This work is being done mostly on the basis of annual contract. Now in most cases Khatabahi is purchased only for the purpose of performing a ritual on the occasion of Diwali.

In spite of the various changes in the ways of celebration, the festival brings joy and merriment even for those leading a hectic tiresome life.

-ASHOK MATHUR



lies of Kumhars, there is only a few engaged in this profession now. According to experienced potter Lalit Prajapat, the new generation is moving on to other means to earn a living. The cost of the raw materials is rising fast. The sand used in making 'diyas' is of a special type and is procured from distant places such as Nathdwara and Vallabhagar. One tractor costs about Rs. 4000. The price of wood used for baking the pots has also gone up considerably. And a result of all this, the old tradition of using 'diyas' on Diwali is dying fast.

There is a sea change in the way people greet each other on the occa-

selling them. According to a bookseller in Babu Bazar, there is a big variety of greeting cards on the internet that people send to others on Whatup. They are received instantly Whatsup groups exchange greeting cards. Buying cards from the market and sending them takes more time and money. Moreover, there is a risk of their being delivered late.

This Diwali, Udaipurites were able to buy pure sweets through group sharing system. A number of societies were formed in the town. They decided to get sweets made in bulk and supply them cheaper than the market price. For example, the rate per kilo of 'kaju katli' was Rs.



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