

Holidays

Winter brings cultural holidays

Diwali festival celebrates Hindu new year with lights, religious mythology, fireworks

By SARAH BAKER
Staff Reporter

Though most people are just starting to admire their holiday lights, the Indian "festival of lights" has already marked a new year.

Diwali, the Indian "festival of lights," is a prominent religious and social holiday celebrated in India, the United States and at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Ron Bishu, a professor in the College of Engineering and Technology, said he celebrates Diwali.

People traditionally celebrate Diwali by donning new clothes, offering gifts and lighting firecrackers.

"It is a mix of the American Christmas and Fourth of July," Bishu said.

The festival lasts five days — the 11th to 15th days of the Ashwin month of the Hindu Calendar. On a contem-

porary calendar, this translates to early to mid-November.

The 15th day is Diwali, the main day of celebration. The day after Diwali is the beginning of the new year on the Hindu calendar.

The holiday is usually celebrated in early morning or late night. Celebrations and myths surrounding the celebration vary across regions.

In the northwest parts of India, the religious mythology tells the story of the Lord Krishna killing a demon named Narakasur, who represents evil. People usually associate the Lord Krishna myth with Diwali.

The mythology is different in the eastern part of India, where the goddess Kalipuya is worshipped as a symbol of discipline.

The Indian Student Association celebrated Diwali Night on Nov. 3, and the Hindu Temple of Nebraska celebrated the holiday on Nov. 16.

Kwanzaa honors social, spiritual needs during week

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and drinks from the cup. Everyone says "harambee" — which means "let's pull together" — and drinks from the cup.

Throughout the week-long celebration participants greet each other with "Habari Gani," which means "How are you?"

Because Kwanzaa is celebrated in December, it is often considered a substitute for Christmas. But Cedric McClester, author of "Kwanzaa: Everything You Always Wanted to Know but Didn't Know Where to Ask," says it is better described as a cultural affirmation.

He said Kwanzaa is a time for African-Americans to reflect upon their African past and American present.

International Colloquium Series

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Editor, *Great Plains Quarterly*;
Interim Director of Native American Studies

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Radio listeners make donations to family

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furniture they needed.

The radio station has not been in touch with the family and is not releasing its name, but it has talked to a charity organization that will help distribute donations to the family.

Telephone operators at the studio quit counting donation calls at 500. Generous callers wanting to offer time or donations ate up all the music programming slots on the 102.7 FM station.

"We had to throw the rest of the show out the window," Tooker said.

Randy Robbins, operations manager at the station, said he arrived at

work only to find a big surprise — a huge mishmash of all kinds of donations in the lobby.

"I said, 'Gee, Dan, what's all this stuff in the front lobby all over the place?'" Robbins said. He said he was amused and pleased by the announcer's on-the-spot philanthropy.

Robbins said people expect radio stations to have contests and play good music; "but just how good a community member are we?"

"That kind of stuff is real important to us. We live here, too."

Donations slowed late Tuesday afternoon but people were still coming by the station to drop off donations, and interested donors were still leaving

their phone numbers.

The station plans to throw a listener-appreciation party on Dec. 21. Listeners with large donations, such as couches, will meet those who have volunteered to offer their trucks to move the items.

They will then deliver the large stash of goods to the family, and be treated to a reception at bw-3, a restaurant downtown on P Street.

Tooker's approach to helping the family encouraged listeners, Robbins said.

But Tooker won't take the credit. "I threw it up against the wall," he said. "But now everyone else is making it stick."

Raid unveils illegal aliens working in Omaha

OMAHA (AP) — Immigration agents raided the city's garbage-hauling company at daybreak Tuesday and arrested 78 suspected illegal aliens, about half the work force.

A law enforcement officer apparently fired a shot at the tires of a car fleeing from Deffenbaugh Industries during the raid. No one was hurt and the car got away.

The immigrant workers — most of them from Mexico and two from Central America — admitted they were in the United States illegally, said Jerry Heinauer, state director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Those arrested were taken to the Dawson County jail in Lexington, where Heinauer said there would be room to hold them until a federal aircraft could return them to Mexico on Thursday.

U.S. Attorney Tom Monaghan and INS officials would not comment on whether Deffenbaugh would face charges in the hiring of illegal immigrants.

INS officials said Deffenbaugh was not notified of the raid, but the company cooperated with authorities once the operation began. The plant had about 150 workers on site during the raid.

In a statement issued by Deffenbaugh, James Godfrey, general manager of the company, said: "These workers had previously provided the company with apparent proper identification to secure employment with the company. Deffenbaugh Industries believes that they have followed all applicable federal and state regulations in the hiring of its workers."

Omaha Public Works Director Don

Students offered discounts from Internet providers

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age plans: 15 hours for \$6.50; 40 hours for \$10; and unlimited hours for \$19. NAVIX claims it will not charge customers who use its service for less than five hours a month. The special rates are \$10 to \$15 less than the regular rates.

Either company will enable students to access their e-mail and use software for the World Wide Web. Both companies use 28,800 baud modems. Also, Internet Nebraska allows its subscribers to post their own web page.

"We are pumped up to be able to serve students, and we will be ready to go in January," said Eric Erlanson, director of operations for Internet Nebraska.

Despite initial student complaints, Michalecki said university officials feel confident that eliminating the modem pool will benefit students.

"Once people get past the idea that they have to pay for something that was free, they will see the Internet opening up to them and realize that what they got free wasn't very much."

Elliott said the city was aware of rumors of undocumented workers at the company but did not investigate or contact the INS about the rumors. He said the city was unaware of the planned raid.

The city's garbage collection was delayed Tuesday, while temporary workers were hired.

Bob Sink, manager of environmental quality with the city's Public Works Department, said about two-thirds of the company's 38 trucks were running. Typically, each truck is manned with a driver and two helpers to pick up trash.

"Apparently, the individuals that were sequestered by the INS were their helpers. All of their drivers are still there," Sink said.

Heinauer said the Deffenbaugh investigation began in January after the INS received at least four tips that there may be illegal workers at the company. That same month, Deffenbaugh took over the city's seven-year garbage contract.

Jerry Younger, secretary-treasurer of Teamsters Union Local 554, said it could have been some of the union pickets at the plant that provided those tips. The union is picketing Deffenbaugh because of the company's reluctance to negotiate with employees who joined the Teamsters.

"It seemed to be common knowledge that this company had plugged into the pipeline, bringing illegals in to work like some of the meatpackers have done," Younger said. "It doesn't really surprise us. We certainly believed they were in there."

Heinauer confirmed a shot was fired at a fleeing vehicle during the raid. Witnesses said it appeared that two people were in the car.

Tuesday's raid was the first time that an immigration agent had fired his gun during an immigration raid in Nebraska, Heinauer said. The INS will conduct an internal investigation in the shooting as it does any time a weapon is discharged.