

India Nite successful despite early distractions

■ Fire alarm doesn't stop celebration of Indian tradition and culture.

BY MARGARET BEHM
Staff writer

Not even a false fire alarm stopped people from enjoying India Nite '99.

Part way through a traditional Indian prayer, the alarm went off and most of the students, children and faculty left the Centennial Room, where the event was held.

For half the night, though the sound of the alarm had died, the fire alarm lights continued to flicker.

Despite the distractions, organizers said they were pleased with the evening.

"We started out on a bad note with the fire alarm, but the program was really organized," said Ram R. Bishu, president of the Lincoln chapter of the India Association of Nebraska.

India Nite is an annual event that is organized by the India Students Association, with the help of many sponsors. The event took place Saturday in the Nebraska Union.

India Nite celebrates the most popular Indian festival, Diwali. In India, the festival is usually celebrated in the first week of November.

Phanidhar Anugonda, from the city of Madras in southern India, is the president of the ISA and has lived in the United States for one year. He said he hoped India Nite was a learning experience.

"India Nite makes people know what the real India is like. It's not what they have made up in their mind," said Anugonda, a graduate student in engineering mechanics.

The festival has increased in pop-



Vijaya Narayanan dances at India Night on Saturday. The event, held in the Centennial Room in the Nebraska Union, featured Indian food and dance. JOSH WOLFE/DN

ularity every year, Anugonda said.

This year was the seventh year that the festival has been held at UNL. The 425 tickets were sold out two weeks before the festival.

People of all ages and ethnic backgrounds attended the festival.

David Brinkerhoff, associate vice chancellor for academic affairs, was one of the speakers at the festival. He used examples of his own experiences of traveling overseas to encourage the audience to learn more about other cultures.

"The enjoyment of the cultural activities of other people in other

parts of the world are truly the richest experiences," Brinkerhoff said.

Throughout the evening, the audience was constantly encouraged to join in on the celebration. During the performances, the audience cheered and clapped to the music.

"I hope you enjoy yourselves and part tonight possessing a little bit of India within yourselves," Anugonda said.

India Nite was not only for entertainment; it also gave people a chance to learn more about India.

The festival reflected many aspects of the Indian culture. Indian

food was served to the audience before a video presentation of India was shown.

The presentation showed the history of India from prehistory to what India is like today, and what it sees in its future.

Then entertainment began with several performances of Indian dances. Later, there were instrumental performances. The performances included music such as folk dances and popular songs in India.

Also, ISA members and others modeled present-day fashions from many parts of India.

After the last performance, Bhangra, the audience was invited to join the dancers on stage.

The stage became packed with people of all ages and ethnic backgrounds dancing to the Indian music.

Bishu said he was happy with how the event was organized. He said that even though the false alarm did disturb the beginning of the festival, it did not prevent the event from being enjoyable.

"It did upset the starting rhythm initially," he said. "But looking back, everything went on nicely in spite of that."

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Lincolnite arrested after crash

From Staff Reports

A 22-year-old Lincoln man arrested after a Saturday morning car crash in which two Fremont men were killed was released on bail the same morning, police said.

David Brouillette paid \$500, 10 percent of two \$2,500 bonds, and was released at 11:45 a.m. Saturday, Sgt. Rita Donlinger said.

Lancaster County sheriff's deputies arrested Brouillette on two counts of felony motor vehicle homicide after the head-on accident on Highway 77 near Bluff Road.

Brouillette was driving south in the north bound lanes of the four-lane highway around 4:45 a.m. when his 1986 Pontiac Grand Am collided with a 1971 Volkswagen Beetle head-on, a Sheriff's department press release said.

The Beetle's driver, Daniel Barrett, 23, and passenger, Jason Reese, 28, were both pronounced dead at the scene.

Brouillette was taken to BryanLGH West by air ambulance and was released later with minor injuries, a BryanLGH representative said.

None of the three men were wearing seat belts at the time of the accident.

Deputies believed Brouillette may have been drinking prior to the accident, the press release said.

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