

Encyclopedia of Hinduism unveiled

A 25-YEAR quest by nearly 1,000 scholars to document and present one of the world's oldest living traditions came to fruition when the international edition of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism was unveiled in Columbia on Monday (August 26).

Hundreds of scholars, dignitaries, students, Hindu leaders and the public converged on the University of Southern California campus to witness the release of much the anticipated and definitive guide.

The two-day event coinciding with the release featured top Indian scholars who discussed the significance of the encyclopedia and the richness and diversity of Indian culture that binds more than one billion people worldwide.

Those present on the occasion included South Carolina governor Nikki Haley, Consul General to India Ajit Kumar, social reformer Anna Hazare, Congressman for South Carolina Hon Joe Wilson and encyclopedia managing editor Dr Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati.

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati, president of Parmarth Niketan Ashram, presented the first official set to the Governor Nikki Haley for the state library.

'The wisdom, truths, teachings and insights of Indian and Hindu culture are not limited to or applicable to only Hindus or Indians. Rather they belong to the world and can deeply benefit the world. It is, therefore, our aim that the richness of this ancient yet timeless culture and heritage should be made available to the entire world, in a way that is authentic, academic, compre-



Momentous event: Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati (left) presents a set of the encyclopedia to Governor Nikki Haley (third from left)



Historic launch: (Left to right) Consul General Ajit Kumar, Dr Sudhir Parikh, encyclopedia managing editor Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, University president Dr Harris Pastides, founder Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati, social reformer Anna Hazare, Dean Dr Meera Narsimhan and Congressman Joe Wilson

hensive and illuminating,' Pujya Swamiji said.

Haley said she was honoured to receive the beautiful 11 volumes on behalf of the state.

'It is so beautiful, and such a

great gift, this Encyclopedia of Hinduism. I am so honored. I am so glad to be here tonight at this historic event,' she said.

Dr Harris Pastides, president of University of South Carolina,

said he was humbled to see the encyclopedia being launched on his campus.

'It is a deep honor to be participating in the American release of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism. This is a remarkable work of scholarship and research. I hope that many in academia and in everyday life will turn to it as a resource to better understand the characters, the tenets, and the impact that Hinduism has had, and is having in the world,' he said.

Consul General Kumar added that India and Hindus all over the world were grateful to the University of South Carolina for the launch of the monumental work.

A project of India Heritage Research Foundation, founded, guided and led by one of India's most revered spiritual leaders, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati, the comprehensive encyclopedia has 11 volumes.

It covers Hindu spiritual beliefs, practices and philosophy and includes about 7,000 articles on Hinduism and its practices, besides touching upon Sikhism, Jainism and Buddhism.

The work also deals with Indian history, languages, art, music, dance, architecture, medicine, and women's issues. It contains more than 1,000 illustrations and photographs.

The encyclopedia's volumes run from 600 to more than 700 pages. Some 3,000 copies are being printed in the first edition.

Hinduism is the world's third-largest religion, with 1 billion followers, according to a Pew Research Center study. Christians number 2.2 billion and Muslims 1.6 billion.

Sikh shot dead

A SIKH man working at a gas station in New Jersey was shot dead over the weekend in an attempted robbery.

A native of India, Surinder Singh, 40, had been working as a gas station attendant at Garden State Fuel in Woodbury for 14 years. He was shot in the chest and near the armpit.

A massive manhunt has been launched in New Jersey and a reward of \$8,000 has been announced for information leading to the arrest of the culprits.

The culprits fled the scene in a silver vehicle on Broad Street.

Haley woos US-Indians

INDIAN AMERICAN South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley has said that she is keen on working with the Indian private sector to help set up manufacturing facilities in her home state.

Haley said India has made great strides in manufacturing and technology and she would welcome Indian industrialists to set up facilities that would help create more jobs in her state.

'I am in touch with Indian Ambassador to the US Nirupama Rao in this connection and hopefully very soon something would turn out,'

she said on Wednesday (August 28).

Haley, who is seeking another term as governor, encouraged fellow Indian Americans to run for elected office in large numbers to make a better America and give back to the nation that helped shaped their destiny.

The contribution of Indian Americans in the field of medicine, law, academics, science and technology was phenomenal and now it is time for them to serve the nation by entering politics, she added.

She also lauded Indian-Americans for running in elections in different states at different levels.

Fellowship

AN INDIAN-ORIGIN cardiologist at Johns Hopkins has been selected for the prestigious White House fellowship for the year 2013-14 along with 11 others.

Kapil Parakh is a co-founder of Health for America, a non-profit organisation that mobilises youth to improve the health of communities through innovation.

He was selected in a national competition based on a record of professional achievement, evidence of leadership potential, and a proven commitment to public service.