



## Shivaratri celebrations in San Diego



Over 500 people attended the event

### VEENU PURI VERMANI

Over 500 people attended the Maha Shivaratri celebrations at San Diego, California's Shree Mandir, February 12. Devotees thronged the temple complex from 6 pm and many stayed on till midnight when the *maha aarti* was performed.

A long line of devotees waited patiently to enter the temple and offer flowers and milk to Lord Shiva. Little girls in *chaniya cholis* and small boys in *kurta pajamas* played outside the temple amidst chants of *om namah Shivay* from inside.

The crowd kept increasing by the hour inside the temple and there was no space left untaken. One of the highlights was the verse sung in praise of Lord Shiva by children aged 7 to 11. The children had learned the verse in their Gurukul — Hindu school — classes sponsored by the temple every Sunday morning.

"These celebrations in the temple are a good time to meet a lot of friends and also to sometimes make new friends," said a woman attendee. "My children are always excited about going to the temple as they get to play with their friends."