



THIS YEAR, the RWA planned to go eco-friendly and reduce pollution by presenting the Ramayana to the visitors through a state of the Art Laser Show with sound and laser lights. Visitors, young and old, were enthralled by melodious Dandiya music from a well known DJ. There were Games stalls for children and exhibitors brought an array of festive products for sale. Everyone enjoyed the variety of delectable Food on display. The residents appreciated the thoughtfulness behind the Seniors Seating and concern for security.

From the proceeds collected, the RWA plans to contribute to the SWACHH BHARAT campaign by monitoring and improving the garbage collection process and disposable system in the colony.



Print Media

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CELEBRATING DUSSEHRA WITH A DIFFERENCE

SHE BABA

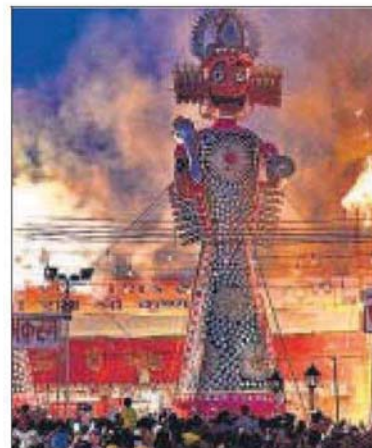
RENUKA NARAYANAN

A few days ago on Dussehra, which many of us also call Vijayadashami, the Victorious Tenth, I saw something I had never seen before – a very modern, well-behaved Dussehra fete in a colony in Delhi. From what I gathered, the fete was taking place after a gap of many years. For one, the Delhi bomb blasts by the 'unfriends' during our festivals had initially been a put-off and in the years that followed, the prime movers had got busy with their children's important examinations and so on. But the colony committee seemed to have regrouped splendidly this year.

I almost didn't go because I no longer relate to smoky burning effigies. In fact, I felt that if I did go, I absolutely had to wear a badge or a tee proclaiming 'Je suis Kumbhakaran' (I am Kumbhakaran) because after a lifetime of trying to understand the Ramayana, it was a Facebook joke that enlightened me that the one character who seemed to have had his life sorted was that gentle giant who peacefully ate and slept his way through existence.

However I was very glad that I did go for I saw all kinds of heartening sights. It was slightly startling at first to see an MNC pizza chain's stall at a Dussehra fete, but why not, really, something for everybody. Good old Nirula's ice-cream was there, too, an authentic bit of modern Delhi, while excellent freshly made desi treats like besan-ka-chila, dahi-vada and bervi-alu flew off the counter at the Old Delhi Chaat stall to which I was irresistibly drawn. I overheard uniquely Indian foodie grumbles like "Golgappe mein jaan nahin hai" ("These golgappas lack life") and saw strangers helpfully hand each other napkins and spoons. I saw long-lost friends and got to wish them 'Happy Dussehra' and enjoy my snacks al fresco with them in the park in the soft October air.

Pleasant bhajans were being played at just the right volume and NGO stalls sold



■ An effigy of Ravana being burnt during Dussehra celebrations in Delhi. AJAY AGGARWAL/HT PHOTO

pretty gift-bags, diya and jewellery boxes (Dipavali is on October 29-30). I spotted a significant act of inclusion - a well-located stall for Kashmiri shawl-sellers next to the quilt-and-linen stall.

A bevy of gorgeous young ladies arrived beautifully dressed in lehngas for garba and dandiya and I actually saw young boys politely jump up to give chairs to the seniors.

Amidst these genteel happenings, I noticed that the Spirit of Dussehra Past lingered with a twist. The superhit of the evening was the man selling toy swords, bows and arrows, the same as in my childhood and at any country fair. He did brisk business with the pre-teens and it was a new, interesting sight for me to see little girls marching around with toy weapons, with their daddies teaching them how to hold and string the bow - and, of course, not shoot arrows except in the safe part of the lawn.

Most astounding was the laser Ramayana on a large screen with excellent images and sound, in place of the Big Three. We had the satisfaction of the holy fable without the fireworks and pollution. Way to go, Vijayadashami.

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