



# Ambedkar Times *Weekly*

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## Remembering Mr. V. P Singh: The former Prime Minister of India

Prem K. Chumber

Editor-In-Chief: Ambedkar Times / Desh Doaba



The former Prime Minister of India, Mr. Vishwanath Partap Singh, passed away on November 27, 2008 after a prolonged fight with blood cancer. His death came at such a time when India was shaken by terrorist attack in Mumbai. Mr. Singh was born on June 25, 1931. He remained in important positions such as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Defense Minister and Finance Minister in Rajiv Gandhi's cabinet. Mr. Singh is known for his commitment to implement the Mandal Commission report for reservation of backward classes. He got installed Dr. B.R. Ambedkar portrait in the hall of the parliament of India and also bestowed the Bharat Ratan, the highest civilian award, on Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. It was also during his tenure that reservation was also extended to lower castes converted to Buddhism. He earned respect of people by upholding values of dignity, liberty and equality. He parted company with Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, over his involvement in a corruption case relating to Bofors deal. He did not compromise his principles by sticking to the august office of Finance Minister in Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's cabinet. He led a coalition against him and remained Prime Minister from December 2, 1989 till November 10, 1990. He dared to arrest the BJP leader Mr. L. K. Advani during his Rath Yatra, the least caring for his party's outside support to his government. "Ambedkar Times" and "Desh Doaba" Weeklies take pride in fondly remembering him for his great endeavors towards social justice, bestowing the highest civilian award of the Republic of India on Babasaheb and installing his portrait in the parliament hall in recognition of his lifelong struggle for the upliftment of downtrodden.

## Indian Overseas Congress Event "Meet & Greet"

In Silicon Valley, Bay Area (California) Nov. 25, 2023

Pamas R. Bhatti

Residents of Silicon Valley and surrounding areas gave warm welcome to the Chief Guest, Mr. Deepender Singh Hooda. The gathered enthusiastic audience filled the Shubham Banquet Hall in Sunnyvale with "Deepender Hooda Zindabad" slogans when the Chief Guest arrived. The Indian Overseas Congress organized this "Meet and Greet Deepender Singh Hooda with Sam Pitroda" event in Silicon Valley Bay Area in California on November 25th, 2023. Present at the stage with honorable Deepender Hooda (MP Rajya Sabha Member 3 term MP Lok Sabha (2005 to 2019) were honorable Dr. Sam Pitroda, Global Chairman Indian Overseas Congress, Mr. Mohinder Singh Gilzian, President

Overseas Congress in the United States. He expressed his sincere gratitude to Honorable Sam Pitroda, the Global Chairman of Indian Overseas Congress by saying that Mr. Pitroda's presence was truly an honor and a source of inspiration for all. He thanked the chief guest, Mr. Deepender Singh Hooda, a respected Member of Parliament, Vice President Mr. Ravi Gullia for organizing the event and Chairman Dr. Ramesh Kumar as well as every member of the Indian Overseas Congress for their tireless efforts in making this event a grand success.

He added that this event was a witness to the growing influence of the Indian Overseas Congress in the west coast region of America as was witnessed at a grand event in the east coast region



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Indian Overseas Congress, Dr. Harmesh Kumar, president Indian Overseas Congress West Coast, Mr. Neeraj Sharma, MLA NIT Faridabad, Haryana, Gurinderpal Singh, General Secretary Indian Overseas Congress USA, Shan Sankaran, General Secretary Indian Overseas Congress West Coast and Mr. Ravi Gullia, Vice President Indian Overseas Congress West Coast, and Sofia Sharma, national general secretary of IOC.

The Banquet Hall was fully packed with approximately 400 people, including a large number of people from Haryanvi Bay Area Association and Bay Area Jat Association.

President Mr. Gilzian thanked members of the Indian Overseas Congress while warmly welcoming the entire audience. He said it was a special day for all who have gathered to celebrate not just an event but the growing strength and presence of the Indian

of America in Dallas, Chicago and New Jersey. This was another successful event of the IOC. He expressed his happiness at the expanding growth of membership which, he said, was a clear sign that many like-minded individuals believe in congress ideology.

He stated that Indian Overseas Congress should be present in every city and state of the USA, connecting people who share party's values and beliefs. He encouraged all to officially become members of the IOC and to engage in weekly meetings whenever possible. Connecting with others on platforms like Zoom or to make video calls to discuss various topics related to congress' well-being and BJP's Politics of hate. He said that all must feel free to raise their voice against injustice and stay fearless. He encouraged all to form WhatsApp groups, creating

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## Forget the Snacks: These Vending Machines Dispense Gifts to Those in Need

Light the World Giving Machines in Sacramento-Modesto Area Are the Only Ones in Northern California

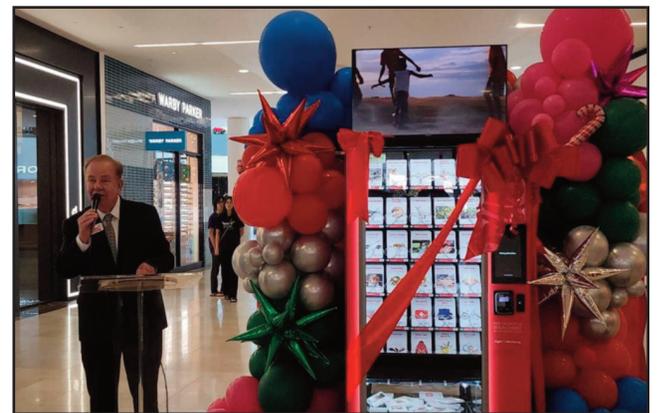


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# Forget the Snacks: These Vending Machines

## Dispense Gifts to Those in Need

Light the World Giving Machines in Sacramento-Modesto Area Are the Only Ones in Northern California



**SACRAMENTO and MODESTO, (California)** – This holiday season, Central Valley residents can go to vending machines and “Light the World” by purchasing a winter coat for a homeless person in Sacramento, 2,000 meals for those in the region who are food insecure, a baby comfort kit for a family fleeing an abusive situation, and even a goat to help a family in Africa start a milking and breeding business.

These vending machines, called Giving Machines, are part of a global effort to promote the true spirit of the holidays by giving gifts to those in need. This holiday season, Light the World Giving Machines will be located in Roseville and Modesto and are the only Giving Machines in Northern California. This year, the Light the World Giving Machines, sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

Saints, will be located in 61 cities around the world.

The Central Valley Giving Machines will spend more than three weeks at Westfield Galleria at Roseville, from Nov. 16 to Dec. 10, then they will move to the Vintage Faire Mall in Modesto on Dec. 11 and will be up through Christmas and New Year’s Day. At the Westfield Galleria, the Giving Machines will carry items of need for four Sacramento-area nonprofits: First Step Communities, Placer Food Bank, Saint John’s Program for Real Change and South County Services. In Modesto, the local nonprofits are American Red Cross: Heart of the Valley Chapter, Boys & Girls Clubs of Stanislaus County, Food Initiative of Greater Stanislaus, and West Modesto Community Collaborative. In addition, three international charities will be represented in both the Roseville and Modesto machines: UNICEF, iDE and Mentors International.

To see the items that can be purchased, visit the local Light the World Giving Machines website at [www.givingmachinesgreatersacramento.org](http://www.givingmachinesgreatersacramento.org). Last year, the Giving Machines made their debut in the Sacramento region, and they were a huge success, with more than 11,500 items purchased for both area and global charities. One of the most popular was a gift that provided two winter coats for refugees in the Sacramento area. Nearly 1,200 coats were purchased. “These vending machines offer a unique and memorable way to light the world with love by serving and caring for others both locally and globally,” said Bruce Anderson, the director of the local effort.

“For many parents, it offers an effective way to teach children about giving to good causes and the joy there is by helping others.” The global Giving Machines initiative first launched in a few U.S. locations in 2017. Since then, 1.5 million people have donated more than \$22 million. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints covers all program operational expenses. This ensures that participating nonprofits receive 100% of the collected funds. Participating nonprofits can use up to 10% of Giving Machine donations for overhead expenses. And each nonprofit is required to submit a detailed report on how funds were used.

For more on the area’s Giving Machines, including answers to frequently asked questions, go to

[www.givingmachinesgreatersacramento.org/](http://www.givingmachinesgreatersacramento.org/)

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Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD



Goodie Takhar, PhD

# Indian Overseas Congress Event "Meet & Greet"

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smaller communities based on shared interests, roots, and connections. These groups would be wonderful venues for sharing common joys, cultural exchanges, staying informed about the latest happenings in the motherland. It is crucial for open discussions, current political challenges, especially concerning the actions of the BJP government.

He urged the audience to be aware of the issues India is facing, including threats to constitutional values, compromises to major institutions, concerns about the education system, and hate politics being played. He advised all to work together to make the Indian Overseas Congress a household name, bringing people together and making a positive impact in the communities they live in. The primary focus must be on establishing congress' presence in every state of America connecting with Indians far and wide. He said the congress is not merely a political entity; it is a legacy, guardian of constitutional values that form the backbone of great nation.

Dr. Sam Pitroda, the Global Chairman of Indian Overseas Congress addressed the audience. Mr. Pitroda is an internationally respected telecom inventor, entrepreneur, development thinker and policy maker. He has spent 50 years in information and communications technology and related global and national developments. He is credited with having laid the foundation for India's telecommunications and technology revolution of the 1980s, Mr. Pitroda has earned respect in the world for his accomplishments in life.

Mr. Pitroda is a recipient of numerous distinguished awards, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award for his outstanding contribution to telecommunication. He received from Dataquest lifetime achievement award, World Telecommunication and Information Society Award by ITU, including Padma Bhushan award for his contribution to Science and Engineering, the Skoch Challenger Lifetime Achievement Award for ushering in the telecom and IT revolution in India. Andhra University honored Mr. Pitroda with D.Sc. in 2008. He was felicitated on 31 March 2009 by Akhila Bhartiya Vishwakarma Mahasabha (ABVM) for service to the Vishwakarma community, in the presence of the then Chief Minister of Delhi, Smt. Sheila Dikshit.

He has served with Indian Prime Ministers in various capacities, including as an advisor to Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, Dr. Manmohan Singh. He has also served as an advisor to the United Nations. His achievements are too numerous to list them here.

Hereceived World Telecommunication and Information Society Award, International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 2011, for his outstanding contribution to improving life in rural communities through information and communication technologies. Sam Pitroda is the first Indian to receive this prestigious award. He is regarded as one of the earliest pioneers of hand-held computing because of his invention of the Electronic Diary in 1975. In 1974, Pitroda joined Wescom Switching which was one of the first

digital switching companies. He developed the 580 DSS switch, over nearly four years. It was released in 1978.

Mr. Pitroda expressed his thanks to the chief guest, Mr. Deepender Singh Hooda, MP, president of Indian Overseas Congress in the US, Mr. Gill (Mohinder Singh Gilzian), dignitaries from the dais, ladies and gentlemen in the audience. He said it was indeed a special honor and privilege for him to be there with everyone in the audience. On behalf of the Indian Overseas Congress, he welcomed all and talked about what IOC does, why it does what it does and how the audience could help the mission of congress party. He explained that Indian Overseas Congress is part of the Congress party, which is from the oldest democratic party in the world that is 534 years old. The Indian independence movement really gave a special shape to the party that was by Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad, Subhash Chander Bose, Sarojini Naidu and the list goes on and on and on. All of these people believed in an idea of India rooted in the diversity, inclusion, democracy, human rights, justice, truth, trust and love for everyone. These are not just words for Congress party, these are real and dear to live by. Indian Overseas Congress is in 32 countries. It has in each country a President like Mr. Gill in the US. The party has executive team, and in many parts of the world, it has presence in many cities, like in the US in about 12 major cities. In Canada, it has presence in Toronto, in Montreal and in the West Coast. In Europe, the party is very active and the reason it is really active in the international arena is because it believes that Indian democracy is larger and global for being good. US has the oldest democracy, India has the biggest democracy and if the Indian democracy goes haywire, the world will pay for it, he added. So, it is not just an Indian issue, it is indeed a global issue. All have seen what happened in this country not too long ago and democracy is at stake in many parts of the world. It is at stake in India mainly because institutions are captured, civil society has been undermined, and scientific logical rational mindset is eroded. One cannot have a normal conversation with people without getting into religion, without getting into hate, without getting into sort of conversations which divide people as supposed to unite people.

"I remind my friends that when I was growing up in small little tribal village in Orissa, I was born in 1942 in British Raj, and we had right in front of our house a Muslim family, on the right there was Sikh family, on the left there was Jain family and in the back was tribal Oriya and we all lived together, played together, ate together, celebrated every possible festival together. No one ever thought that they were different, and now when I go back, I see how people get divided on petty issues and that is what Congress party tries to fight. We believe unity is important for economic prosperity. We believe unity is important for peace and we respect 200 million Muslims who live in India. They are part and parcel

of Indian community, India, they are Indians, and when I see that being challenged today, it bothers many of us. As you know elections are going on right now at the state level. We will wait for the results to come on by December 3rd. and then there are general elections around May, 2024. I firmly believe that the next election will decide the destiny of India. There are elections here also in 2024, and this election will also decide the destiny of the world and we cannot take it too lightly. I worry a lot because I understand some of these issues because I came here 60 years ago and then there was hardly any Indian community. In Chicago we are just about 400 people of Indian origin. Every time you saw an Indian on the street, you got so excited to meet a fellow Indian in those days. Now there is a large community of Indians in America, about 4 million Indians live in the United States. Indians are all over in the government, high-tech, banks, intel, universities, hospitals."

He credited Silicon Valley and people of Indian origin for being an integral part of high-tech innovation. He said Indian community in Silicon Valley is affluent, highly educated, and their voice gets heard everywhere. It also matters to Indians. He had an office on El Camino Real in Silicon Valley in 1974 with 50 people when not much was around, it was basically a barren land. Silicon Valley leads the world in technology, it has been critical not only to computer but to IT, telecom and all kind of other things, but it is also an important destination for innovations.

"Look at what is going on in social media which was basically invented in Silicon Valley. There is Google, Apple, Facebook, YouTube, Yahoo, AOL. All of these inventions basically were rooted here. The social media today plays an important role in democracy. Unfortunately, social media has created a negative role because social media promotes and expands anti bias misinformation. Unfortunately, we did not pay enough attention in early days to understand the implication of social media on democracy and the result is that you have unauthenticated behavior that drives misinformation. If we had enough regulation early in the game that you have to identify yourself with some kind of ID that I am indeed real Sam Pitroda and I take responsibility for what I am saying, and oppose to that, today on Face Book, there are 8 Sam Pitrodas. Anybody can sign up with your name, tweet on your behalf and you don't even really know who is tweeting. Social media is today dictating elections. It really started with Obama. But I thought, since high-tech audience is here, I want to comment a little bit on social media. We are all worried about social media because, in India, I know personally that many political parties have thousands of people on payrolls, thousands, not hundreds, who do nothing but attack people. I can make a headline in India today by saying something here tonight and it will be all over India tomorrow because three thousand people will be tweeting against Sam Pitroda because I said something because organized army of

people who drive social media in India. And remember, we had series of conversations at the congress party and some of us said, we will not play this game, we will not lie, attack people personally, we will not be party to paid social media to attack people and that is the mission today in India.

This is an issue here also. So, I think technology has played an important role in shaping the democracy. Next election will be influenced by what happens on social media and I request Silicon Valley people to pay close attention to it. Help us, not as political party, but as a nation not only in India but also in the US to make sure that we remain on track when it comes to democracy, freedom, liberty, human rights, justice. Today, US is what US is only because US remains a vibrant democracy and US focuses on innovation, entrepreneurship, freedom to move, freedom to do what you want to do, freedom to believe in what you believe in and we take everything for granted, we don't fight for it because we think it is given to us. But today, that basic idea is being challenged in India, challenged in a very peculiar way, challenged through building temples, challenged through controlling election commissioner, judiciary, police, income tax office, even universities. You look at all the vice chancellors of the universities in India and you realize that a lot of these people come from RSS. An average person is too happy living a normal life and they don't pay attention to these things. And I think we are here to sensitize our community, here as well as back home as to the urgency to spread this message to the right people, and if we don't work now, it is going to really dictate the destiny of the country."

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Pitroda thanked everyone who came here to attend this event by taking the time from their busy schedule. He asked people to stay engaged with IOC, the congress party and with the idea of India and to protect the values embedded in democracy and fight for it and if one doesn't fight, it will adversely affect everything.

Mr. Deepender Hooda, thanked IOC Chairman Dr. Sam Pitroda, the IOC President (USA) Mr. Mohinder Gilzian, VP IOC West Coast Ravi Gullia, IOC Chairman West Coast Dr. Harmesh Kumar and the entire team especially, Ravi Gullia, for organizing such a big event in short period of time. He also mentioned to people that it was Sam Pitroda who initiated the telecom revolution and sowed the seeds of electronics and computers which were core pillars of IT revolution. He congratulated all for doing so. He expressed his joy for the Haryanvi cultural program that the small children performed. He thanked Mr. Neeraj Sharma, MLA from Haryana for being there from India. He said that he was pleased with the results of elections in Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka and he firmly believes that there will be good news that will soon emerge from Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Rajasthan and other states. He expressed his optimism that the congress party will be victorious in the

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# Indian Overseas Congress Event "Meet & Greet"

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2024 general elections. He encouraged all to stay engaged with IOC and actively work for the congress party by spreading its vision for the people of India. Additionally, Mr. Deepender Hooda mentioned if he is elected as a CM of Haryana, he will create an NRI department which will specifically work with NRI's for their concerns or interests in Haryana.

Dr. Harmesh Kumar thanked the IOC management for appointing him to the position of IOC west coast chairman. He said the future of congress party is very bright if young leaders like Mr. Deepender Singh Hooda emerge in the party. He said Mr. Gilzian singled him out two years ago that he could do something for the community here. He said he is in mental health business and he wants to address the mental health issues of the people in the US and about the increasing homelessness in the state of California. That is one of the reasons he is running for senate in 2024. He added that the people cannot afford the basic things in India. The government has destroyed the public-school education in India. The government has destroyed the social equilibrium of the community, brotherhood etc. etc. He emphasized on forming unity among themselves. He added that he was on radio program on 1550 AM called emotional healing with Dr. Kumar, where he had addressed the problems of mental health. This is prevalent in the prison system in the

US and the patients of mental health are not heard, they are only given medicines that the psychiatrists offer to them. He said this country gave the opportunity to all to work hard to be successful in whatever field they choose. Unfortunately, the same opportunities were not offered in India to many for thousands of years. They were not given the education they needed, economic opportunity they needed, the spiritual freedom to practice in the religion of their choice. He said one is recognized by the merit based on quality, based on caste, religion in India.

He thanked Ashwini Bhakri Law Firm, Dr. Vaneet Sharma and Bikano for supporting this event for providing dinner and financial support. He said he promised to Mr. Mohinder Gilzian financial support that he will provide \$25,000 in a year for party causes. He asked everyone in the audience to provide financial support in whatever amount they can afford. Functions like these require finances to organize. He encouraged all to fill out the life-time membership forms with IOC with only \$100. He reminded that 4 million people of Indian origin live in the US. He believes in the mission of the congress party. He has been living in the city of Concord for the last 35 years and the people there listen to him and respect him when he talks on various social and economic issues because he has done something good for the community. He said all the leaders on the stage have done wonderful

things for the community and he wished them the best. At the end, he asked people to bring the congress party in the central government in India which is not a simple task but doable. Everyone has to work hard to make that a reality. He warned people to be careful about fake news that will erupt from everywhere. The game that algorithm oppression will play adverse roll in the election with the help of artificial intelligence.

Mr. Ravi Gullia was presented a letter of appointment as the vice president of west coast of the Indian Overseas Congress. Mr. Gullia expressed his thanks to Dr. Sam Pitroda and the future Chief Minister of Haryana, Mr. Hooda who attended this event in spite of his busy schedule, Dr. Harmesh Kumar, the OIC chairman of west coast, chairman of IOC USA, Mr. Gilzian and all the guests in attendance. He thanked the members of his team, especially the Haryanvi families who came to the event and gave special thanks to Dr. Vaneet Sharma, AB Bhakri Law firm and Bikano to supporting the event.

Dr. Sharma thanked Mr. Hooda, Dr. Sam Pitroda, Dr. Harmesh Kumar, Ravi Gullia and everyone who supported this event. He said he has the honor and privilege of welcoming the most dynamic and visionary young leader of India, Mr. Deepender Hooda. Mr. Hooda is dedicated to public service and he is an inspiration to millions. At such a young age, Mr. Hooda has been responsible for bringing world

class institute and multimillion-dollar projects to Haryana. On behalf of all the Indian community of Bay Area, he thanked Mr. Hooda.

Mr. Raj Chahal, council member city of Santa Clara, thanked the members of the IOC and audience for attending this event. He particularly thanked Mr. Pitroda for his leadership and the chief guest, Mr. Deepender Singh Hooda for contributing so much for the state of Haryana as well as the county. He particularly thanked Mr. Ravi Gullia for inviting him to the event. He humbly recognized the contribution of the sitting audience for electing him as council member for the city of Santa Clara. He said a lot can be accomplished with unity. He encouraged all to get involved in politics whether it is local politics, state or national politics. He also presented to the chief guest with a commendation certificate on behalf of the city council as well as from the mayor of the city of Santa Clara.

Mr. Satish Dalal from Haryana Bay Area Association who, formed the Haryana Bay Area Association, addressed the audience. He recognized the members of the association. He emphasized on the unity of IOC. He welcomed the chief guest to the bay area. He commended the Haryana Bay Area Association for helping the law enforcement, FBI for identifying a victim in an accident in Fresno in 2015. Baldev Randhawa, the newly appointed vice president of IOC USA,

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# Indian Overseas Congress Event "Meet & Greet"



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 thanked the IOC management for giving him this honor of appointing him to this position. He promised to work closely with the IOC management on the mission of the congress party. He thanked Mr. Hooda for flying all the way from India to attend this event to motivate people like him. He expressed his thanks to Sam Pitroda, Harbhajan Singh, Mr. Gilzian, Sofia, Neeraj Sharma, Ravi Gullia, Dr. Harmesh Kumar, Gurpreet, Appa, his close friends and members of Silicon Valley for this beautiful event.

Mr. Shan Shankaran, the general secretary IOC of west coast thanked Mr. Sam Pitroda and he promised to work hard for the party to carry its mission forward.  
 Chirag Kathrani, IT head west coast, thanked Dr. Sam Pitroda for his contribution to the world. He said a lot of people are here because of Dr. Pitroda, Mr. Deepender Hooda for attending the event. He pledged to continue to work hard for the congress party.  
 Sofia Sharma, national general secretary of IOC, thanked all for grac-

ing the event with their presence and their support.  
 She expressed her heartfelt thanks to Dr. Sam Pitroda, Mr. Deepender Singh Hooda, Mr. Neeraj Sharma, Mr. Mohinder Singh Gilzian, Mr. Harbhajan Singh and Mr. Baldev Randhawa. She said their presence, guidance and inspiring words have been the corner stone of this success. She expressed that the duly appointed president of the west coast, Mr. Ravi Gullia, chairman west coast, Dr. Harmesh Kumar, general secretary Shan Shankar and Gurinderpal Singh

for their time and efforts and unwavering dedication have been instrumental in making this event not only the possibility but a huge success. She thanked all in the audience for their participation. She thanked the sponsor Bikano and Dr. Vaneet Sharma, Astro Vastu Solutions. She encouraged people to continue the spirit of dedication to move the mission of congress party forward. Because of cooperation of the people, the IOC will continue to grow. The program was concluded with a group picture.  
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