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A massive awareness campaign by over 400 people was held to protect Hindu Temples in India.

Rosemont, IL- May 6, 2007 – A massive protest campaign organized by Save Temples forum was attended by about 500 Concerned people during the visit of Mr. Y S Rajasekhar Reddy, Chief Minister of the South Indian State of Andhra Pradesh. Mr. Reddy was at the Donald Stephens Convention Center to attend a Reception hosted by organizations TANA and ATA. People including many doctors, IT professionals, businessmen were protesting the policies of Mr. Reddy's Government which have been highly detrimental to the Hindu institutions including temples.

The protest was held from 3:00 PM till 6:30 PM which included men, women and children of different nationalities from all around the country. Most of the concerned participants attended in response to the fliers and advertisements placed in various temples and various Indo-American newspapers. Many participants responded to the continuous bad news such as temple land scams, cancellation of Sri Rama Navami as Hindu Holiday and misuse of temple funds., Frustrated youth spontaneously arranged the protest and it was so overwhelming that it was beyond their expectations. Members of several organizations such as ISKCON, Christians against proselytism, Indian American intellectual forum, Vishwa Hindu Parishad also joined the protest.

One of the protesters, Mr. Durga Prasad from Arizona, was on Fast without taking even water starting on Friday night till the protest was concluded. He provided tremendous inspiration to the fellow protesters.

The protesters demanded repealing the Hindu Endowments Act, religious freedom for Hindus in practicing Hindu religion and management of Hindu institutions. The participants raised slogans such as 'Repeal Hindu Endowments Act', 'Hands off..... temples', '1-2-3.... keep temples free', *Eadukondalavada Venkataramana Govinda Govinda* etc. and sang devotional hymns.

Representatives Meet the Chief Minister

V. V. Prakasa Rao and Prasad Yalamanchi have been in constant contact with Dr. Gavva Chandra Reddy, the president of ATA and Dr. Bandla Hanumaiah, the president of TANA. They have been very cooperative with our request to meet the Chief Minister and also expressed their concern for the welfare of the Temples. At the request of Dr. Gavva, V. V. Prakasa Rao and Prasad Yalamanchi met with Hon. Chief Minister, Dr. Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy in Hyatt Hotel in Chicago. They expressed concerns of all Hindus regarding the plight of the temples in Andhra Pradesh by saying that thousands of acres of Temple lands have been sold, Temples' revenues have been diverted to non-Hindu causes, numerous Temples have been demolished and hundreds of Temple lands have been allowed to be encroached. They mentioned that the Endowment Act should be repealed. Mr. Reddy mentioned about the recent amendment to the Endowment Act giving autonomy to about 30,000 temples with less than Rs 50,000 annual

income and giving Rs 2500 for these Temples to support Dhup Deepa Naivedyam program; release of Shirdi Sai Baba temples to independent management trustees; and legislation to ban missionary activities near major temples. When the representatives mentioned that although the Hindu community was happy to read the news about these developments, they again requested the repeal of the Endowment Act. They mentioned that Hindu Temples should enjoy the same freedom and independence as other two major religions. Then they submitted a "Memorandum of Concerns to Hon. Y S Rajasekhara Reddy, Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh" Mr. Reddy scanned through the memorandum, smiled and said, "Anything is possible," and that he would consider the demands.

Plan to disrupt the Peaceful Protest was foiled in Chicago

On May 6, 2007 nearly 500 people were peacefully protesting in Chicago expressing their concern for the plight of Hindu Temples in Andhra Pradesh during Honorable Chief Minister's visit to USA. A group of five people came into the middle of demonstration and started asking why we were doing the protest. One of the Protesters gave the booklet containing the information. Protesters took the booklets when they did not want. Then one gentleman, later identified as Dr. Jayachand Pallekonda went behind Mr Praveen Gandhi and started choking his throat with his fingers. Mr Gandhi was not even able to shout as his throat was being pressed very hard. Nearby police saw the incident immediately, rushed behind Dr Pallekonda pulled his hands off Mr Gandhi and handcuffed him. Then took away from the Protest area and filed a case. Hearing is set for May 23, 2007 in Rosemont, Il. Mr. Gandhi was taken to the emergency hospital the next day due to the swollen glands. Dr. Pallekonda is seen on the left side of the picture with black outfit. Dr. Jayachand Pallekonda is President of Federation of Indian American Christian Organization of North America, Washington, DC. His website link:

<http://www.zoominfo.com/search/PersonDetail.aspx?PersonID=50212444>

Please follow this link to see the attacker:

<http://specials.rediff.com/news/2007/may/07sli1.htm>

After the protest, many participants gathered in a conference hall at a nearby Hotel to share their experiences and plan future action. The speakers congratulated the participants and urged everyone to carry on the fight for Hindu Civil Rights.

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