

Bahuda Yatra (Return Ratha Yatra) Celebrated at Durga Bari

HOUSTON: *Bahuda yatra* or return *ratha yatra* is the return journey of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra from their Aunt's house (Gundi-cha Temple) to the main temple. It is significant in the sense that it completes the *ratha yatra*.

Like last year, Char Dham Hindu Temple along with Houston Durga Bari Society and ISKCON celebrated *Bahuda yatra* at Durga Bari on Sunday July 21. Volunteers had reached the temple well ahead of the 11am start time to re-decorate the *ratha* for the *Bahuda yatra*. The *ratha* was turned around as well to imply that the deities are now coming back to their own temple. Puja started around 11am and it went on for little over an hour. Then followed the *Pahandi Bije*, in which the deities were brought from the temple on to the *ratha*. This was completed with the help of several eager devotees who were delighted having the chance to hold the deities. After all the deities including Nrushingha and Lord Ganesh were situated properly on the *ratha*, Pandit Dr. Bishnupada Goswami climbed onto the *ratha*. A ceremonial King Indradyumna, Dr. Raghu Dass performed the *Chhera Panhara* (brooming) ceremony to cleanse the path of progress for the *ratha*. Chants of *Maha Mantra, Jai Jagannath and beautiful Kirtan by ISKCON* filled the air as devotees started pulling the *ratha*. With great enthusiasm, the devotees pulled the *ratha* three times within the temple premises to signify the home coming journey for the Lord.

Once the *ratha* pulling was complete, devotees made a bee line to climb onto the *ratha* to see their beloved Lord and have a chance to touch them and do *pradakshina* around the *singhasana* of the dei-



Bahuda Ratha Yatra celebrations at the Houston Durga Bari on Sunday, July 21. Highlights of the event included, *Pahandi Bije* and *Chhera Panhara*.

ties. After that it was time for the devotees to get to Kala Bhavan to get Prasadam, which was prepared so lovingly by Durga Bari volun-

teers along with *Rasgulla* (cheese-based, syrupy sweet dish), which was offered to the Lord. As per the rituals in Puri, *Rasgulla* is offered by Lord Jagannath to Goddess Laxmi to enter into the temple and this is the only day in the year when *Rasgulla* is offered to the Lord.

Char Dham Hindu temple, Houston Durga Bari Society



and ISKCON are truly grateful to all the devotees and volunteers for participating in the *Bahuda yatra*. May Lord Jagannath bless us all on the occasion of this *Bahuda yatra*!

For further information about the organizations, visit www.skaifoundation.org, www.greaterhoustonrathayatra.org, www.durgabari.org and www.iskconhouston.org

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