

International Non-violence Day Celebrated

By: Firoz Khan

Mehfil Group, a well known social and cultural organisation celebrated Gandhi Jayanti, birth day of Mahatma Gandhi in a unique way last Saturday. It was celebrated as International non-violence day. Last year UNO declared this day to be celebrated as such throughout the world.

The function was held in a party room of a condo building in North York. It was attended by over a hundred participants. They came all corners of Toronto and GTA. Among the attendees were ex-Ontario Immigration Minister and MPP Mike Cole, ex-Ontario Human Rights Commissioner Abdulhai Patel, Constables Ronnah Smith and Callahan representing Toronto Police Service.

Addressing the gathering with salaam and Namaste Cole paid rich tributes to Mahatma Gandhi. He said, “Gandhi was a simple but a powerful leader. He had the chasm of mobilising the masses for freedom of India. Although he was from India he was truly a global leader inspiring many in the world. His principles of Truth and Non-violence were unique and appealing.

Congratulating Mehfil group he said, “You did a good job in celebrating his birth day as non-violence day. Yes, we need to follow his principles. In fact many Canadians know nothing about him and his principles. We got to tell them about him.” He further said further that organisations like yours should be encouraged and supported.

Abdulhai Patel who is originally from Gujarat province of India where Gandhiji was born said, “I consider myself privileged to be from the same province. He was a great person the world produced in twentieth century. In fact he started a movement against apartheid in South Africa. We can say that the freedom struggle of India was born there.’

He further said, “Gandhi’s principles of Satya (Truth) and Ahimsa (Non-violence) are simple and they can be practiced by anyone. I am sure the crime and violence that we see around us will be vanished in no time if we all apply them in our life. There will be peace and prosperity everywhere.”

He told the gathering, “Great leaders like Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King (Jr) and many others were inspired by Gandhi. He is truly called Mahatma (A great soul) and Baapu (Father of the nation).” Turning to Firoz Khan, president of Mehfil Group he said, “You and your team did an excellent work in organising this function involving youth. Well done. Keep it up.”

Constable Smith gave details of the activities and programmes for youth supported by the Toronto Police and urged all youth to take advantage. He also commended Mehfil Group to keep youth in forefront.

Firoz Khan while welcoming guests and participants said, “unfortunately today many Indian think and believe that Gandhi’s principles of truth and non-violence have become outdate, irrelevant and obsolete. This is a mistaken notion. In fact this is the right time to implement these universal principles because we see violence, crime and terror around us”. He further said, “Give youth jobs and terror around us”. He further said, “Give youth jobs and engage them in creative activities and the crimes will soon be at zero level.”

Ms. Diana the office secretary of M.P. Joe Volpe read out a congratulatory message.

Youth and everyone present stood up raised their right hands and took a pledge to uphold and work for non-violence, peace and making crime free communities.

Ms. Rachna Mehra, Geeta Chopra, Sushmita Vaidya, Mehboob Shaikh (Voice of Rafi) delighted the audience by beautifully rendering old and new bollywood songs. A musical tribute was paid to Mahatma Gandhi.

Afzal Khan Nayyar and Zameer Patil Vice Presidents of Mehfil Group introduced guests and proposed vote of thanks.

A memento to Mehfil Group was presented by MPP Mike Cole.