

Fri, 19 Oct 2007

## Dharamsala celebrates the awarding of the US Congressional Gold Medal award to His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet Organised by 9 NGOs and co-ordinated by ITSN

Tibetans all over the world celebrated the conferment of the Congressional Gold Medal Award, the highest United States Civilian Honour, to His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama of Tibet on the 17th of October, 2007.

The award, considered the most significant international tribute to His Holiness since he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, has pulled in thousands of Tibetans and foreigners alike in Dharamsala who witnessed the ceremony live on two huge screens put up at the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts. With co-ordination from ITSN, 9 NGOs organised a day-long fun filled event followed by a live proceedings of the award ceremony that was relayed (live) on VOA in the evening (IST) of the 17th October.

The fire works that went off soon after His Holiness was awarded the US Congressional Gold Medal were marvelous to watch, despite having disturbed the initial speeches of the Dalai Lama. Nevertheless, the show went off superbly. Everyone from child to adult; Tibetans to foreigners enjoyed it to the fullest.

Tibetan Youth Congress, Tibetan Women's Association, National Democratic Party of Tibet, GuChuSum movement of Tibet, Students for a Free Tibet - India Chapter, Dotoe Cholka, Do-mey Cholka, U-Tsang Cholka and Choksum Chikdril Association organised the events with co-ordination from International Tibet Support Network.

The day-long programme include an official function in the morning followed by traditional performances and a tug 'O' war game amongst 10 men's team and 7 women's team separately. Prizes were also given out to the winners and the runner-ups. At the end of the day, all the presidents of the organising committee and the guests played a musical chair to cheer up the already pumped-up thousands of Tibetans. That was indeed a good show filled with extreme joy and fun. General public -- specifically -- showed keen interest to watch them become childlike, as they haven't seen any of them indulging in such fun game earlier.

We, as organisers haven't anticipated such crowd to turn up. This was, perhaps the most outstanding celebration we ever had for long long time since the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize award to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Tibetan Welfare Office in association with the people of Dharamsala organised a day-long programme the following day i.e. on the 18th of October. The morning saw an official function by TGiE.

The spirit of collective effort paid its dividend, where both the organisers and public returned home truly satisfied and fresh even after exhausting day-long programme that stretched till 1 am the next day.