

# Rupal Shah Crowned Ms India GA; Sapna Shah Is Ms Teen India GA

BY VIREN MAYANI

Atlanta: Twenty young ladies, with chic apparel and finest jewelry & cosmetics competed for the coveted title of Ms India-Georgia & Miss Teen India-Georgia 2010, on Saturday July 10<sup>th</sup> at the Gwinnett Center. The annual pageant was hosted by the India American Cultural Association (IACA). Miss Teen India-Georgia, Sapna Shah & Ms India-Georgia, Rupal Patel, won a narrowly contested and spirited pageant that had taken months of dedicated perseverance by an enterprising group led by Pageant Director, Anisa Daftari an already popular community figure.

A panel of 11 judges and a certified public accountant had the daunting task of fairly scoring all contestants, who weren't leaving any stone unturned on stage, and to reduce the final contestant count to five for the closing Q & A round, which determines the new tiara owners. Every contestant was a winner for mustering enough courage to parade in high-heels on stage, in dressy western gowns & formal Indian wear, to dance for the opening act and perform their individual talents as well and be able to indelibly respond to the tough question asked by their elected judge and being presented on stage for their camera presence through a video as a backdrop, all of this in front of a significant audience. A task, never easy for any judge or for that matter, even the presenting team!

The pageant organizing team had been preparing for the "D" day for a long time, grooming and training the twenty-some contestants of which, a few bailed out for a reason. The show

opened with an amazing dance performance by all girls, dressed in absolute white as they swayed to a Bollywood number choreographed by dance instructor Prem Rehman. A drop screen that portrayed the silhouette of the dancers behind it,



Photo by Ketan Shah

ratcheted-up the anticipated tone of the evening's scintillating presentation.

The stage production team led by Sonny Molu did an outstanding job controlling precision timing: for lights, video and sound, to create the perfect stage ambiance. The stage décor included a ramp across the stage which had floral & lighted stairways, one on either side and one in the center to provide easy entry and exits for the contestants as well as for the stage-hands to keep the flow moving smoothly.

The emcees for the evening, Archith Sheshadri of ABC news Augusta and the glamorous Vandana Aggrawal, Miss Teen India-GA 2003, were a pleasant presence. As is usual, they decked up in formal western attire with shades of blue and turquoise for the 1<sup>st</sup> half and switched to shades of red in Indian pageantry for the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The opening number was followed by a formal

"Welcome" presented by Viren Mayani, IACA's Executive Vice President. He thanked everyone to have made the time to support the oldest community organization in Atlanta and reminded all attendees of the spirit of the contest. "Applaud everyone and no jeering or making condescending remarks of any contestant".

"I AM"; the theme of the contest, signified the importance of the female gender with emphasis on the combined beauty; inward and outward. It also highlighted the importance of one's confidence and ability to attain their dreams. Additional stage performances included the karaoke singing by talented Laxmi Rao, who belted Asha Bhosle's famous numbers and the amazing dancers of the Silent Killers group, also directed by Prem Rahman. All the twenty contestants

competed in the Evening Gown and India Attire rounds, whilst the Talent round was only contested by the Miss India-GA participants. The concluding round was the Question & Answer, which was contested by the top five Miss Teen India-GA; viz., Preeya Banit, Sapna Shah, Alisha Ukani, Akshaya Kumar, and Shail Vyas and the top five Ms India-GA viz., Sumera Jiva, Amreen Lalani, Bulbul Patel, Rupal Patel and Puja Shah. The declared Miss Teen India-GA 2010 winners are: Sapna Shah, Alisha Ukani, 1st runner-up and Akshaya Kumar, 2nd runner-up whereas Ms India-GA 2010 winners are: Rupal Patel, Sumera Jiva, 1st runner-up and Amreen Lalani, 2nd runner-up.

The Best Talent recognition went to Rupal Patel who played the Indian National Anthem on clarinet followed by an Indian dance routine. The Best Eyes recognition went to the beautiful Anisha Pradhan and the Best Smile recognition went to the gorgeous 2nd runner up Amreen Lalani. Ms Teen India-GA 2010,

Sapna Shah also took the Ms Photogenic title. Ms Congeniality is the only category that is voted by only the pageant contestants and the 2010 winner was Sumera Jiva; 1<sup>st</sup> runner up Ms India-GA.

After the intermission and before the declaration of the winners, IACA's President Padma Rallapalli gave a short account of IACA's success this year and the gist of future programs including the Festival of India slated for August 15<sup>th</sup> at the Gwinnett Center as well. She poignantly asked everyone to continue supporting the organization that promotes such unique events such as the Beauty Pageant besides a host of other activities for all age groups. She closed by thanking all that worked diligently to make the event such a huge hit. Speaking of the colossal branding the event garners, this year IACA was successful in having TV Asia cover the Pageant for nationwide TV news as well – a huge step in the right direction with a media partner that was very forthright in covering the show. Two other known entities that contributed wholeheartedly to the success of the event was Board of Director's member Dr. Gauranga Banik and Mustafa Ajmeri, who despite frail health stood like a pillar throughout the program's presentation.

The asteful make-up for each of the twenty girls was done by one young beautician; Megha Agarwal whereas the reigning Ms India-GA Sabrina Nooruddin, co-hosted the show as well as enabled the IACA Executive Team including Chairman Shyam Yellamraju, in placing the sashes around the necks as well as Tiara's on the head, for all winners. The teamwork was incredible and the pageant sparkled with cohesive attitude from everyone involved. Gwinnett Center's staff was a pleasure to work with and the timely start and finish added to the imminent success of this show with a promise of waiting for the next!

## 'Work Hard, Play Harder' Approach To 2010 India Run

Atlanta: Last August, the 4th Annual India Run for Hope conducted in Atlanta generated over \$20,000 for the India Cancer Initiative, bearing testimony to the Indian community's commitment to help fight the cancer crisis in India. The American Cancer Society's India Cancer Initiative helps conquer cancer in India by enabling early detection, spreading awareness about treatment options, providing services to stop tobacco consumption, ensuring implementation of the Tobacco Control Act and improving life of cancer patients. This year, the India Run continues to take action against the growing cancer crisis as it supports the initiative with larger fundraising goals and plans to expand to more cities.

Carrying the baton this year are Uma Patel, event coordinator, and assistant coordinators Priya Patel and Bhavdip Javia. This year's efforts began with a general board meeting on February 28 where over 40 students from colleges in the metro-Atlanta area gathered to develop new and innovative strategies for the 2010 event. The focus this year is to ensure that the volunteers have a personally rewarding experience while planning a family-oriented event to spread awareness and raise funds for the India Cancer Initiative. Patel be-

lieves this "work hard, play harder" approach is what will maximize the India Run's potential to make a difference. Keeping this aim in mind, the volunteers have successfully organized events like date auctions, Hope parties and car washes.



Atlanta is not the only place coordinating efforts for this year's run. Alpha Iota Omicron, the fraternity that founded the India Run in 2006, will also conduct the run at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Bharat Kusuma, former president of the chap-

ter adds, "Our brothers in Atlanta have brought to light a very real problem that we have the very real power to affect, in a way that wouldn't have been feasible without the efforts of the India Run. We look forward to bringing this run to our city." The

Atlanta members of Sigma Sigma Rho, a South Asian based sorority, have also supported the India Run since its inception. The organization now plans to extend the event to its new establishment at Florida State University.

The teams this year are full of dedication and enthusiasm to ensure the success of the growing movement.

Jacob David, event founder and chairman, makes the group's resolve clear. "Grassroots-level events like the India Run for Hope have the potential to make change in the community at large; we are determined to use the run as a means to take action by spreading awareness and giving hope to those dealing with the cancer crisis in both India and the US."

The India Run for Hope will be held at the Georgia Tech Campus on August 28, 2010.

You can find more information about the run on [www.indiarun.org](http://www.indiarun.org)

## The Hanuman Mandir

### Temple Timings:

9.00 am to 12.00 pm  
(11.30 am Aarathi)

5.00 pm to 9.00 pm  
(7.30 pm aarathi)

Weekends: 9.00 am to 9 pm  
Lalitha Sahasranama Paarayana  
(Every Friday 7.00 pm) By Devotees

Vishnu Sahasranama Paarayana  
(Every Saturday 7.00 pm) By Devotees

11 times Hanuman Chalisa Paarayana  
(Every Tuesday, Sunday 6.30 pm) By Devotees

Hanuman Panchamrutha Abhishekham  
(Every Tuesday – 10.30 am)

Hanuman Beetle Leaves & Vada Maala Puja  
(Every Tuesday 7.00 pm)

390 Cumming Street, Alpharetta GA  
30004 Next to Amma Kitchen  
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