**The festival of lights**

Diwali was celebrated by the Indian society ,Kalkaji on 7 November. The MLA ,Avatar Singh Kalka attended the celebrations and added even more joy to it .
Diwali, the festival of lights, sees millions of prayers and celebratory gatherings across the world every autumn.

Observed by Hindus, Sikhs and Jains, the season's theme is the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance.The five-day long Diwali festival begins on Dhanteras and ends with Bhai Dooj. This year this auspicious occasion laid on 7 November .

Choti Diwali was celebrated a day before the grand Diwali celebrations. It marked the second day of the five-day long Diwali festival which is also called as Panch Maha Parva.

The flower vendors sat among the bags of Marigold flowers at Ghazipur flower market ahead of Diwali festival in Delhi.
The significance of the festival is the victory of light over darkness, good over evil, knowledge over ignorance, and hope over despair.

In India,the preparations of this festival began days before the actual date. People cleaned and renovated their homes and offices, special shoppings were done for the occasion, homes were decorated with lights and much more.
But this year ,the population level of Delhi before Diwali got even higher than 400 ppm so the bursting of crackers was confined from 8 pm to 10 pm by the honorable supreme Court . So the Diwali celebrations this year included changing gifts, blessings,etc with friends and family.

The celebrations started with five days prior to the Grand Diwali. A fair was organized , in which different traditions and reasons for celebrating Diwali were brought up.

The first day exhibited the Hindu tradition of celebrating Diwali .The religious significance of Diwali varies regionally within India. The festival is associated with a diversity of deities, traditions, and symbolism.These variations, states Constance Jones, may reflect diverse local autumn harvest festivals that fused into one pan-Hindu festival with a shared spiritual significance and ritual grammar while retaining local traditions.One tradition links the festival to legends in the Hindu epic Ramayana, where Diwali is the day Rama, Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman reached Ayodhya after a period in exile and Rama's army of good defeated demon king Ravana's army of evil.
Many Hindus associate the festival with Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, and wife of Vishnu. According to Pintchman, the start of the 5-day Diwali festival is stated in some popular contemporary sources as the day Goddess Lakshmi was born from Samudra manthan, the churning of the cosmic ocean of milk by the Devas (gods) and the Asuras (demons) – a Vedic legend that is also found in several Puranassuch as the Padma Purana, while the night of Diwali is when Lakshmi chose and wed Vishnu. Along with Lakshmi, who is representative of Vaishnavism, Ganesha, the elephant-headed son of Parvati and Shiva of Shaivism tradition, is remembered as one who symbolises ethical beginnings and the remover of obstacles.Hindus of eastern India associate the festival with the goddess Durga, or her fierce avatar Kali(Shaktism), who symbolises the victory of good over evil. Hindus from the Braj region in northern India, parts of Assam, as well as southern Tamil and Telugu communities view Diwali as the day the god Krishna overcame and destroyed the evil demon king Narakasura, in yet another symbolic victory of knowledge and good over ignorance and evil.
Trade and merchant families and others also offer prayers to Saraswati, who embodies music, literature and learning and Kubera, who symbolizes book-keeping, treasury and wealth management.In western states such as Gujarat, and certain northern Hindu communities of India, the festival of Diwali signifies the start of a new year.Mythical tales shared on Diwali vary widely depending on region and even within Hindu tradition, yet all share a common focus on righteousness, self-inquiry and the importance of knowledge,which, according to Lindsey Harlan, an Indologist and scholar of Religious Studies, is the path to overcoming the "darkness of ignorance".The telling of these myths are a reminder of the Hindu belief that good ultimately triumphs over evil.

The second day told about the significance of Diwali in Jainism .Jeffrey Long, a scholar of Jain and Hindu studies, states that in Jain tradition, Diwali is celebrated in observance of "Mahavira Nirvana Divas", the physical death and final nirvana of Mahavira. The Jain Diwali celebrated in many parts of India has similar practices to the Hindu Diwali, such as the lighting of lamps and the offering of prayers to Lakshmi. However, the focus of the Jain Diwali remains the dedication to Mahavira.This practice of lighting lamps first began on the day of Mahavira's death in 527 BCE according to the Jain tradition,where 18 kings who had gathered for Mahavira's final teachings issued a proclamation that lamps be lit in
that lamps be lit in remembrance of the "great light, Mahavira".This traditional belief of the origin of Diwali, and its significance to Jains, is reflected in their historic artworks such as paintings.

The third day was fully colored with the colour of Diwali in Sikhism .Sikhs celebrate Bandi Chhor Divas in remembrance of the release of Guru Hargobind from the Gwalior Fort prison by the Mughal emperor, Jahangir, and the day he arrived at the Golden Temple in Amritsar.According to J.S. Grewal, a scholar of Sikhism and Sikh history, Diwali in the Sikh tradition is older than the sixth Guru Hargobind legend. Guru Amar Das, the third Guru of the Sikhs, built a well in Goindwal with eighty-four steps and invited Sikhs to bathe in its sacred waters on Baisakhi and Diwali as a form of community bonding. Over time, these spring and autumn festivals became the most important of Sikh festivals and holy sites such as Amritsar became focal points for annual pilgrimages.The festival of Diwali, according to Ray Colledge, highlights three events in Sikh history: the founding of the city of Amritsar in 1577, the release of Guru Hargobind from the Mughal prison, and the day of Bhai Mani Singh's martyrdom in 1738 as a result of his failure to pay a fine for trying to celebrate Diwali and thereafter refusing to convert to Islam.

The fourth day was like as we were in a Buddhist shrine.Diwali is not a festival for most Buddhists, with the exception of the Newar people of Nepal who revere various deities in the Vajrayana Buddhism and celebrate Diwali by offering prayers to Lakshmi.Newar Buddhists in Nepalese valleys also celebrate the Diwali festival over five days, in much the same way, and on the same days, as the Nepalese Hindu Diwali-Tihar festival.According to some observers, this traditional celebration by Newar Buddhists in Nepal, through the worship of Lakshmi and Vishnu during Diwali, is not syncretism but rather a reflection of the freedom within Mahayana Buddhist tradition to worship any deity for their worldly betterment.

The fifth day was a mix of Indian folk songs ,dances etc..

The closing was accompanied with the litting of candle by the honorable MLA of the locality .

 HAPPY ECO FRIENDLY DIWALI.