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Maryland Governor Celebrates Diwali for the First Time

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Maryland Governor, Maryin O'Malley, celebrated Diwali, at the Governor's Mansion here, along with members of the Indian-American community.

"I am happy to join the Indian American community in celebrating Diwali" O'Malley said on the occasion.

"The Festival of Lights is a beautiful tradition, and the message of light over darkness is one that can be an inspiration to us all during these difficult times," the Governor said wherein he appreciated the significant contributions made by the community in the progress of Maryland.

The Governor also issued a proclamation citing Oct 17 as Diwali Day, and the week as Diwali week.

"As a Marylander and as a member of the Indian American community, I would like to thank Governor O'Malley for recognizing this important holiday," Delegate Kumar Barve, Majority Leader of the Maryland House of Delegates said.

"By recognizing the festival of Diwali, the Governor is underscoring Maryland's tradition of inclusion of all religious beliefs and practices," he said.

Addressing a large gathering of Indian American community and business leaders, Swami Dheerananda from Chinmaya Mission delivered a prayer and spoke about the significance of Diwali. Lt Governor Anthony Brown joined Governor O'Malley in the lighting of the Diya.

"Having celebrated Diwali by the Governor for the first time, and with the chanting of the sacred mantra, is a landmark achievement and signifies how far we have come as a community," said Ishani Chowdhury, from the Hindu American Foundation said.

"We have to continue to work hard to ensure that we take an active role in shaping our future, as well as the public policy of this state and nation," she said.

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