

# Protesters gather to support Davis man convicted of raping adopted daughter

By **GEOFF JOHNSON**

[gjohnson@dailydemocrat.com](mailto:gjohnson@dailydemocrat.com)

More than 100 supporters gathered Wednesday evening to protest the 378-year sentence of a Davis man they said was wrongly convicted of raping his adopted daughter.

Protesters, whose ranks grew as the evening went on, spent about an hour at Freeman Park decrying the 2009 sentencing of Davis resident Ajay Dev, then 42, before marching to the District Attorney's Office and circling back to the park.

They carried neatly printed

■ See related column,  
**Page A7**

signs reading "Yolo County: 48% minority, 80 % prosecution" and "Justice for the dog, no justice for human life," referring to the conviction of a sheriff's deputy who shot a dog.

Dev's sister-in-law, Patty Pursell, who flew in from Connecticut, walked Dev's 3-year-old son to the edge of the gazebo and asked him to speak to the audience.

"Thank you for coming," Kishan Dev said. "Help save my daddy."

Ajay Dev is serving one of the longest sentences in Yolo County history for 46 counts of sexual assault and rape and 27 counts of lewd acts with a minor, all involving a Nepalese girl the Dev family adopted at the age of 15. Dev was also convicted on three counts of attempting to dissuade a witness.

His case awaits a ruling from the California Court of Appeals.

Complaints from protesters were ride-reaching. Members of Dev's extended family opened the protest by reenacting portions of court tran-

See **PROTESTERS** on page A10

## PROTESTERS

Continued from Page A1



Geoff Johnson/Democrat

**Sanjay Dev, at the center of the gazebo, contests the guilty verdict of his brother, Ajay Dev, on Wednesday evening in Freeman Park. Davis resident Ajay Dev was sentenced in 2009 to 378 years in prison after a jury convicted him of raping his adopted daughter.**

scripts, saying Dev's adopted daughter repeatedly changed her story about how many men she had consensual sex with, how many abortions she received and whether she performed oral sex on Dev. They also said she claimed to have been shown a pornographic film on a laptop in 1999 — before either the model laptop or film had been released.

"Lies — not one lie, two lies, three lies," said Ajay's brother, Sanjay Dev. "You heard about five or six lies. I witnessed at least 50 lies."

Sanjay Dev accused Deputy District Attorney Steve Mount of attacking the Nepalese people during the tri-

al.

"(He) pointed to us Nepalese and said, 'You know what, we are all liars ... we are barbarians,' is what he was trying to say," Sanjay Dev said.

Dev supporters attacked Davis Detective Mark Hermann, who they accused of putting words in the victim's mouth and strategically destroying key notes before the trial. They also accused District Attorney Jeff Reisig and Hermann of pursuing the arrest as part of a larger campaign to keep convictions up as a way to guarantee grant funding.

Others said the arrest was motivated by racism, comparing it to the case of Brett

Pedroia, who served a year in county jail after pleading guilty to orally copulating with a boy under the age of 14.

"When you have a justice system where the people who operate in it try to validate their existence and prove their importance to the society by committing acts of injustice, then you no longer have a justice system, you've got a legal system," said Tom Grothe, who characterized himself as Ajay Dev's lifelong friend. "And that's what you've got in Yolo County. ... The real criminals occupy the block three blocks down."