

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF INDIAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATIONS (NFIA)



Serving the Indian American Community since 1980

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RICHARD BRANSON AND JEFF BEZOS AND THEIR DREAM RIDE ON A ROCKET - A FEW DOZEN MILES ABOVE THE EARTH HAS SUCCEEDED:

Reaching great and greatest heights has been the motivation of Americans. It is now matched with real achievements. Space travel started in 1960 during the time of John F Kennedy, the 35th President of America who encouraged innovation and the desire to touch the moon. On July 4, 1776, is when the declaration of Independence was made and the Continental Congress declared that the thirteen American colonies were no longer subject (and subordinate) to the monarch of Britain, King George III, and were now united, free, and independent. This year another milestone has been set which will have great significance in the history of America and Space. People could fly on commercial flights. It is really happening.



Space Scientists have been searching for other planetary systems that could have the potential for life. So far, Earth is still the only planet, out of many planets in the universe that has everything to sustain humans. The universe is a vast expanse of space which contains all of everything in existence. The universe contains all of the galaxies, stars, and planets. So, the search for exploring planets continues.

NASA astronauts have been working hard but the desire to touch the outer edge of cosmos and make space travel commercially viable was made possible by the "Unity 22" vehicle. The carefully crafted equipment and the mission of twenty-second flight test for VSS Unity and Virgin Galactic's fourth crewed spaceflight was the most successful attempt to touch the outer edge of space and this included Indian astronaut Sirisha Bandla.

Richard Branson said: "I have dreamt about this moment since I was a child, but nothing could have prepared me for the view of Earth from space. We are at the vanguard of a new space age. As Virgin's founder, I was honored to test the incredible customer experience as part of this remarkable crew of mission specialists and now astronauts. I can't wait to share this awe-inspiring experience with aspiring astronauts around the world." It was followed by New Sheppard, a rocket that was launched in July 2021, from West Texas, and the vehicle successfully touched the Karman line and the crew of four, Jeff and Mark Bezos, the oldest female, 82, Wally Funk and youngest crew member, 18, Oliver Damon, from Netherland went to space and made it back. People who watched an epic science fiction film, produced and directed by Stanley Kubrick could see what the human imagination and creativity is capable of exploring and achieving in reality. Congratulation NASA and America.

Angela Anand, NFIA Immediate Past President, Editor of the newsletter

INDIAN AMBASSADOR VISITED SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AND MET DIASPORA SPREAD ACROSS THE METROPOLITAN CITY LOS ANGELES AND OUTSTRETCHED NEIGHBORING COUNTIES:

Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu, visited Southern California and attended several gatherings with non-profit Indian community groups, important businesses, and politicians spread all across there. Indians arranged several meetings in LA, Orange, and Riverside counties to welcome one of the most acclaimed Indian diplomats. He also visited San Diego. In a distinguished career spanning over thirty years in the Indian Foreign Service since 1988 and then went on to secure more responsible assignments. Ambassador Sandhu started his diplomatic career from former Soviet Union (Russia) where he worked as Third Secretary (Political) / Second Secretary (Commercial) in the Indian Mission from 1990 to 1992.

Honorable Ambassador is one of the most experienced Indian diplomats on US affairs, having served in the Indian Mission in Washington DC twice earlier. He was Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of India in Washington DC from July 2013 to January 2017. Earlier, he was First Secretary (Political) at the Embassy of India, Washington, DC responsible for liaison with the United States Congress from 1997 to 2000. He has also been at the Permanent Mission of India to United Nations, New York from July 2005 to February 2009. Prior to his current assignment in Washington DC, Ambassador Sandhu was High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka from January 2017 to January 2020.

Due to spread of Corona, CDC and state governments had imposed restrictions on travel and group meetings. Since the restrictions are generally lifted so the Ambassador took the time now to travel and meet Indian Diaspora in nations metropolitan city Los Angeles amongst few more. Ambassador shared very proudly that India has made great progress in the medical sector. His meeting in Orange County was an important one.



He declared that India, as part of the Quad group of nations, is helping in mass producing over one billion Covid vaccines. He elaborated that the U.S. will provide the technology, Japan the financing, Australia the lift power, and India, with its proven standing in global healthcare wherein it currently produces 60% of the world's medicines, will be uniquely qualified to mass produce the vaccines. He visited Sony Picture studio, Culver City, in the San Fernando Valley and met Antony Vinciguerra, Chairman and CEO of Sony Entertainment. He also met Rand Corporation headquartered President and CEO, Michael D. Rich. In addition to that, ambassador met academicians at UCLA and UCSD, prominent personalities from both major political parties, Democrats and Republican and attended

a reception held at Anaheim Mayor Harry Sidhu's residence.



Ambassador praised diaspora and their aid to help India and the Indians victims of Corona virus. He outlined major sectors of Indian and American collaboration in Health, It, Defense, and Renewable Energy.

AMBASSADOR'S RECEPTION BY INDIA ASSOCIATION OF LOS ANGELES:

India Association of Los Angeles (IALA) organized the reception for first visit of India's Ambassador to USA to Southern California, at Royal Delhi Palace restaurant in Canoga Park (Los Angeles), CA. Sunil Agarwal, Chairman IALA, invited representatives of many organizations to be part of the reception including GOPIO, NFIA, RAOA, and many others. NFIA was represented by President Ajoy Dube. Kewal Kanda (GOPIO-LA, RAOA), Vasu Pawar (Step 2 Step Up), Venkat Peddi (GOPIO-IE) and many others were there to represent their organizations. Mr. Agarwal welcomed all attendees and thanked them for their presence.

The MC for the event told the audience that IALA organization was started by Late Mr. Inder Singh. Inder Singh worked very closely with Mr. Kewal Kanda and spoke very highly of his work ethics. So, we invite Mr. Kewal Kanda to deliver the welcome speech for our guests of honor. Kewal Kanda then welcomed the Ambassador Mr. Sandhu and CGI-SF Dr. Prasad and other guests



including Deputy Consul General of India – SF Mr. Rajesh Naik, Congressmen Brad Sherman and Jimmy Gomez.



Ambassador Mr. Sandhu in his speech said, India and USA relations have never been better and continue to improve. He emphasized President Obama, Trump and now Biden, they all are giving high preference to improve strategic relations with India. Congressmen Brad Sherman and Jimmy Gomez also emphasized the importance of good relations with India. CGI-SF Dr. Nagendra Prasad also addressed the audience briefly and assured continuous help to community during this difficult time of Covid-19 pandemic. The reception was attended by approximately 150 people and concluded with a sumptuous lunch.

SOME OTHER NOTABLES FROM AMBASSADOR'S INTERACTIONS WITH INDIAN DIASPORA:

Many stalwarts, community activists, former and current Board Members of NFIA met Ambassador Sandhu during his trip to Atlanta where Mahatma Gandhi's statue is installed as well as in Southern California where there is presence of lot of Indian organizations, businesses, and educational institutions.



In Atlanta, he was received and introduced by the chairman of Gandhi Foundation, Subash Razdan, former President of NFIA and current Director. In California by IALA where he was introduced to the audience by former Treasurer of GOPIO and former NFIA Administrative Director, Kewal Kanda, also were present former NFIA President and Active member of TiE of Southern CA, Ashok Madan, NFIA President Ajoy Dube, Vasu Pawar, NFIA member, Rajbir Husson, Member of NFIA, along with many other community leaders. Amongst them was also a democrat and community activist Ashok Bhatt

who had an opportunity to speak with the ambassador as well as attend a dinner with the ambassador and actress Periti Zinta and her husband, Gene Goodenough. Along with them was the Anaheim Mayor Harry Sidhu, a Republican who attended community function and also hosted a private dinner at his residence for the Ambassador. In Atlanta, ambassador had multiple engagements with think tanks and businesses to advance bilateral relationship between the two largest democracies of the world.



STEP 2 STEP UP AND THE BRIDGE 2 UNITY – MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS OF NFIA RECOGNIZE WOMEN LEADERS:

Ms. Vasu Pawar, Founder of Step 2 Step Up, Inc. and Bridge 2 Unity, organized a tribute to 24 successful women in USA in a live spectacular as well as virtual event held in Riverside in the back yard of a big mansion, owned by Mr. & Mrs. Muralikrishnan. The event was attended by over 100 community leaders including the women who were recognized for their achievements. Local businessmen Parimal Shah and Yogi Patel Co-Convened the event.



The theme of the event was “Together we Create a Footprint to move towards the Brightest, most Purposeful Future”. Step2StepUp Inc has chosen the Ashoka Chakra as their powerhouse symbol of optimal success. The Ashoka Chakra is a wheel with 24 spokes around it. Each spoke represents one of the 24 most important factors in living a meaningful life. The 24 factors include chastity, health, peace, sacrifice, morality, service, forgiveness, love, friendship, fraternity, organization, welfare, prosperity, industry, safety, awareness, equality, purpose, policy, justice, co-operation, duties, rights, and wisdom. Hence 24 women of repute were selected to be recognized.

The event started with singing of American National Anthem followed by a speech by the convener Vasu Pawar

explaining how women can achieve anything if they put heart into it including her own struggle and success story. A special recognition was given to Divine Soul Rami for her Spiritual contributions to the society. Some of the women who were recognized included, Dr. Manorama Gupta, Henna Noor, Rani Kuusto, Rose Muralikrishnan, Baljit Toor, Dr. Sinduri Jayasinghe, Charu Shivakumar, Ruhi Hak, Harshi Syal, Kamlesh Chauhan and many more.

The event was graced by the presence of a few known celebrities such as Fashion Designer – Shekhar Rahate, Entertainer/Comedian – Mona Shaikh, Director Ruhi Hak (of documentary E-Rikshawali), Industry experts Tess Cacciatore and Isabella Hofmann.

Mona Shaikh made the audience laugh with her standup comedy and witty comments about the people in attendance. Bollywood singer Shahid Mallya and Music Band “The Hash Browns” entertained the audience with some melodious renditions. The master of ceremony was handled by a young Sharina Kurani.

MANORAMA SHARMA GUPTA – SELECTED AS THE PRESIDENT OF UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION – USA LONG BEACH CHAPTER:

Manorama Sharma Gupta, M.D., presently serving as commissioner of Health & Human Services for the City of Long Beach, has been selected as the President of the United Nations Association of USA (UNA-USA) Long Beach Chapter. UNA-USA is dedicated to empowering young Americans with tools and experiences that prepare them to become the next generation of global leaders. For the UNA-USA Long Beach Chapter, Dr. Gupta will be engaged in promoting the sustainable developmental goals of the United Nations. She is also the Founder and President of the Global Peace Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization in Southern California.



Dr. Gupta has held leadership positions in several organizations. She served as the Chairwoman of the Board of Trustee, and President, of India Medical Association of Southern California (IMASC); the President of Federation of Indian Association (FIA); and the President of India Association of Southern California (IASC). Her volunteer work involves serving the community through her work for a number of non-profit organizations, such as NFIA, GOPIO LA, and India@75.

She has taken retirement and now spends time traveling and volunteering. Prior to retirement, Dr. Gupta was the Vice chairwoman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Fountain Valley Regional Hospital in Fountain Valley CA, and an Advisory Board member of Outpatient Surgery Center of Fountain Valley Hospital in Fountain Valley. She also provided community service as a speaker on health topics in different associations, hospitals and Chambers of Commerce.

A GOLDEN ERA OF METHOD ACTING IN CINEMA ENDED WITH THE PASSING OF THESPIAN DILIP KUMAR WHO WAS ACCORDED A STATE FUNERAL IN MUMBAI:

The golden era that started with films almost six decades ago ended with the passing of last of the three well known thespians on July 7,2021. The three pillars of the cinema and their legendary films, the generation born after India’s Independence came to know from their folks included stalwarts Raj Kapoor, Dev Anand, and Dilip Kumar. India had known about Mohammad Yusuf Khan’s illnesses recently due to age related problems but due to advancing years had hoped that he would make a century. He was born in Peshawar (now in Pakistan) in 1922 (98-year-old) and was an institution for the actors who came after him and idolized him. He spoke softly and only raised his voice when it was needed for the act and mostly expressed his emotions with mellow and melancholy voice. He especially performed the tragic acts superably. He mostly under acted but did it so perfectly. He was said to be for the longest time considered a titan of the industry who perfected his acts by

working hard and had never received any formal training for acting in the movies. Dilip Kumar, married to actress Saira Banu, twenty-two youngsters to him, had a great marriage and Saira took care of him lovingly all those years when his health was declining. Often it is said that Dilip Kumar acted so naturally but he was a method actor.



In his autobiography *Dilip Kumar: The Substance and The Shadow*, he said, "I am an actor who evolved a method, which stood me in good stead." He has left a legacy of films spanning over six decades and he was honored by the Government of India with the Padma Bhushan award in 1991, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 1994 and the Padma Vibhushan in 2015, for his exceptional and distinguished contribution to the Indian cinema. Dilip Sahib's burial was held at Juhu Qabrastan in Santacruz where he was given a gun salute, following which the police band paid their tribute to the actor. His wife, actress Saira Banu Khan thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray for according Dilip Sahib burial with state funeral protocols.

Many highly acclaimed actors and actresses expressed sorrow and paid glowing tributes to the deceased great actor. He represented the best and the best of that era. The country and his admirers across many countries poured in their sentiments and condolences to Saira Banu ji.

EXCEL FOUNDATION HONORED SEVERAL FATHERS INCLUDING GOPIO INTERNATIONAL CHAIRMAN DR. THOMAS ABRAHAM:

A Father's Day celebration was held on Sunday, June 13, 2021, and was arranged by Excel Foundations USA. The chief guest was Dr. Thomas Abraham, chairman of GOPIO International, who presented the opening speech for the program. The Father's Day theme was, "My Dad, My Hero". He related his own experiences of his dad.



The organizational team members were: The Founder and President of Excel Foundations USA: Charu Shivakumar. The Event Chair Members: Hasmukh Mod, Hark Vasa and Kewal Kanda. The Event Facilitation Members: Surekha Modi, Rachana Srivastava and Radhika Patel. The Youth Emcees: Jasmin Sivakumaran, Megha Arun and Swarit Srivastava.

Also joining the program were the International Community Fathers, Gaurav Awasthi and Omkareshwar Pandey. The other Community Fathers present at the Zoom meeting were recognized by name and included: Kewal Kanda, Ashok Patnaik, Sudip Goarkshakar, Ajoy Dube, Dr. Gunvant Mehta, Hasmukh Modi, Keshav Patel, Babubhai Gandhi, Ramesh Thalli, Hark Vasa and Dr. Rangaesh Gadasalli.

The program began with greetings and songs. The opening statement was presented by Charu Shivakumar and Jasmin Sivakumaran. A sensational moving drama, "Danni Vriksh" (The Giving Tree) was presented by Jasmin (as the tree) and Swarit (as the boy). Different participants presented their views and love for their fathers including Rani Kuusto, a leader, community volunteer, and credentialed retired nurse practitioner. As the participants were presenting, the background showed their respective fathers' pictures with their family.

A men's fashion show was presented and led by Hark Vasa. There was a father and daughter dance performed by Shivakumar and Jasmin Sivakumaran. The Lassya Dance Academy presented dance choreographed by Lalitha Venkatraman and Satrangi Dance Institute also presented dance choreographed by Sadhana Mohan.

There were different song numbers sung by the participants. The vote of thanks was given by Surekha Modi. The organizational team members were: The Founder and President of Excel Foundations USA: Charu Shivakumar. The Event Chair Members: Hasmukh Mod, Hark Vasa and Kewal Kanda. The Event Facilitation Members: Surekha Modi, Rachana Srivastava and Radhika Patel. The Youth Emcees: Jasmin Sivakumaran, Megha Arun and Swarit Srivastava.

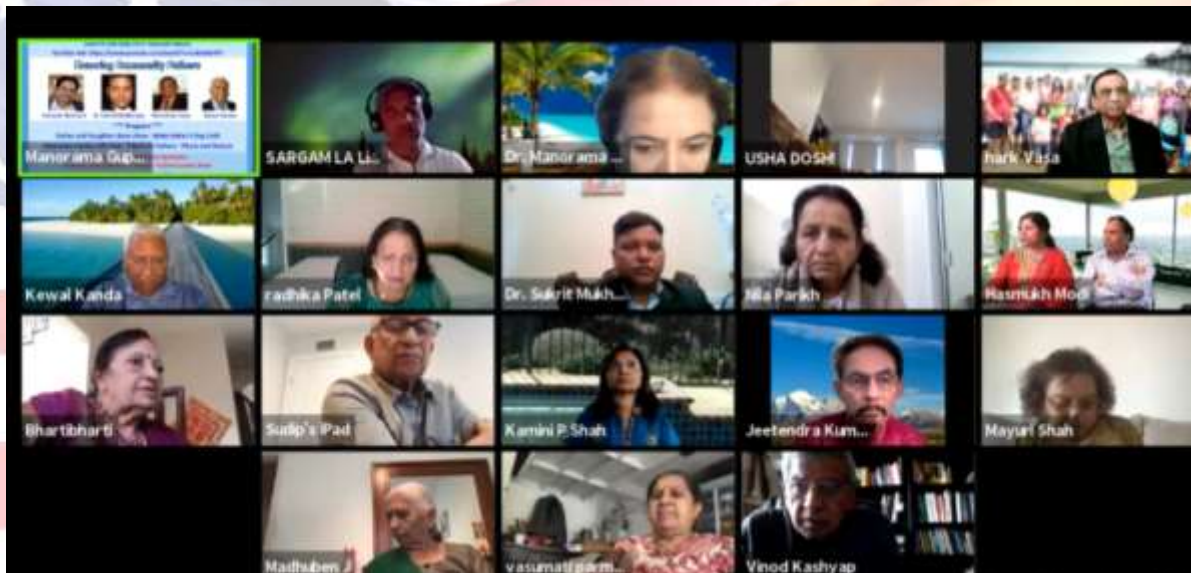
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GLOBAL PEACE FOUNDATION- A MEMBER ORGANIZATION OF NFIA HELD FATHERS DAY CELEBRATION AND BESTOWED HONOR ON FOUR COMMUNITY LEADERS:

A Father's Day celebration was held by Global Peace Foundation, Inc. on June 28, 2021 amidst great excitement by its members. The program took place over virtual platform over zoom. Four Community Fathers were honored during the Ceremony including Mr. Ramesh Ramnani, Dr. Sukrit Mukherjee Mr. Harkishan Vasa and Mr. Kewal Kanda. The Award was bestowed by Global Peace Foundation, Inc. based on the contribution of the four selected fathers to the community and was handed over to the recipients by Dr. Manorama S Gupta, President of GPF, Inc.



Some unique and colorful programs were part of the show including Dress Up with Dad, Making Craft for Father, and Fashion Show with Dad and Adventure Stories with Dad which were all performed by young Children towards their fathers.

A very good Dance show was presented by Savitri Academy and its students and Members sang beautiful

songs for their dads in celebration of Father's Day. Dr. Sukrit Mukherjee, Mr. Harkishan Vasa and Mr. Jitendra Trivedi were the Co-Chairs for the event.



IN MEMORIAM – THE FOLLOWING LEFT ON THEIR JOURNEY BUT LEFT A VERY BIG LEGACY BEHIND:

Jaswant Modi was a great community worker who volunteered selflessly for NFIA, FIA, and GOPIO. He was much respected but died in a car accident. NFIA along with other associations send condolences to this great human's family. He will be missed and will always be remembered by his family, friends, co-workers, organizations that he so lovingly served.



He was born in Bombay in 1938 and was an engineer by profession. He was an honored member of the Society of Indo-American Architects and Engineers. For his journey to America, SIAE, has decribed how he decided to come to America and achieved much. They have lost someone who was revered by all their members. They join in sending condolences to the family of Jaswant Modi. Let the departed soul rest in peace and NFIA is saddened to hear that a car accident took his life. May God give peace to the grieved family members.

A GREAT MOVIE AND THEATER ACTOR DIED OF A CARDIAC ARREST THIS MONTH:



An acclaimed actor, Surekha Sikri, who had many films and appearances to count in television, and theatre died at the age of seventy-five. Surekha Sikri in the early stage of her career attended GRC, Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh.

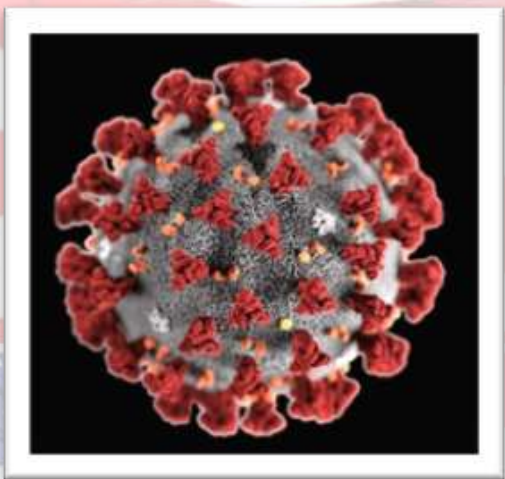
Surekha Sikri was awarded the Indian Telly Award for Best Actress in a Negative Role in 2008 for her work in the primetime soap opera Balika Vadhu and won the Indian Telly Award for Best Actress in a Supporting Role in 2011 for the same show.

It was at a primetime TV show, Balika Vadhu, that made her a household name amongst the television audiences. She played a strong matriarch named Kalyani Devi who rules with an iron fist but gradually softens up towards the protagonist Anandi. Her portrayal of a negative role was greatly watched brought her kudos. Then in 2018, for the film Badhaai Ho, she won a National Award. Her fans had applauded acting on screen. The Amit Sharma film had her playing the role of a woman who comes from an orthodox background but is ready to embrace the new world, sort of a time paradigm. The world will miss her great acting capabilities.

CORONA VIRUS AND FEARS OF DELTA VARIANT ARE REAL BUT TRUST IN HEALTH OFFICIALS AND AGENCIES RECOMMENDATIONS ARE WELL RECEIVED BY PUBLIC:

The Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center maintains an ongoing count of the COVID-19 cases and deaths in the United States and worldwide. As of 3:56 p.m. on July 22, 2021, the tally is:

Total cases worldwide: 192,343,125 (up from 191,800,548 Wednesday)
Total deaths worldwide: 4,131,804 (up from 4,123,206 Wednesday)
Total cases in the United States: 34,254,97 (up from 34,210,391 Wednesday)
Total deaths in the United States: 610,004 (up from 609,797 Wednesday)



Cases of infection have gone up which is a matter of concern to health officials. Fears are stemming about the highly infectious Delta Variant which is found in all most all states in the United States.

It is almost alarming that the United States is seeing the largest drop in life expectancy since WWII. The CDC published health data this week showing that life expectancy for the total U.S. population was 77.3 years, declining by 1.5 years from 78.8 in 2019. The decline was the biggest since 1942–43, when American experienced a life expectancy drop of 2.9 years. Life expectancy at birth for males was 74.5 years in 2020, representing a decline of 1.8 years from 76.3 years in 2019. For females, life expectancy declined to 80.2 years, decreasing 1.2 years from 81.4 years in 2019.

The numbers were particularly striking among Hispanic and Black populations. Life expectancy declined by 3 years for the Hispanic population to 78.8 years and by 2.9 years for the non-Hispanic Black population to 71.8 years, while the non-Hispanic white population saw a 1.2-year decline to 77.6 years.

Public trust in Dr. Fauci and health officials is strong. A new survey released by the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania found that the vast majority of Americans are confident in the information being provided by Anthony Fauci, MD, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and by federal health agencies. A total of 77 percent is confident that the FDA is providing trustworthy advice, while 76 percent are confident in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and 68 percent believe in information that comes from Fauci. The poll, which was conducted among 1,719 U.S. adult respondents from June 2 to June 22, 2021, noted that 78 percent of the U.S. public now believes it is definitely or probably true that COVID-19 vaccines are effective in preventing COVID-19 — a significant gain from 74 percent in April.

SHOUT OUT GOES TO AN INDIAN ATHLETE FOR GETTING THE FIRST SILVER MEDAL AT THE OUTSET OF OLYMPICS IN TOKYO AND CHEERS FOR THE UNITED STATES TEAM:

Mirabai Chanu gets silver medal in weightlifting. It is a proud moment for India and a good start at the Olympics. The United States athletes are well represented and encouraged by the presence of first lady,

Dr. Jill Biden, who leads the U.S. delegation to the opening ceremony of the summer Olympics amid a state of emergency due to a spike in Covid-19 cases. She is going to meet Japanese emperor and prime minister during her visit to Japan.



The world witnessed an empty stadium at the opening ceremony. There were beautiful dances and music to celebrate athletes who worked hard to stay strong and ready to perform during the last several months of Covid. A moment of silence to commemorate those who have died during the pandemic was observed while the protestors outside made loud sounds for not allowed to enter the stadium.

Washington Wizards forward Rui Hachimura was one of the two flag bearers for Team Japan which closed the Parade of Nations as the Olympics host. Additionally, tennis superstar Naomi Osaka was the final torch bearer, as media cheered her for her coveted position at the ceremonies.

NFIA is a 501c (3) association. NFIA's newsletter aims to inform and to mobilize the Indian American community nationally. It was founded four decades ago and has been continuing to work with the

community organizations in large metropolitan areas of the United States. Your suggestions on topics of interest and NFIA's member organizations activities and projects can be featured here and circulated with the help of this communication tool.

Please let us know if you like to receive the newsletter by giving us your best email address. Editor: Angela Anand, angela_anand@yahoo.com Contributions to this issue were made by the following individuals.

Contributing Members: NFIA Director, Dr. Sukrit Mukherjee; Kewal Kanda, GOPIO former treasurer and NFIA's Administrative Director II; Rani Kuusto, Indian Embassy, and Immediate Past President of NFIA, Angela Anand. Also credited for information here are Everyday Health, John Hopkins data base, The Indian Express, India West newspaper, CDC, CBS news, Washington Post, Indian Association of Los Angeles for photos, wiki web site, Facebook, Twitter, and Getty images.
