

# NATIONAL FEDERATION OF INDIAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATIONS (NFIA)



**Serving the Indian American Community since 1980**

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## **NEW YEAR BRINGS NEW EXPECTATIONS AND A RAY OF HOPE IN COMBATING HEALTHCARE CRISIS – HAPPY 2021:**

The year 2020 will be marked as a time of incredible anxiety and stress. It represents loss of loved ones for families all across the globe. The United States, along with all other countries were taken by a surprise by COVID-19, a highly infectious virus, that engulfed all continents at a high speed which brought the world economies to a screeching halt. All healthcare systems were unprepared for this highly contagious and fast spreading virus resulting in loss of millions of lives. Most countries started to search for cure in a vaccination.



It appeared to be a distant hope. Most vaccines take long time of research and testing before the vaccine can be considered safe for human use. All countries experienced lack of preparation in controlling the spread of virus and also having inadequate reserves of personal protective equipment. The Year 2021 brought new hope, great relief, and confidence in battling with this healthcare crisis. Two vaccines had emerged which had been tested and approved for emergency use for humans. Along with that came a greater emphasis on manufacturing greater number of doses of the vaccines, along with supplies of related personal protective equipment to help the healthcare workers engaged in saving themselves, their own families and the people who were under their care and fighting for survival.

The White House, under the able guidance of healthcare task force, as well as CDC, and NIH infectious diseases expert, Antony Fauci, were continuously sharing information on Corona 19 for the benefit of the government, media, and people. The goal of the United States was to help and share the research and medical knowledge globally in a leadership role. This has brought

multi-lateral collaborations and push of new administration to vaccinate people as fast as possible to bring economic recovery.

New administration promised in the first 100 days of his administration to get control over the spread of this virus, start work on a comprehensive immigration policy, reduce poverty and unemployment, boost small businesses, work on climate issues, and provide equity and opportunities for people capable and willing to avail opportunities for growth and prosperity. To achieve goals laid out, President Biden has met recently with top business leaders, including the CEOs of JPMorgan and Walmart, two giants to talk about his economic policy and his \$1.9 trillion stimulus plan. NFIA wishes lot of success to the new administration.

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

## **NATIONAL FEDERATION OF INDIAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION ELECTS NEW OFFICERS:**

One of the longest community service association, with national presence, has elected new officers as of January 2021. Ajoy Dube of California is elected as the president of the association. Mr. Dube has been involved in the association for a long time and brings lot of historical perspective to the association and the president, Ms. Angela Anand, after serving two years as NFIA president now becomes part of the board as immediate past president for continuity of associations goals and mission.

NFIA was formed in May 1980 at the First Convention of Asian Indians in North America organized by FIA New York and it has been working for four decades. NFIA was instrumental in the formation of the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) at the NFIA sponsored First Global Convention of People of Indian Origin in New York (1989). It is composed of members from different associations and functions as the umbrella organization of the community and is all inclusive of associations from community whose mission is to serve and represent the Indian community and its related goals and mission in the United States as well as promote Indo Americans bilateral relations through seminars and events.



**President**  
Ajoy Kumar Dube



**Ex. Vice President**  
Lavanya Reddy



**Vice President**  
Dr. Satish Misra



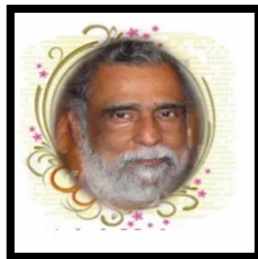
**Vice President**  
Ashok (Pat) Patnaik



**Vice President**  
Raj Razdan



**Secretary**  
Dr. Makam Subbarao



**Joint Secretary**  
Dr. Om P. Sharma



**Treasurer**  
Pooja Thomre



**Past President**  
Angela Anand



**Chairman**  
Babu K Patel



**Director-At-Large**  
Aparna Hande



**Director-At-Large**  
Dr. Sukrit Mukherjee



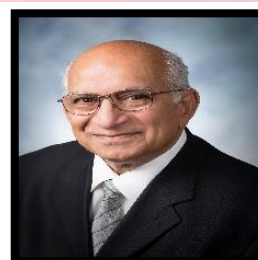
**Director-At-Large**  
Dr. Lalita Kaul



**Director-At-Large**  
Minhaj Akhtar



**Director-At-Large**  
Subash Razdan



**Director-At-Large**  
Sudip Gorakshakar



**Director-At-Large**  
Vamshi R. K. Akuntala



**Executive Director**  
Dr. Hari Har Singh



**RVP Pacific North**  
Prashanthi Harathi



**RVP Pacific South**  
Kamini Khare



**RVP Central (IL)**  
Satish Gabhawala



**RVP New York (NY)**  
Gunjan R. Rastogi



**RVP South East (GA)**  
Aruna Patel



**RVP Capital (DC)**  
Kamlesh Munshi



**RVP New England**  
Gope Gidwani

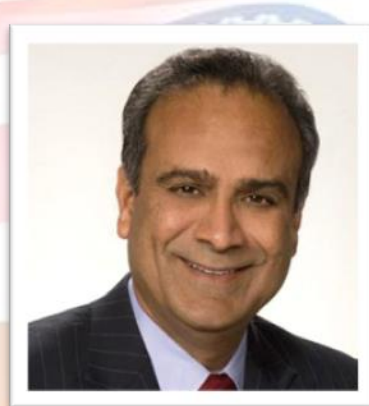
Other officers of the Executive Committee Members are Lavanya Reddy (Executive Vice President), Dr. Satish Mishra (Vice President), Ashok (Pat) Patnaik (Vice President), Raj Razdan (Vice President, Dr. Makam Subbarao (Secretary), Dr. Om Sharma (Joint Secretary), Pooja Thomre (Treasurer) who are all continuing members representing several member associations of NFIA from different regions. The new chairman of the association is Babu Bhai Patel who is from Chicago and has been with NFIA for many years.

Part of the board are Aparna Hande, Dr. Lalita Kaul, Minhaj Akhtar who are re-elected. There are also a few new members of the board who are elected for the first time at NFIA. Dr. Sukrit Mukherjee has served NFIA before as an appointed member by outgoing president Angela Anand, now he joins the board in the position of Director. Mr. Vamshi Reddy is a first-time elected Director-at-Large and veteran community leaders Mr. Subash Razdan and Mr. Sudip Gorakshakar are also elected as the new Director-at-Large members of the board.

Mrs. Prashanthi Harathi and Mrs. Kamini Khare were elected as the RVP of Pacific North and Pacific South Regions respectively. Mr. Satish Gabhawala, Mrs. Gunjan R. Rastogi and Mrs. Aruna Patel were elected from Central (Illinois), New York (NY) and South East (GA). Mr. Kamlesh Munshi and Mr. Gope Gidwani were re-elected from Capital (DC) and New England respectively. The oath ceremony of inducting the new officers was conducted by Dr. Thomas Abraham, the founder of NFIA and GOPIO.

**INDIA'S REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATION WAS HELD IN LOS ANGELES, CA ON JANUARY 30, 2021:**

Indian American Communities in Southern California jointly celebrated 72<sup>nd</sup> India's Republic Day on January 30, 2021. The associations who joined were Federation of Indian Associations (FIA-SC), India Association of Southern California (IASC), Global Peace Foundation, Inc. (GPF), Excel Foundation and Brahman Samaj of North America (BSNA) Los Angeles Chapter.



Dignitaries among audience included US Congresswoman Young Kim, Mayor of Anaheim, Harry Sidhu, and Nitesh Patel, Mayor of La Palma who were formally introduced and shared their thoughts on this occasion. The cultural program was primarily organized by Mr. Ishwar Deedwania, President of FIA-SC and Mr. Ajoy Kumar Dube, Past President of FIA-SC and currently serving President of National Federation of Indian American

Associations (NFIA) along with Mrs. Kamini Khare, Founder and Chair of IASC; Dr. Manorama S Gupta, President of GPF, Inc.; Mrs. Charu Shivkumar, President of Excel Foundation and Dr. Sukrit Mukherjee, President of BSNA Los Angeles. The entire program was celebrated virtual over zoom platform and Dr. Sukrit Mukherjee was the Master of Ceremony.

Students, staff and faculty members filled with a feeling of patriotism and dedication gathered in front of the building. The celebration started with the hoisting of the National Flag by the Director, prof. Udaykumar Yaragatti. In his speech, the director highlighted the importance of the Constitution and its unique features such as being sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic and republic which are enshrined in the preamble of the constitution. He also gave an insight on the various accomplishments achieved by college and motivated the crowd for bringing more laurels for the college through their accomplishments.

The speech was followed by the National Anthem, various other representations of the classical art forms in the different dances and songs performed by the students, giving a glimpse of the diversity in unity of the nation. The program ended with the message to create a great nation through collective efforts from all individual. Sweets were distributed among all the guests.

### **REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATION AT INDIA HOUSE, IN WASHINGTON D.C. :**

The 72nd Republic Day of India was celebrated in Washington D.C. with a flag-hoisting ceremony on 26th January, 2021 at the India House. Members of the Indian community joined the celebrations in large numbers virtually, in view of the local public health guidelines due to COVID 19.

Ambassador of India, H.E. Taranjit Singh Sandhu, unfurled the tricolor, which was followed by singing of the National Anthem. In his remarks to the community, Ambassador complimented them for their work during the pandemic and their role in bringing India and the US closer. He said that the Indian Government "looks forward to working with the new Administration, led by President Joseph Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. From outer space to nanotechnology, from the Indo-Pacific to climate change, from healthcare to education & IT, there is a recognition, that our partnership can benefit, not just our two nations, but the entire world."

The Address by the Hon'ble President of India on the eve of Republic Day was played. This was followed by a short cultural program involving local artist and rendition of patriotic songs by students of Gandharva School of Music, Richmond and a violin recital by Mr. Kamalakiran Vinjamuru.



### **GOPIO CELEBRATES INDIA'S REPUBLIC DAY VIRTUALLY:**

Ranking Democrat Congressman Gregory Meeks, Chairman of House Foreign Relations Committee was the Chief Guest at the celebration of India's 72nd Republic Day, organized by GOPIO New York. Beena Kothari, GOPIO-NY President welcomed the participants from across the globe to the celebration.

Rep. Meeks of New York was introduced by Lal Motwani, Honorary Chairman of GOPIO-NY and former president of NFIA. "He is a true friend of the Indian American community," Mr. Motwani said. Rep. Meeks in his address, said he has known Mr. Motwani for over two decades. While recognizing the contributions of Mr. Lal Motwani and the leaders of the Indian American community, he thanked GOPIO leaders for inviting him to the celebrations of India's Republic Day.



Rep. Meeks pointed to the Bill passed with bipartisan support by the US House of Representatives, that would establish an exchange initiative between the USA and India to study the work and legacies of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. On his inaugural address, Indian Consul General Randhir Kumar Jaiswal, greeted the Diaspora in the United States as well as those around the world connected online to the event on the occasion of India's 72nd Republic Day celebration. Calling it an important occasion and a milestone for India and the people of Indian origin, he said, "This is a time when we reflect on the past and the present and ways to go forward." Describing the current period as "difficult times," he referred to the health and the economic challenges India and the world is facing today. He expressed hope that the arrival of the vaccination will help make a new beginning.

NY State Senator Kevin Thomas was introduced by Dr. Thomas Abraham, as a friend and part of the Indian American community. Dr. Abraham conveyed Republic Day greetings from all GOPIO International officers including President Sunny Kulathakal from Bahrain, Executive VP Ishwar Ram Lutchman from South Africa, Vice President Ram Gandhi from the USA and all other International Coordinators from all over the world present at the Zoom celebrations.

Senator Thomas, who is chairman of the Consumer Protection Committee, conveyed his greetings to the Indian Diaspora and read out the Preamble of the Indian Constitution, reminding all of the high ideals of unity and diversity, urging the nation to live up to the high ideals enshrined in the constitution of India. Senator Thomas said that "India is not only an emerging power but today India contributes globally".

### **NFIA OFFICERS VISIT GANDHI JI STATUE WITH OFFERINGS OF GARLANDS IN SEATTLE, AS WELL AS IN ATLANTA, AND PARTICIPATE VIRTUALLY IN WASHINGTON DC.**

On Martyrs' Day Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi, whose life and ideals continue to inspire and motivate millions across the globe. He also recalled the sacrifices of the heroes of India's freedom struggle. The statue of Gandhi ji was visited by NFIA officers, Ex. Vice President Lavanya Reddy, Mr. Vamshi Reddy, along with others who offered garlands. Additionally, the statue in Atlanta was visited by vice president Raj Rajdan, Director and former president Subash Rajdan and others.

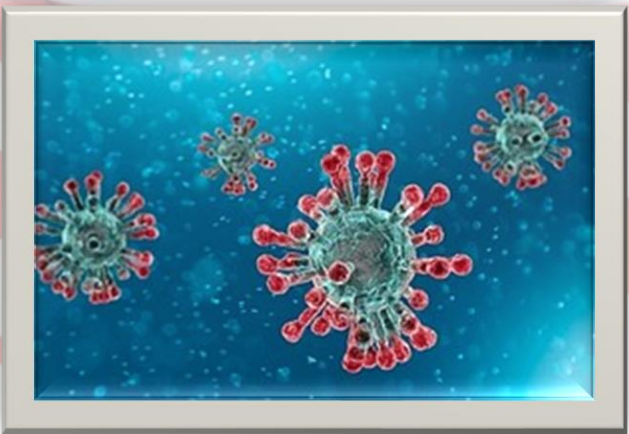
Mahatma Gandhi, byname of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, (born October 2, 1869, Porbandar, India—died January 30, 1948, Delhi), was an Indian lawyer, politician, social activist, and writer who became the leader of the nationalist movement against the British rule of India. As such, he came to be considered the father of his country. Gandhi is internationally esteemed for his doctrine of nonviolent protest (satyagraha) to achieve political and social progress and is remembered not only in India but everywhere where Indians are living.



**STATUS OF COVID 19, UPDATES – NEW VARIANTS:**

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 5:15 p.m. on February 12, 2021, the tally is:

- Total cases worldwide: 108,054,984 (up from 107,631,068 Thursday)
- Total deaths worldwide: 2,378,143 (up from 2,362,735 Thursday)
- Total cases in the United States: 27,464,442 (up from 27,356,234 Thursday)
- Total deaths in the United States: 479,949 (up from 474,198 Thursday)
- Total recovered: 60,505,759 (up from 60,197,581 Thursday)



President Biden has been putting lot of emphasis on controlling the spread and reviving the economy. The administration is credited for purchasing 200 million more doses of COVID -19 vaccines. Both leading vaccine pharma, Pfizer and Moderna are providing 100 million and it is believed that 300 million Americans will be vaccinated by the end of July.

The number of coronavirus cases reported from India stood at 1,08,98,743 at the time of writing this newsletter, with the death toll at 1,57,028. India seems to be getting better in controlling the spread of virus.

Wall Street reported that deaths are declining recently, however, variants of the CORONA 19 virus have happened and it is found in England, Brazil, and South Africa. The South African variant has been found in California, North Carolina, Illinois, and Washington, DC. The CDC endorses double-masking for maximum protection. However, their message also has some positive lining. It says that some variants can spread and become predominant while others subside. Recently, Eli Lilly's combination antibody therapy to fight COVID-19 has been granted emergency use authorization in the United States and Johnson and Johnson has also requested FDA approval for their vaccine for emergency use. Now there are therapeutics available and the future appears to be little brighter.

### **GOPIO ORGANIZES A BOOK DISCUSSION:**

Dr. Thomas Abraham and Dr. Neerja Arun Gupta moderated the discussion of the book authored by Dr. Aravind Panagariya "New India – Reclaiming the past Glory." The talk was organized by GOPIO) on zoom application on Saturday, January 23, 2021.



Dr. Aravind Panagariya shared with the attendees from across the world on ways India can regain the lost glory." Taking the audience to the glorious days of India, the scholar said, India accounted for 38% of the total world economy in the first millennium and it continued to grow in the second millennium. In the 17th century, India accounted for 20% of world's total GDP, with India and China accounting for 50% of total world

economy. With the arrival of British rule, India began to lose its place in world with the Western nations growing at a faster pace while India's economy stayed stagnant. In 1947, when India got Independence from Britain, India's economy was mere 3% of the total world GDP, he pointed out.

"With a GDP that just reached \$2.6 trillion, India is poised to become the world's third largest economy in less than a decade," Aravind Panagariya told an audience consisting of people from around the world. Panagariya said, in his new book, *he* provided the roadmap for India on ways to go forward.

1. Externally, India needs to be more open. Modi govt has done some changes. But on external trade, we need to be more open.
2. Labor reforms have been "almost done" both at the federal and state levels. Currently, the right to terminate workers has been delegated to the states, and now only those companies with over 300 laborers can use the hire and fire policy.
3. Land has largely remained untouched. Urban planning has remained static. Conversion of land from agriculture to industry is the need of the hour.
4. India's financial system needs to be fixed.
5. Privatization of several government sectors needs to be implemented for more efficiency.

### **CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF NETAJI SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE ON HIS 150<sup>TH</sup> BIRTH ANNIVERSARY – OBSERVED IN THE NATIONS CAPITAL:**

The National Council of Asian Indian Associations (NCAIA) National group (Chicago) and the local affiliate organized virtually "Parakram Divas" on Saturday February 13, 2021. This was an opportunity to pay tribute to India's beloved son. Attending the event were family members of Neta ji's family, daughter by video, his grand-nephew, and associates as well as the community affairs minister from the Indian Embassy, Anurag Kumar along with officers of NCAIA and local leaders.

The event was exciting, inspiring, and informative and was truly befitting the special occasion. It started with the singing of BANDE MATARAM and other patriotic songs, "BOLO MERE SANG, JAI HIND! Welcoming

remarks on the behalf of NCAIA and preview of the proceedings were taken care of early on by Harish Kolasani, National NCAIA President; Shri Sunil Singh, Chairman of NCAIA (VA HQs); and Dr. Sambhu Banik, Senior Advisor (VA HQs), along with the president of NCAIA, Ms. Naina Desai.

The Keynote Speaker, Dr. Anirban Ganguly, Director of S.P. Mookerjee Research Foundation gave a very informative talk detailing ideals and message of Neta ji and his legacy. He was introduced by Dr. Adapa Prasad, President of Overseas Friends of BJP. Ambassador (Retd.) Dr. Har Swarap Singh, introduced by Ms. Sashi Agarwal, Executive vice President, recollected his interaction with family of Netaji—his daughter, Anita Bose Pfaff and her husband Martin whom he got to know personally in 1966.

A talk by Chandra Kumar Bose, a grand nephew of Netaji, was interesting and he shared many facts about Neta ji. He said, Neta ji was a devout Hindu and followed the teaching of Swami Vivekananda. Shri Mithun Banerjee introduced him at this event. Dr. Subroto Mitro, a well-known historian, shared his thoughts about the life of Neta ji. Shri Mukund Agashe and Shri Kripa Ji also delivered their tasks graciously. Also, a nice poem dedicated to Netaji was presented by Shri Ajay Kumar. Thus, a blending of cerebral and entertaining parts of the program made for an extremely enjoyable morning. The MC and host kept the program moving efficiently and smoothly.

### **HAPPY VALENTINE DAY TO ALL AND IN THIS TIME OF VIRTUAL CONTACT – WE OFFER VIRTUAL HUGS TO EVERYONE:**



*Valentines Day  
Is Not Only For Lovers...  
But Also For Those Family & Friends  
Who Care For Each Other  
Through Out The Year !!*

“Na ko bairy, nahe bigaanaa, sagal sang humko ban aayee”-Shri Guru Granth Sahib. To me, there are no enemies, nor strangers; I am comfortable with all. This was posted by Chief Editor of The Indian Panorama, and it made perfect sense today and is taken from his post on social media. Wonderful thoughts taken from the scripture of sikhs – the Guru Granth Sahib. We acknowledge and thank Indrajit S. Saluja for so aptly posting this in the time of healthcare crisis and when people are isolated and suffering economically. Hope this inspires and we offer virtual hugs to everyone.

**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](mailto:angela_anand@yahoo.com) Contributions to this issue were made by the following individuals. Contributing Members: GOPIO International Chairman, Dr. Thomas Abraham; NFIA Director, Dr. Sukrit Mukherjee; Harish Kolasani, NCAIA, National President, and Immediate Past President NFIA, Angela Anand. Also credited for information here are Everyday Health, John Hopkins data base, CDC, Wall Street Journal, and special acknowledgement of images, Executive Vice President, Lavanya Reddy; Vice President Raj Rajdhan; and special credit to the Indian Embassy for their press release and photos along with The Indian Panorama.**