

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF INDIAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATIONS (NFIA)



Serving the Indian American Community since 1980

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MOTHERHOOD CELEBRATIONS ARE HAPPENING IN MANY COUNTRIES – HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY:

Females perform many roles in a life time. Role of a daughter, sister, wife, and the most respected one is the role of a mother. The child in all of us will always remember growing up those times when mother entertained us, played with us, sang to us and read stories to us. She is a nurturer, a teacher, a counselor, and a guide. Mothers play a very important role in our lives and thus are now very fondly remembered on Mother's Day.



We can remember our mothers and how they taught us to respect elders, study hard, and practice humility as those were the desired qualities of a human being. Mothers championed in us the best they learned from their own life experiences. For all extended families, there were elders at home and they needed respect, compassion, and affection when they start to become dependent for their life's necessities on younger folks. Those teachings and guidance have proven to be helpful in growing up and then manage a life of adulthood and parenthood.

Many can remember some learning that took place during play time which helped them as young children to learn counting - One, two, buckle my shoe. Three, four, open the door. Five, six, pick up sticks. Seven, eight, lay them straight. Nine, ten, a great big hen! Then the rhyming alphabets. You may have seen a graphic of a mother hen during rain that she was getting rained on but she spreads her wings to shelter under her extensions her young ones so that they can stay dry. Mom is a protector.



The history of this celebration in the United States is that at the initiative of Anna Jarvis in the early 20th century a day in May came into being a recognized celebration of mothers and motherhood, the thought that has existed throughout the world over thousands of years. We are aware that there are Greeks and their cult to Cybele the mother god Rhea, then is the Roman festival of Hilaria, or the Christian Laetare Sunday celebration (associated with the image of Mother Church). In some countries, the date adopted is one significant to the majority religion, such as Virgin Mary Day in Catholic countries. For example, Bolivia's Mother's Day is a fixed date, remembering of a battle in which women participated to defend their children. Some countries, such as Russia, celebrated International Women's Day instead of Mother's Day or simply celebrate both holidays, which is the custom in Ukraine. Kyrgyzstan has recently introduced Mother's Day, but "year on year International Women's Day is certainly increasing in status".

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

NFIA SPEARHEADS AN INTERACTIVE SESSION ON OCI AND PIO ISSUES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY IN CHICAGO:

Keeping in mind the demand of the community to understand guide lines for changes in OCI card and PIO issues, and some lingering questions in the mind of the people, partially due to Covid 19 spread and limited access to consulate and partially due to the opportunity to ask questions directly, NFIA took the opportunity to fill that need of the community. The president of NFIA, Mr. Ajoy Dube and others who were part of the organizing team asked the community to mail in their questions ahead of this interactive session with Ambassador Amit Kumar and the team from the Chicago Consulate.



The session started with a welcome by the president of NFIA and some self-introductions, after that attendees had the opportunity to hear FIA-Chicago President Raj Patel who thanked NFIA President for hosting the interactive session. Patel introduced Chicago FIA organizations and its key Members and stressed on importance of such a seminar on Visa, OCI and PIO matter.

The Ambassador Amit Kumar, introduced by Mr. Dube, is a career diplomat and joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1995. Prior to taking up his current assignment as the Consul General of

India in Chicago, he was the Deputy Chief of Mission in the Embassy of India, Washington DC with Ambassador-rank and has held several very high-ranking assignments in Foreign Service.

On the recent announcement by the Government of India on OCI related issues, Ambassador Kumar said, "We have taken these steps to simplify measures with your participation and collaboration," he told the leaders of the Indian American community. Government of India continues to simplify the procedures and we are open to your suggestions."

The Government of India on April 15, 2021 announced that the Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders will now be required to get their document re-issued only once at the age of 20 instead of multiple times needed currently. According to a Press Information Bureau statement, a person who has got registration as OCI cardholder prior to attaining the age of 20 years will have to get the card re-issued only once when a new passport is issued after his or her completing 20 years of age, so as to capture his or her facial features on attaining adulthood.

If a person has obtained registration as OCI cardholder after attaining the age of 20 years, there will be no requirement of re-issue of OCI card, it said. Currently, the OCI card is required to be re-issued each time a new passport is issued up to 20 years of age and once after completing 50 years of age, in view of biological changes in the face of the applicant. "With a view to facilitate the OCI cardholders, the government has decided to dispense with this requirement," it added.

Ambassador Kumar said, with a view to update the data regarding new passports obtained by the OCI cardholder, it has been decided that he/she shall upload a copy of the new passport containing his/her photo and also a latest photo on the online OCI portal, each time a new passport is issued up to 20 years of age and once after completing 50 years of age. These documents may be uploaded by the OCI cardholder within 3 months of receipt of the new passport. "There has been a surge in OCI application, which has delayed the process," the Ambassador warned. He referred to travel to India and current travel restrictions on tourist visas to India due to Covid.

Others who took the opportunity to appreciate this effort of NFIA to hold the session included

GOPIO and NFIA founder and current Chairman, Dr. Thomas Abraham who spoke briefly also about the issues, and NFIA Foundation Chairman **Babu Patel**. Mr. Patel who proudly made the announcement that his son had been elected as Mayor of Lincolnwood in Greater Chicago area, and **Mr. Satish Gabawala**.

Others from NFIA who attended the session were **Immediate Past President of NFIA Angela Anand** and **Regional VP Gunjan Rastogi**, and **Regional VP Satish Gabawala**, and also **former president Sohan Joshi**, who is also a resident of Chicago. **Dr. Sukrit Mukherjee, Director of NFIA** hosted the video conference over zoom on April 22, 2021 and facilitated questions answers forum with consulate. The interactive session was attended by over 100 people.

NFIA REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT REPRESENTING NEW YORK AREA PLANNED AN INTERACTIVE SEESION ON OCI AND PIO ISSUES:

The National Federation of Indian American Associations (NFIA) organized a virtual interactive zoom meeting on Thursday, April 29, 2021 with the Indian Consulate Office in New York, NY. The session was planned to clarify changes and issues related to OCI, emergency visa issuance, and other related travel guidelines.



This effort was initiated by NFIA's Regional Vice President (RVP), Ms. Gunjan Rastogi who single handedly spearheaded and successfully planned the event in a relatively short time. This was necessitated due to the fervent requests made by the Indo-American community to hold another back-to-back session with the Indian consulate office to gain a better understanding of the guidelines regarding OCI changes/issues. The consulate office included Honorable DCG, Shatrughna Sinha and Honorable Consul

(CPV) Murugesam Ramaswamy and the zoom live event was attended by approximately 280 participants from all over the United States.



The welcome address by Gunjan Rastogi followed by a moment of silence observed in honor of the victims in India due to the COVID pandemic. Ajoy Dube, the president of NFIA made some introductory remarks about the association. The consulate office spent the first hour dedicated to the aforementioned topics in an informative manner and this then transitioned into a Q&A session that was ably moderated by Mukesh Modi and Nilima Madan, both residents of New York area.

Among the attendees from NFIA were: **Ajoy Dube, Subash Razdan, Sudip Gorakhshakar, Dr. Thomas Abraham, Angela Anand, Raj Razdan, Dr. Hari Har Singh, Dr. Satish Mishra, Sunny Gabhawala, Aparna Hande, Prashanthi Harathi, Kamini Khare and Ashok Patnaik**. Ms. Rastogi also introduced the presidents of the 15 organizations that participated in the virtual zoom meeting. All appreciated the session. The Deputy Consul General encouraged the viewers to keep sending any unanswered questions to the Indian consulate office.

INDIAN EMBASSY POSTED PUBLIC INFORMATION REGARDING OVERSEAS CITIZEN OF INDIA CARD NEW GUIDELINES:



Relaxation in OCI Guidelines till 31st December, 2021

1. The following OCI guidelines have been in force since 2005:

- OCI card is required to be re-issued each time a new passport is acquired by the cardholder up to the age of 20 years.

- OCI card is required to be re-issued once on acquiring a new passport after completing 50 years of age.
2. The Government of India has decided to grant further extension of time till 31st December, 2021 to get the OCI cards re-issued in accordance with above guidelines.
 3. The requirement of carrying old and new passports, along with the OCI card, has been done away with. Henceforth, an OCI cardholder traveling on the strength of existing OCI card bearing old passport number is not required to carry the old passport. However, carrying the new (current) passport is mandatory.

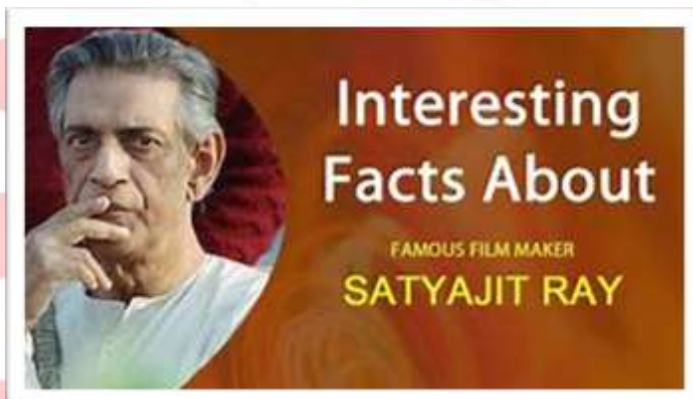
It is informed that **VFS Global** is the service provider for OCI services for the Embassy of India, Washington DC or its Consulates in Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, New York and San Francisco. Its operations have started from 04 November 2020.

All the OCI applicants are requested to visit the link <https://services.vfsglobal.com/usa/en/ind/apply-oci-services> for details.

Apart from the applicable Government of India OCI fees, the applicants will also be required to pay US\$ 15.90 as service charge to VFS Global and US\$ 3 as contribution to Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF).

In case of any other specific queries related to OCI services, please email to fsoci.washington@mea.gov.in

INDIA MARKS CENTENARY OF CINEMA GIANT- MOST ADMIRER AND PRIDE OF INDIA- WIDELY ACKNOWLEDGED FILMMAKER SATYAJIT RAY:



India is celebrating the birth centenary of one of her most admired, not only in India but also abroad, Satyajit Ray, who won an honorary Oscar in 1992. He was ailing at that time. It was shortly before his death. To get recognition at that stage when he was not well enough to travel to Hollywood, the film industry delivered the award to his home so honorably. Mr. Ray was born in Calcutta on May 2, 1921 and died April 23, 1992.

He was a writer, poet, illustrator, and an excellent filmmaker. According to Variety, a film industry publication, Ray debuted with "Pather Panchali" (1955) the first part of the magisterial Apu Trilogy, which won best human

document at Cannes. The Trilogy includes "Aparajito" (1956) and "Apur Sansar" (1959). Berlin was a particularly happy venue for him and he won top awards at the festival numerous times, for "Pather Panchali," "Aparajito," "Mahanagar" (1963), "Charulata" (1964), "Nayak" (1966) and "Ashani Sanket" (1973).

It was again, at Venice, great film maker he was known to be shooting black and white films with single camera to capture each and every detail, Mr. Ray won for "Aparajito" and "Seemabaddha" (1971), culminating in a career Golden Lion in 1982. He also won a British Institute Fellowship in 1983 to go with the London Film Festival's Sutherland Trophy for "Apur Sansar." In 1987, the government of France made Ray a Commander of the Legion of Honor.

India also awarded him with Dadasaheb Phalke Award as well as with Bharat Ratna. He is not only the son of Bengal, he is son of India and a great film maker who has been acknowledged by even the Hollywood cinema respectfully and fondly. It is said that Ray won 36 times for his films at India's National Film Awards.

The Indian government has newly instituted a Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Cinema, and the country's various film bodies are organizing year-long centenary celebrations, necessarily virtual-physical hybrids because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Ray will always be remembered for his magnificent legacy. All who follow his contributions to the film industry are fully comprehend how the master was able to narrate stories very simply but effectively. He worked hard and has many films produced with his imaginative thinking, hard work, and tremendous talent.

EXCEL FOUNDATION- A MEMBER OF NFIA HELD - GOSSIP AND EERSHA (JEALOUSY) EVENT VIRTUALLY:

Excel Foundation USA has planned a series of events to Empower Women. It hosted the first event of the series under the banner of Women of India Network (WIN), a wing of Excel Foundation USA, on May 06, 2021 using zoom platform. The first event focused on Unhealthy Relationship and Behavior. The subject matter for discussion was Strategies to deal with Gossip and Jealousy. Many well-known community workers participated to express their views and suggestions to handle this bad behavioral problem.

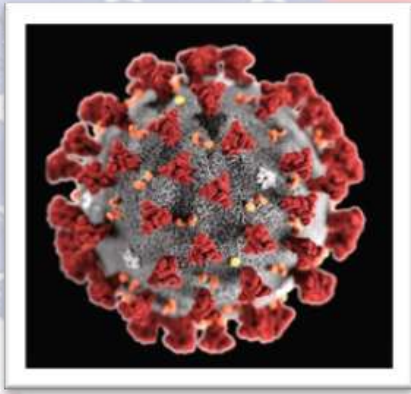
Gossip and Jealousy are two such subjects that are very common in society and can ruin someone's life if not dealt with orderly manner. Many speakers told their personal stories and experiences how they handled gossip problems. One most common way to handle it is to understand the intention of the gossiper and discourage him/her from doing so. Many gossipers look for some kickbacks from spreading or talking about rumors. If they are denied their kickbacks, they will stop. If you tell the gossiper, yeah, I know and I don't care and I am not interested in it, he/she may get discouraged and walk away.

Jealousy is another touchy subject that we encounter many times. A few speakers talked about this problem. Jealousy can ruin someone's life. It is a self-imposed disease. People feel jealous to see someone flourishing or having something or having more of it than the other. It is a just a mental thought. No one pushes someone into jealousy but oneself. Best way to sway from jealousy is to be thankful for what you have. Men get jealous seeing their partners having a fun conversation with other men or women get jealous seeing their spouses doing the same with other ladies. It is all in the head. Your spouse is going back home with you at the end of the day. So, why get jealous. The easy solution to be free of jealousy is - be content with what you have and accept what is yours.

Audience was also entertained by some melodious music and songs. The event was well attended and enjoyed by all.

CORONA VIRUS STATISTICS AND LATEST NEWS ABOUT VACCINATIONS REGARDING YOUNGER CHILDREN:

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 p.m. on May 6, 2021, the tally is:



Total cases worldwide: 155,475,984
Total deaths worldwide: 3,247,557
Total cases in the United States: 32,593,882
Total deaths in the United States: 579,977
Total recovered: 91,855,975

Biden Administration has said that in the United States everyone who wants to be vaccinated will have received a shot by **July 4, 2021**. This is related to adults but there are children who are underage and the

questions are now being raised about the health of the younger children. There are public service announcements are being planned and Elmo, Big Bird, and the Sesame Street gang will be promoting vaccinations. **Pfizer aims to file for authorization of vaccine for young children by September**. On Tuesday, Pfizer announced that it intends to submit for authorization for its COVID-19 vaccine for use in toddlers and younger children (ages 2 through 11) in September and in infants by November, according to CNBC.

HEALTH CRISIS IN INDIA DUE TO SECOND WAVE OF COVID 19 – COUNTRIES COMING TO ASSIST INDIA IN COMBATING THE SPREAD AND HELP THOSE MOST IN NEED:

On social media, someone had written these words of wisdom. When you have your health, you have everything. When you do not have your health, nothing else matters at all. It is true in the context of Covid 19 virus. Life has come to standstill in India and economy is experiencing slow down due to lockdown like situation prevailing again. India is experiencing its **second wave of Covid 19 spread** and what was experienced in the United States a year ago is happening there. In States healthcare resources were found to be inadequate. India is not able to take care of the population suffering and many fatalities are happening each and every day.



India`s capital Delhi is reporting a gradual decline in COVID-19 positivity rate over the past week, but the healthcare infrastructure remains strained. On May 5th, Delhi saw 20,960 new cases and 311 deaths. The positivity rate was 26.37% after testing 79,491 people. Calling it an early assessment, the Union Health Ministry said Delhi is showing a plateau/decrease in the daily cases.

The 5th series of consignments carrying medical equipment from the USA arrived in India on 4th May. The consignment has 545 oxygen concentrators. MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi officially appreciated the support from the US. Meanwhile, the fourth consignment

of medical supplies containing 60 ventilators had also arrived from the UK to India on 3rd May. A shipment of an oxygen production plant and twenty ventilators also arrived from Italy to India. Bagchi said India values the support from the important European Union partner Italy and it will help augment the oxygen capacities.

A Major newspaper, Washington Post, has recently carried several prominent stories on critical situation in India. It has stated that India suffers through a calamitous coronavirus surge, **the number of deaths looks to be even worse than** stated. Furthermore, it mentions about the analysis of crematorium done for at random three cities. The write up states soberly that the fatalities released by authorities appeared to represent just a fraction of all covid-19 deaths. The magnitude of that finding is amplified by the fact that **India's official statistics are already shattering global records** for daily infections. Of course, this kind of report is quite sad to read and comprehend the gravity of the present prevailing health care situation. TV Networks are reporting that a third wave may ensue next and it might affect the children and there is no vaccine under consideration at present.

Need for Indemnification is a Roadblock for Pfizer with respect to India:

Pfizer has asked the Modi government to indemnify it against lawsuits in case of adverse effects linked to its jab. Pfizer has reportedly signed an indemnity clause with many countries that are using its vaccine. However, Pfizer's demand for indemnity has become a major roadblock in the discussions as India, unlike other countries, does not offer any protection against adverse effects such as serious illness or death caused by the vaccine. India says that she cannot give it to one company as it may set a trend for the domestic companies.

It may be noted that the two Covid-19 vaccines approved in India - Serum Institute of India's Covishield and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin – have not been granted indemnity against lawsuits in case of adverse events as yet.

NFIA FAMILY EXPRESSES THEIR SENTIMENTS ON LOSS OF A CLOSE FAMILY MEMBER OF VICE PRESIDENT DR. SATISH MISRA TO COVID 19 IN INDIA:

Sheela Misra wife of Dr. Satish Misra lost her nephew (son of her younger sister) **Shailendra Shukla** to COVID-19. He worked for the India Railways in Lucknow, he was only 50-year-old and is survived by his wife and their 2 boys, aged 20 and 15. They lived with his parents in Sahara Estates, Lucknow.

IN MEMORIAM – NFIA BOARD STANDS IN SOLIDARITY WITH FAMILIES WHO HAVE LOST A CLOSE FAMILY MEMBER:

GOPIO Life member and former treasurer as well as NFIA's former Administrative Director II Mr. Kewal Kanda lost his brother **Om Prakash Kanda** on Sunday, April 25, 2021. NFIA board members and friends of the family offer condolences to the Kanda family.



Mr. Om Prakash Kanda, born in 1942, was the third child of seven children and lived in Canoga Park, CA. He had two elder sisters and three younger brothers and one younger sister. He was married in 1967 to Satya Devi and had five children – four daughters and one son. During these uncertain times of Covid spread, community and extended family offers sympathies to his immediate family, his wife – Satya Devi, four daughters – Sunita, Anita, Sanyogita, and Rajni, one son and six siblings and pray for the peace for the family left behind and eternal rest for the departed soul.

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 President Ajoy Dube; NFIA Director, Dr. Sukrit Mukherjee; Kewal Kanda, GOPIO former treasurer and NFIA's Administrative Director II, Gunjan Rastogi, Regional Vice-President from New York; Charu Shiv Kumar, President of Excel Foundation; and Immediate Past President of NFIA, Angela Anand. Also credited for information here are Everyday Health, John Hopkins data base, CNN, CNBC, Washington Post, and special acknowledgement of PIO TV, and Indian Embassy, Washington DC.

