

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF INDIAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATIONS (NFIA)



Serving the Indian American Community since 1980

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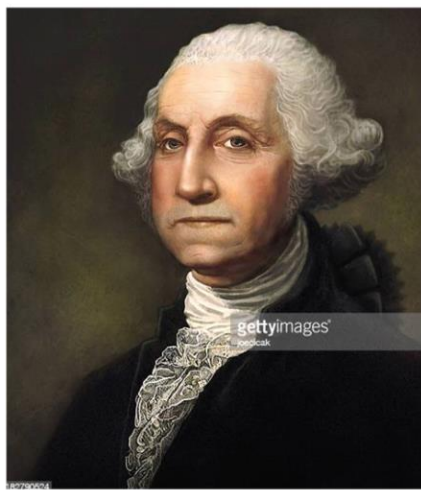
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GEORGE WASHINGTON, THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, WAS INAUGURATED IN APRIL OF 1789:

The United States of America is a relatively young nation. The month of April reminds one the history of the country and its cultural values. The first president of the country, George Washington, was inaugurated on April 30, 1789. He had served as the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War and that too very honorably. Additionally, he acted as President of the 1787 Constitutional Convention. Once the Convention and the Constitution was passed, he was considered the most desirable to occupy the position of the presidency of the country. He served the country for eight years and established the new federal government.



President Washington appointed all high-ranking officials in the executive and judicial branches of the government. He also established the site of the permanent capital of the United States. He was partial to the Alexander Hamilton's economic policies whereby the federal government assumed the debts of the state governments and established the First Bank of the United States, the United States Mint, and the United States Customs Service.

It is recorded in the American history that he reluctantly assumed the presidency because he thought he did not know enough about the civil administration and he was an army official but history has recorded his accomplishments. He had the foresight to protect the country from pirates and external threats, he re-established the United States Navy with the Naval Act of 1794. He is known for many firsts in his life and also described as the father of the nation.

The U.S. capital is named after Washington—as are many schools, parks, and cities. Today his face appears on the U.S. dollar bill and the quarter. He always thought farming the "most delectable" of pursuits. "It is honorable," he wrote, "it is amusing, and, with superior judgment, it is profitable." And, of all the spots for farming, he thought Mount Vernon the best. "No estate in United America," he assured an English correspondent, "is more pleasantly situated than this." His greatest pride in later days was to be regarded as the first farmer of the land.

Greatly concerned about the growing partisanship within the government and the detrimental impact political parties could have on the fragile unity of the nation, Washington struggled throughout his eight-year presidency to hold rival factions together. He was, and remains, the only U.S. president never to be affiliated with a political party. After that those who supported Alexander Hamilton formed the Federalist Party, while his opponents coalesced around Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson and formed the Democratic-Republican Party. Historians have record George Washington as one of the greatest presidents of America.

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

HOLI CELEBRATION BY BRAHMAN SAMAJ OF NORTH AMERICA LOS ANGELES CHAPTER:

Los Angeles Chapter of BSNA Celebrated Holi program on March 21, 2021 and was attended by around 20 members. But the program was virtually celebrated over zoom along with YouTube Live. The program started with a Welcome speech by Dr. Sukrit Mukherjee, President of the Chapter. After Virtual Lamp Lighting a video was broadcast titled "Significance of Holi" that covered all religious and social aspects of Holi. Then followed a presentation and speech by Dr. Sri Kanth Mishra on "Impact of Holi on Community – Today and Tomorrow". Holi Jokes were presented live by Mr. Durlav Trivedi for the amusement of all attendees.

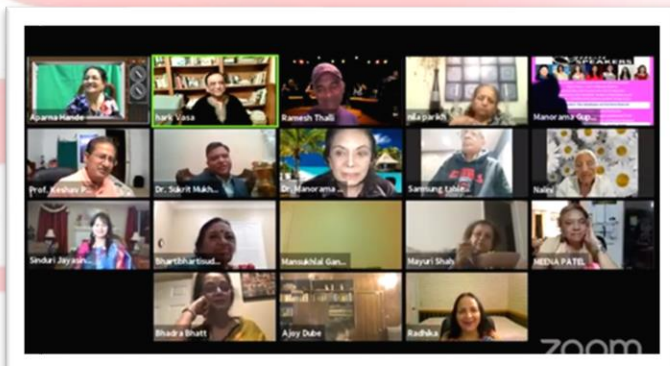


Holi Poems were read by Mrs. Rita Mishra, a long time Life Member. That followed a speech on "Color of Holi and Hindus – Present & Future" by Dr. Vinod Mishra, spouse of Rita Mishra and a long time Life Member. A Holi Song was sung by Mrs. Jayesha Mukherjee, another life member. Dr. Jayshree Vyas presented an important topic "Believe Systems". Then came the cultural program and Holi Songs by Dr. Mahesh Vyas. After the cultural program that lasted for 30 minutes or floor was open for Attendees to meet and greet each other and attendees played Virtual Holi with each other. Vote of Thanks were given by the president, Dr. Sukrit Mukherjee.

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SUMMIT WAS HELD IN LOS ANGELES:

Women's Leadership Summit was organized by Global peace Foundation on March 28, 2021 virtually over zoom video conferencing and was broadcast live over YouTube. The program was attended by around 35-40 attendees. The program kicked off with a Welcome Address by Aparna Hande. This was followed by a Digital Lamp lighting showcased by Dr Sukrit Mukherjee who also introduced the Dr. Manorama S Gupta as the Emcee for the Day.

Speakers like Shilpa Pandey, Giovanna Salas and Council Woman Mary Jendejas delivered some inspirational speeches. Dr Anandhi Narahsim presented an exceptional presentation regarding mental health. This was followed by a speech from Isabel Triedl.



Ramesh Thalli was introduced who rendered some beautiful songs along with his associates. Directors Duo for the program Dr Sukrit Mukherjee and Ramesh Ramnani were introduced. A Global peace Foundation slideshow followed. This was followed by the President's speech by Dr. Manorama S Gupta.

Dr Sinduri's speech and her Students dances were showcased. Then came the speech of by the youngest speakers Karishma Ramnani and Riya Upadhyaya on women leadership. A fashion show clipping was shown by Virgelia's Fashion Show. The program came to end at around 9:00 with a Vote of Thanks by Harkishan Vasa.

INDIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY LEADERS RECOGNIZED BY NEO HINDU FOUNDATION & EXCEL FOUNDATION USA:

Neo Hindu Foundation & Excel Foundation USA organized a virtual program to honor and award the Indian community leaders who have been serving the Indian Community at large in one way or the other. Charu Shivakumar founder of Neo Hindu Foundation and president of Excel Foundation USA in coordination with Kewal Kanda, Prof. Keshav Patel, Nila Parikh, Aparna Hande, Radhika Patel, and Rani Kuusto solicited the nominations from the community whom it thinks are worthy of recognizing. The event was moderated by Charu Shivakumar and Rachna Srivastava. A number of people locally and internationally were nominated and selected to be recognized.

Event started with prayer by Sumati Arun and invocation by Jasmin Sivakumaran followed by introductory message and explanation of award ceremony by Charu Shivakumar. She also explained the mission of and vision of Neo Hindu Foundation. Pandita Indarani Rampersad from Trinidad & Tobago and Ila Mehta explained the importance of recognizing the community leaders. The awards ceremony was divided into three main categories;

1. Antharashtriya Ekta Ke Heere (Diamonds of International Unity)
2. Bhartiya Ekta Ke Heere (Diamonds of Indian Unity)
3. Ekta Ke Ubharate Sitare (Budding Stars of Unity)

The nominated members were introduced by peers by recognizing their achievements and kind of services they render to the community. They were honored by presenting them (virtually) plaques or certificates. Dr. Thomas Abraham, former president of NFIA and currently chairman of GOPIO recognized posthumously - Inder Singh, Deepi Singh and Dilip Butani. Ashok Patnaik currently Vice President of NFIA recognized posthumously - Ravjibhai Patel and Ramesh Mahajan.

The audience was also entertained by song and dance performances. A well-attended program concluded with general discussion.

PROFILE OF GUNJAN RASTOGI- REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT OF NFIA:



Gunjan Rastogi, elected as the Regional Vice President for New York for the National Federation of Indian-American Associations (NFIA), current President of National Indo-American Association for Senior Citizens (NIAASC), Vice President of World Vegan Vision (WVV) is an entrepreneur of her home health care business in New York.

Trained as a software engineer and with a bachelor of science degree in science from India, she has worked in New York for leading firms of wall street reputation. She started her business in home health care more than a decade ago and is achieving success in managing this business.

Gunjan has a passion for the arts and is an accomplished dancer, theater actress and singer. She has won numerous awards for dance performances and choreography during her lifetime. She also ran a successful dance studio, with students of hers participating in several high-

profile performances on reputable stages. As a theater actress, she held many lead roles in plays in India and now in her spare time, she enjoys karaoke with friends.

With strong philanthropic views, Gunjan is passionate about giving back to the community and remains active in the community by serving in leadership roles with several non-profit organizations. She resides in Douglaston, New York with her husband Pradeep.

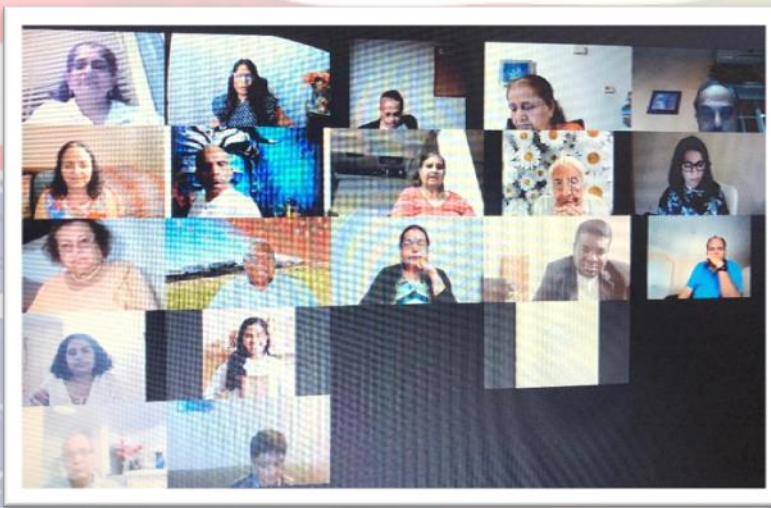
EXCEL FOUNDATION ORGANIZED AN EVENT ON EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING – LIVE HAPPY AND BE CONTENTED:

Excel Foundations USA Organized, through virtual platform, "Emotional Well-Being – Live Happy and Contented" program to explain and educate people regarding ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and alleviate the stress and fears caused by it.

Mrs. Charu Shivakumar, Mr. Kewal Kanda and Ms. Rani Kuusto offered an event which was attended by approximately 40 people. Charu Shivakumar – the president of Excel delivered the welcome address and moderated the program. The speakers were introduced.

Dr. Rangaesh Gadasalli – Psychiatrist, MD and a Research Physician Fellow at UCLA-Harbor - Psychiatry, explained why it was important to ask for help when feeling stressed to recognize & manage it. Having good family communication and setting boundaries in relationships along with a smile are assets for well-being.

Dr. Sirisha Potluri – General Physician, Expert in plant Based Diet, Health Coach, explained in detail with power point presentation about importance of plant-based diet. She explained how certain food groups help immunity and in coping with stress.



Dr. Victoria Smith – Master's in Neuropsychology- University of Northern Colorado, Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, California School of Psychology, San Diego, gave an insight on stress management by combination of life style changes and awareness of toxic environment.

Mr. Ramesh Thalli – a Software Architect, Creative Director Sargam-LA, CEO, OakBiz Solutions, Los Angeles, explained the importance of Yoga and meditation that relieves stress and promotes relaxation.

Mr. Kewal Kanda – MBA, Founder Director of Rajput Association of America and Founder

President – GOPIO-LA, explained how to cope with personal tragedy and not forget to take care of family and their own emotional and physical health after a loved one is lost.

Rani Kuusto – Registered Nurse RN, MPH, stated that she was also going through the grieving process as she had lost her mother recently. She said the definition of emotional well-being is the ability to practice stress management, getting quality sleep, and strengthening social connections.

Mrs. Charu Shivakumar – MS - Speech Pathology & Audiology, AIISH, Mysore, Master's in Organizational Leadership- Woodbury University, CA, talked about pursuing happiness and why it is important to practice gratitude, doing things one enjoys and building confidence.

Pastor Sunil Kathramalla – Founder-Director-Horizons of Hope Disability Ministry, Western Region Coordinator for Church of South India (CSI), explained why forgiveness is an act of grace and quoted Mahatma Gandhi & Jesus that violence begets violence. He emphasized respecting values and beliefs of others.

Mrs. Yatri Shukla – Professor of Mathematics-Chapman University, Creator of Signature Food Products as a Food Scientist, explained how going to retreat gives opportunity to meet new people and spend quality time to refresh and revitalizes emotional well-being.

Mega Arun – a student, explained the definition of mental health. She stated how she handles stress in a given week by using the technique of 25/5 - Work for 25 minutes take time off for 5 minutes as down time or work 6 days and take Sunday off to regroup her thoughts.

Jasmin Shivakumar – a student, explained about social & emotional well-being. She stated that emotional people who are in control have better friends, are strong minded, have bright outlook in life, and have good social connections.

Swarit Srivastava – a student stated that mindful person is aware of the present situations, focuses on surroundings. He said that to have stress sometimes is a good thing but one must learn the techniques to relieve stress using yoga and meditation techniques.

Dr. Pravin Sedani, Mrs. Mayuri Shah, Jiten Patel, and Dr. Gadasalli entertained with emotional songs. Rani Kuusto delivered the vote of thanks.

THE FESTIVAL CELEBRATED WITH DANCE AND MUSIC FOR GREATER YIELS OF CROP HAPPENS IN APRIL:



Baisakhi, also called Vaisakhi in Sanskrit, is the harvest festival of Punjab, which people across religions celebrate. Farmers get ecstatic and celebrate with music and dance. It is a holiday that coincides with arrival of Spring. This year, it falls on April 14.

The majority of Hindus celebrate the festival of Vaisakhi, the states that are involved with the celebration of the festival includes, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, and Punjab. It is a form of thanking the mother earth for the prosperous yield of crops. It is specially a happy occasion for the farmers of the country.

Baisakhi has religious significance too. On March 30, 1699, on Vaisakhi, Guru Gobind Singh established the Khalsa, the history has it that Khalsa means purity. On the day of Baisakhi, the tenth Guru, Guru Govind Singh asked people to sacrifice their life for the Guru and the Lord. As a result of that request, five people volunteered and they later came to be known as Panj Piaras.

The festival of Vaisakhi is however named differently in different parts of the country. It is called Bihu in Assam, Baisakhi in West Bengal for example. The dates of celebration however are altered in different states. Some dates fall one or two days ahead, and some fall behind. But the essence of the celebration is not slowed in any sense. Happy Vaisakhi!!

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH, PRINCE PHILIP HAS DIED AND THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS ARE REMEMBERING THIS MAN FOR HIS PLEASANT DISPOSITION:

Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh and the husband of Queen Elizabeth II has died at the age of ninety-nine. Philip, a lifelong companion of the Queen had served in the Navy and then retired and was a good consort of the queen. He was much admired by all. Speaking to media after attending a service at the chapel at Royal Lodge Windsor, the Duke of York said, "I feel very sorry and supportive of my mother who is feeling it probably more than anybody else."

The Duke of Sussex, who has arrived in the UK ahead of Saturday's funeral, described his grandfather, The Duke of Edinburgh, as a "man of service, honour and great humour". Harry, 36, who has been living in the US with his wife Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex, 39, wrote a tribute and signed off this tribute using the words: "Per Mare, Per Terram".



"He was a remarkable man, I loved him as a father. He was so calm. If you had a problem, he would think about it," Andrew said. "He was always someone you could go to." The news of Philip's death was met with an outpouring of tributes from around the world, including messages from every living US President and other world leaders. The royal family themselves are "all feeling a great sense of loss," Andrew said. "We've lost almost the grandfather of the nation."

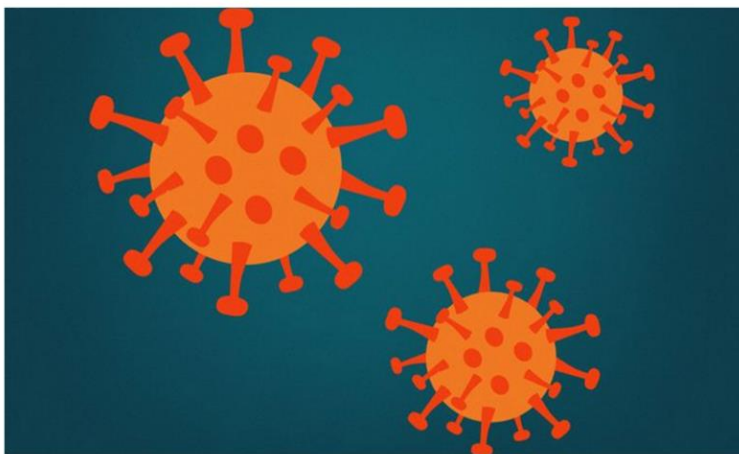
Asked how his mother is feeling, the duke replied: "The Queen as you would expect is an incredibly stoic person.

And she described his passing as a miracle. And she's contemplating. "She described it as having left a huge void in her life," he said, adding that the family is "rallying around to make sure that we're there to support her."

SEVERAL NATIONS ARE EXPERIENCING SECOND WAVE OF SPREAD OF THIS VIRUS BUT HOSPITALIZATIONS ARE DECLINING:

We have spent more than one year in self-imposed isolation and now the narrative includes the mass vaccination drive in the nation and the emphasis in on most recent status of Corona Virus cases. It is said that virus related hospitalizations, especially in the younger age group has gone up, however the overall deaths related to this virus have been going down.

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 5:02 p.m. on April 9, 2021, the tally is:



Total cases worldwide: 134,322,229 (up from 133,499,369 Thursday)

Total deaths worldwide: 2,908,190 (up from 2,893,583 Thursday)

Total cases in the United States: 3,1067,338 (up from 30,983,624 Thursday)

Total deaths in the United States: 560,946 (up from 559,849 Thursday)

Total recovered: 76,345,268 (up from 75,957,045 Thursday)

To date more than 562, 000 people in the United States have lost their lives to this highly infectious virus. Unfortunately, the rise of numbers attributed to this virus in India, in spite of vaccinations, has gone up. It is said that India is in the second wave of spread of this virus. Newspapers have reported that 100 million people are vaccinated in India but the numbers have gone up recently in many cities again and this is happening sadly after the first wave had gotten under control of the healthcare agencies.

China is in a tight spot after the country's top health official admitted efficacy rates for Chinese Covid-19 vaccines are "not high." He suggested either increasing doses or mixing with other vaccines may help to improve performance of vaccinations. People are tired of restriction on their movements. Canadians in Montreal are protesting a new curfew put into effect to curb Covid-19 numbers, while in the UK, there is a sense of relief as officials are lauding the slow rollback of restrictions as vaccinations increase.

Dr. Fauci warned that U.S. COVID-19 cases have reached a "disturbing new level." This was said in an interview with the CNN's Anderson Cooper on Wednesday of this week. Analysis from The New York Times on Friday shows that the United States has recorded more than 80,000 new infections on Thursday. Over the past week, there has been an average of 66,118 cases per day, an increase of 13 percent from the average two weeks earlier.

NFIA MEMBERS AND OFFICIALS ATTENDED HOLI PROGRAM OF IASC:

IASC has been working in Southern California for more than two decades nurturing and promoting India's rich cultural heritage for next generation. Cultural programs like Holi, Dipawali and Independence Day celebrations have been good occasion to share Hindu culture with other communities for cultural harmony.

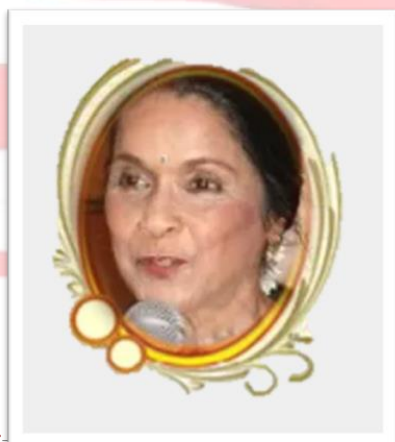
Vedic Mandir kept the tradition and celebrated festival of Holi by observing protocol of health department. Students of Dwani dance school of Hiral Joshi and talented Nithiyashree Moorthi presented various folk and Holi dances.



Singers Sabari Girish, Utara Rajamani, Rohan Ullas, and Dr. Sadani of community presented their best Holi songs. All the people in temple played Holi with colorful flower petals. NFIA president, Mr. Ajoy Dube with his executive members and past presidents and chairpersons attended the program on zoom to support their member organization IASC and Vedic Mandir.

Mandir Committee Kamini khare, Richa Sharma, Varsha Dixit and Roshan Khandpur technical director and president of IASC, Mr. Atul Makwana and pujari Anil Sharma Ji, are thankful to all NFIA devoted members who took their time to become part of Mandir's first public Holi celebration. Mandir web site www.vadicmandir.org can be accessed to know future programs of Mandir. After the program all the guest in the temple were served Holi Dinner.

REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT OF NFIA FROM PACIFIC SOUTH, KAMINI KHARE:



Kamini khare was born and raised in Hindu family in city of Kanpur India. She has a master's degree in Economics from Kanpur University of Kanpur, UP India. After many years of living in America, she started her business in insurance and financial planning in city of Orange California. She also started social and cultural organization, Indian Association of Southern, California. That is still functioning well and promoting rich cultural heritage of India.

The association has distributed blankets to refugees in Kashmiri camps. She had Radio musical Show named, Radio Mayuri on 1190 AM radio station, in city of Anaheim, CA. Kamini also ran a monthly community newspaper named, India -USA for two years. She says, community work is her passion.

Kamini wrote a story book for children, Divine Mother for Mandir's needs for the purpose of fund-raising. Kamini has great interest in politics. She says she likes to call herself "a nationalist". Right now, she says her hands are full with loads of work of new Mandir, located in the City of Lake Forest CA.

SPRING TIME HERALDS MANY PLEASANT FESTIVITIES TO CELEBRATE – NFIA BOARD MEMBERS WISH EVERYONE READING THIS HAPPY FESTIVITIES WITH FAMILY, FRIENDS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS:



Baisakhi is the Sikh New Year's Day as it is not just a Spring-time harvest festival but also a day that is commemorative of the formation of the Khalsa Panth of warriors under Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. Every year it is celebrated on 13 April and after every 36 years, on 14th April.

Cheti Chand - The festival marks the birth of Ishtadeva Uderolal, popularly known as Lord Jhulelal, the patron saint of the Sindhis. Hence it is also known as Jhulelal Jayanti as well. Sindhi community observes Cheti Chand on the Pratipada Tithi (first day) of Chaitra, Shukla Paksha (waxing phase of the Moon). Sindhi New Year begins with this festival. It is celebrated when the crescent appears after the New Moon day (Amavasya). After 40 days of Chaaliho, the followers of Jhulelal celebrate the day as 'Thanks Giving Day'.

Ugadi (Ugādi, Samvatsarādi, Yugadi) is the New Year's Day for the States of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka in India. It is festively observed in these regions on the first day of the Hindu lunisolar calendar month of Chaitra. This typically falls in April month of the Gregorian calendar.

Gudhi Padwa is a spring-time festival that marks the traditional new year for Marathi and Konkani Hindus. It is celebrated in and near Maharashtra and Goa on the first day of the Chaitra month to mark the beginning of the New year according to the lunisolar Hindu calendar. The word padava or padavo comes from the Sanskrit word pratipada which refers to the first day of a lunar fortnight.

Rama Navami is one of the Hindu festivals that is celebrated by the Indian Hindu diaspora with roots in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Ram Navami celebrates the birth of the seventh incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

Ramadan - Muslims around the world celebrate the holy month of Ramadan. Many people know that fasting is a common practice during Ramadan, but there are a number of other traditions associated with the holiday that are less well known. The community comes together, people bring food to share, even children love going to the mosque at night. It's a time of community and gathering."

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, Gunjan Rastogi, Regional Vice-President from New York; Kamini Khare, Regional Vice President from Los Angeles, and Immediate Past President of NFIA, Angela Anand. Also credited for information here are Everyday Health, John Hopkins data base, CNN, New York Times, and special acknowledgement of Getty images.
