

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF INDIAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATIONS (NFIA)



Serving the Indian American Community since 1980

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HOMAGE TO MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. – PROFILING COURAGE ON HIS BIRTHDAY:

I had heard the name of Martin Luther King and the association of King with the Indian freedom fighter, Mahatma Gandhi, who spoke about civil disobedience and rights of the socially outcasts, known Harijans, in India. Upon my arrival in this country, I understood the significance of this linkage. King Jr. was inspired by the writings of Gandhi which I also learned more deeply later. For a young person, these names were of some leaders mentioned in academics due to their uplifting socially unifying message to the society.

I learned King's famous words, "I have a dream" and the importance after reading his speech and listening on television broadcasts on his birthday. It is then I truly understood not only the name, but the importance of the message. Now, these words reverberate in my ears.



Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy.

Now it the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice.

Now it the time to lift our nation from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood.

Now is the time to make justice a reality to all of God's children.

History has recorded the importance of King's message - On August 28, 1963, some 100 years after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the slaves, a young man named Martin Luther King climbed the marble steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. to describe his vision of America. More than 200,000 people-black and white-came to listen. They came by plane, by car, by bus, by train, and by foot. They came to Washington to

demand equal rights for black people. And the dream that they heard on the steps of the Monument became the dream of a generation. His courage and determination and desire to achieve racial justice is commendable. It was the determination of King to explain to the masses the message of the American Constitution, a promise that all men are guaranteed the inalienable right of life - lived in liberty and in the pursuit of his or her happiness.

Born in 1929, Martin Luther King's actual birthday is January 15, it is now celebrated on third Monday of January every year. His birthday is celebrated throughout in all states of America. The campaign to accept this day as a federal holiday in King's honor began soon after his assassination in 1968. President Ronald Reagan signed the holiday into law in 1983, however, President Bill Clinton, on August 23, 1994, made this holiday as a federal holiday, a holiday that is set under the Uniform Monday Holiday Act. The earliest Monday for this holiday is January 15 and the latest is January 21. Martin Luther King and his legendary legacy lives on.

Angela Anand, NFIA President (2019-2020), Editor of the Newsletter

REPUBLIC DAY, JANUARY 26, ADOPTION OF CONSTITUTION OF INDIA AND YEAR 2022:



India had a glorious past but went through a period when it was ruled by the British Empire, it was fragmented, states with their own autonomy and needed to join together and get modernized as a Democratic Republic country. After gaining freedom in 1947, a draft of the constitution was developed and submitted to the Constituent Assembly, after two years the draft was finalized and now India celebrates January 26 each year the day when Constitution officially came into effect. It is a holiday in India and the country shows its strength by doing arial shows, parading its military tanks and personnel, with music, special guests and lot of fanfare. The flag is hoisted on this day by the president of India. This month is very important for India and Indians.

India now is modernizing fast. It is engaged in social, economic and technological revolution. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has often shared his vision of building a new, Aatma Nirbhar (self-reliant) India by the year 2022. This is a special year when India is celebrating 75 years of free India.

Indian media recounted some of its recent achievements. For the first time, the exports have crossed 300 billion dollars and it is supposed to reach 400 billion dollars by the end of the fiscal year. Second great news is about meeting the energy target. It had pollution and the air was not good for its citizens health but it had set its target of acquiring 40% of energy from non-fossil sources and it has achieved that already. It was reported that engineering colleges in India has all time high placements. India now is boasting of its modern rapid transit system in few cities and has constructed the world's tallest statue – statue of unity in the state of Gujarat. It has embarked upon revolutionizing the fields of healthcare and technology by adopting innovation and ingenuity of its people. It is expected that India will merge with the best of tradition with the most modern, global outlook in year 2022.

ON 125TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF SUBASH CHANDR BOSE, PM MODI TO UNVEIL NETA JI'S HOLOGRAM STATUE ON JANUARY 23, 2022:



The month of January is also going to be recorded in history when a granite statue of Neta ji will be dedicated to the freedom fighter. The statue that will be installed at India Gate may not be ready on January 23, 2022, the birth anniversary of Neta ji, so PM has announced that he will be unveiling a hologram to honor the efforts of this freedom fighter and acknowledge the indebtedness of the nation that has been owed to him for his dedication to India and its freedom struggle.

"At a time when the entire nation is marking the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, I am glad to share that his grand statue, made of granite, will be installed at India Gate. This would be a symbol of India's indebtedness to him," said Prime Minister Modi.

NFIA sends greetings to everyone and rejoices in honoring Neta ji for his personal sacrifices to do inside and outside India for its freedom. Let us pay respect to this patriot and credit him for working so hard for India on his birthday.

FOR THE YEAR 2022, AN OATH CEREMONY OF NFIA OFFICERS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND BOARD MEMBERS WAS CONDUCTED ON DECEMBER 3, 2021:

Following members attended the oath ceremony which was presented by former NFIA President Subash Razdan, managed technically by Sukrit Mukherjee, and attended by Immediate Past President, Angela Anand and former NFIA President Lal Motwani. The oath was administered by Dr. Thomas Abraham, former NFIA President and present Chairman of GOPIO International.

Lavanya Reddy, President, Raj Razdan EVP, Aparna Hande Membership VP, Satish Parikh VP, Fund Raising, Subbarao Makkam, Public Relations and Communication, Ashok Patnaik, Secretary, Prashanthi Harathi, Joint Secretary, Om Sharma, Treasurer, Harihar Singh, Executive Director Admin, Babu. k. Patel, Chair of NFIA Foundation, Ajoy Dube, Immediate Past President.

Directors At Large: Geeta Sunkara, Gope Gidwani, Jiten Patel, Kamalesh Munshi, Sukrit Mukherjee, Sudip Gorakhakar, and Vamshi Reddy Akuntala.

Regional Vice presidents: Anna Prakash, Chandrasen Sriramoju, Gunjan Rastogi, Lalitha Kaul Satish Ghbharwala, Shashi Sidhaya, and Vasu Power.

Each month, with the help of NFIA newsletter, members of the board will be profiled, so look for their profiles and get to know them more closely through their activities and commitment to NFIA.



Lavanya Reddy, president, is proud to be born in Sacred land of India. She lived in Andhra Pradesh prior to coming to US. She is married to Dr Raghavan Reddy of Bangaluru. Blessed with two kids Rama and Mayuri and one grandchild Rumi Reddy. She is a Montessori Teacher by profession, likes kids. Worked in the same field 42 years in MN, NY, Tx, and 30 years in Seattle. She has Owned her own Montessori school for the last 20 years.

She served many nonprofits organizations for 41 years in the United States. She is founder of Washington Helping Hands, Sitharaman Cultural And Educational Foundation, Founding President of FIAWA and board member of

Women Of Wisdom, NW Share and Ambassadors of Peace. Her hobbies are cooking, travelling, having fun and appreciates all forms of art.

She says her goals include: Fund raising, increasing membership, increase NFIA profile in politics, trade, and education. She wants to encourage all board members to do their best.



Babu K Patel, Chair of Foundation is a prominent member of the Indian Community, residing in the Metro Chicago area. He is a recipient of an award from President Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma serving community since 1965. He is past president and a Lifetime Trustee of FIA Chicago and active in Politics. He actively participates for noble and Charity causes and helps Community members in need of help.

One of the founding and active members of the NFIA, who is also a current NFIA foundation chair for the year 2022. He is a member of 30 plus religious, political and not for profit community Associations in US and India. He has presided over and helped many charitable institutions/ organizations. Recipient of prestigious awards from The Governor of State of Illinois Governor, The Mayor Chicago of the City of Chicago and many other suburbs.



Raj Razdan, Executive Vice President, has a dedicated record of civic-social and professional accomplishments and recognition. From helping disadvantaged women in India to organizing the first multicultural parade for the Indian American community at Fulton County Stadium, Razdan has prioritized seniors and Indian culture in the States.

Alongside her volunteer work, she worked with Emory University to do scientific research. Her paper on SARS/Corona which she co-authored in 2005 was cross-referred by 1500 scientists across the globe during the current Covid/Corona pandemic.

Her goals for the NFIA for 2022, are to help NFIA and its leadership to succeed in its mission to serve the Indian American community and to enhance the Indo-US ties. Long term goal is to continue to serve humanity selflessly with focus on Seniors.



Satish N. Parikh, Vice President of Finance/Fund Raising, is a Consulting Electrical Engineer/Task Order manager for Amentum. Besides his academic training in engineering, BSEE, PE he is also active in community. He is a resident of Cleveland, Ohio since 1979. He is past president of FICA of NE Ohio. He had served as convention chair of the NFIA convention held in 2005 in Cleveland, Ohio. He is a family man, married to Pragna, and enjoys spending time with his wife, children and grandchildren.

His goals for 2022, serving as vice president are: To support NFIA goals, support efforts for fund raising and finally, to work as a team player and support goals established by the NFIA President.



Aparna Hande, RN, MSHCA, is VP and Chair of Membership committee of NFIA in 2022. She was the president of FIA SC in 2012 and also, Woman of the year in 2012, 56 Th district, CA. She co-chaired Health and Wellness Council –GOPIO (International).

It was a proud moment for me when I walked to receive the California 56th Assembly District woman of the year award for community services in 2012. I also received many awards for social services. I was Captain in Indian Military Nursing Service, Midwife in (Zambia) 1971 to 1974, and leadership role in the USA from 1974-2016. I have been working with Domestic Violence Groups at SAHARA, Artesia, CA. I sheltered Domestic Violence Victims in my house for their safety. I was the

keynote speaker for Chino Hills BAPS hosted the Women's Conference with the theme of moving Forward' in 2015. She says her goal is to participate actively to help achieve NFIA organization's mission vision and goals and also to increase membership. She says she plans to get actively involved in organization activities.

Makam Subbarao, Ph. D., Vice President, has worked both in academic and private organizations and is currently operating his own business. He has served for six years on Laguna Niguel City Committee/Commissions. He is Associated with Laguna Niguel Chamber of Commerce and as a chairman has organized Laguna Niguel Chamber of Commerce Pancake (& 5K) event, where 1500 or so people attended. The event was flawless, successful and made money. He has been on HOA board for more than 25 years.



He has served Telugu Association of Southern California as Secretary and President, as Treasurer & President for FIA Southern California and now serving NFIA. He is responsible for public relations for NFIA. For NFIA, he had served two terms as treasurer and he is now part of the NFIA team 2022 as Vice President.

He intends to help NFIA in getting the NFIA message out to the public by providing good public relations service. He is committed to serving and fulfilling his assigned tasks efficiently.

LOS ANGELES INDO-AMERICAN COMMUNITY CELEBRATED REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA - PART OF "AZADI KA AMRIT MAHOTSAV":

The Indian American community in southern California planned and executed a grand celebration of "Vibrant India" on 22nd Jan 2022 to celebrate the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav/72nd Republic Day of India in Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, Cerritos, CA. The event focused on "Vibrant India" providing the audience with information on achievements of India, primarily uniting the community and providing them with wonderful information on India's past, present developments, and future.



The Chief Guest and Keynote Speaker for this celebration was Honorable Consulate General of India, Ambassador Dr. T.V. Nagendra Prasad. The other Guests of Honor were Harry Sidhu (Mayor of Anaheim), Captain Minh Dim (Police Chief of Cerritos), Avadhesh Agarwal (Entrepreneur and Philanthropist) and a few other notable community stalwarts.

The program started with traditional Lamp Lighting by dignitaries, and India@75 committee team. Kewal Kanda – Chairman of India@75 committee, thanked the team for working hard and dignitaries for their presence. He expressed gratitude to Consul General of India Ambassador Dr. TV Nagendra Prasad for gracing the occasion with his presence and introduced him to the audience.

Honorable consulate general of India Dr. T.V. Nagendra Prasad expressed his gratitude to be part of this celebration and congratulated India on its stellar growth and progress. He thanked the team for planning and celebrating four events as Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, an initiative started by our Honorable Prime Minister Narendra Modi 75 weeks of celebration for 75 years of India's Independence. Guests of honor Mr. Harry Sidhu and Capt. Minh Dinh also spoke highly of Indian diaspora for their contributions to the growth of USA.

The team put together an amazing slide show with narration to showcase India's infrastructure advancement to boost economic growth. The construction of expressways, bridges, tunnels to boost the expansive growth of the transportation sector. The longest Delhi-Bombay 8 lane expressway is a perfect example in this sector. India strives to be Energy independent by innovating waste to energy plants, solar and renewable energy initiatives.

There was Unity March by the youth, and an excellent presentation by the youth regarding why India is the next superpower including Artificial Intelligence, Education, and renewable sources of energy. There were also

several performances representing all the states of India, representing "Vibrant India", showcasing the food, festivals, their rich biodiversity, the flora, and the fauna.



The India@75 committee had planned four events to celebrate 75 years of India's Independence as Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. This was the second leg of celebration. The four planned (or completed) events are; Independence Day celebration completed on August 14th, 2021. Theme was "Modern India", Republic Day celebration completed on 22nd Jan 2022 focusing on "Vibrant India", Baisakhi celebration in April 2022, the theme is "The Raiders of the lost ARK, Our triumph over evil". The finale will be India's 75th anniversary of Independence on August 6th, 2022: The theme will be "India the next superpower".

Secretary Rani Kuusto and Jt. Secretary Hark Vasa of India@75 team, delivered the Vote of Thanks. They thanked all our sponsors including the Platinum sponsors Avadhesh & Uma Agarwal, and Ashok & Manju Madan. The Diamond sponsor Harkishan & Kusum Vasa. They also thanked the Gold sponsors, Arvind and Jayshree Mehta, Desai diversified investments, Lata Ahir of West Shore Reality, and State Bank of India (California) as well as Silver and Bronze sponsors.

MY DREAM ENTERTAINMENT CROWNED CONTESTANTS AND HONORED SEVERAL LEADERS FROM THE COMMUNITY:

My Dream Entertainment, a New Jersey based entertainment company successfully organized Miss Bharat USA 2021 Beauty Pageant along with Miss- Teen- Mrs. - Mr. - Grand mom – several international categories titles at Event Center, Sterling, VA, on December 12, 2021. Participants came from all across the United States of America. Among several who were invited as honored guests and were honored with commemorations of well-crafted beautiful red and gold wooden plaques for their leaderships included Ms. Angela Anand.



In this beauty pageant, famous Movie Director Harish Shankar, Tollywood Actor Mannara Chopra, Bollywood Actor Aryan Vaid were the invitee celebrities' special guests for Crowning of the winners of various titles. Elected officials included Senator Jennifer Boysko, Delegate Irene shin, Delegate Suhas Subramanyum, VA State Census Commissioner Sreedhar Nagireddi who attended this mega show styled red carpet event. The show was directed by Amrita Maitra from Bollywood.

This was not just a Beauty pageant, it was also women Empowerment event said Rashmi Bedi, the CEO of the My Dream Entertainment Company. The primary goal of this pageant was to bring light to all contestants, their talents, and be judged fairly. Crowned winners included: Miss Bharat USA 2021, Winner - Amrutha Kannoju, Mrs. Winner - Meenal Manikandan, Teen winner - Sneha Gupta, Miss Bharat Elite USA 2021, Winner - Manasa Kandadi & Shefali Subir, Mrs. & Mr. Bharat USA 2021, Winner - Rani & Sam Singh, Mrs. Bharat Elite Winner USA 2021, Winner - Divya Mowar, Mrs. & Mr. Bharat Elite USA 2021, Winner -Divya & Ashish, Miss Bharat International USA 2021, Winner - Sabrina Wasim, Mr. Bharat International USA 2021, winner – Dante. (Courtesy of TV Asia – SS Mancu – Rashmi and Janak Bedi of MyDream Entertainment)

ON JANUARY 26, 2022, CELEBRATE VIRTUALLY 73TH REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA:



Please join the Indian Embassy virtually to celebrate the 73rd Republic Day of India on Jan 26, 2022 from 1030 (EDT) onwards.

The event will be live on Embassy's social media handles - #RepublicDay2022 #AzadiKaAmritMahotsav

Happy Republic Day of India to everyone from NFIA.

LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY CELEBRATED 50TH VICTORY ANNIVERSARY OF WAR BETWEEN INDIA & PAKISTAN:

Southern California Community leaders got together in Tandoor, Cuisine of India, in City of Orange, CA to celebrate 50th anniversary of victory of 1971 war between India and Pakistan when Indian Army liberated Bangladesh what used to be called East Pakistan until then. When Pakistani Army of approximately 93,000 soldiers surrendered to Indian Army, it was the biggest ever surrender in the world.



So-Cal community leaders paid special tribute to Sam Manekshaw, who was General of Indian Army under whose command the Indian soldiers fought and won the war and carved Bangladesh out of Pakistani controlled East Pakistan.

All army friends living in So-Cal area were invited to be recognized and to share their memories with the local community. Major Gurjit Singh (who joined Indian Army in 1974 in Corps of Engineers and served 21 years), Colonel Navan Krishnan (a great hockey player and civil engineer commissioned Corps of Engineers, had various stints in different positions),

and Captain Aparna Hande (who served in Indian Army from 1965-1971 at Rajouri Border in Kashmir) were on hand to tell the stories of their experiences during their time in the Indian Army. Major Gurjit Singh told the story how, Indira Gandhi, then Prime Minister of India, was badly treated by Richard Nixon, then president of USA, when she came to meet him and ask for help to solve the Bangladeshis crossing over to India to escape the atrocities committed on them by Pakistani Army.

She was made to wait 15 minutes outside Nixon's office before she was asked to come inside his office. Indira Gandhi went inside and refused to talk to Nixon, said good-bye and left with solid determination in her mind to solve the problem on her own. Capt. RD Singh founder director of GIVE could not make it to the celebration. All three Army veterans were recognized and given bouquets to honor them. Other members who had some recollection of 1971 war also spoke out of their memories and what experience they had during 1971 war. A tribute was also paid to General Bipin Rawat who was recently killed in a Helicopter crash. The celebration ended with a sumptuous dinner.

IN MEMORIUM – KATHAK GURU DIES AT THE AGE OF 83:



Pandit Birju Maharaj, the legendary Kathak style dance guru, died earlier this month at the age of 83. It is often said that he could play (dance) a woman better than a woman. He was known not only for his ethereal footwork but also for abhinaya – shringar. It was quoted recently in a tribute to him that Birju Maharaj had said, that stage spotlights were only for external things to create an atmosphere. He explained further how he would create atmosphere with his artform, "If I was performing in the winter and the piece was set in the summer, the audience had to feel the hot and dry summer winds...such needs to be the power of expression". To the Kathak dance followers, his death is a great loss but his legacy lives on through all the performances he gave during his life time and now his students will continue to do so. May God give rest to his 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. NFIA President and Officers of the Board and Kewal Kanda, GOPIO, and Past President NFIA, Angela Anand. Also credited for photos are Dr. Sukrit Mukherjee, NFIA Director, the Indian Embassy, TV Asia representative – SSMancu and MyDream Entertainment and Wikipedia.

