



# THE DIASPORA BI-WEEKLY



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Federation of Indian Associations NY-NJ-CT. 501(C)3. The Largest Non-Profit Grassroot Umbrella Organization in the Tri-state of NY-NJ-CT



## Hariprasad Swamiji leaves for his heavenly abode

The spiritual leader, known for his compassion and wisdom, had founded the Sokhda Swaminarayan sect. He was cremated in Sokhda on Sunday

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## Young @75

India will celebrate 75th Independence Day on Aug 15; join FIA, in person or virtually, for flag-hoisting at Times Square & Rhode Island State House

August 15 is probably the most important day in the history of India as we know it today. On this day 74 years ago the country, ravaged from numerous invasions and subsequent years of slavery, finally became free. That freedom was hard-earned... hard because it emerged from a grave of countless lives, dignity and self-respect... hard because it was raised from that grave after immeasurable sacrifices.

Independence Day speeches have been replete with mentions of the struggle and glorious sacrifices, big and small, of commoners and leaders alike which paved the way for the Tricolor to unfurl and usher in a new era for India on August 15, 1947.

India has come a long way in these 74 years. The colonial past behind it, the country has grown. Yes, there have been hurdles, but none so big as to stymie that growth.

On March 12 this year, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi kicked off the 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' (year-long celebrations) by flagging off a commemorative Dandi March from Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad.

America is home to a few million Indians, many of whom were born and raised here. The

Indian-American community is among the largest non-indigenous groups in the US. We may identify ourselves as we choose—as Indians in America, as Indian-Americans or as Americans with India roots/ancestry. But together, we represent the community that has been nurtured by two of the world's largest democracies.

Not everyone might be able to attend the flag-hoisting or stand for the national anthem, but as Indians what we can do is take out some time from our busy schedule and spare a thought for the motherland, for the journey it has made over the years and for people who have been the driving forces behind its success...

The Federation of Indian Associations in the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut as well as New England will celebrate the day in a big way. (More details inside!) The events at both places will be live-streamed on Facebook (Times Square) and on Zoom (Rhode Island State House).



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## 75<sup>TH</sup> INDEPENDENCE DAY OF INDIA SUNDAY, AUGUST 15<sup>TH</sup>, 2021

FEDERATION OF INDIAN ASSOCIATIONS (FIA)



**1**  
FLAG HOISTING AT  
TIMES SQUARE  
9:30 AM EST  
FREE EVENT



**2**  
TRICOLOR  
ON THE CROWN OF  
EMPIRE STATE BUILDING



**1<sup>ST</sup> INDIA DAY  
BILLBOARD AT  
TIMES SQUARE  
FOR 24 HOURS**



**3**  
GALA ON THE HUDSON  
6 PM TO 10 PM EST

**19+**  
COMMUNITY  
ORGANIZATIONS

**56+**  
MEDIA  
COVERAGE

**5 MILLION+**  
SOCIAL MEDIA  
OUTREACH



Celebrity  
TBA

This Independence Day,  
join us to honor Abhimanyu Mishra



**ABHIMANYU MISHRA**

Youngest Grand Master in Chess History

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## 75<sup>TH</sup> INDEPENDENCE DAY OF INDIA

Federation of Indian Associations New England & Indo-American Community invite you to



### Flag Hoisting At Rhode Island State House & Dome tricolor lighting



Sunday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

August 14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

8:00pm - 05:00am  
Dome Tricolor Lighting  
& Musical Band Performance

August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

8:30am - 9:00am  
Meet and  
Greet

9:00am - 9:15am  
Flag Hoisting  
National Anthem

9:15am - 12:30pm  
Music  
Concert

For more information:

[president@fianewengland.org](mailto:president@fianewengland.org) | [www.fianewengland.org](http://www.fianewengland.org) | (573) 821-1785

#### Partner Organizations



#### Media Partners



# Tricolor to unfurl at Times Square...

Crown of Empire State Building to be lit up in colours of Indian National Flag in the evening of August 15

## #New Jersey

This August 15, the Federation of Indian Associations of the tri-state region of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut will hoist the Indian Tricolor at the Times Square in New York. This is only the second time that the Tricolor will be unfurled at the Times Square, with FIA being the first to do so last year.

The flag-hoisting will take place at Times Square at 10 am on Sunday, in presence of the Consul General of India-New York and other celebrities, dignitaries and guests. On the occasion, FIA will also felicitate Abhimanyu Mishra from New Jersey who became the youngest Chess Grandmaster in June this year. FIA has also arranged buses from New Jersey to Times Square for interested persons.

This year, FIA has rented the tallest billboard at the Times Square where photos and videos related to India will be displayed for a full 24 hours.

In the evening, the crown of the Empire State Building will be lit up in the colors of the Indian National Flag. The FIA's annual gala, which coincides with its Independence Day celebrations, will be held in the evening.

Confirming the details, FIA Chairman Ankur Vaidya invited the Indian community to be part of the celebrations. All the events will be streamed live on Facebook.



**Write and win**

Hello, young friends!

Here's your chance to see yourself in the **DIASPORA BI-WEEKLY's** souvenir edition to commemorate India's Independence Day and win prizes.

Write an essay on **'Proud to be an Indian'** in not more than 300 words, with details of your name, age, school and city. Attach a high-resolution photograph of yours and mail it to us at [editor@fianyjnct.org](mailto:editor@fianyjnct.org)

Last date to send entries: August 10  
Age limit: 15

Prize on offer : **\$100** vouchers for three best entries.

The essays will be published in the next issue of DB

# ...and at Rhode Island State House

FIA-New England chapter will have 2-day celebrations, including flag-hoisting and cultural programs; Rhode Island State House will be lit up in colors of the Indian Flag in the evening of Aug 14

## #Rhode Island

The celebration is set to get bigger this year! Now that Federation of Indian Association (FIA) has launched its New England chapter, the newest members of the association, too, will be part of the Independence Day festivities. And what better occasion than the 75th I-Day?

The FIA-NE and the Indo-American Community, along with other partner organizations of New England, has organized a two-day celebration to commemorate the day. A gala event has been organized on August 14 and 15 at Rhode Island State House.

The Rhode Island State House Building 'Capitol Hill' will be lit up in colors of the Indian National Flag at around 8:30 pm EST on Saturday until 5 am on August 15.

On Sunday, August 15, the event will officially commence at 8:30 am. Rhode Island Governor Daniel McKee, the chief invitee, will hoist the Indian and American national flags. There will be a formal meet-and-greet of the

guests and the dignitaries.

On this occasion, FIA will felicitate senior citizens and young volunteers who have made significant contributions through their community service.



## Art and culture of India to be showcased

A cultural program has been arranged for the guests at the event, where the art and culture of India will be showcased, besides a music concert and other events.

The events will be live-streamed via zoom to allow nearly 2.5 million people in New England take part in the Independence Day celebrations.

India Association of Rhode Island, World Hindu Council of America, New England, Team AID, New England, Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh USA, New England, Overseas Friends of BJP, New England, Rhode Island Tamil Sangam, Rajput Association of North America, Boston, Gujarati Association of New England, Patidar Samaj of New England, Samarthanam-USA, New England, SEWA International-USA, New England, World NRI Association, New England, Bihar-Jharkhand Association of New England, Tamil Nadu Foundation, New England have come together to support the celebration.

**Nisha Sinha**

# Founder of Sokhda Swaminarayan sect Hariprasad Swamiji no more

The spiritual leader left for his heavenly abode last week; He was cremated in Sokhda on Sunday

## #Sokhda

**H**ariprasad Swamiji Maharaj, the founder of Haridham Sokhda sect, left for his heavenly abode on July 26. The spiritual leader was undergoing treatment for a kidney ailment at a private hospital in Vadodara, Gujarat, when he passed away, triggering an outpouring of grief among his followers and non-followers alike in India and elsewhere.

His mortal remains were kept at the Swaminarayan Temple premises in Sokhda for four days for his followers and devotees to pay their homage. Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani and Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel were among the scores of political leaders who visited Sokhda to pay tributes to the departed soul and lauded his work and immense contribution to society.

"Swamiji had spent his life in the service of society, and his contribution in the fields of de-addiction and education will be remembered forever," Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani said while condoling the spiritual



leader's passing away.

Mortal remains of the Founder President of Yogi Divine Society were consigned to the flames at Sokhda on Sunday, August 1, amid chanting of Vedic hymns in the presence of thousands of devotees and saints. The cremation rituals started from early morning as a large number of devotees from Gujarat and elsewhere gathered for his antim darshan. Sacred water from Ganga, Yamuna, Narmada, Tapi and other rivers was used in the rituals of Late Hariprasad Swami, who spent 65 years as a monk.



Described as a man of profound compassion, wisdom, and true spirituality, Hariprasad Swami devoted his life to the welfare and spiritual health of all people, especially for youth development and education. His work as the Founder President of Yogi Divine Society is widely acknowledged for its array of social services, medical services, and relief services during natural disasters.

## In awe of you: Andy Kim to Indian-American doctors

The Congressman was speaking on the occasion of fifth anniversary of the Siddhivinayak Temple at Toms River in New Jersey last week

### #New Jersey

**C**ongressman Andy Kim was all praise for the Indian-American doctors for their tireless work on the frontline when Covid-19 was ravaging the country. Kim was at the Siddhivinayak Temple at Toms River in New Jersey last week on the fifth anniversary



Congressman Andy Kim and CGI-NY Randhir Jaiswal at Siddhivinayak temple

of the temple.

"I have been unbelievably in awe of your service, especially when it came to the Covid crisis. Whether it is providing vaccines or administering them, you were unbelievable," said Kim. There are about 80,000 doctors of Indian origin who practise in the US.

Kim thanked the community for allowing him to be a part of the occasion. Several children recited Sanskrit hymns, led by Dr Geeta Gupta. Consulate General of India, New York, Randhir Jaiswal, who was also present on the occasion, praised Kim for being actively engaged in providing help to India when the second wave of the pandemic hit India.

BJANA President Avinash Gupta thanked Kim and Jaiswal for visiting the temple.

## Saavan ka mahina: Devotion in the air

**T**he holy month of Shravan, or Saavan, is here. For many parts of North India, the month starts earlier. This time, it began on July 25. For others, the first day of Shravan will be August 9.

Devotees throng Shiva temples every Monday and make offerings to the lord. Each day of Shravan has some religious significance associated with it. Festivals like Janmashtami and Rakhabandhan fall during Shravan.

Throughout the month, Vaishnav temples arrange for a variety of 'Manorath Darshan'. In the tri-state area, prominent Vaishnav temples are Govardhanathji in New York; Dwarkadhish in Parlin, New Jersey; Vraj in Pennsylvania; Sanatan mandir Parsippany and others, as well as Swaminarayan temples, celebrate the month. The Jain community's most auspicious, religious and spiritual celebration—Paryushan Parva—is an eight-day long celebration which falls around the fag end of Shravan. **Chandrakant Trivedi**

## India at Tokyo Olympics

# A few hits, a few misses

### #Tokyo

The Tokyo Olympics has been a mixed bag for the Indian contingent. There have been a few wins and a few more losses. But even in those misses, there was a reason

to cheer. So far, the country has two medals to its name—a silver and a bronze—with another assured medal. The country's hopes of more medals are alive, with important matches coming up this week.

## Mirabai Chanu wins first Tokyo Olympic medal



Weightlifter Mirabai Chanu bagged a silver medal in the women's 49-kg category. Back home, her family and neighbours erupted in celebration after spending anxious moments huddled in a room and watching the telecast. She won the medal on the day after the opening of the Olympics season. China's Zhihu Hou won the gold medal.

## Lovlina Borgohain bags a bronze in boxing

Not very well known until now, boxer Lovlina Borgohain has become a household name after she reached the semi-finals of Women's Welter (64-69kg) category. However, she lost to reigning world champion Busenaz Surmeneli. While she was assured of a bronze medal after her entry into the semi-finals, Lovlina and her fans were hopeful that she would get a medal of a different colour. She is only the second Indian



woman boxer after Mary Kom to win an Olympic medal, and the third overall.

## Women's hockey team in semis for the 1<sup>st</sup> time



The women's hockey team reached the semi-finals after defeating Australia 1-0 in quarter-finals on Monday morning to march ahead.

This is for the first time that the Indian women's team made it to the Olympics hockey semi-finals. They will play against Argentina in the semi-finals.

## Men's hockey team to play for bronze medal

It was a historic moment for the men's hockey team when they reached the semi-finals. After 1980 when the Indian team won the gold in the Mexico Olympics, India hasn't gone very far in the game.

The team lost to Belgium which won the semi-final match 5-2 and will now head to the finals. So far, Belgian hockey team has remained unbeaten.



Meanwhile, India still stands a chance at bronze. They will play against Germany

Weightlifter Mirabai Chanu picked a silver—India's first medal at Tokyo Olympics; PV Sindhu bagged bronze in women's singles badminton; Lovlina Borgohain settles for bronze in boxing

## PV Sindhu returns with bronze

When ace shuttler PV Sindhu reached the semi-finals after defeating Japan's Akane Yamaguchi in the quarter-finals, everyone was sure she would go farther. Unfortunately, the hopes crashed when Sindhu lost to Tai Tzu-Ying of Chinese Taipei in straight sets despite putting her best foot forward.

Putting aside her disappointment, Sindhu faced China's He Bing Jao in the play-off for the bronze. She defeated Bing Jao 21-13, 21-15 to win the bronze, thus giving India its second medal.

## Major heartbreak for Mary Kom

The six-time world boxing champion lost to Colombian Ingrid Valencia via a 3-2 split decision in favour of her opponent. The loss left the star Indian boxer shell-shocked, as she had won the last two rounds. In fact, Mary Kom later said that she was not aware that she had lost the match and got to know about it through social media. She could not believe that she had lost.

This was the last time that the 2012 London Olympics bronze medallist and mother-of-four was competing in the Olympics because of the age limit. The maximum permissible age is 40 and Mary Kom will be 41 by the 2024 Olympics.



■ Music composer Anu Malik back in news

# In eye of plagiarism storm

He was trending on Twitter for allegedly copying Israel nat'l anthem for his song 'Mera mulk mera desh'

#Mumbai

Controversy is not new to music composer Anu Malik, nor are allegations of plagiarism. But, this time, he was accused of "not sparing even the Israeli national anthem".

It all started after Israeli gymnast Artem Dolgopyat won his first Olympic medal in artistic gymnastics. As per ritual, when the Israeli flag was raised, its anthem 'Hatikvah' was played. However, the tune seemed to remind Indians of the song 'Mera mulk, mera desh' from the film 'Diljale'. The song was composed by Anu Malik.

Soon enough, he was trending on Twitter, with memes and jokes erupting on the micro-blogging site.

Diljale, a 1996 film, had Ajay Degrn, Madhoo and Sonali Bendre in the lead roles. The film had eight tracks and the music went

on to become a huge hit. The song 'Mera mulk' appears multiple times in the film.

"Anu Malik just simply didn't copy Israel national anthem in 1996 film diljale song. It needs years or reaserch (sic) and analysis to find out which country isn't going to win medals for years. Visionary man," read one tweet.

Another said, "Anu malik heard the Israel national anthem years before all of us losers. Give him some credit".

**In the past**

This is not the first time that Anu Malik has been accused of plagiarism. Other popular songs whose music had been composed by him include "dil mera churaya kyu" and "raja ko rani se pyar" from Akele Hum, Akele Tum; "aaja maahiya" from Fiza; "Neend churayi meri kisne" from Ishq



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## Organ transplant jokes are tasteless: Selenators

Singer Selena Gomez's fans angered at joke on her kidney transplant

Fans of American singer Selena Gomez are venting out their ire at the show 'The Good Fight' for a joke about her kidney transplant in one of the episodes.

The said episode, showing a conversation on comedy content, has one of the characters ask if there are any topics that are off limits, another responds saying "Selena Gomez's kidney transplnat".



That scene has not gone down well with her fans who took to social media to lash out at the makers of the show.

The topic #RespectSelenaGomez was trending on Twitter. "When will people stop doing this", asked one follower. "using selena's transplant, or someone else's transplants/past struggles, for that matter, for entertainment purposes has always and will always be completely tasteless and utterly disgusting. respect selena gomez & every single organ donor and recipient. it's 2021- grow up," tweeted another fan.

"I am not sure how writing jokes about organ transplants for television shows has become a thing but sadly it has apparently. I hope in the next writer's room when one of these tasteless jokes are presented it's called out immediately and doesn't make it on air," Selena tweeted.

Expressing gratitude to her fans, Gomez said in another tweet, "My fans always have my back. LOVE YOU..."

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