

# THE DIASPORA



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**BI-WEEKLY**

Issue. 43

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

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**FIA SHIPS 3RD  
CONSIGNMENT  
OF COVID CARGO  
TO INDIA**



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**DANDI: A  
STATEMENT  
BEYOND  
IMAGINATION**



# INDIA IN US STANDING TALL

The excitement was palpable. For, people who had gathered at the Times Square on Sunday morning knew they were going to be part of a historic moment when Consul General of India Shri Randhir Jaiswal unfurled the biggest Tricolor at the world-famous destination to celebrate the 75th Independence Day of India. This is the second consecutive year that the Federation of Indian Associations has organized flag-hoisting at the venue

Paresh Gandhi





# MESSAGE FROM NATIONAL PRESIDENT, BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY **SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA**

Namaste to everybody.

I take this opportunity in wishing you and your loved ones a very happy Independence Day of India. I thank the Federation of India Associations NY-NJ-CT for inviting me to the Indian Independence Day celebrations. I also congratulate the Federation of Indian Associations for being awarded the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman for the 50 years of commendable service to the Indian community in USA.

The way Indian diaspora in USA has shown their enthusiasm while offering grand reception to Prime Minister Modi Ji reflects your deep love and affection for India and her towering leader. Indo US relationships have become increasingly multifaceted. I'm certain that under the visionary leaderships of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji and the U. S President Joe Biden, this relationship will prosper towards a brighter future.

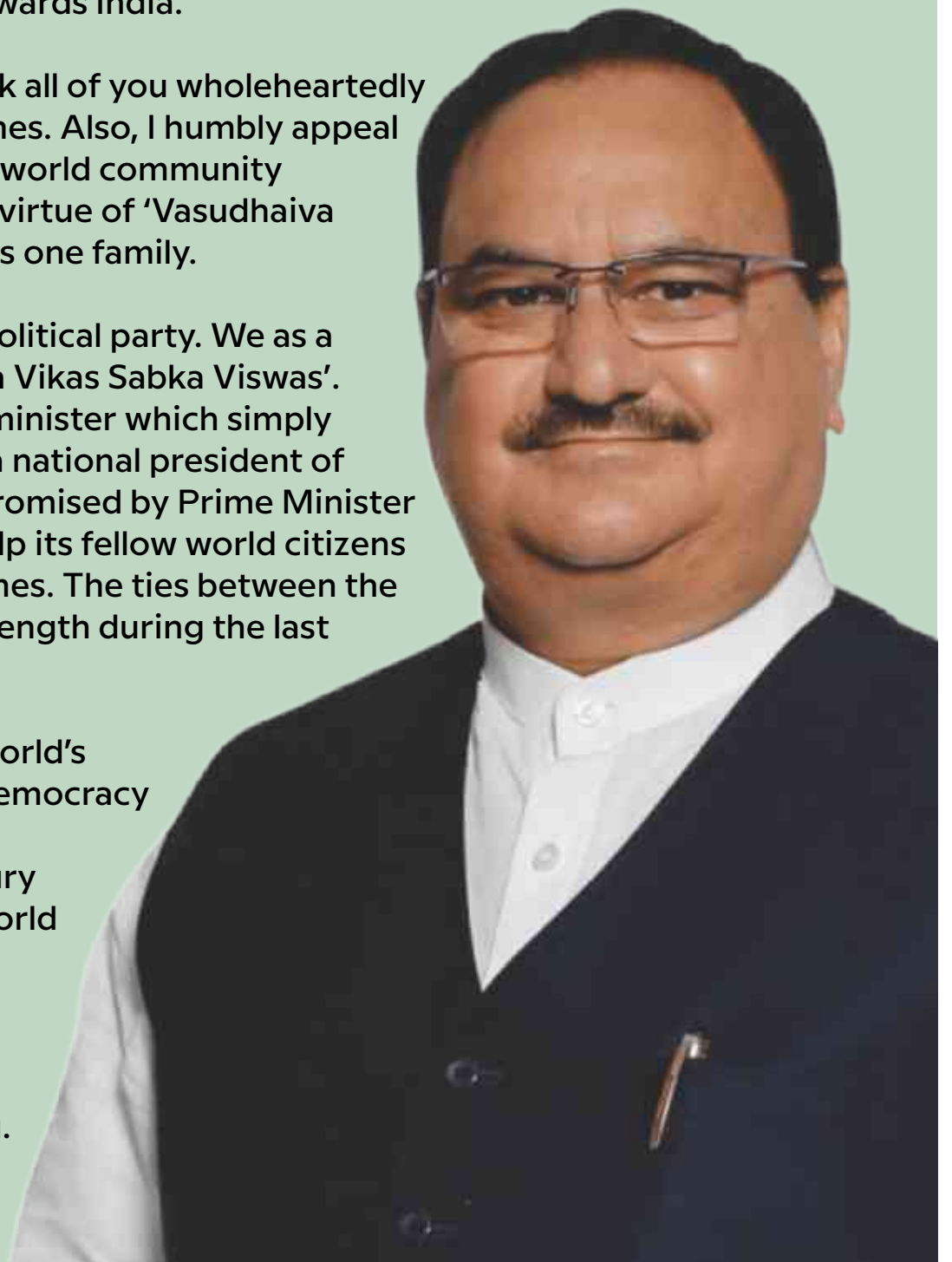
From Contributing to the economy to gaining influence in the different sectors of the U. S society, Indian diaspora has always been instrumental in strengthening of the bilateral ties. The generous assistance provided by Indian diaspora to India during the second wave of Covid pandemic reflects the love and devotion towards India.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you wholeheartedly for the helping India during these tough times. Also, I humbly appeal to you to keep working for the good of the world community and the mankind taking forward the Indian virtue of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' which means that the world is one family.

Bhartiya Janta party is the world's largest political party. We as a political party believe in 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas Sabka Viswas'. This is the slogan given by our Hon. prime minister which simply means taking over everyone together. I as a national president of Bhartiya Janta party reassure you that as promised by Prime Minister Shri Modi ji, India will always be ready to help its fellow world citizens in every possible way during this testing times. The ties between the two nations have gone from strength to strength during the last seven years.

I firmly believe that the confluence of the world's oldest democracy and the world's largest democracy has the potential to emerge as the most consequential partnership of the 21st century and the work for the greater good of the world community.

I once again wish all of you a very happy independence day and praying for a safe, healthy and prosperous future for all of you. Namaste to all of you.



# MUCH DONE, MORE TO LOOK FORWARD TO

A very happy Independence Day, my dear fellow countrymen.

India is launching a year-long celebration from August 2021 to mark the 75 years of independence. We are proud of every Indian who has contributed to the progress of the country. I would also like to salute the visionary leaders of modern India because of whom India is a thriving multicultural country respected across the world.

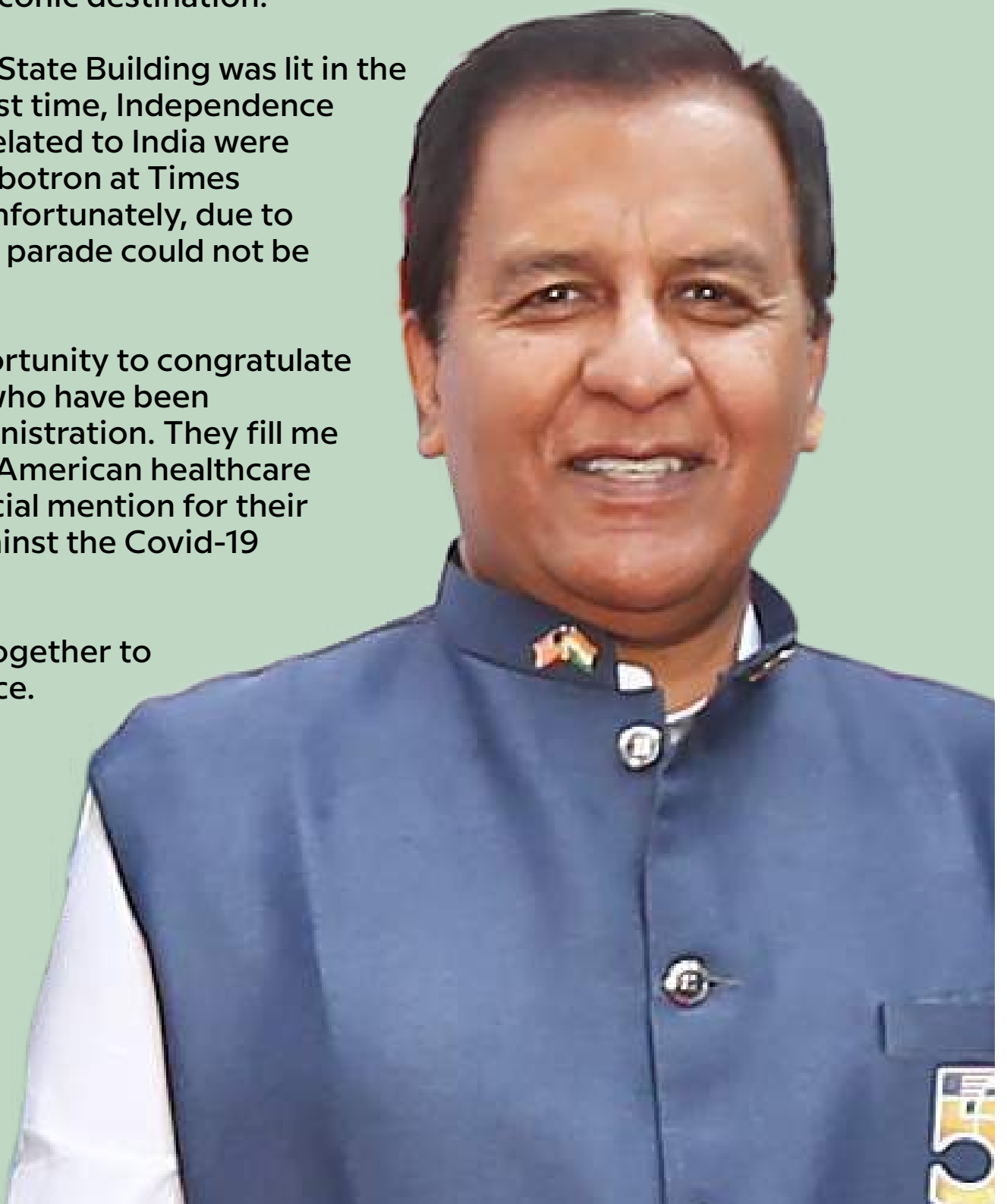
In tandem with the celebrations in India, we at the Federation of Indian Associations, too, will have events to mark 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'. The celebrations were kick-started with the hoisting of the Tricolor at the Times Square in New York City and at Rhode Island State House. Last year, FIA became the first organization to unfurl the Tricolor at the iconic destination.

Later in the day, the Empire State Building was lit in the colors of the flag. For the first time, Independence Day messages and images related to India were displayed on the largest jumbotron at Times Square for a full 24 hours. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, our signature parade could not be organized this year as well.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Americans of Indian origin who have been appointed in the Biden administration. They fill me with immense pride. Indian-American healthcare professionals deserve a special mention for their contribution to the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

Let us all continue to work together to make this world a better place.

**Anil Bansal**  
President, FIA



# UNITED WE STAND

I have a dream like Martin Luther King. And, like Rabindranath Tagore, I want India and, by extension, Indians to wake up in a world that “has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls”. On the 75th Independence Day of India, borrowing from the two legends—one an American and the other an Indian—I hope and pray for a united world where we move ahead together.

India is a standing example of unity in diversity. From our forefathers, we have inherited freedom, the most valuable treasure. As the heirs, it is our duty to protect this inheritance, nurture it and use it to take our motherland to newer peaks.

The Indian community is among the largest non-American communities in the US. Members of the Indian Diaspora have made noteworthy contributions here in different fields. We have Indian-Americans in the government. Recently, Abhimanyu Mishra of New Jersey became the youngest Grandmaster in the history of chess. The Junior Wimbledon champion this year is Sameer Banerjee, also from New Jersey. The list is bigger. Not just the Indians, but even others in America are extremely proud of their achievements.

At FIA, our goal is to have a unified community that will be a force to reckon with. We must together strive to do our bit for both the countries, the one where we have our roots and the one where we have grown.

Over the years, we have enjoyed the support of many well-wishers, both in US and in India. With their continued support, we hope to make FIA a bigger and stronger platform for the Indian community in the US.

**Ankur Vaidya**  
Chairman, FIA





## Parveen Bansal

Secretary, FIA

On behalf of the FIA, I extend my heartiest greetings to all of you and our brothers and sisters in India on the country's 75th Independence Day. I also remember the valiant sacrifices made by thousands of freedom fighters during the Independence struggle. Most of us have not lived in India for many years, but our hearts beat for India. FIA is committed to contribute to India's development and see it reclaim its glory days as a Vishwaguru. I am confident each of you will support our endeavors as you have in the past. The FIA hoisted the Tricolor at Times Square and hosted several other events as a part of the celebrations. We also plans to organize more events to bring the diaspora together and help us connect better with our motherland. Jai Hind!



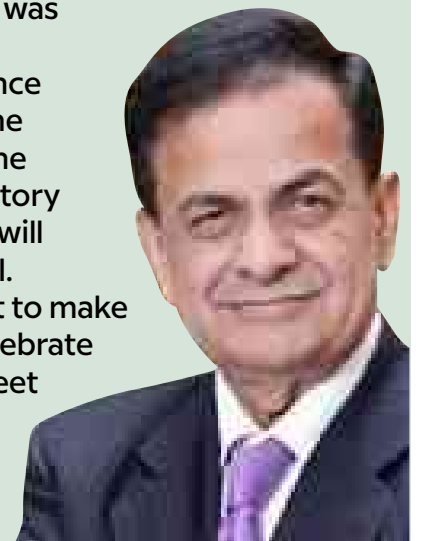
Padma Shri

## Dr. Sudhir Parikh

Member, Board of Trustee

There are times in the history of a nation when great tragedies occur. India has had its share of tragedies. But it is how a country overcomes tragedies that shows the real strength of its people and their resilience. India was tested during its independence struggle—it was victorious.

This year's celebration of Independence Day is tempered with sadness over the loss of several thousands of lives to the terrible Covid-19 pandemic. But if history is anything to go by, our motherland will overcome this latest challenge as well. We who live abroad must do our best to make sure that India beats Covid. Let us celebrate the day by remembering the past, meet today's challenges and look forward to a bright future!



## Alok Kumar

Past President, FIA

The 'Azadi Mahotsav' celebrates the 75th year of India's independence. It is a special day for every Indian living in India or outside. We are extremely thankful to the senior members of our community who decided to celebrate the occasion every year, thereby bringing all Indians together to commemorate the occasion. This year is a milestone for India, even as the country continues to progress with leaps and bound under the able leadership of our Hon. Prime Minister. With each passing day, India brings its population of 1.3 bn people closer to achieving their dreams. With our celebration of Independence Day at Times Square, we wish to resound the significance of the day and our common goal towards working to make Mother India better and greater.



## Srujal Parikh

Past President, Board of Trustee

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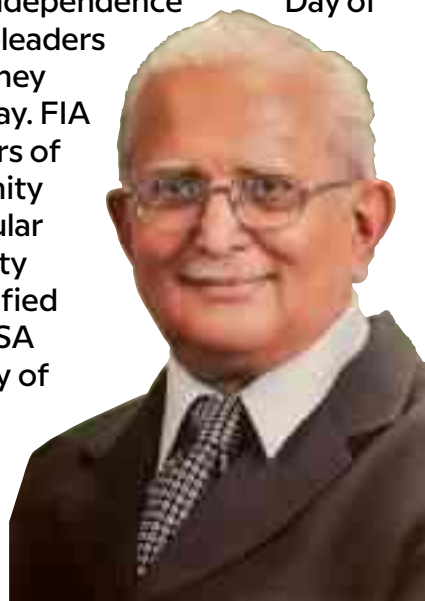


## Chandrakant Trivedi

Board Member

Mother and mother land are greater than heaven. As the global Indian community celebrates 75th Independence Day of India, let us salute all freedom fighters -leaders for their incredible selfless sacrifices. They paid a huge price for what we have today. FIA has an illustrious history of 50-plus years of service to the vast and vibrant community and has been hosting increasingly popular annual India Day Parade in New York City for past 40 years. FIA's multiple, diversified activities have earned a prestigious PBSA Award from GOI, which is the testimony of its widening horizons. I am proud and honored to be a part of FIA since 1982 in various capacities.

**God Bless America, India & FIA.**



## Saurin Parikh

Vice-President, FIA

I wish everyone a very happy 75th Independence Day. The Indian Diaspora in the US has been growing exponentially and continues to make us all proud. I pray for the ties between both the countries to grow in all fields. There's a lot we have achieved, and there's a lot more we can do in future.





## Abhishek Singh

President, FIA, New England

"On this day, I feel a surge of joy and pride. Not only is this day a milestone for India, but also for FIA. We organized the biggest event to celebrate India's 75th Independence Day at Rhode Island on Sunday. It was a proud moment for us to see the Rhode Island State House lit up in the Indian Tricolor for the first time. On behalf of the FIA family, I express my heartfelt gratitude to Honorable Governor Daniel McKee of Rhode Island for accepting our request to be the chief guest of this momentous event. We look forward to hosting more such events to showcase the beauty of the Indian culture. Jai Hind



## Rakesh Kavhari

Secretary, FIA, New England



It is difficult to sum up India, one of the oldest civilization of the world, or its rich cultural heritage in a few words. Our country has proved that it is possible to reach the stars while having the roots firmly stuck in the ground, i.e. in the traditions. We have come a long way since 1947. August 15 is an important day for all of us, an occasion to remember the martyrs who fought hard for the freedom that we now enjoy. As I see the Tricolor fly high, I feel immense pride and joy, besides a deep sense of gratitude to the bravehearts.

## Shova Sharma

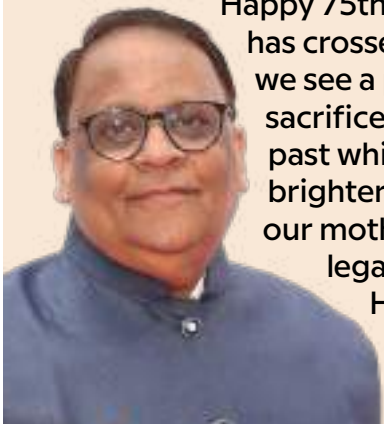
Vice-President, FIA, New England

I extend hearty congratulation to all my Indian brothers and sisters. It is a proud moment where the community is once again coming together to celebrate the golden moment in India's history. The New England chapter of the Federation of Indian Associations has taken forward its legacy by organizing an event of this stature. On this occasion, I call upon every Indian to uphold the spirit of independence.



## Haresh Shah

Vice-President, FIA



Happy 75th Independence Day to all! Our country has crossed another milestone. As we look back, we see a past replete with stories of courage, sacrifices and love for the motherland. It is that past which we salute today as we focus on a brighter tomorrow and promise ourselves and our motherland that we shall carry forward the legacy bestowed on us by the heroes. Jai Hind!

## Sanjay Gokhale,

Vice President, FIA, New England

I congratulate all my Indian brothers and sisters on the momentous occasion of India's 75th Independence Day. Wishing everyone a glorious future! Jai Hind! Vande Mataram!



## Raj Gupta

Committee Member, FIA, New England

"Warm wishes on the 75th Independence Day of India. No Independence Day celebration can ever be complete without paying tribute to the people who fought for freedom. As Indians, we are eternally indebted to the countless men, women and children who laid down their lives while trying to win freedom for others. Let's all respect this gift and protect it with all our might.



## Mahesh Dubal,

Executive Committee Member, FIA

India has come a long way since 1947. We as a country have successfully demonstrated our competence and visionary dynamic leadership in several arenas. India is a huge reservoir of talent, which has aided its phenomenal growth and success across sectors. This is the time to appreciate all those who contributed to India's march towards becoming an emerging superpower. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the FIA for its 50-plus years of relentless distinguished service to the Indo-American community. I am proud to be part of such a dynamic, patriotic, powerful, purposeful, and pioneering umbrella organization.







**75th Independence Day: A milestone for India and FIA**

# CGI unfurls biggest Tricolor at Times Square

**This is the second consecutive year when FIA organized the Independence Day celebrations at the iconic Times Square in New York; for the first time, I-Day messages were on display at the biggest jumbotron reserved by FIA for full 24 hours**

**#NEW YORK**

**T**he Times Square was a sight to behold on Sunday morning. Every time the crowd shouted out 'Jai' to complete the slogan "Bharat Mata ki..." or "Mataram" after "Vande", the Sunday morning air reverberated with indescribable energy. The towering Tricolor bore testimony to the spirit that had brought Indians together to celebrate a momentous occasion.

This occasion was the 75th Independence Day of India.

The venue was the iconic Times Square.

Befitting the grandeur of the occasion, the Federation of Indian Associations had organized the unfurling of the biggest Tricolor at the Times Square. The flag, 6ft x 10 ft, was hoisted on a 25-foot pole.



**CONTINUED ON PAGE 8**

**Bharat Mata ki Jai: Team FIA at Times Square**





The band Dhol Tasha Pathak in action. The group came all the way from Michigan to take part in the celebrations

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7**

This is only the second time that the Tricolor was unfurled at the busy spot. Last year, FIA had organized flag-hoisting at Times Square for the first time.

FIA Chairman Ankur Vaidya wished everyone a happy, healthy and safe 75th Independence Day.

FIA president Anil Bansal called it a privilege to be living in US where they have the freedom that they “as Americans can celebrate our history, culture and love for our motherland.” He thanked the New York City and its police for allowing them to enjoy the day safely.

The American anthem was played first, after which Consul General of India-New York Shri Randhir Jaiswal unfurled the Indian flag. This was followed by the playing of the national anthem

“Today is a historic day in India’s onward march as a nation... a day to celebrate our achievements, our success, our freedom struggle, all the sacrifices done by the leaders, by the Indian nation and also to chart out our future course of action,” he said while addressing the gathering.

“Today is also the day to celebrate our vibrant democracy and progress and prosperity. This is one special aspect that connects us deeply with this beautiful



**Today is a historic day in India’s onward march as a nation... a day to celebrate our achievements, our success, our freedom struggle, all the sacrifices done by the leaders, by the nation and also to chart out our future course of action**

**Randhir Jaiswal, Consul General of India, New York**

**24 HOURS OF INDIA AT TIMES SQUARE**

In another first, FIA reserved the biggest jumbotron at the Times Square for display of Independence Day messages and other images related to India. The jumbotron was reserved for full 24 hours.

country of the United States of America... the world’s largest democracy India and the world’s oldest democracy, the US,” Jaiswal added.

He thanked the FIA and all members of the Indian-American community for leading the celebrations related to India.

On the occasion, Jaiswal felicitated Abhimanyu Mishra, the youngest Grandmaster in the history of chess. Abhimanyu and FIA president Anil Bansal received proclamations from the office of Brooklyn Borough president Eric

Adams.

Jaiswal gifted a token of appreciation to Captain Amanjeet Sandhu, who is the only Indian-American executive officer in the New York Police Department (NYPD). He has been in NYPD for 19 years. He is also the first Sikh captain in the nation.

**Cricket Cup unveiled**

The ‘India @75 Cricket Cup’ tournament, which commemorates

the 75th year of India’s Independence Day, will be held next weekend in Westchester County. On Sunday, CGI Jaiswal unveiled the trophy that will be presented to the winners of the tournament which has been organized by 22 Yards Sports that promotes cricket in North America.

Deputy Counsel General of India-NY Shatrughna Sinha, Jackson Heights representative in New York City Council Daniel Dromm as well as and district leader from Queens-New York Neeta Jain, too, graced the event with their presence and addressed the gathering.

FIA member Anand Patel, who also represents one of FIA’s sponsors and well-wishers, thanked the company and the CEO for their generous contributions to the Federation and supporting it in its community-oriented activities.

The morning concluded with a power-packed performance by the band Dhol Tasha Pathak of Maharashtra Mandal who had come all the way from Michigan to participate in the celebration.





Photos: Paresh Gandhi



**See it to believe it:** There's no stopping the indomitable spirit of Indians, wherever they are in the world. Community members had arrived at the venue early on Sunday morning to be part of the Independence Day festivities

Photo via Twitter (@EmpireStateBldg)



Indians from in and around New York join the chorus of Jai Hind



And the two flags fly high!



The magnificent Empire State Building decked up in Indian flag colors



CGI Randhir Jaiswal unveils 'India @75 Cricket Cup' on Sunday



CGI Jaiswal felicitates FIA President Anil Bansal...



... and youngest Grandmaster in chess history Abhimanyu Mishra



# Aakhir Dil Hai Hindustani!



*Cricket is in our DNA! May the best cricket team win!*



*FIA President Anil Bansal*



*A proclamation for Abhimanyu*



*FIA Chairman Ankur Vaidya*



*FIA member Sudhir Parikh*



*Queens district leader Neeta Jain*



*NYPD captain Amanjeet Sandhu felicitated*



*Daniel Dromm, Jackson Heights rep, NYC Council*



*FIA had reserved the largest jumbotron at Times Square for 24 hours for I-Day messages*



# FIA Gala a grand success



***It was lovely weather on Sunday evening, just the perfect time to sail on the calm Hudson. Guests of FIA had a relaxing time on board the Horizon Edge as they enjoyed the cool breeze with the view of the magnificent view of the New York skyline.***

*Artistes Mickey Singh and Jonita Gandhi share a joke*





# FIA New England's first I-Day celebration



***It was an occasion of double celebration for FIA-New England. Besides being the 75th Independence Day, it was also the first major event organized by the team since its launch earlier this year. Flag-hoisting at Rhode Island State House, lighting of the building in Tricolor hues and cultural programmes were the highlight of the celebration***



*The team of FIA New England with the esteemed guests on Sunday*





Back home in India, the mood was exuberant. Prime Minister Narendra Modi unfurled the Tricolor at the Red Fort on Sunday morning.

## August 15: A red letter day in India's history

# An ode to freedom fighters

**India celebrated its 75th Independence Day on Sunday; PM Narendra Modi kicked off the celebrations by hoisting the Tricolor at Red Fort in New Delhi; country will celebrate the year as 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'**

### #NEW DELHI

India celebrated its 75th Independence Day on Sunday, marking a significant milestone in the history of the world's largest democracy.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the celebrations by hoisting the Indian National Flag from the ramparts of the Red Fort in New Delhi. Top political leaders in India, chiefs of the three armed forces, foreign ambassadors, top bureaucrats, India's Tokyo Olympic contingent, and other dignitaries attended the celebrations in the national capital.

In his customary address after the flag hoisting ceremony, Modi paid tribute to all the leaders who had taken part in the freedom struggle.

"Be it Nehru ji, the first Prime Minister of India, Sardar Patel, who united the country, or Babasaheb Ambedkar, who showed India the way to the future, the country is indebted to all of them," the Prime Minister said.

The PM also announced a \$1.35 trillion (Rs. 100 lakh crore) Gathshakti initiative aimed at holistic infrastructure growth, creating employment opportunities for the youth, and expanding the use of cleaner fuels to achieve the country's climate goals.



(Left) A spectacular formation of '75' to mark the Independence Day of the country by the Indian Navy personnel on Sunday; (Right) the iconic Ghanta Ghar in Srinagar was lit up in the three colors of the Indian National Flag on Saturday evening



Indian National Congress President Sonia Gandhi hoisted the tricolor at the party headquarters in Delhi. Her son Rahul Gandhi and other senior party leaders were present on the occasion.

President Ram Nath Kovind visited the National War Memorial in Delhi and paid tributes to the soldiers who laid their lives for the country.

Superstar Amitabh Bachchan and actors Akshay Kumar, Kangana Ranaut, Alia Bhatt, and other Bollywood celebrities shared their wishes on the occasion.

In state capitals, respective

chief ministers led the flag hoisting ceremonies and the Independence day celebrations. Private celebrations of the event were also organized in cities across India.

However, the celebrations of the 75th year of India's independence will continue until August 15, 2023. The Indian government launched the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' from Mahatma Gandhi's home Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad in March this year, and a host of events have been planned as a part of the celebrations over the next two years.

### President Biden extends I-Day greetings

In a statement, US President Joe Biden extended his wishes to those celebrating India's Independence Day.

"Over the decades, the ties between our people, including a vibrant community of more than four million Indian-Americans, have sustained and strengthened our partnership," President Biden said.

He noted the special bond between the world's oldest and largest democracies.



**With love: From US to India**

# FIA ships 3rd consignment of Covid cargo to India

**#NEW YORK**

**T**aking forward its commitment to its motherland, India, the Federation of Indian Associations of the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut (FIA-NY NJ CT) successfully dispatched the third consignment of medical supplies to India last week. That this happened just days before the country celebrated its 75th Independence Day made the occasion even more special.

The consignment is part of the donation by the City of New York to India as the country prepares for a likely third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The consignment, which was sent via air from New York to New Delhi, comprises 4452 Resmed Bi-Pap machines and 6980 additional parts and consumables for these machines. This will help hospitals and healthcare institutes treat patients with breathing difficulty, one of the most common complications seen in Covid-19 patients.

The consignment has been sent to the Foundation for Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship in India. ACT Grants will be managing the last mile distribution to local health care facilities such as Uttar Pradesh government's healthcare system as well as to the charitable healthcare facilities across the nation free of cost.

FIA believes that these supplies will make an impact to needy communities across the nation and will help in the war against Covid-19.

## India, we stand with you

In April-May this year, India had struggled with a disastrous second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. At that time, the health infrastructure of the country had come under severe stress, one of the reasons being shortage of medical supplies. Several lives were lost because of this shortage.

In June this year, FIA facilitated the shipping of the first two con-



*FIA has earlier shipped two consignments of Covid relief material to*



*The FIA NY-NJ-CT team with packed material ahead of the shipping*

**Health experts have warned of a likely third wave of the pandemic. We hope that our contributions can make a positive difference, however small, to the country and help it in the fight against Covid**

## Ankur Vaidya, FIA chairman

towards Covid relief.

The cargo comprised 400,000 pulse oximeters, ventilators, resuscitation bags, BiPAP machines, test kits, etc. It was shipped from Keasbey, NJ to Navi Mumbai. Ventilators were sent via Air India. The supplies were donated by the City of New York, while the rest of the logistics related to the shipment were handled by FIA.

signments of medical cargo donated by the City of New York to India towards Covid relief. Around 400,000 pulse oximeters, ventilators, resuscitation bags, BiPAP machines, test kits, etc had been sent at that time.

In June this year, FIA facilitated the shipping of the first two consignments of medical cargo donated by the City of New York to India

General secretary and executive committee member of FIA-NY NJ CT Parveen Bansal led the logistical efforts.

On the occasion, FIA chairman Ankur Vaidya once again thanked the New York City, sponsors and the entire FIA team for their support.

"India is celebrating the 75th year of its independence. By fighting for the freedom and dignity of their motherland, the freedom fighters fulfilled their duties towards India. Now, it's the turn of current generations to do their bit. With these shipments, I would like to reiterate that our motherland is always in our thoughts," said Vaidya.



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## PUBLISHED BY

Federation of Indian Associations (NY-NJ-CT-PA-MA-NH-VT-RI)

Editor  
Chitra Nair

Voluntary Design & Graphics  
Gracia Marcom

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# INDIA AT ITS OLYMPIC BEST IN TOKYO

The country bagged seven medals at the recently concluded Tokyo Olympics, its highest tally so far



## The rocket launcher

That's the nickname Neeraj Chopra earned for himself after he launched his javelin into the air to strike gold. By the time the country took note of him as he advanced, he had already found his place among the top throwers. He qualified for the finals after the first throw itself. His performance in the finals was par excellence. The entire country watched with bated breath as he began taking his strides. The rest, as they say, is history. His javelin covered 87.58 metres. Neeraj created history that day by becoming the first Indian to win a gold in athletics. He gave India's Tokyo Olympic run a picture-perfect finish.

Neeraj's performance catapulted him to the position of World number 2

## Wrestlers win laurels



Wrestler Ravi Dahiya had his eyes set on gold after a phenomenal victory over Nurislam Sanayev of Kazakhstan in the semi-finals. But he could not get the better of Zaur Uguev of Russia in the 57 kg category finals. He settled for silver. That became the second silver for India after the one won by weightlifter Mirabai Chanu.

With this win, Ravi became only the fifth wrestler in India to have won an Olympic medal. He follows KD Jadhav, Sushil Kumar, Yogeshwar Dutt and Sakshi Malik.

Meanwhile, Bajrang Punia was sure he would make it to the podium. But his loss in the semi-finals of the men's freestyle 65 kg wrestling category came as a huge disappointment not just to him, but to the entire country. However, he bounced back in the play-off to lift the bronze medal after defeating Daulet Niyazbekov of Kazakhstan 8-0.



## A shout-out for hockey teams

It is said that cricket unites India. But when the Indian hockey teams were playing in Tokyo, the entire country switched the television channels from cricket to tune into hockey. That was the effect this season had. The Indian men's team returned home with a bronze after losing in the semi-finals and later winning in the play-off match. The girls weren't as lucky. They lost in the play-off. But they, too, were given a hero's welcome. For, it was for the first time that the Indian women's hockey team had advanced to the semi-finals.

## WINNERS, TAKE A BOW!

WINNER	MEDAL	SPORT
Neeraj Chopra	gold	Javelin throw
Mirabhai Chanu	silver	weightlifting
Ravi Dahiya	silver	wrestling
PV Sindhu	bronze	badminton
Indian men's hockey team	bronze	hockey
Lovlina Borgohain	bronze	boxing
Bajrang Punia	bronze	wrestling





# Dandi Statement beyond imagination

**The Salt Satyagraha that Mahatma Gandhi undertook in March 1930, from Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad to Dandi coast in Navsari marked the launch of the Civil Disobedience Movement against the British rule in India**

**S**alt tax in India had been at the centre of lot of criticism several years before Mahatma Gandhi protested against it. However, the breaking of the salt tax law was symbolic in more than one ways. It was the launch of the Civil Disobedience Movement that grew to pave the way for freedom of India from the British Rule.

It was on March 12, 1930, that 78 people led by Mahatma Gandhi set out from Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad for the Dandi coast where they intended to break the salt law. They walked for 21 days, covering nearly 387 kilometers to reach Dandi on April 5. The next day, after his morning prayers, Gandhiji went to the seashore and picked up a handful of salt. Manufacturing of salt was illegal. Thus, Gandhiji's act was a defiance, which is what he intended to do. He defied a law which, he said, was harming the common people. Something as basic as salt could not be taxed, after all. The poorest of the poor needed it, but

## **A WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE**

India's struggle for freedom is too big to be forgotten. In his famous poem 'Ae mere watan ke logo', Kavi Pradeep wrote "Tum bhool na jao unko, isliye suno ye kahani..." So we take this opportunity to give you glimpses of the past.

Starting this week, we begin a series of stories related to India's freedom movement.

could not afford the exorbitant taxes levied by the British government. With that handful of the naturally and abundantly available condiment, Gandhiji had sent a message to the rulers. The Civil Disobedience movement had started.

After Dandi, Gandhiji hoped to go to the Dharasana Salt Works in Gujarat, but was arrested by the police. Later, Sarojini Naidu led the marchers to Dharasana. The non-violent marchers were stopped by the police and were beaten up.

American journalist Web Miller met Gandhiji when he was launching the Dandi yatra. He stayed to cover it. He happened to witness the assault of the unarmed satyagrahis on May 21, 1930, where a few hundred died. His report helped the world opinion turn against the British rule in India.

The Salt Satyagraha, as the Dandi mission is also called, did not achieve its intended goal. The rulers did come to the discussion table, but the tax continued. It was eventually abolished in 1947.

## **Dandi revisited 91 years later**

March 12, 2021, marked 91 years of the launch of the historic Dandi yatra. On this day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off a march from Sabarmati Ashram during which 81 people would retrace Gandhiji's steps to Dandi. The march ended on April 5 as per schedule.

On the occasion, PM Modi also announced the launch of the 75-year celebration of India's Independence, called 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'.

**(Compiled from various sources)**

