

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

Bapu's yatra revisited

91 years later, on Dandi path once again



On March 12, PM Narendra Modi launched 75-week celebration of 75 years of India's independence from Sabarmati Ashram in Gujarat's Ahmedabad by flagging off a 'padyatra' to Dandi where Mahatma Gandhi had broken the Salt Law and announced launch of Civil Disobedience movement against British

March 12 it was when Gandhi Bapu, accompanied by a group of volunteers, set out on a 24-day journey to Dandi. The goal was clear—breaking the Salt Act that gave the British the monopoly over salt. Indians were forced to pay a tax on salt, despite it being freely available on the sea coasts.

With the Salt Satyagraha, Gandhiji kicked off the Civil Disobedience movement against the British. The choice of salt was strategic. To launch the movement, he needed an issue that would resonate with every person. And what better than salt? The proposal had initially met with scepticism. But Bapu's logic was sound. Salt was one thing that affected even the poorest of the poor who would not have felt the same way about demanding political rights.

On March 12, 2021, Indian Prime

Minister Narendra Modi kicked off the 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav', a 75-week celebration to mark 75 years of India's independence from the British Rule. The launch coincided with the 91st anniversary of Gandhiji's Dandi Yatra. To commemorate the event, a select group set out from Sabarmati Ashram. The Sabarmati Ashram-Dandi route which Bapu had taken has been developed as a heritage corridor. The group began walking on the route past noon on March 12. Like Bapu and his team, they stopped at Aslali on the first night, after walking around 21 km.

They will be covering 386 km in 24 days, aiming to reach Dandi on April 5, the day when Bapu reached Dandi. The next day, after his morning prayers, he broke the Salt Law by making salt from the sea water by boiling it. He also urged those who could to make salt on their own and defy the British law that forced them to pay taxes on something that was available freely.

At the launch of the Amrit Mahotsav, PM Modi once again exhorted everyone to become 'atma nirbhar (self-reliant)', a message that resonated with Gandhiji's clarion call for 'purna swaraj' (total independence).

He also paid tribute to all the freedom fighters who had played a role in India's independence.



Bapu and his followers on Dandi Yatra in 1930

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Write to us!

Got feedback for us? We would love to hear about it. Have an event you want others to know about? Tell us. Clicked a pic worth sharing? Send it across. Your inputs are invaluable. You can mail your comments to

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In recognition of their dedicated services

7 Indian women honored on Women's Day

They were felicitated at an event hosted by FIA NY NJ & CT along with the Brooklyn Borough President's office and the Consulate General of India New York on March 8

#Brooklyn, New York

The Federation of Indian Associations of NY NJ & CT along with the Brooklyn Borough President's office and the Consulate General of India New York hosted a commemorative ceremony on the footsteps of the historic venue of the Brooklyn Borough Hall. Consul General of India-New York Shri Randhir Jaiswal felicitated the distinguished awardees with a memento and applauded their efforts and resilience in staying dedicated to their respective causes, fields and careers even during the unprecedented times of the pandemic.

Two of the honorees who stayed remote were presented a memento and a citation from the Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams who extended his greetings through Dilip Chauhan who handles the South Asian affairs for the Borough President.

Among the honorees was Ms Tejal Amin, a gold medalist and visharad in Bharatanatyam, and founder of Ghargharika, an organization that promotes dance and music. She is the chairperson of Navrachana Education Society, brand ambassador of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, awardee of Glory Of Gujarat, founding director and chairperson of Vadodara Marathon as well as brand ambassador for MG Motors' MG Drive Her Back.

Dr Uma Rani Madhusudana was felicitated for her service as a frontline worker at Hartford healthcare. She has been an unsung hero of the pandemic. She assisted with protocols regarding plasma therapy in India. She will now be featured in a documentary, "Pandemic away from the motherland", which has been shortlisted for Oscar.

Dr Abha Jaiswal, a dentist with a master's degree in Public Health and in Sociology, was recognized for playing a pivotal role of supporting her spouse on national duty—that of diplomatic assignments. She has lived and learnt in culturally diverse societies in Asia, Europe, and America and can speak 7 languages.

Ms Rashmi Aggarwal, a nurse, provided

uninterrupted support and service to her peers and patients. She was lauded for her role as a healthcare first responder who, at the cost of family and personal time, continuously dedicated and served her time to those impacted by the pandemic.

Ms Sabina Dhillon, Esq – community attorney, was appreciated for her pro bono services to people from the community and for her continuous support.

programs, including launching a channel (Indika) as an effort to provide children spiritual content through Vedic science.

Besides individual honorees, the Mask Squad, a group of likeminded women who came together to help the community, was also felicitated on the occasion. At the height of the pandemic, the team pitched in with its efforts by sewing 3,200 masks and sharing them with first responders and with those needing them the most. Collectively the 40 organizations across the country, working together



selfless advice and legal guidance to those not able to afford professional legal advice.

Rashana Shah, a producer-actress and founder and managing director of film development company Mulberry Films, was recognized for her dedication and work with kids'

made the group. From donating masks to organizing food donations, helping domestic violence survivors in emergency situations, the group of Mask Squad has made an impact.

A private dinner was organized at the Consulate General of India in New York for the honorees where they were greeted and congratulated by the Consulate.

On the occasion, Smita Miki Patel, Rohi Singh and the International Women's Day team were applauded for their efforts to put together the celebration amid pandemic restrictions.

The organizers also thanked Jayshree Patel of New Jersey and Saku Patel of Connecticut for their generous support and sponsorship.



FIA's Meet and Greet with Hon. Dan Quart, NYC Assembly member

Dan Quart - Engages in virtual meet and Greet with the community

Will help bridge the gap and help better educate on the Matters important to Indian American community

#New York

Swastika is a sacred symbol holding immense religious value for Hindus and many other ancient cultures. New York State Assembly member Dan Quart was explained the symbolism at length at the virtual Meet and Greet session organised by the FIA on March 7. Mistaken over the years for the Nazi hate symbol, Swastika has long been seen with suspicious, often angry, eyes for past several decades. But it is different and has nothing to do with the Nazis, Quart was told. One of NYC's top pro bono attorneys and strong advocate for reforms in criminal justice, Quart represents Manhattan's East Side.

A Bill introduced in the New York State Senate identified Swastika as a symbol of hate and required it to be presented thus in academic curriculum. Outside the communities that revere the Swastika, not many know about its origin and relevance or how it is different from the Nazi Hakenkreuz. The latter does not have the four dots and is tilted to the right. Swastika has been a part of



the Hindu culture for thousands of years, having been in existence much before Hitler's symbol.

At the meeting, Quart was posed with questions about the Bill to ban Swastika. Empathising with the Indian diaspora, he opined that people need to be educated and should have a thorough knowledge before

introducing such bills and as a state representative Assembly member Quart agreed to help educate his colleagues on the historical relevance of this Hindu symbol.

The event

The opening statement for the event was made by the Hon. Deputy Consul General of India Shatrughan Sinha, with prominent leaders and the members of the Indian Diaspora - FIA chairman Ankur Vaidya, president Anil Bansal and Democratic Candidate for the post of Mayor in Edison Township New Jersey Mahesh Bhagia among others in attendance. There were nearly 50 participants at the event.

During the meeting Dan Quart put his views forth on Criminal Justice, working with the Indian community, and housing and rent issues faced by the landlords and tenants as well. In his closing statement he said that he would like to know the Indian Diaspora more closely and looked forward to more such events in person to get a better understanding.

\$35 bowl from yard sale worth half-a-million!

Buyer who picked it up in Connecticut took it to Sotheby's. They confirmed its value

#Connecticut

Imagine picking up a bowl from a backyard sale, only to realise that it's worth several hundred times more! That's what happened to a buyer at a yard sale in Connecticut. The \$35 porcelain bowl that he picked up at the sale turned out to be a rare, 15th-century Chinese artifact estimated to be worth between \$300,000 and \$500,000.

Last year, after purchasing the bowl, the buyer was so intrigued by its appearance that he decided to ask experts at the Sotheby's auction house to evaluate it, as per a report. The response left him stunned. His yard-sale

buy was an "exceptional and rare" bowl, with only six others of its kind known to exist. Its auction was scheduled at Sotheby's Important Chinese Art auction in New York on March 17.



FIA felicitates DPC participants, committee



FIA organised an event to honor the participants of Dance Pe Chance 2021 at Akbar Hotel Edison New Jersey on March 12. Close to 300 trophies and certificates were given away to participants as a mark of appreciation.

FIA chairman Ankur Vaidya, president Anil Bansal and the top Democratic candidate for upcoming primaries for the post of Mayor of Edison Township New Jersey Mahesh Bhagia were present on the occasion. Bhagia also presented a trophy and a special mention to Anil Trivedi, one of the judges

Team India on the front foot

The Men in Blue won the second of a 5-match T20I series against England, being played at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad; they have won 3 of the 4 matches played since inauguration of the world's largest cricket stadium last month

#Ahmedabad

After facing defeat in the first match of the T20 International series that began last week, Team India bounced back in the second match, restricting England to 164-6 and then reaching the target with two overs and seven wickets to spare.

Crediting the Indians for the victory, England captain Eoin Morgan said, "We were probably in and around par, but India bowled well... They put us on the back foot from the start..."

India won the toss and chose to bowl first. Washington Sundar and Shardul Thakur took two wickets each, while Jason Roy became the top scorer for England with 46 runs off 35 balls. The visitors gave the hosts the target of 164 to chase.

For India, opener Ishan Kishan struck a sensational 56 off 32 balls while skipper Virat Kohli made 73 not out off 49 balls to set up the win in 17.5 overs

Dhruv Shastri



2nd T20I match between IND & ENG at Narendra Modi Stadium on March 14

Mithali second woman to get 10k runs in int'l cricket

Indian women's ODI team captain Mithali Raj on Sunday became the first woman to score more than 7,000 runs in ODIs. She achieved the milestone in her 213th ODI. The achievement comes right after she became the first Indian woman cricketer and second in the world to get more than 10,000 runs in international cricket, which combines three

formats—Tests, ODIs and T20 matches.

The top place is currently held by England's Charlotte Edwards who quit international cricket in 2016. She has scored 10,273 runs. The historic moment for Mithali came at the match in Lucknow in India on March 12 when she scored 36 runs.



Stadium to be part of world-class sports district



The cricket stadium in Motera in Ahmedabad, now rechristened as 'Narendra Modi Stadium', was officially inaugurated by Indian President Ram Nath Kovind on February 24.

The cricket stadium is part of a larger world-class sports district named Sardar Patel Sports Enclave. It is spread across 63 acres and has four entry points. The field size of the stadium is 180 yards x 150 yards. It also has six indoor pitches and three outdoor practice fields with bowling machines and four dressing rooms. It also has 75 corporate boxes with seating capacity of 25 each.

"The new world's largest stadium is the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It was his dream that Gujarat and India should have in cricket, a game that generates a billion inspirations across the country," India's Home Minister Amit Shah said, as per the website of the Gujarat Cricket Association.

In February last year, the Motera stadium had hosted the then US President Donald Trump and his family. The event was called 'Namaste Trump'.

Since its formal inauguration, the Narendra Modi Stadium has already hosted two Test matches and two T20 matches till now

75th I-Day celebration begins: PM Modi flags off Dandi Yatra 2021



(L) Indian PM Narendra Modi flagged off Dandi Yatra from Sabarmati Ashram on March 12. The 'padyatris' (above) will reach Dandi on April 5.

Covid shadow on Bollywood

Several celebs have tested positive for the infection so far. Among the most recent are actors Ranbir Kapoor, Siddhant Chaturvedi, Manoj Bajpayee and director Sanjay Leela Bhansali

Whatever precautions our Bollywood celebs are taking to keep the dreaded virus at bay are clearly not enough, if the recent number of positive cases in the industry are anything to go by.

Recently, Brahmastra actor Ranbir Kapoor tested positive for the infection. His mother and heart throb of yesteryears, Neetu Singh, recovered from the infection in December last year.

With director Sanjay Leela Bhansali getting the infection, supposedly on the sets of his upcoming film Gangubai Kathiawadi, the entire cast and crew were tested and asked to quarantine. That includes Ranbir Kapoor's girlfriend Alia Bhatt. However, she has tested negative.

Manoj Bajpayee tested positive for Covid-19 after Kanu Behl, director of his film 'Despatch', was detected with the infection.

Student of the Year-2 actress Tara Sutariya is yet to confirm it, but there are reports of her having tested positive. Also on the list are Siddhant Chaturvedi of 'Gully Boy' fame and actor Ashish Vidyarthi, both of whom announced their 'positive' status on Instagram.

Previously, Amitabh Bachchan, son Abhishek, daughter-in-law Aishwarya Rai and



granddaughter Aaradhya had tested positive.

Sunny Deol, Varun Dhawan, Kriti Sanon, Genelia D'Souza, Kanika Kapoor, etc are the celebs who have had a brush with the virus.

Popular and much-loved singer SP Balasubramaniam succumbed to the infection in September last year.

The recent spike in cases does not augur well for an industry that is just limping back to normalcy after almost a year of dormancy.

Quite a few big-ticket releases have been lined up this year, with the encouraging BOX Office collections of Jahnvi Kapoor and Raj Kumar Rao-starrer 'Roohi' that was released on March 11.

'Positive' actress goes for shoot, booked

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation has lodged an FIR against model and actress Gauhar Khan for violating Covid rules. Despite testing positive for the infection and being told to quarantine herself, she is said to have left her home for a film shoot.

In its tweet, BMC said, "No Compromise On City's Safety! BMC has filed an FIR against a Bollywood actor for non-compliance to COVID19 guidelines on testing positive. The rules apply to all alike and we urge citizens to follow all guidelines and help the city beat the virus."



Coming soon: Pee Cee's love for khana at 'Sona'

The actress announced the launch of her restaurant in New York, which will serve authentic Indian food

Sona just got a new meaning—Priyanka Chopra's Indian restaurant in New York. The actress recently announced its launch on her Instagram handle with a photo of a prayer ceremony where she could be seen doing the 'arti' with husband Nick Jonas.

"I'm thrilled to present to you SONA, a new restaurant in NYC that I poured my love for Indian food into. SONA is the very embodiment of timeless India and th flavours I grew up with", she wrote

According to her, the kitchen affairs will be helmed by Chef Hari Nayak, a restaurateur and author of cook books.

'Sona' will be inaugurated later this month, Priyanka said.

Alongside, Priyanka and Nick Jonas will appear as guests on Oprah Winfrey's show 'Super Soul'.



Priyanka with husband Nick Jonas

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