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Hindu Americans Celebrate Historic Event of Bhoomi Poojan of Holy Ram Mandir in Ayodhya



Hindu Americans celebrated the historic groundbreaking of the Ram temple in Ayodhya on Aug. 5, by congregating at New York's iconic Times Square. Over 500 people participated in the festivities which included the singing bhajans, praising Ram and lighting of diyas. The community joined Hindus globally to celebrate an occasion which will be written in golden letters in the history of India and Hindus. They commemorated the day when, after a long wait of 492 years, the construction of a grand Shri Ram Mandir will begin at Ram's birthplace in Ayodhya.

The New York celebration was organized by Jagdish Sewhani, president of the American Indian Public Affairs Committee, who described it as "one-of-a-kind historic event."

On August 5, according to reports in Indian media, Prime Minister Narendra Modi performed the bhoomi poojan for the Ram mandir in Ayodhya. "Amid the chanting of shlokas, Modi consecrated the very first bricks for the temple at the spot where devotees believe Lord Ram was born," the Hindu newspaper said.

"August 5th is a major symbolic day for Hindus of the world," FIA President Anil Bansal said. "The Ayodhya Ram temple location has an incredible significance to all Hindus," he said. "India is considered by many as a secular nation. First, it is not. If you have



any set of laws in a country based on religion, it is not a secular country. Second, the construction of the Ram temple has nothing to do with secularism. Just like this temple, any religious organization can build a monument of their faith in India. I, as a Hindu, want to give my sincere greetings to all Ram devotees, all over the world on this occasion.”

Devout Hindus believe that Lord Ram was born in Ayodhya some 7,000 years ago but that a mosque was constructed on top of his birthplace in the 16th century. The Babri Masjid stood on the site for almost 500 years until it was activists by Hindus in 1992. which sparked riots across the country, killing over 2,000 people. Last November, the Supreme Court of India allowed construction of the Ram temple on the disputed site and also allocated a 5-acre land to the Muslim community to build a mosque near Ayodhya. Following that verdict, Prime Minister Modi had announced the formation of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teertha Kshetra Trust this February.



FIA Hosts Community Reception to Welcome New Consul General of India in New York



The Federation of Indian Associations of NY, NJ, CT (FIA Tristate) hosted a welcome reception on August 7 for Randhir Jaiswal, the newly-appointed Consul General of India in New York, at Royal Albert Palace in Fords, New Jersey.

It was an intimate affair due to New Jersey state and local restrictions and regulations on gatherings during COVID times.

Guests were checked in by FIA volunteers, led by Smita Miki Patel, after which their temperature was checked, prior to entering the reception venue. Each guest was handed a complementary face covering as well.

FIA leadership, prominent members of the Indian American community and members of the press attended the event. Guests networked and mingled with each other, carefully observing social distancing guidelines.

Andy Bhatia, member of the FIA Board of Trustees, compered the evening. FIA leaders including

President Anil Bansal, Chairman Ankur Vaidya, senior advisors Padmashri Dr. Sudhir Parikh and Padmashri Dr. H. R. Shah, among others, welcomed Consul General Jaiswal and Deputy Consul General shatrughna Sinha.

In his address, Consul General Jaiswal thanked FIA for the warm welcome, and acknowledged the contributions made by the community in various fields. "The Indian story all over the world is very engrossing, very deep" he said. "It is a story that carries a message of peace and harmony." Consul General Jaiswal lauded the FIA for putting a stamp on New York City with its flagship India Day Parade "which has become iconic, not just in New York and in this country, but all over the world."

Consul General Jaiswal noted that the Indian American story is that of "peace and progress," as well as a story of "sharing and caring for others." And that, he said, is what defines the community and has also become its identity. He urged the community



to keep playing a pivotal role in “strengthening the friendship between the U.S. and India, which is going to be a defining pathway of the century.” He said he is looking forward to the time when the Indian community will have a stronger imprint of our strength, of our hard work, of our identity, culture, color, and vibrancy, in this country and everywhere else.

He said he seeks the community’s support and wishes, as he “carries out his responsibilities as a representative of the Government of India.” The Consulate will “have an engaging relationship with the FIA,” he said, and added that during this time of the pandemic “we have to see how to hold each other’s hands and see how best we can help each other.”

He said he looks forward to interacting with the Indian American community which is full of “great ideas and great energy.” He said the Consulate General of India in New York is “looking forward to supporting the FIA next year when it will celebrate 50 years. He said, he, along with his colleague Deputy Consul General Sinha and the entire team in New York is there for you whenever you need us.”

Consul General Jaiswal’s first introduction to prominent members of the community was on July 19, a few hours after his arrival in New York. He administered the oath of office to FIA’s new Board of Trustees. “No sooner than I arrived in New York, I had the opportunity to engage with a few members of the Indian American community when I swore-in the new FIA team,” he said.

Prior to being appointed the Consul General of India in New York, Jaiswal was the Joint Secretary cum Social Secretary to the President of India Ramnath Kovind. A 1998 Indian Foreign Service officer, Jaiswal headed the foreign affairs office of the Rashtrapati Bhavan and advised the President on India’s foreign policy. Prior to that he served as the Consul General of India in Johannesburg in South Africa.

Consul General Jaiswal is passionate about sports, culture, old cities and cuisine. He is married to Dr. Abha Jaiswal, a public health expert and together they are the proud parents of two daughters.

Tri-state Area Temples Gearing to Celebrate Janmashtami



Lord Krishna, manifesting divinity, happiness, incredible power, knowledge and all virtues, is worshipped by Hindus residing worldwide. Janmashtami - the auspicious day is celebrated as his birthday every year on Shraavan Vad 8th with great devotion by the global Hindu community.

This year, Janmashtami is being celebrated on August 12 at most of the temples, worship places and homes of Hindus (Vaishnavas).

In New Jersey, where there is a great concentration of Indian American community, the Shree Dwarkadhish Temple in Parlin, has an illustrious track record of celebrating Janmashtami since its inception in 1994.

A very devoted and committed board of trustees of the temple, under the dynamic leadership of its Chairman Pankaj Sheth hosts celebrations throughout the day, with the main one reserved for midnight, the birth time of Lord Krishna. Mayor and police and fire department of Sayreville Township provides great support in controlling traffic and orderly celebration, as a large turnout of devotees fills the temple and the outside ground. Devotees also partake of the prasad that is distributed.

The following day, a joyous celebration of Lord Krishna's Nand Mahotsav attracts hundreds



of participants. The story is that Lord Krishna was born at midnight to Devakiji and was brought by his father Vasudev to Gokul at Nand and Jashodaji's home to save Krishna's massacre by Kans. Hence the next morning, this moment of joy is celebrated symbolically as Nand Mahotsav. This year Nand Mahotsav will be celebrated on Aug. 13 morning at the temple.

However, due to the unusual circumstances of COVID-19 pandemic, this year's Janmashtami celebration will be regulated as per the guidelines of the government.

Another temple that celebrates Lord Krishna is the Vaishnav Temple at Vraj in Pennsylvania. It has similar idols of Lord Shrinathji, accompanied by Yamuna Maharani and Shrimad Vallabhacharyaji.

Vraj has been developed as a major pilgrimage place. Similarly, the Vaishnav temple of New York, known as Shree Govardhannathji temple, which was established in 1988, attracts thousands of devotees in that region.

Janmashtami is also celebrated in most of the temples including those run by ISKCON, Sanatan mandirs, as well as South Indian temples with puja, archan, kirtan aradhana and darshan. Incidentally, the month of Shravan is also known for Lord Shiva's puja-archan worldwide. Lord Shiva is regarded Sayambhu which means He is not born from a human body. and is worshipped by millions of Hindus chanting "Om Namah: Shivay" and Bili Patra is offered to him. Twelve Jyotirlingas have a special significance for Shiv Bhaktas.

Registration is Open for 2020 National Training Program Virtual Workshop

Registration for the 2020 Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) National Training Program (NTP) virtual workshops is open. Session dates are listed below.

Select the hyperlinked event title(s) to register for those you're interested in attending. You'll be prompted to login to the NTP virtual workshop webpage. To login, use the same email address and password you use to register for all NTP webinars. If you don't have an account, you'll need to create one before registering. After you register for an event, you'll get an email confirmation and calendar appointment. Please email NTPHelp@cms.hhs.gov if you need help with your account or registration. Sessions will open at 12pm, with the live presentations starting at 1pm and conclude no later than 3:30pm (ET). Sessions will be recorded for later viewing.

August 2020

- 4th - Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage
- 5th - Medicare Advantage
- 6th - Medicare Appeals and How Medicare Works with Other Insurance
- 11th - Programs for People with Limited Income and Resources
- 12th - Medicare Plan Finder Demonstration & Tips
- 13th - Medicare Current Topics
- 18th - Preventing Medicare Fraud
- 19th - CMS' Actions in Response to COVID-19
- 20th - CMS' Actions to Address Opioid Crisis
- 25th - Social Security Benefits
- 27th - Where Do I Find? (Online Resources)

September 2020

- 1st - Tax Favored Programs & Medicare
- 3rd - Medicare- Spanish Language Presentation

Session materials will be available for download during the events.

NOTE: Registration requests will be considered on a first-come, first-serve basis until each session reaches capacity. The number of attendees from the same organization may be limited. If any session reaches capacity, we'll work to schedule an additional offering for a later date.

The July 26 newsletter inadvertently referred to civil rights leader and Late Sen. John Lewis as George Lewis. Similarly, a typo misspelled Sen Bob Menedez (D-N.J.), as Melendez. The errors are regretted.