

DIASPORA BI-WEEKLY

Federation of Indian Associations (FIA)
New York, New Jersey, Connecticut

Sunday / February 09, 2020

An initiative by FIA



FIA's Annual Dance Pe Chance is a Grand Success; Annual Event Celebrates India's 71st Republic Day



Over 500 participants and 21 performances set a new record for Federation of Indian Associations, NY NJ CT (FIA) at the 36th edition of Dance Pe Chance held on Jan. 25 at the Patriot Theater at the War Memorial in Trenton, N.J. Celebrity judges and distinguished invitees included Deputy Consul General of India in New York, Shatrughna Sinha, actress and Kathak dancer Prachee Shah Paandya, actress and athlete Prachi Tehlan and 'Super 30' fame mathematical

maestro Anand Kumar, who was the chief guest. The event also celebrated India's 71st Republic Day. The new executive board of FIA, led by president Anil Bansal, was sworn-in as well.

This year's Dance Pe Chance saw the participation of 13 dance schools which performed in categories: minor, junior, senior and adult. Among the schools that participated were Aum Dance Creations, Arya Dance Academy, Aatma Performing Arts, B2Z



Dance School, Dancing Shiva, Nruthu Aaloka Dance Vision, Nirmitti School of Dance, Nritya Creations, Shake It Up dance school, Dance4Ever, Taal Institute of Performing Arts, Dansation, and Taraang with Mitali. For over four hours, students of all age groups took the audience on a journey through different genres of dance styles and music. There were classical dances, fusion as well as the popular Bollywood style of dance. Participants were judged by Odissi dancer Anindita Nanda, Bharatnatyam dancer, theater artist and choreographer Paromita Chakravarty, dance teacher Pranaya Akula and Nartan Rang Dance Dance

Academy owner Swati Vaishnav.

The event commenced with the national anthem of America and India, followed by a welcome address Dance Pe Chance chair Saurin Parikh. Parikh, who welcomed the spectators and applauded the children, parents and choreographers, announced that so far over 18000 children that have participated in FIA's cultural dance competition that spans three decades.

Deputy Consul General Sinha administered the oath of office to President Anil Bansal and his executive committee of 2020 including Himanshu

Voluntary Content Compilation
FIA NY-NJ-CT and
Community Volunteers

Voluntary Editor
Bhargavi Kulkarni

Voluntary Graphic
Compilation
Gracia Marcom



Bhatia, Executive Vice President; Saurin Parikh, Vice President; Praveen Bansal, General Secretary; Amit Ringasia, Treasurer; Alok Kumar, Immediate Past President and Mardavi Patel, Joint Secretary.

Bansal thanked the 2019 team and expressed his gratitude for the trust placed on him by the FIA fraternity in electing him to lead the organization. He assured continued engagement with the diaspora assistance programs as well as celebrations to mark FIA's 50 years of completion.

Sinha, in his address, acknowledged and welcomed the incoming FIA executive team. He expressed his appreciation for the role FIA has played in the community for 49 years and how the consulate and FIA working in sync is pivotal, and progressively benefits the Indian diaspora in the Northeast.

Some of the prominent members of the Indian American community were also honored at the event. Also present was Rajpal Bath, a representative from the N.J. Governor Phil Murphy's office, who administered the oath of office to two new members added by FIA to the Board of Trustees - past presidents Srujal Parikh and Andy Bhatia, both long-time FIA veterans. Chairman Ramesh Patel recognized the support of the FIA Board that currently holds a line of distinguished community leaders including Ramesh Patel, H R Shah and Dr. Sudhir Parikh, both recipients of the Padma Shri award, Albert Jasani, Ram Gadhavi, Dipak Patel, Chandrakant Trivedi, Pravin Pandhi, Ankur Vaidya, Jayesh Patel and Yash Paul Soi.

The event also had many firsts for FIA. The organization launched an e-bi-weekly diaspora news mailer and performed a beta app test for a popular audience voting app which saw an accumulated total of over 7000 votes cast. The app vote scores were not included due to the beta version of the app being tested. FIA plans to incorporate this as a part of

the counted vote score in the coming competitions.

Concluding with the announcement of results, FIA also honored all the dancers, choreographers and judges with prize-winning amounts, mementos and certificates.



Below is the list of winners:

Minor:

- 1st place: AUM Dance Creations
- 2nd place: Arya Dance Academy
- 3rd place: Shake It Up dance club
- Best Choreography: AUM Dance Creations
- Best Costume: AUM Dance Creations

Junior:

- 1st place: Aatma Performing Arts
- 2nd place: Arya Dance Academy
- 3rd place: AUM Dance Creations
- Best Choreography: Aatma Performing Arts
- Best Costume: Aatma Performing Arts

Senior:

- 1st place: Aatma Performing Arts
- 2nd place: AUM Dance Creations
- 3rd place: Arya Dance Academy
- Best Costume: Aatma Performing Arts
- Best Choreography: Aatma Performing Arts

Adult:

- 1st place: Nirmiti School of Dance
- 2nd place: Dansation
- 3rd place: Shake It Up dance club

Rising Star:

- 1st place: Taal Institute of Performing Arts
- 2nd place: Dance4Ever



Taranjit Singh Sandhu is India's New Ambassador to the U.S.

Taranjit Singh Sandhu, the newly appointed Ambassador of India to the United States assumed charge of his new role on Feb. 3. Two days later, on Feb. 5, he presented his credentials to President Donald Trump at the Oval office of the White House.

President Trump warmly welcomed Ambassador Sandhu back to Washington, D.C. and wished him every success in his responsibilities in his new role. Sandhu said that the vision and guidance provided by Prime Minister Modi and President Trump in the last three years have moved India and the United States towards greater strategic convergence. Ambassador Sandhu affirmed his commitment to work towards strengthening strategic partnership between India and the United States, which is anchored in mutual trust and friendship, democratic values and people-to-people ties.

Ambassador Sandhu is one of the most experienced Indian diplomats on U.S. affairs. He has served in the Indian Mission in Washington, D.C. twice earlier. He was Deputy Chief of Mission at the Indian embassy from July 2013 to January 2017. Prior to that, he was First Secretary (Political) at the embassy, and was responsible for liaison with the United States Congress from 1997 to 2000. He has also been at the Permanent Mission of India to United Nations, New York from July 2005 to February 2009.

Prior to his current assignment in Washington, D.C., Ambassador Sandhu was the High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka from January 2017 to January 2020. He had also served at the High Commission

of India, Colombo earlier as the head of the Political Wing from December 2000 to September 2004.

Ambassador Sandhu was Consul General of India in Frankfurt from September 2011 to July 2013. He has worked in the Ministry of External Affairs in various capacities: as Joint Secretary (United Nations) from March 2009 to August 2011; and later as Joint Secretary (Administration) heading the Human Resource Division. He was Officer on Special Duty (Press Relations), Ministry of External Affairs from December 1995 to March 1997, and was responsible for liaison with foreign media in India.

In a distinguished career spanning over thirty years in the Indian Foreign Service since 1988, Ambassador Sandhu started his diplomatic career from former Soviet Union (Russia) where he worked as Third Secretary (Political) / Second Secretary (Commercial) in the Indian Mission from 1990 to 1992. Following the breakup of Soviet Union, he was sent to open a new Embassy in Ukraine. He served as head of Political and Administration Wings in Indian Embassy in Kiev from 1992 to 1994.

Born on Jan. 23, 1963, in a family of educationists, Ambassador Sandhu studied at The Lawrence School, Sanawar and graduated with History Honors from St. Stephens' College, Delhi. He pursued a Master's Degree in International Relations at the Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Ambassador Sandhu is married to Mrs. Reenat Sandhu, who is Ambassador of India to Italy. They have two children.

2020 Census and the Importance of Being Counted



As the Census Bureau is gearing up for the 2020 Census, it is extremely important to stress the importance of the decennial exercise. While the Census Bureau is aiming to

count every single person residing in the U.S. in the enumeration, and is encouraging all to take part in the most inclusive civic activity in the U.S.

However, while population count every 10 years is an essential prerequisite for ensuring equitable social and economic development, not everyone seems to be equally aware of the importance of census and the need to participate in the exercise. According to data revealed by the Census Bureau last year, any people were unfamiliar with the census, with only 33 percent being "extremely" or "very" familiar. The study revealed that knowledge about the purpose and process of the census was uneven across groups.

To combat that ignorance, and create awareness about Census 2020, several Indian-American groups have come together to carry outreach across several communities.

People can answer the 2020 Census questionnaire online, by phone or by mail when it becomes available in mid-March. People can respond to the census online and by phone in 13 languages.

What is 2020 Census?

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the 2020 Census counts every person living in the 50 states, District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories (Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands). The count is mandated by the Constitution and conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, a nonpartisan government agency. Each home will receive an invitation to respond to a short questionnaire—online, by phone, or by mail. Each household will receive a form that asks about basic demographic and housing information that covers: The number of people living or staying in your household as of April 1, 2020; If your home is owned with or without a mortgage, rented or occupied without rent; A phone number of someone living in your home; The name, sex, age, race and date of birth of each person living in your home; Whether anyone is of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish descent; The relationship of each person to a central person in the home; Data collected on age for example, helps local officials plan program funding for health and assistance to seniors and children; To help you answer the census, the U.S. Census Bureau provides translated web pages and guides in 59 non-English languages, including Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi, Tamil,

Telugu, Malayalam, Bengali, Urdu and the American Sign Language, as well as guides in braille and large print.

The Asian race category which was added to the census in 2000, offers an option to mark national origin as 'Asian Indian'.

Privacy of Information

The undocumented population, whether from India, or any other country, fear that if they divulge that they are in the country illegally, that information will be turned over to immigration authorities for their eventual deportation.

The Census Bureau is bound by Title 13 of the U.S. Code to keep your information confidential. Under Title 13, the Census Bureau cannot release any identifiable information about you, your home, or your business, even to law enforcement agencies. The law ensures that your private data is protected and that your answers cannot be used against you by any government agency or court. The answers you provide are used only to produce statistics. You are kept anonymous: The Census Bureau is not permitted to publicly release your responses in any way that could identify you or anyone else in your home.

Why is This Count Conducted?

The results of the 2020 Census will help determine how hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding flow into communities every year for the next decade. That funding shapes many different aspects of every community, no matter the size, no matter the location.. Every year, billions of dollars in federal funding go to hospitals, fire departments, schools, roads, and other resources based on census data. The 2020 Census will determine congressional representation, inform hundreds of billions in federal funding, and provide data that will impact communities for the next decade. The 2020 Census will provide a snapshot of our nation—who we are, where we live, and so much more.

The results of this once-a-decade count determine the number of seats each state has in the House of Representatives. They are also used to draw congressional and state legislative districts. Over the next decade, lawmakers, business owners, and many others will use 2020 Census data to make critical decisions. The results will show where communities need new schools, new clinics, new roads, and more services for families, older adults, and children.

The results will also inform how hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding are allocated to more than 100 programs, including Medicaid, Head Start, block grants for community mental health services, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as SNAP.

Anand Kumar of 'Super 30' fame thanks N.J for all the love and support

During a recent visit to a temple in New Jersey, Anand Kumar says he was surprised by the number of people who recognized him and stopped by to say hello or have a photograph taken. But this is not something Anand has witnessed for first time. Since the release of "Super 30," a film based on his life and his educational program of the same name, the Patna-based mathematician he's stopped at airports and other public places. "People tell me they like the film, they appreciate the work I'm doing," he says.

Kumar was in New Jersey last month, to attend Dance Pe Chance, FIA's annual dance competition, where he was the chief guest. Kumar said he was overwhelmed by the love and support of the people here. He also praised all the students and their parents



and teachers for their dedication to Indian dance and their desire to stay close to Indian's rich heritage and culture.

Kumar also revealed that a film on him could have been made long ago. Writer Sanjeev Dutta also approached him to buy the rights, but it didn't develop further. "Anurag Basu showed interest then, but

nothing moved. Things took off when producer Madhu Mantena came into the picture. It was through him Kumar met Hrithik who said he needed a year to prep for the role. Directed by Vikas Bahl, 'Super 30' also stars Virendra Saxena, Mrunal Thakur, Pankaj Tripathi, Johnny Lever among others.

Born in Patna, Kumar's father was a clerk working for the postal department. He got his schooling done from a Hindi-medium school. Kumar soon developed a keen interest for mathematics and after graduation, he submitted his papers on number theory, which was published in major mathematical journals.

Initially Kumar started his own institute, the Ramanujan School of Mathematics in 1992. by renting



a classroom for Rs. 500 a month. Within a span of one year, his class grew from just two students to almost 500 students. However, it was in 2002 when a poor student came to him seeking coaching for IIT-JEE but was unable to pay the fee due to poverty, the idea of 'Super 30' struck him. Since then every year, his institute would hold a competitive test to select 30 students from the economically backward sections for the Super 30 program, in which he would tutor them, provide them with study materials and took care of their lodging for a year absolutely free.

Kumar garnered widespread recognition in 2009 when the Discovery Channel broadcast a one-hour-long program on Super 30. Soon awards and appreciation followed Kumar. The New York Times devoted half a page for Kumar and his institution. The Time magazine also featured Super 30 in the list of Best of Asia 2010.

However, it was Krithik Roshan's film that made Kumar a hero of sorts in India and around the world. Speaking about the film, Kumar says that he was in awe of how Hrithik had transformed himself to portray Kumar. When he watched the trailer of the film with his 3-year-old daughter, he recalled how she mistook Hrithik for her father. Kumar says that felt like Hrithik was almost like a shadow of him. Kumar says he and his family didn't just enjoy the film, the "felt it."

But most of all, Kumar says he was impressed with Krithik's dedication to his role. Kumar says he made a video of himself for over 250 hours and sent it to Hrithik so he could observe Kumar's mannerisms in different settings. He also made several trips to Mumbai to meet Hrithik.

Kumar meanwhile says that more than the changes to his life, what "Super 30" managed is to bring a change in India's youth. "Today's youth is convinced more than ever that they have to work hard," he says. The film shows the value of perseverance, and I am hoping they inculcate these values."

He says he wants to build an institute which just doesn't focus on IITs. "Any field, where the child wants to study, my institute will help them."