

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

We are now in 8 states

New England: The newest chapter in FIA history

After New York, New Jersey & Connecticut, FIA enters 5 more states—Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont



Consul General of India Randhir Jaiswal with FIA members ahead of launch;



Massachusetts State Representative Carolyn Dykema (Centre) with FIA chairman Ankur Vaidya (L) and FIA NE president Abhishek Singh (R)

The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA), one of the largest umbrella organizations of the Indian community, launched its New England (NE) chapter at an event in Boston on May 8. With this, the association now has extended its presence to Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont along with the existing tri-state area of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Why the New England chapter?

The NE region was in need of a true grassroots non-profit organization for the Indian American diaspora. The formation of FIA NE will ensure that community initiatives and issues more core to the Indian American community in the region get due attention.

Those in attendance included Massachusetts State representative Carolyn Dykema, Justice Sabita Singh, Associate Justice of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Appeal Court, FIA Chairman Ankur Vaidya, Padma Shri S P Kothari, entrepreneur philanthropist Ramesh Kapoor, veteran community leader Dr Dinesh Patel and Professor Balram Singh among others.

The team

Abhishek Singh, has been named the president of FIA New England. The FIA NE team includes Sanjay Gokhale, Shova Sharma, Gautam Patel, Deepak Rathore, Rakesh Kavsari, Karan, Sainil, Karthkeyan Ramu, Amol Panshanwar and others. They were sworn in by Consul General of India NY Randhir Jaiswal.

2 Indian visa camp marks FIA's entry in New England

FIA celebrates Gujarat, Maharashtra Day

3 DRDO drug brings fresh hope for India

COHNA campaigns for school holiday on Diwali

4 China's out-of-control rocket part lands in Indian Ocean

Bomb blasts outside school in Kabul leaves 50 dead

Myanmar junta labels ousted lawmakers 'terrorists'

5 Celebrities extend helping hand in India's Covid battle

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 editor@fianynjct.org

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Indian visa camp marks FIA's entry in New England

Federation of Indian Associations partners with the Consulate General of India New York and prominent community organizations for Indian visa camp in Boston on May 8; over 1,000 applications processed.

#Boston

The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) in association with prominent organizations in New England facilitated a consular services access programme in partnership with the Consulate General of India York for the community in Boston on May 8.

The Indian Visa Camp 2021 coincided with the formation of FIA's New England

chapter. It was a grand success with nearly 1,000 applications processed with the help of a team of over 60 volunteers, coordinated by FIA New England.

Prominent organizations of the Indian community in New England like World Hindu Council of America (VHPA), Bihar Jharkhand Association of New England, Ekal Vidyalaya, Gujarati Association, Hindu Swyamsevaka Sangh USA, India Association of New Hampshire, India Society of Worcester, India

Circle for Caring, Kerala Association, Marathi Mandal, Rhode Island, New England Malayalee Association, New England Marathi Mandal, Overseas Friends of BJP, Patidar Samaj, Rajput Association of North America, Rhode Island Tamil Sangam, Saheli, Samarthanam-USA, Sewa International-USA, Tamil Nadu Foundation, Team Aid, Telugu Association of Greater Boston, World NRI Association besides the Consulate General of India NY and VFS Global partnered for the visa camp.



(Anti-clockwise from standing-right) FIA secretary Parveen Bansal, president Anil Bansal, joint treasurer Mahesh Dubal, chairman Ankur Vaidya, board members Anand Patel, Srujal Parikh; committee member Amit Yadav, treasurer Amit Ringasia and vice-president Saurin Parikh



Consul General of India-New York Randhir Jaiswal with members of FIA NY-NJ-CT and FIA NE

FIA celebrates Gujarat, Maharashtra Day

The event on May 1, scaled down significantly due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, was held online this time; on the occasion, the association pledged full support to India in its battle against the virus

#New Jersey

The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) and the Gujarat Associations of North America (GANNA) celebrated the Gujarat and Maharashtra Foundation Day on May 1. The event, scaled down significantly and held online in view of the ongoing pandemic, was dedicated to Covid heroes and frontline warriors who have been making relentless efforts to provide relief to others in such tough times.

The speakers included FIA Chairman Ankur Vaidya, President Anil Bansal, Vice President Saurin Parikh and member of board of trustees Srujal Parikh. Consul General of India in New York Randhir Jaiswal also addressed the online gathering on the occasion.

Chairman Vaidya reiterated FIA's commitment to help fellow Indians back home in their times of need. He pointed out that the organization has been involved directly or indirectly in facilitation of about 400 shipments.



President Bansal added, "We along with our sister organizations like Bihar and Jharkhand Associations of North America (BAJANA), Share and Care and others have been working tirelessly to provide much-

needed medical advice, instruments, oxygen and, most importantly, logistics to send them to proper places in India."

Consul General Randhir Jaiswal thanked the US government, the Indian community and organizations for their help to India. He shared that three aircraft with relief material had already reached India.

Amish Parikh of the PN Group announced donation of \$125,000 towards the PM Relief Fund.

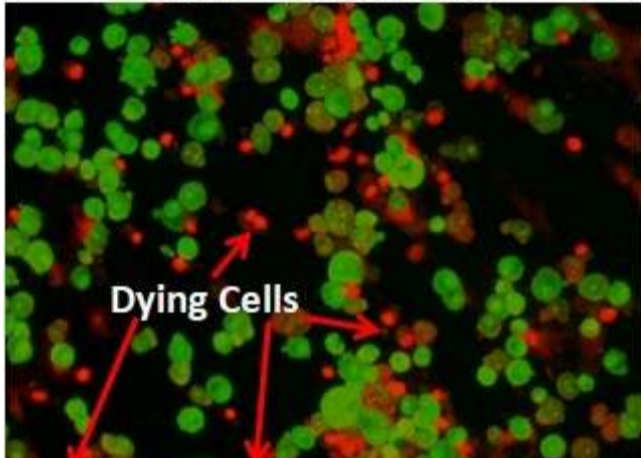
On the occasion, 14-year-old Riya Pawar sang 'Jai Jai Maharashtra Maaza'. Versatile singer Forum Shah presented 'Vaishnav Jan to tene re kahiye'.

Joint secretary of FIA, Smita Miki Patel, gave the vote of thanks.

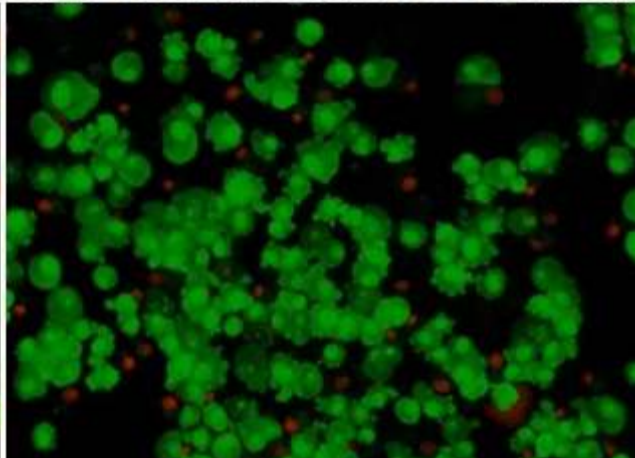
DRDO drug brings fresh hope for India

India's Defence Research and Development Organization develops drug that can reduce oxygen dependency among patients with moderate to severe infection, as per a statement

SARS-CoV-2 Infection



SARS-CoV-2 Infection + 2-DG Treatment



#New Delhi

The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) of India has come up with an oral drug that, according to the organization's claims, can provide relief from oxygen dependency among the patients. This could provide relief to patients with moderate to severe infection.

The drug, 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG), has been developed by DRDO's Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS) in collaboration with Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Hyderabad. It was given emergency approval for use by the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI).

DRDO, in a statement on Saturday, said the drug can provide early relief from oxygen dependency among the patients, which can be helpful as the second Covid-19 wave rages on across the country, and more patients continue to need medical oxygen.

The statement further mentions that clinical trials of the drug have shown that it helps in faster recovery of hospitalized

patients and reduces supplemental oxygen dependence. It adds that "higher proportion of patients treated with 2-DG showed RT-PCR negative conversion in Covid patients".

The 2-DG comes in powder form in sachet and is taken orally by dissolving it in water.

"On May 01, DCGI granted permission for emergency use of this drug as adjunct therapy in moderate to severe Covid-19 patients. Being a generic molecule and analogue of glucose, it can be easily produced and made available in plenty in the country," the country's defence ministry said in its statement.

"It accumulates in the virus infected cells and prevents virus growth by stopping viral synthesis and energy production. Its selective accumulation in virally-infected cells makes this drug unique," it added.

Scientists had been working on this drug for over a year now. Laboratory experiments were conducted in April last year with the help of Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology

Double mutant strain in India resisting vaccines?

The coronavirus strain that has currently held India to ransom, B.1.617, is more contagious and could be the reason for disastrous second wave of Covid-19 outbreak in the country, chief scientist of the World Health Organization has indicated. What's worse, this variant may possibly be resisting antibodies generated either by vaccination or earlier infection. That makes it a "variant of concern" (VOC), WHO's chief scientist Soumya Swaminathan has said in an interview to a news agency. The WHO recently listed it as a 'variant of interest' but is yet to put it on the list of VOCs.

The new variant is also called the double mutant variant as it carries markings of two virus mutations.

(CCMB) Hyderabad when it was still the first wave of the pandemic. Results showed that it works effectively in inhibiting the SARS CoV-2 virus.

"In efficacy trends, the patients treated with 2-DG showed faster symptomatic cure than Standard of Care (SoC) on various endpoints. A significantly favourable trend (2.5 days difference) was seen in terms of the median time to achieving normalisation of specific vital signs parameters when compared to SoC," DRDO said.

Agencies

COHNA campaigns for school holiday on Diwali

#New York

Diwali is an important festival for Hindus. However, the day is yet to find a places among holiday list in schools. The Coalition of Hindus of North America (COHNA) has started a campaign to seek support for their call to have Diwali holiday in schools.

In the campaign note, COHNA has stated, "New York City is home to hundreds of thousands of Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs who celebrate the festival of Diwali with

great enthusiasm. Yet, while NYC has religious holidays for other major religions, Diwali does not enjoy the same status."

A New York Assembly Bill, introduced by Jenifer Rajkumar, aims to designate Diwali as a school holiday in NYC, it pointed out.

COHNA has now urged Indian Americans to join its campaign for school holiday status for Diwali so that "families and children can enjoy this wonderful festival together and in a more traditional way".

Those interested in joining can send a mail to info@cohna.org



■ 'Irresponsible behaviour'

China's out-of-control rocket part lands in Indian Ocean

There were many apprehensions around uncontrolled entry of segment of China's Long March 5B rocket

#Beijing

A freefalling part of a Chinese rocket that had kept the American and European space authorities on their toes as they tracked its movement finally re-entered the earth's atmosphere and disintegrated over the Indian Ocean near Maldives.

The Long March 5B rocket, launched on April 28 was to put a core module of China's Tianhe space station into orbit. However, apparently there was no control over the 18-tonne debris that would return to the earth. China claimed there was hardly any risk to life or property from the falling part. But NASA and the space experts made it clear that China had behaved irresponsibly.



The rocket was launched on April 28

"After monitoring and analysis, at 10:24 (0224 GMT) on May 9, 2021, the last-stage wreckage of the Long March 5B Yao-2 launch vehicle has re-entered the atmosphere," the China Manned Space Engineering Office said in a statement. It also provided the coordinates

for a point in the Indian Ocean near the Maldives. Most of the part was destroyed during the descent, it added.

For now, the fears have been laid to rest, but lessons need to be learnt. "Spacefaring nations must minimize the risks to people and property on Earth of re-entries of space objects and maximize transparency regarding those operations," NASA administrator Bill Nelson said in a statement.

Harvard astrophysicist Jonathan McDowell, who tracked the tumbling rocket part, said on Twitter, "An ocean reentry was always statistically the most likely. It appears China won its gamble... But it was still reckless."

Bomb blasts outside school in Kabul leaves 50 dead

Multiple bomb blasts occurred outside Sayed ul Shuhada school in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, on Saturday. The blasts left at least 55 dead and 150 injured, mostly female students. Eyewitnesses have said that barring around seven to eight, all were students coming out of the school. The school has three shifts, of which the second one is for girls, according to a news report.

So far, no group has claimed responsibility for the attack. President Ashraf Ghani has blamed the Taliban, but they have denied their involvement. Notably, the explosions took place in a Shi'ite Muslim neighbourhood which has earlier faced Islamic State attacks over the past years. The Afghan Capital has been on high alert since the US announced withdrawal of its troops.



The dead being buried

Myanmar junta labels ousted lawmakers 'terrorists'



Rally of supporters of National Unity Government, formed by forcibly ousted lawmakers from NLD and representatives of ethnic groups in Myanmar

A shadow government formed by elected legislators of Myanmar after the February coup by the military has been labelled as 'terrorist'. The junta had previously accused them of treason and last week announced that they were being branded terrorists as they participated in a civil disobedience movement.

Around 750 civilians have been killed by the forces since the coup, with the military justifying its act as an attempt to stop "rioting".

Last week, the shadow government announced the formation of the People's Defense Force.

Meanwhile, the military once again postponed the court hearing date of Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD) who had had a landslide victory in the November elections. She continues to be under house arrest and her lawyers are yet to get permission to meet her in person.

Celebrities extend helping hand in India's Covid battle

Ever since the number of cases and deaths in India went out of control, help has been pouring in from all nooks and corners. The country's own entertainment industry has also come forward to make contributions in each possible way

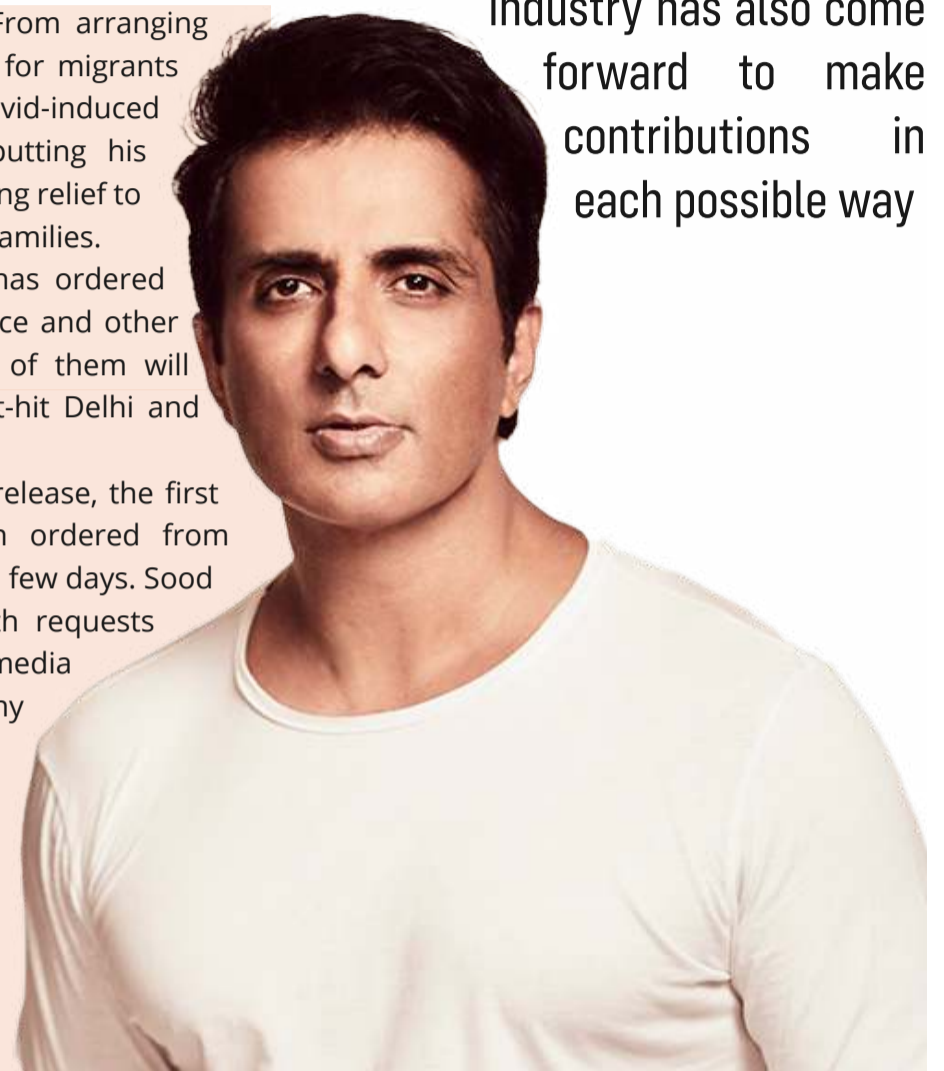
Sonu Sood: From reel to real hero

Sonu Sood has become a household name because of his extraordinary relief work for Covid patients and their families as well as needy people since the pandemic struck. Until the start of the pandemic, few knew about the philanthropic side of the actor. A year later, the entire country swears by his extraordinary philanthropic work over

these difficult months. From arranging free transport and food for migrants at the time of the Covid-induced lockdown in 2020 to putting his heart and soul into bringing relief to Covid patients and their families.

In the latest, he has ordered oxygen plants from France and other countries. At least four of them will be installed in the worst-hit Delhi and Maharashtra.

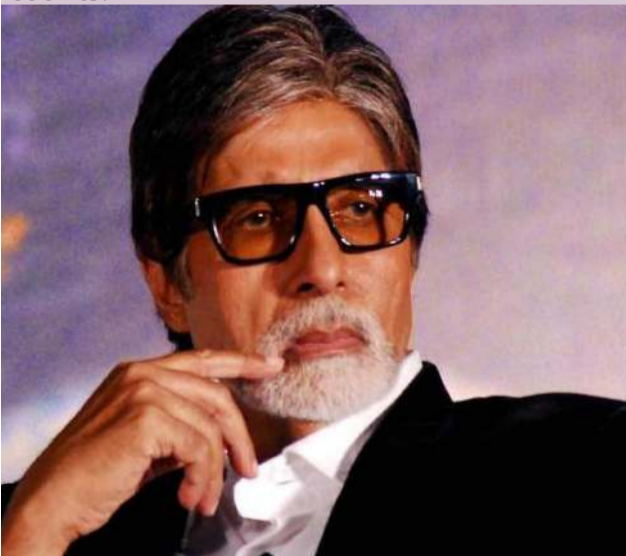
As per an official release, the first plant has already been ordered from France and will arrive in a few days. Sood has been inundated with requests for help on his social media accounts. Alongside, many have volunteered to join him in his work. His selfless service has earned him a lot of love and respect from all quarters, with many calling him the real hero of India.



Amitabh Bachchan donates Rs 2 crore to Covid centre

The megastar recently donated Rs 2 crore to Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Covid Care centre at Rakab Ganj Gurudwara in Delhi. He also arranged for oxygen cylinders for the centre

He also appealed to the world to help India in its fight against the virus. He shared the video on Twitter, where he says, "As a global citizen I appeal to all global citizens to rise up, speak to your governments, pharmaceutical companies and ask them to donate, to give, to extend a helping hand, to the public that needs it the most. Every effort counts."



Gurmeet Choudhary sets up makeshift hospital in Nagpur

Television actor Gurmeet Choudhary has launched a makeshift hospital in Nagpur that will treat Covid-19 patients. Called Astha Dedicated Covid Hospital, it has been set up in collaboration with Dr Sayyed Wajahatali and his team. Speaking about the same, the actor said he wants people to reach out to him and his team for any Covid related assistance.

Gurmeet had earlier said that he wanted to set up 1000-bed hospitals in Lucknow and Patna as India battles the devastating second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.



Virushka raise over Rs 3.5 crore through fundraiser

Cricketer Virat Kohli and his actress wife Anushka Sharma collected more than Rs 3.5 crore in a single day of announcing their fundraiser #InThisTogether with Ketto for Covid patients. The couple has targeted Rs 7 crore. Anushka took to Instagram on Saturday to share the update with fans and media, and also thanked people for their generous contribution.

They had made the announcement

about the fundraiser two days after IPL 2021, in which Virat Kohli was leading RCB, was suspended. Of the raised amount, Rs 2 crore has been donated by the couple.



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

Voluntary Graphics
Compilation
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