

DIASPORA BI-WEEKLY

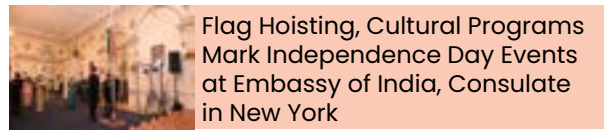
Federation of Indian Associations NY-NJ-CT. 501(C)3
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Hon. Consul General of India in New York, Randhir Jaiswal, unfurls India's national flag at an event at the Consulate to commemorate the 74th Independence Day of India in New York, August 15.



Hon. Consul General of India in New York, Randhir Jaiswal, speaks at the event at the Consulate to commemorate the 74th Independence Day of India in New York, August 15.

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Hon. Taranjit Singh Sandhu, India's Ambassador to the U.S., unfurls India's national flag at an event at the Embassy of India in Washington, D.C., to commemorate the 74th Independence Day of India, August 15.



Hon. Taranjit Singh Sandhu, India's Ambassador to the U.S., with his staff at the event at the Embassy of India in Washington, D.C., to commemorate the 74th Independence Day of India, August 15.



Guests maintain social distance at the event at the Embassy of India in Washington, D.C., to commemorate the 74th Independence Day of India, August 15.

The 74th Independence Day of India was celebrated in Washington D.C. with a flag-hoisting ceremony on Aug. 15 at the India House. Members of the Indian community joined the celebrations in large numbers virtually through digital platforms in view of local public health guidelines.

Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu, Ambassador of India, unfurled the tricolor, which was followed by singing of the National Anthem. Ambassador Sandhu addressed the guests, and the address to the nation by Hon'ble President of India on the eve of Independence Day was played. This was followed by a cultural program involving rendition of patriotic songs by the students of Gandharva School of Music, Richmond.

In New York, India's 74th Independence Day was celebrated at the Consulate General of India, with a flag-hoisting ceremony. Hon. Randhir Jaiswal, Consul General, unfurled the national flag after which the national anthem was sung. The Consul General then read out the address of the President of India. A short cultural program was presented by Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, which included singing of patriotic songs and poetry recitation.

Due to the current pandemic caused by COVID-19, the event was telecast Live through the Consulate's social media platforms. Social distancing was maintained during the event. The event was viewed virtually by around 9000 people.

In addition, Consul General Jaiswal attended the flag hoisting ceremony organized by the FIA at Times Square. He also addressed students of Cornell University and participated in other Independence Day celebrations organized by community organizations such as Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO), Connecticut and central New Jersey; Indian Association of Greater Boston and Council of Indian Organizations in Greater Philadelphia. The Consul General attended these events virtually.

Apart from these celebrations, Consul General also shared his good wishes via video messages with other organizations who held functions on the occasion.

FIA Bids Farewell to Jaideep Chola, Head of Chancery at the Consulate General of India in New York



FIA President Anil Bansal presents a memento to Jaideep Chola, Head of Chancery at the Consulate General of India in New York, as FIA Vice President Saurin Parikh, looks on, at farewell dinner hosted in his honor in New Jersey on August 15.



FIA's women team members, Krina Parikh, Karishma Vaidya and Radhika Mehta with Jaideep Chola, Head of Chancery at the Consulate General of India in New York.



Jaideep Chola, Head of Chancery at the Consulate General of India in New York speaks at the farewell dinner hosted for him by FIA in New Jersey on August 15.



FIA leadership with Jaideep Chola, Head of Chancery at the Consulate General of India in New York, at a farewell dinner hosted in his honor in New Jersey, August 15.



FIA Chairman Ankur Vaidya reads a citation presented to Jaideep Chola, Head of Chancery at the Consulate General of India in New York, at a farewell dinner hosted in his honor in New Jersey, August 15.

FIA leadership bade farewell to Jaideep Chola, Head of Chancery at the Consulate General of India in New York, at an informal gathering in New Jersey on August 15. FIA Chairman Ankur Vaidya, President Anil Bansal and his executive team, committee members and members of the Board of Trustees and FIA's women team of Krina Parikh, Karishma Vaidya and Radhika Mehta, attended the event.

Chairman Vaidya thanked Chola for the joint initiatives administered between the consulate and FIA during this tenure. FIA President Anil Bansal congratulated Chola on completion of his tenure in New York and extended good wishes and luck for his future endeavors.

Chola was administratively involved with FIA's International Women's Day celebrations held at the Consulate.

"All I have done is what I am supposed to as a part of my job and in the process have made some good friends who will stay along," Chola said. "I had always heard about Indian associations and about India Day Parade in New York and this posting here has made that desire to be able to witness the event in person a dream come true."

FIA Trustee Srujal Parikh talked about how the consulate is a second home for Indian Americans, while past president Alok Kumar, member of FIA's Golden Jubilee Executive team thanked Chola for his dedicated and sincere commitment to serving the Indian community in the U.S.

Chola was presented a citation from Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, who commended him for his outstanding service. Several FIA member organizations including Bihar Jharkhand Association of North America, India Cultural Association, Telugu Association of USA, American Tamil Sangam, Friends of India, also complimented Chola.

FIA Mourns the Passing of Classical Singer Pandit Jasraj

The Federation of Indian Associations of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut (FIA-tri-state) joins music lovers worldwide in sharing their grief in the passing of Padma Vibhushan Sangeet Martand Pandit Jasraj of cardiac arrest on August 17 in New Jersey. He was 90, and is survived by his wife, Madhura Shantaram, and his children, Durga Jasraj and Sharang Dev Pandit.

Belonging to the Mewati Gharana, Jasraj is considered the doyen of Indian classical vocal music. Mewati Gharana is a school of music known for its traditional performances of khayals.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered condolences after Panditji's death. "The unfortunate demise of Pandit Jasrajji leaves a deep void in the Indian cultural sphere," Prime Minister Modi said. "Not only were his renditions outstanding, he also made a mark as an exceptional mentor to several other vocalists. Condolences to his family and admirers worldwide. Om Shanti."

Panditji graced FIA's world famous India Day Parade in August 2011 as the Guest of Honor along with Bollywood actress Rani Mukherji as the Grand Marshall.

Panditji was among the top golden vocal classical singers in the era of Pandit Omakrath Thakur, Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, Pandit Kumar Gandharva, Girija Devi and Begum Akhtar, among others. He was an ardent devotee of Dwarkadhish Prabhu.

Pandit Jasraj was born on Jan. 28, 1930 in Hissar district of Punjab, now Haryana. His father, Motiram, was also a classical singer. Motiram was Mewat's 'Raj Gayak.'

Panditji first started mastering the tabla, under his elder brother, Pandit Maniram's tutelage.

Through God's grace and hard work, Panditji trained himself to excel in classical, semi classical and bhajan singing. In a career spanning over 80 years, Panditji has added his own elements to the genre, including the thumri. There was divinity in his music. He gave a new dimension of classical vocal singing and bhajan singing.

In 1970, Panditji developed his own new raga - "Jasrangi Raga" - which is a superb combination of two ragas, Abhogi and Kalavati - a masterful jugalbandi. He also popularized semi-classical musical styles, such as Haveli Sangeet, that involves semi-classical performances in temples. He has created a variety of rare ragas like Gyankali, Dhanashree, Abiri Todi, Bhavsakh, Patdeepki and Purba.

He received the Padma Vibhushan in 2000, the Padma Bhushan in 1990, the Padma Shri in 1975 and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1987 for his contribution to the Indian classical music.

Panditji married Madhura, daughter of famous producer and director, V. Shantaram of Rajkamal Kala Mandir in 1962. His son, Sharang Dev Pandit, and daughter, Durga Jasraj, are both well known in music, acting and anchoring fields.

In the U.S., Panditji co-founded the Pandit Jasraj Institute for Music Research, Artistry and Appreciation - the Mewati Gurukul, with locations in Colonia, New Jersey; Brooklyn, New York; Mars, Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The institute aims "to foster the preservation, growth and teaching of Indian Classical Music in the tradition of Mewati Gharana. The institute is headed by co-founder, Pandita Tripti Indira R. Mukherjee.

A special scholarship in classical music on Panditji's name is awarded at the Queens University in New York.

There is also an annual performance in New York, where Indian classical singers of all genres assemble and perform to honor Panditji.

Panditji would always greet everyone with his signature smile, accompanied by "Jai Ho," with his blessings by both hands. A regular at high-profile events, Panditji has performed at the Consulate General of India in New York as well as the TV Asia studios in Edison, New Jersey.



Mahendra Singh Dhoni Retires From International Cricket

India's legendary cricketer Mahendra Singh Dhoni's August 15 Instagram post, announcing his retirement from all forms of international cricket, sent shockwaves among his fans and cricket lovers the world over.

M.S. Dhoni has dominated Indian cricket for over 15 years and has registered so many records on his name, establishing himself as a giant of the sport. Dhoni is undoubtedly India's greatest limited-overs cricketer, its most successful captain, with a superb cricketing brain and incredible coolness during challenges on the field.

Dhoni's records are a testament of his legacy. His lifelong records define his super stardom. A boy who was born in Ranchi in 1981, with his hard work and brilliance, became the hero of the cricketing world.

Dhoni has the distinction of becoming the only captain among World Cup cricket playing nations to win three prestigious ICC titles.

1. T20 World Cup in 2007 in Johannesburg, South Africa.
 2. Champions Trophy in 2013 in London, UK.
 3. One Day World Cup in 2011 at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai.
- Won Asia Cup matches twice - 2010 and 2016.
 - Number 1 Test ranking.
 - He captained 332 international matches, including 200 One Day, 60 Test, and 72 T-20 (more than 50 matches in each format). Following Dhoni is Australia's Ricky Ponting, at No. 2, with 324 matches.
 - Dhoni has the maximum wins in One Day finals - 4 out of 6 - with a total of 110 victories.
 - He has the maximum not-outs in One Day matches (24). He has been not out for 51 times while chasing, out of which India won 47 matches, lost two, and two were declared a tie.
 - Dhoni has the distinction of maximum stumping - 123 in 350 One Days. Sri Lanka's Kumar Sangakkara has 99 stumping.
 - His total aggregate runs are 17, 266 and 829 outs as wicket keeper.
 - Dhoni led the Chennai Super Kings thrice in the IPL.

Dhoni was regarded as one of the best finishers in the game, though in his later years, he slowed down a bit. This resulted in India's defeat in the One Day World Cup semi-final to New Zealand, which was incidentally the 350th and last One Day of his illustrious career.

Dhoni's powerful hurricane innings of 148 runs in 123 balls in Visakhapatnam (Vizag) in 2005 had announced his majestic arrival in international cricket. The World T20 final in Johannesburg made him the hero. His match-winning 91 not out in the 2011 World Cup final against Sri Lanka at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai, took Dhoni to the highest echelons of the sport.

Dhoni's flair and sheer natural brilliance, cool temperament, constant communication with his team members and bowlers, made him India's wicket keeper and batsman par excellence.

Dhoni married his longtime sweetheart, Sakshi, and the couple has one daughter. He received the honorary rank of a lieutenant colonel with the Indian Territorial Army in 2011. In 2015, he became a qualified paratrooper after having completed five parachute training jumps from Indian Army aircrafts in the Agra training camp.

A highly successful biopic "M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story," was based on his popularity and importance, starring Sushant Singh Rajput.

Dhoni's contemporary, Suresh Raina - an accomplished batsman and fielder - also announced his retirement from international cricket on August 15, the same day as Dhoni. Raina has the distinction of scoring a century in the three big formats - Test, ODI and T-20. Both Dhoni and Raina will continue to play in the IPL. FIA wishes the best for a second innings to both.



This image was originally posted to Flickr by vijay_chennupati

Social Security Expedites Decisions For People With Severe Disabilities

Agency Adds to Compassionate Allowances List

Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social Security, on August 17, announced five new Compassionate Allowances conditions: Desmoplastic Small Round Cell Tumors, GM1 Gangliosidosis - Infantile and Juvenile Forms, Nicolaides-Baraister Syndrome, Rubinstein-Tybai Syndrome, and Secondary Adenocarcinoma of the Brain. Compassionate Allowances is a program to quickly identify severe medical conditions and diseases that meet Social Security's standards for disability benefits.

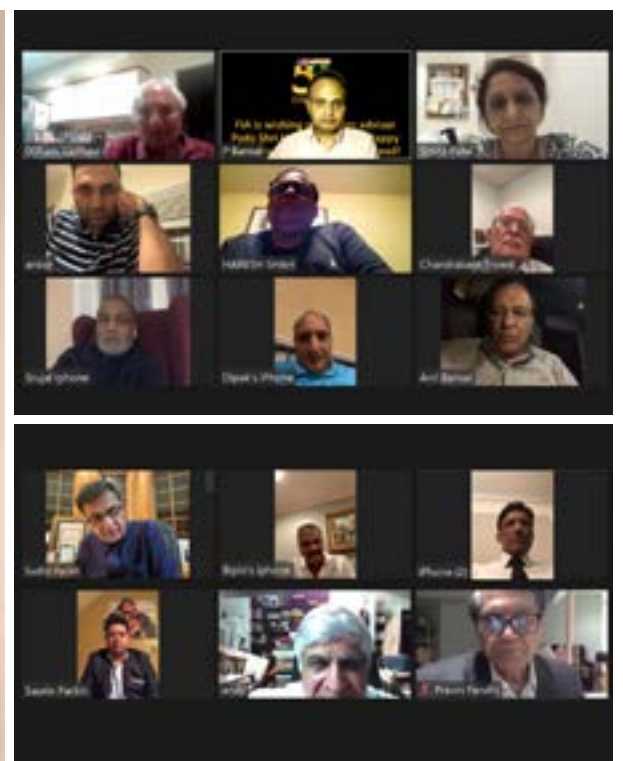
"Social Security's top priority is to serve the public, and we remain committed to improving the disability determination process for Americans," said Commissioner Saul. "Our Compassionate Allowances program gets us one step closer to reaching our goals by helping us accelerate the disability process for people who are likely to get approved for benefits due to the severity of their condition."

The Compassionate Allowances program quickly identifies claims where the applicant's condition or disease clearly meets Social Security's statutory standard for disability. Due to the severe nature of many of these conditions, these claims are often allowed based on medical confirmation of the diagnosis alone. To date, more than 600,000 people with severe disabilities have been approved through this accelerated, policy-compliant disability process. Over the last decade, the list has grown to a total of 242 conditions, including certain cancers, adult brain disorders, and a number of rare disorders that affect children.

The agency incorporates leading technology to identify potential Compassionate Allowances and make quick decisions. When a person applies for disability benefits, Social Security must obtain medical records in order to make an accurate determination. Social Security's Health IT brings the speed and efficiency of electronic medical records to the disability determination process. With electronic records transmission, Social Security is able to quickly obtain a claimant's medical information, review it, and make a determination faster than ever before.

For more information about the program, including a list of all Compassionate Allowances conditions, please visit www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances.

FIA Team virtually extended Birthday wishes to Senior Advisor, Board Member and Past President of FIA Padma Shri Dr. H R Shah who turned 78





SEPTEMBER 7, 2020



HAPPY
LABOR
DAY

