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**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



## FIA Receives Prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award for its Untiring Service to the Community



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

Voluntary Editor  
**Bhargavi Kulkarni**

Contributors  
**Chandrakant Trivedi,  
 Amit Yadav**

Voluntary Graphics Compilation  
**Gracia Marcom**

Republic Day: Commemorating the day the Constitution of India came into effect

## FIA RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS PRAVASI BHARTIYA SAMMAN AWARD FOR ITS TIRELESS AND DETERMINED SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

The Federation of Indian Associations of New York, New Jersey & Connecticut (FIA-Tristate), was conferred with the prestigious recognition of the Pravasi Bhartiya Samman on the 16th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) held on Jan. 9, 2021.

The Pravasi Bhartiya Samman Award is the highest honor conferred on a non-resident Indian, Person of Indian Origin; or an organization or institution established and run by Non-Resident Indians or Persons of Indian Origin, who have made significant contribution in better understanding of India abroad, support India's causes and concerns in a tangible way, community work abroad, welfare of local Indian community, philanthropic and charitable work, etc. During the PBD convention, select eminent Indian diaspora members are awarded the Pravasi Bhartiya Samman Awards in the presence of Hon'ble President of India, Ram Nath Kovind.

The 16th edition of the Pravasi Bhartiya Divas was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Jan. 9 in New Delhi. The theme of the convention, aimed at encouraging Indian diaspora to be part of socio-economic development in India, was "Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat."

"We are very proud, humbled and thankful to be the recipient of the Pravasi Bhartiya Samman. It is the recognition of hard and selfless work of so many people in the FIA family. This award is for the exceptional and meritorious contribution to India, the Indians for social and humanitarian causes. We at FIA have been totally dedicated to serving the interest of India and Indian diaspora in the USA. I have no doubt that under the new leadership of Ankur Vaidya, we will expand our footprint and activities immensely in future. This award certainly gives us the encouragement and incentive to reach for the stars. Thanks India, our motherland and Jai Hind."

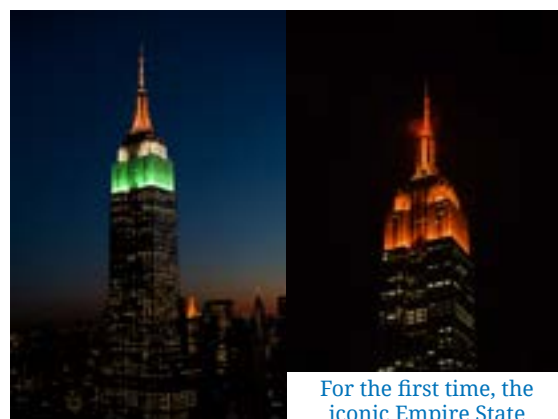
"It is truly a moment of pride for FIA and for me to witness this prestigious recognition bestowed upon FIA," Chairman Ankur Vaidya said. "I take this opportunity to thank the founders and patriarchs, some of them are on our board who dedicated a lifetime in serving the community through the organization and when told of the news had tears of joy. The timing has a cryptic hint in it having lost Ramesh Patel to COVID when we had already rolled our sleeves to prepare for the golden jubilee grandeur celebration, we still continued and faced the worst times in history, we managed with the motivated team and Ramesh Patel's spirit and soul to show us light and inspiration, the magic worked. I know he would be ecstatic. A big



FIA NY-NJ-CT created history on August 15, by unfurling the Indian tricolor for the first time ever at Times Square in New York City, to commemorate India's 74th Independence Day.



FIA shined through the pandemic with its philanthropic efforts with more than 10,000 meals served for community assistance.



Empire State Building lit-up in India's tricolor. For the first time, the iconic Empire State Building was lit orange in celebration of Diwali..



FIA had the honor of hosting community welcome and farewell for Indian diplomats for the last 20 years

thank you to Rohit Korat, Srujal Parikh and Alok Kumar for their contribution to make this FIA dream a reality. Anil Bansal's presidency has created history and full credit to him, his executive team and a big thank you and salute to the diplomatic community who took the message of our work back to the motherland. This is only the beginning and bigger and better things are coming, stay tuned... God bless the USA and Bharat Mata ki Jai!"

The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) of the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut is one of the largest esteemed umbrella organizations in the Indian community. It represents over one million strong and vibrant Asian-Indians who provide significant grass root support and assistance. Established in the year 1970, the FIA has blossomed into a commendable organization that has become an effective mouthpiece and mobilizer for the community.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, over 11 events, including Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu's reception, events surrounding FIA's flagship India Day Parade, women empowerment celebration, Long Island Diwali Gala, visa assistance camps, among other events had to be called off.



Community Assistance Program with the Consulate General of India in New York nearly a decade of serving the community



Women's Empowerment seminar on International Women's Day, March 8, organized jointly with the Indian Consulate in New York



NASDAQ opening ceremonies to commemorate India's Independence Day

While facing the dire impact of the pandemic, including on its fundraising activities, FIA has continued with the challenges faced, to serve and uplift the community in these unprecedented times. Among the unique initiatives introduced during the challenging year were assistance to first responders which included serving meals in local hospitals and to NYPD, including front line heroes, hot meals in the International Diwali Soup Kitchen Drive in the U.S. and India; Bi-Weekly Diaspora newsletter which will complete one year in January 2021; historic flag hoisting ceremony at Times Square on India's Independence Day, accommodation assistance in partnership with the Consulate General of India in New York to find accommodations for the students from India who were stranded in the U.S. due to COVID-19 travel ban; OCI & visa Town Hall; and several other events on the hybrid as well as exclusively virtual platforms. For its work during the pandemic, the FIA, along with its core members, was recognized as COVID Heroes by Brooklyn Borough President, Hon. Eric Adams.



FIA hosted a community reception to welcome New Consul General of India in New York, Randhir Jaiswal.



NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio has graced India Day Parades during his term.



The Indian Diaspora in the U.S. celebrates India's Independence day.



Indian chief of Army staff Gen. V. K. Singh(Retd.) addressing India Day Parade.



FIA has been commemorating India's Republic Day for the last few decades annually, with Dance Pe Chance where 700 children participate in a 2000 capacity auditorium



Counsel General of India in New York, Reeva Ganguly Das rings NYSE closing bell with FIA members



NASDAQ opening & closing bell ceremonies to commemorate India's Independence Day



More than 400 Indian-Americans attend India Day on Capital Hill



Air India - The pride of India in the skies has supported the parade since its inception in 1981 and participates with grandeur.



FIA Hosted then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in NY during his visit. From left Vajpayee, Lal Motwani, Navin Mehta, HR Shah, Ramesh Patel, Sudhir Parikh.



Hon. Amb. Dr. Mulay, Bollywood Actress Parineeti Chopra, Hon. Chief Minister of Haryana Manohar Lal Khattar Supporting the Haryana Govt. Campaign Beti Bachhao - Beti Padhaao (Save the girl chil)



Cricketer Anil Kumble graces the 32nd India Day Parade as chief guest.

## ANKUR VAIDYA

CHAIRMAN - FIA

It really is a matter of pride and honor that our organization and work has been recognized and highlighted by this meaningful gesture and accolade from the Government of India. I am thankful to all the diplomats with whom FIA has closely worked and continues to do so in serving our community and serving, shining, and enhancing the glory of our motherland. I hope this recognition enables FIA to unite the community and take on bigger and larger issues of distinguishing the community identity and creating a unified power base in the USA for our present and future generations and exponentially elevate the graph chart of the community's reputation in the halls of power. Successful and thoughtful efforts in this direction will, in turn, make our community and its members along with our motherland India the natural and automatic beneficiaries. Let us unite as one community, let us unify our efforts. May God bless the great nation of the USA. Bharat Mata ki Jai.



## ANIL BANSAL

FIA PRESIDENT

We are very proud, humbled, and thankful to the Government of India for bestowing the Pravasi Bhartiya Samman award for 2020 on FIA. It is the recognition of the hard and selfless voluntary work of so many people in the FIA family, including hundreds of volunteers, member organizations, past presidents and trustees who have steadfastly supported our work to serve the Indian American community in the Tri-state area and beyond for five decades. This award is for the exceptional and meritorious contributions made by FIA members in creating a positive image of India in USA, supporting, and promoting bilateral issues, and becoming an agent of change for social and humanitarian causes here and back in India. We at FIA have been completely dedicated to serving the interests of India and the Indian diaspora in the USA. This award certainly gives us encouragement and incentive to reach for the stars. We are very appreciative of this recognition and may God bless our motherland India and the adopted homeland of USA. Jai Hind!



## SRUJAL PARIKH

PAST PRESIDENT, MEMBER | FIA BOARD OF TRUSTEES

It's great honor to be part of Federation of Indian Associations and receiving PBD 2021 by Government of India is a great feeling. All the hard work for the last decade by President, Executive team and Committee members has been rewarded. FIA is not just known for the biggest India Day Parade outside US. We started community service at its grass root level. Camps to support Visa, OCI, Passport community awareness campaign, Soup Kitchens these are some of the significant work done in last 10 years. I congratulate chairman Ankur Vaidya, President Anil Bansal and entire FIA family. Let us continue our journey to the next level.



## AVINASH GUPTA

MD FACC | PRESIDENT, BJANA

Bihar Jharkhand Association of North America popularly known as BJANA is proud and honored to be a sister organization of FIA who on January 9 was conferred with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA), the highest honor by Government of India in recognition of their outstanding service and achievements. When I look back, I have always seen FIA at the forefront in community service in the tristate area. BJANA congratulates FIA and its leaders, Late Shri Ramesh Patel ji, Chairman Ankur Vaidya, Past Presidents Srujal Parikh, Alok Kumar and current President Anil Bansal and all the trustees and members of the executive committee for taking FIA to greater heights.



## SAURIN PARIKH

FIA VICE PRESIDENT

FIA has been doing community services for 50 plus years. Whether, it is helping the needy, promoting Indian culture & Heritage with its signature yearly event like India Day Parade and Dance Pe Chance Event, hosting various community assistance camps and seminars, or raising the community voice at the United States Capitol, FIA has been at the forefront. The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman given to FIA from the government of India is the testimony of FIA's great work away from the motherland, and in ensuring raising the Indian Values high. I, Saurin Parikh, Vice President, am very honored to be part of the FIA team for more than 10 years to witness all the commendable work FIA has done.



## JAYESH PATEL

PAST PRESIDENT, MEMBER | FIA BOARD OF TRUSTEES

FIA is one of the oldest umbrella organization of the Tri State doing community, charitable and philanthropic work in the welfare of the local Indian Community and significant contribution in India cause and concern.

When I heard the announcement made by the Govt. of India during the 16 th Bharatiya Pravasi Divas Convention that FIA is the recipient of the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award, which is the highest honor bestowed on NRI, PIO, or an Organization or an Institution run by NRI, we all feel Proud, Humbled and Thankful. It certainly is the recognition of the hard and selfless work of many former leaders of FIA, the Trustees, The executive committee and support of all member organizations of FIA for last half a century. I congratulate the President, Chairman and whole FIA team for this recognition when FIA, this year is celebrating its golden jubilee year and thank to Govt. of India for this superb recognition. This is a big source of inspiration to FIA to continue to serve the community and to many such organization to do more.



## PARVEEN BANSAL

FIA SECRETARY

I thank the Government of India for recognizing FIA's efforts with Pravasi Bhartiya Samman, for serving the diaspora community in the U.S. for the past fifty years. This recognition not only humbles us but also encourages all of us at FIA to do even better for India and the Indian community in the U.S.. I thank our current leadership team under Chairman Ankur Vaidya and President Anil Bansal and all the FIA founders and veterans, who worked tirelessly in community service for the past 50 years and inspired countless individuals. Proud to be part of FIA and having an opportunity to serve on a day-to-day basis. Jai Hind.



## SMITA MIKI PATEL

FIA COMMITTEE MEMBER

Honored to be affiliated with FIA as FIA is being recognized for its pure hearted vision, dedication, commitment to serve our community.



## MODEL UNITED NATIONS: AN OVERVIEW

By Samaira Yadav

Model United Nations is an educational simulation and/or academic activity in which students can learn about diplomacy, international relations, and the United Nations as a whole. Taking part in this can also help a student build leadership, debate, teamwork and public speaking skills. If you want to research current affairs, come up with workable solutions to an issue, debate them in a competitive setting, and win awards, then MUN is for you! You can research current affairs, crises and other international affairs. You also get a chance to debate topics related to such in a competitive setting from the point of view of our assigned nation. Not only that but you can work together with other delegates to get the best resolution passed, and win awards! Awards include Best Delegate, Outstanding Delegate, Honorable Mention, Verbal Commendation, Most Improved, and Best Position Paper. The goal of each committee is to come up with resolutions for the issue being discussed, which you will research for.

Each conference uses parliamentary procedure to function, where delegates will motion by raising their placard to open committee, start debate, open speakers list, moderated caucus, unmoderated caucus, close debate, close committee, and much much more! This is also used when each resolution is voted for. Each committee also has a chair, who moderates the committee.

**IMPORTANT THINGS TO UNDERSTAND (and other tips to help you get started):**

1. No crying is allowed in MUN. Sometimes we can't help it. Please go to a private location if you wish to cry. There are usually

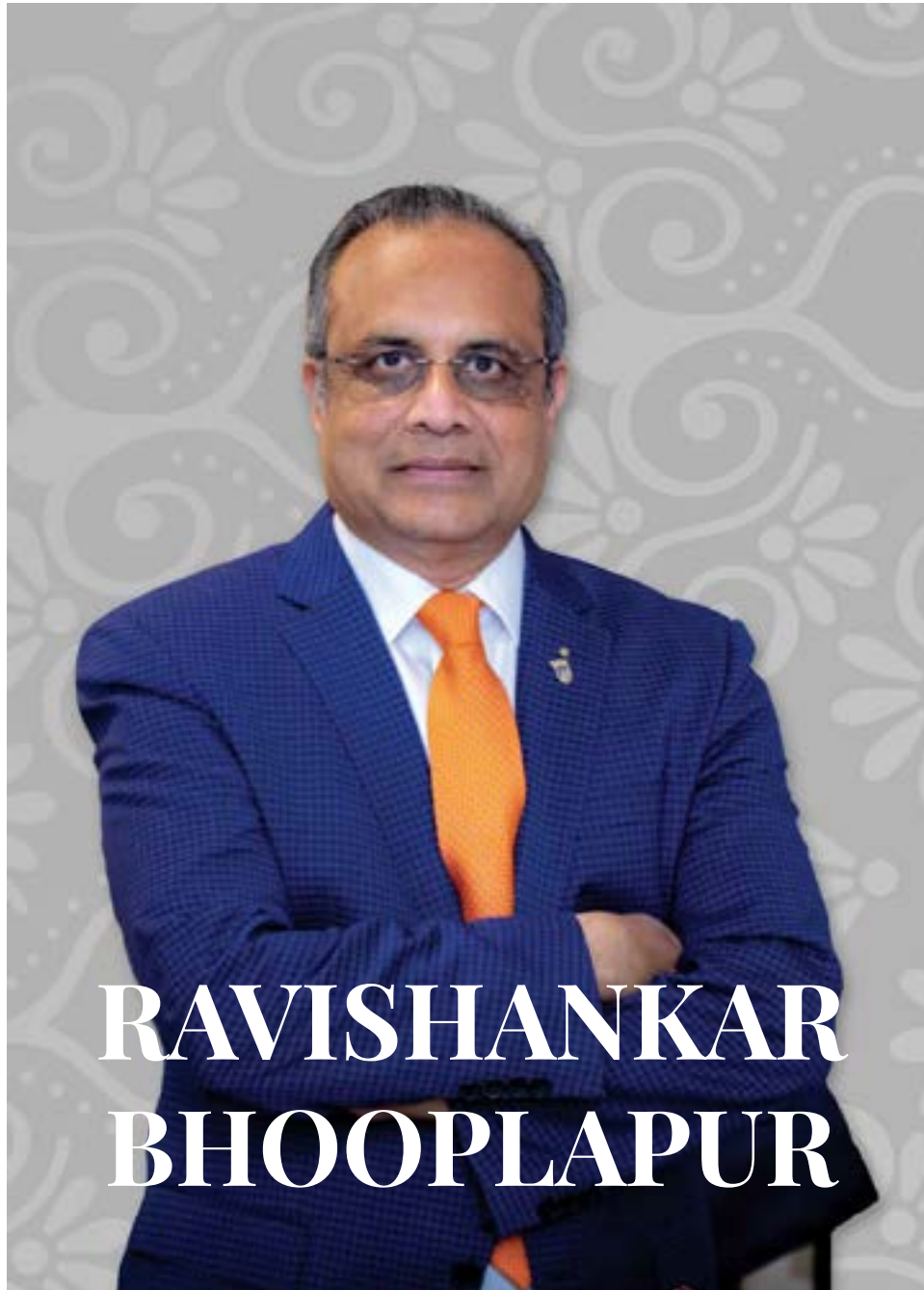
bathrooms near committee. Also, please don't throw a fit if you don't award. You'll regret it instantly.

2. Don't give up, even if you don't award. I'm aware that what I just said is a very cliché statement. It's not the end of the world if you don't award in the beginning. Just stick with it, and you'll see results. No matter how bad you did, you can always recover!
3. If you do award, please don't be a jerk about it. I don't want to hear anyone say that they "only got an outstanding." If you're disappointed in your performance, that's okay. If you really are upset, please express your regrets in private. There are people who didn't do as well as you did. It rubs people off the wrong way, just inconsiderate. If you want to be a good delegate, you have to be a good human being first.
4. Diplomacy matters. Can't stress this one enough. I can't count how many times I've heard people say that the chairs are all talk when it comes to how much they care about diplomacy. That's false. No one wants to give an award to a jerk. No one will be happy that a jerk took Best Delegate. Don't be a jerk. You should always be respectful to everyone you meet in committee, no matter what. Be respectful, and that includes being quiet when people are giving speeches. Because the biggest jerk that snakes everyone is the one who actually goes home empty handed.

And make sure to have fun! You'll be traveling to different schools and cities all over, take a break from the debate to get some food, mess around with friends, and meet new people.

However, while this can give you a good theoretical understanding of what Model UN is and how to effectively debate, lead, and speak, the best way to get a more intuitive understanding is to practice and compete! So, if you're interested, make sure to join right away, whether it's a school club, out-of-school, or individual, you will not regret it!

# FEDERATION OF INDIAN ASSOCIATIONS NY-NJ-CT CONGRATULATES



RAVISHANKAR  
BHOOPLAPUR

**THE SOUTH ASIAN TIMES PERSON OF THE YEAR 2020**

## **Humanitarian, Philanthropist, Educationist, Entrepreneur, Community Leader**

Mr. Bhooplapur is an illustrious and inspirational role model. His extraordinary accomplishments and endeavors as Humanitarian, Philanthropist, Educationist, Entrepreneur, and Community Leader are truly inspirational for many. He is richly decorated, with the Ellis Island Medal of Honor and many more magnificent awards. Recently he became the only South Asian member of the most prestigious & exclusive Legacy Club of Rotary International.

# REPUBLIC DAY: COMMEMORATING THE DAY THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA CAME INTO EFFECT

**FIA CELEBRATES THE OCCASION WITH AN ANNUAL DANCE COMPETITION WHICH WILL BE HELD VIRTUALLY IN A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT FORMAT.**

By Chandrakant Trivedi

India's Republic Day is celebrated each year on January 26 since 1950, and is a national holiday. The day has a very historic and patriotic significance. It honors the date on which the Constitution of India came into effect on Jan. 26, 1950, replacing the Government of India Act (1935) as the governing document of India and thus, turning the nation into a newly formed republic.

India became Independent on August 15, 1947 and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru became first prime minister. A drafting committee was set up with Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, also known as Babasaheb Ambedkar, as the chairman who prepared the model constitution studying the British constitution and incorporating amendment after several deliberations. The constitution was adopted by the Indian constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949. And it came into effect on Jan. 26, 1950.

With a democratic government system, completing the country's transition towards becoming an independent sovereign republic, Jan. 26 was chosen as the date for Republic Day because it was on this day in 1929 when the declaration of Indian Independence (Purna swaraj) was proclaimed by then Indian National Congress at its historic Lahore Convention as opposed to the Dominion status offered by the British Regime. The 308 members of the constituent assembly signed two handwritten copies of the document (one each Hindi and English) on Jan. 24, 1950. Two days later, it was implemented. The Constituent Assembly became the Parliament of India and Dr. Rajendra Prasad took the oath as the first President of the Indian Union. President of India is the highest title, the commander in chief force of the three wings - Army, Navy and Air Force. Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, a great scholar and statesman became the vice president, with a five-year term limit.

Republic Day celebrations

nationwide exhibit patriotism, fabulous festivities, and a national spirit. The main Republic celebration is held in the national capital, New Delhi at the Rajpath before the President of India and invites foreign dignitaries as guests of honor. Ceremonious parades are organized by the Ministry of Defense. The parade showcases India's defense capability, as well as its cultural and social heritage by India's many states joining with attractive tableaux. Twelve contingents of various para military forces of India and police forces also take part in this parade. The Indian Air Force displays breathtaking exercises in the sky, mesmerizing thousands of spectators assembled to witness this parade commencing from Rashtrapati Bhavan and passing through India Gate to Rajpath. The president, along with the guest of honors witnesses this fabulous parade, salutes them. He also confers awards for exceptional gallantry performance by jawans like Param Vir Chakra, Ashok Chakra etc. Many monuments are illuminated and sweets are also distributed

On the eve of Indian Republic Day (Jan. 25) the president addresses the nation and distributes the most prestigious and coveted Padma awards to the civilians of India for their outstanding contribution in various fields and for glorifying the nation. After the Bharat Ratna (the top most) Padma awards - Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri - in decreasing order of importance are announced. These awards

are presented to recipients in a glittering ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan the President of India amid the presence of the prime minister, other cabinet ministers and invited guests.

The Federation of Indian Association has a proud and illustrious track record of celebrating India's most patriotic holidays - Independence Day and Republic Day - with incredible success. FIA organizes the largest India Day Parade since 1981 in New York City as an Independence Day celebration. The Republic Day Celebration includes the increasingly popular 'Dance Pe Chance' competition to encourage and glorify India's rich cultural heritage and incredible talents of our youngsters in minor, junior, senior and adult categories. In the 1980s and 1990s it was widely known as 'Folk Dance Competition' and was held in New York City, displaying the versatility and talents of participants and choreographers. Prizes are awarded in all categories. It is regarded as the most popular social and cultural extravaganza. More than 18,000 people have participated in this competition in the past 37 plus years of its run. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the format of competition will be virtual and is modified to individual solo dance competition to implement the government's guidelines and ensure safety. All related information of the dance competition is available on [www.fianynjct.org](http://www.fianynjct.org).