



# FIJI INDIAN ASSOCIATION

*Bringing Fiji Indian communities together*

## NEWSLETTER AUTUMN EDITION 11

*Namaste, Assalam Alaikum,  
Satsriakal, Bula, Kia Ora, Namaska-  
ram, Masih ke Jai,  
Greetings*

### WELCOME

By now you would have all come to terms with the catastrophic earthquake which caused such huge pain and suffering to so many people in Christchurch and New Zealand. The images on the TV screen show how powerless and helpless human beings are in the face of natural disasters. The events of Christchurch reveal the appropriateness of a very old saying, "live everyday of your life as if it is the last one" and "kal ho nah ho".

In the light of this disaster, the FIA Executive decided to shelve some of its routine programmes and embarked on activities that would not only benefit the members of Fiji Indian community but the New Zealand community at large.

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### PRESIDENT'S OVERVIEW

*Vinod Kumar*

As I write my message for this Newsletter, my thoughts go out to the people of Westport and the Pike River disaster and the victims of Christchurch earthquake which rocked Canterbury again on 22 February.

The massive rebuilding now commences. Yet there will be so many that will not be able to forget the difficulties they had to endure over such a long period. Your resilience as true New Zealanders has shown the world what can be achieved if we share the burden of pain and support each other in such difficult times.

Our term as executives of the association comes to its third quarter. Regrettably we have not been able to keep moving at a pace to fulfil the many items we identified at the beginning of our appointment. Some of these have been deferred and have been incorporated in our 5 year business plan, so that we do not lose sight of our objectives.

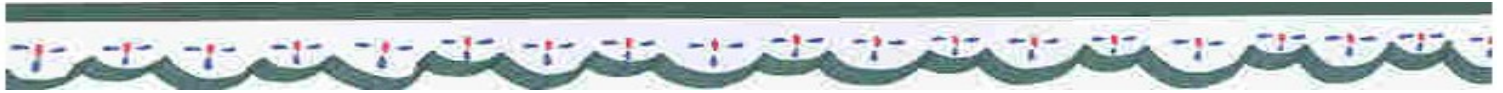
The preparations of Girit soccer together with a family fun day is underway and the committee has set 12 June as the tentative date. Please keep the day free and start training for soccer, volleyball, netball and a lot of fun.

The FIA will be holding its annual dinner night on 25 June 2011 at the Horticultural Hall in Lower Hutt. Tickets will be available from the committee members six weeks prior to the function.

The hall is open to the members and friends every Sunday from 2 pm to 6pm, and I would like to thank the executive committee members for making themselves available on a rostered basis.

I hope all of you had a colourful Holi and wish you a safe and Happy Easter.

*(continued on page 2)*



(continued from page 1)

In spite of the challenges faced by FIA the executive has successfully completed the following activities:

A “sausage sizzle” on two consecutive Saturdays in Lower Hutt to raise funds for the Christchurch Mayoral Fund under the FIA banner. It was heartening to note so many local people acknowledging the efforts of FIA.

Successfully negotiated a deal with the Harbour City Funeral Services whereby the family of any financial member who passes away will receive a 10% discount on the funeral services handled by Harbour City Funeral Services. In today’s terms, this deal roughly equates to \$750.00. Other discounted facilities through businesses are being explored.

Formulated a 5-year business plan, which has been adopted by the Executive and which, now, has become the corner stone of goals for the Association over the next five years.

Promoted FIA’s existence by writing congratulatory letters to all newly elected mayors of Wellington and greater Wellington region.

Opened the FIA headquarters every Sunday between 2pm to 7pm.



This is to enable members to gather in informal setting and enjoy a game of pool, card Carom board etc. Members can also quench their thirst with bubbly and kava.

Is in consultation with the Wellington City Council cultural team and is looking at FIA awareness promotion through Ethnica (not to be confused with Ethnic Council).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### GIRMIT DAY CELEBRATIONS

This year the celebrations will be in the form of a Family Sports/Fun Day being organised by one of our sub-committees which will include under 15s seven-a-side soccer, adults’ seven-a-side soccer, and a one-off veterans (over50s) soccer. In addition, there will be mixed volleyball, and netball as well. So get into gear, start practicing and get your teams ready. All presentations will be at the Dinner Nite.

We would greatly appreciate if anyone is willing to donate some trophies for the Netball, Volleyball and under 15s and veterans games.

### ANNUAL DINNER NITE

The Association’s annual dinner-night will be held at the Horticultural Hall in Lower Hutt on 25 June, so keep this date free to enjoy lots of sumptuous spicy intake. Tickets will be on sale shortly.

### A CONTRATUTORY NOTE

Congratulations to the Wellington Indian Association and the Wellington Indian Sports Association who managed to raise over \$20,000 during their annual bazaar on 5 March.

All money raised has been pledged towards the Christchurch Mayoral Appeal Fund.



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## ACHIEVEMENTS OF FIJI INDIANS IN WELLINGTON

### OUR YOUNG WOMEN IN INDIA

Anuksha Narayan and Alisha Kumar have returned from the Know India Programme (fondly called KIP) in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. They also had the opportunity to attend the Pravasi Bharatiye Divas (PBD) from 7 to 9 January where they met several dignitaries including the President of India Smt Pratibha Devi Singh Patil, the Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Sri Valayar Ravi, our Governor General Sir Anand Satyanand and the High Commissioner of India to New Zealand Retired Admiral Sureesh Mehta. PBD commemorates Gandhiji's return to India after his struggles in South Africa.

Alisha and Anuksha were among 35 young Indian Diaspora from 12 different countries. This programme is open to youth of Indian origin between 18 and 25 years of age. This is a high investment programme run by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs to provide the participants an insight into India - its efforts and success in sectors of health care and education and its great potential for growth.

Below Alisha and Anuksha share their experiences briefly.

"I was lucky enough to be selected for the Know India Program that had scheduled Bihar as one of the areas to be visited. As a Fiji Indian youth born in New Zealand, visiting Bihar reemphasised my appreciation for my ancestral heritage. I saw first hand the place where many of our ancestors came from. The Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar told us that he was very proud of us. However, upon reflection, it is not us he should be proud of but those daring men and women who took a chance, not only on the future but on their lives, and voyaged to Fiji. After so many generations, Fiji Indians have maintained their language, culture and religion. This is all due to the determination of those who slaved tirelessly over the land I call my second home. Though it was not my first time in India, it was the first time I had felt a sense of belonging there. To stand on the soil



*Alisha & Anuksha (centre, 3<sup>rd</sup> row from front) with the participants and the President of India and officials*

that my great great grandparents had once walked on and to breathe the air they had once breathed was like finding a puzzle piece that had been missing too long."

**Anuksha**

"I was greatly honoured to be part of the 16th KIP that was hosted by Bihar, where part of my family is originally from. Bihar is a beautiful state, so rich in culture and spirituality. Visiting various Buddhist temples and even the exact spot where Buddha reached enlightenment, to dipping my hands and praying in the holy Ganges River, shows the deep religion of Bihar. I felt a great connection to Bihar as I could see similarities to the culture with my own Fiji Indian heritage. I found that at the Cultural night put together by the Department of Art, Culture and Youth Affairs, there were many similarities between my culture and the Bihari song, dance and music displayed to us.

Not only did I gain knowledge about India itself, but also through hearing stories and learning about the culture and traditions of my fellow thirty-five participants whom I got to share this experience with. I found it amazing how even though we are from different parts of the world as far as Chile in South America, and even though, like myself, most participants are third or fourth generation born out of India, we are all connected and share these great values and beliefs brought from our motherland many years ago."

**Alisha**

FIA encourages young people of Fiji Indian descent to apply for this programme. Refer to this site for details on KIP - <http://moia.gov.in/services.aspx?id1=42&id=m4&idp=42&mainid=23>

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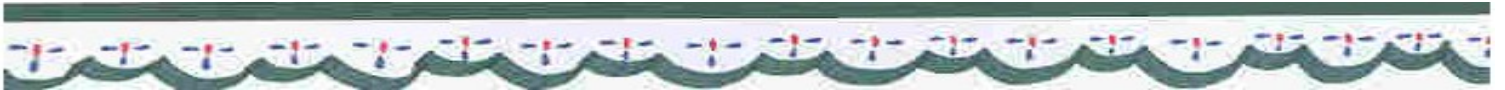
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## COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

On Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March, more than a hundred devotees packed the Hanuman Mandir at 59E Marsden Street, Lower Hutt to celebrate Maha Shiv Ratri.

Devotees from around Wellington came to offer Bel pa-tra, flowers, water, Prasad and milk to Lord Shiva. The Mandir was decorated for the special occasion. A “Shiv Ling” made from ice, along with a “Ling” each to denote Lord Ganesh and Goddess Parvati was put up, as can be seen in the holy caves at Amarnath, in India.

Pooja and hawan was performed by the priest, Pt Mani Ram Sharma, followed by kirtans and bhajans. The evening ended with Prashad and Maha Prashad served to all present.

More events coinciding with religious occasions are being planned at the Mandir. Further details can be obtained from the convenor, Mr Praveen Khanna on 021606870.



*Holi Celebrations:  
Fiji Indians singing chautal.*



*Holi Celebrations:  
Wellington Hindi School students  
playing with gulaal.*



*The Decorations on Maha Shivratri at the Hanuman Mandir on 2.3.11. On the left are the “Lings” made of ice. On its right is a depiction of “Kailas Parbat” the home of Lord Shiva.*

**REMINDER:**  
Please keep the following dates free of any engagements

**12 June 2011**  
Annual Family Fun Day and Girit Celebrations.

**25 June 2011**  
FIA's Annual Dinner Night at the Horticultural Hall, Lower Hutt

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