

NEWS LETTER

Bringing Fiji Indian communities together

Winter Edition July 2010

President's Message

As the Committee approaches the end of its term, I would first and foremost like to thank my Committee Members and our members for their continued support of the Association.

The Association's annual general meeting will be held on Sunday, August 08 and I look forward to your attendance and meaningful contribution.

It is imperative that more of you should play a pivotal role in the affairs of the Association and I really hope some younger people would put their hands up to serve.

I have decided not to seek the Presidency for another term, as I have been involved as Vice-President and President for the last five years. The interests of the Association have been paramount to me and I shall continue to be ardent advocate of the FIA

It is a matter of extreme satisfaction to me personally that the Fiji Indian Association has remained a secular organisation and that we have not taken on the mantle of any religious group and may it remain this way.

The Association belongs to Fiji Indians and we must continue to play a major advocacy role for members of our community in Wellington, without losing sight of our commitment and loyalty to our adopted home, New Zealand.

We must continue to stress to our young people, particularly, that they should not lose sight of their heritage and the sacrifices made by our Girmitya foreparents and we owe it to their memory to

keep our Fiji Indian legacy, languages and cultures alive.

We must maintain our pride in what is our culture and traditions and keep the Fiji Indian flag alive, wherever we are settled.

The Association has had very powerful support from members and Indian organisations and I thank you all for your support and on an organisational level, I would like to thank the Wellington Sangam for its unstinting and exceptional support for the FIA, right from the Association's inception.

May God Bless you all and I wish the incoming Committee and the Association the best for the future.

With best wishes, SALIM ASHWIN SINGH PRESIDENT

FIJI INDIAN ASSOCIATION

Notice of
Annual General Meeting
Date: Sunday 8th August 2010
Place: FIA Hall, Petone
Time: 2.00 PM
All members are requested to attend.

Girmit Diwas 2010

More than 200 people turned out at a function in May at Lower Hutt to mark the 131st anniversary of the arrival of Indians in Fiji. Girmit Diwas is the flagship programme of the Fiji Indian Association and the Chief Guest this year was His Excellency Admiral Sureesh Mehta, the Indian High Commissioner to New Zealand New Zealand Race Relations and Commissioner, Mr Joris de Bres keynote speaker. The event was marked by cultural and musical items and a 15-minute play in Hindi was to many the highlight of the function. In this play, the actors evoked the Girmit-era and this play was produced by Mrs Aparna Prakash. The actors, Shanti Narayan, Meena Pratap, Nirmala Balram. Vinod Kumar. Richard. Rattan Prakash, Prashant Lakshman and Devesh Prakash performed brilliantly and the FIA thanks all those involved in the play and its production.

In his address, Admiral Mehta paid tribute to the Fiji Indian Association for keeping aklive the memories of the pioneer Indians who came to Fiji and spoke highly of the efforts of the Fiji Indian community to keep alive the legacy of their forebears. In his address, Mr Joris de Brees spoke of the struggles of immigrant communities and how they had survived adversities to succeed in New Zealand. He paid a glowing tribute to members of the Fiji Indian community in New Zealand.

Girmit Diwas opened with a joint religious service by Hindu, Muslim and Christian priests and Pundit Muekeshwar Ram Sharma, Molvi Abdul Samim and Pastor Atish Suresh paid tribute to the Girmityas and asked God to bless them for the sacrifices they had made.

The opening dance item by Anuksha Narayan, daughter of Dev and Sunita Narayan was brilliantly performed and captured the efforts Fiji Indians have made to retain the cultures and values of their ancestral home, India.

On the musical front, Jai Chand, James Karan Singh and Aparna Prakash kept the audience entertained with their feast of traditional and Girmit-era songs.

Another feature of the programme this year was Girmit-era stories, which were read by Nirmala Balram, Sunita Narayan and Vinod Kumar.

Girmit Diwas 2010 ended with a vegetarian meal sponsored by Moshim's Wellington and prepared by Wellington Sangam's Manikam Gounder.

The FIA hopes for your continued support for Girmit functions in future.

In Religious News

A **Hanuman Mandir** has been established in Lower Hutt and a ceremony was held recently for the installation of 13 deities from India. The temple is used by adherents of the Hindu faith from Fiji,India, Malaysia,Singapore,Sri Lanka and other countries.The Temple also runs meditation and yoga classes and for more details, contact: Prayeen Khanna on 021-606-870.

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A new **Islamic Centre** has opened in Tawa, Wellington. The new Centre is operated by the New Zealand Muslim

League and spokesperson, Mr Nazrul Ali says the Centre is open for the five daily prayers, Quran classes, Milad-un-Nabi and Juma prayers. Most members of the Centre are Fiji Muslims.

The Wellington Sangam has decided to build a Mandir and this decision was taken at the Sangam's recent annual general Sangam President, meeting. Krishna Gounder says there has been very strong support for the Mandir project and the Committee has been very encouraged by the show of support for the Mandir project. Apart from its Mandir project, Wellington Sangam has also started dance and cultural classes and these are held at the FIA Hall in Gounder Petone. Mr was re-elected President, Manoj Gounder and Satish Naidu are the Vice-Presidents, Sam Narendra Sami is the Secretary, Krishna Pillay, Assistant Secretary and Sami Nadan is Treasurer. The Committee members are: Chinnaiya Naidu. Ram Lingam Gounder(Dan), Solgar Monagran Yasodan Padachi. Krishna Gounder says a major membership drive is being launched.

Hindu Heritage Association Fundraising function

The Hindu Heritage Association, of Wellington had a very successful fundraising annual Bollywood show recently. The event attracted a large crowd. The Association has already acquired land in Island Bay for its proposed Shiu Mandir.

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In sports news...... Soccer

Inter-district Wellington tournament will be held over the Labour weekend in October and 12 teams are expected to take part. The tournament, provincial team which is based on representation along the lines of the Fiji IDC has become an annual feature of sporting life for the Fiji community in Wellington. It is organised by the Fiji Football Association of Wellington, FFAW. President, Salim Singh says the tournament features a high level of soccer and this year's tournament could well see cash prizes being given. Suva is the current holder of the IDC Mishra Cup.

The FFAW recently had its AGM and Salim Singh was re-elected President, Ranjit Vice-President, Reddy, Singh, Venkat Secretary and Shahmeem Buksh is Treasurer. Niraj Mishra Officer. Governance/Compliance Sanjesh Lallu is Events Co-ordinator, Atish Suresh is Technical Adviser and Poasa Tubuna, Assistant Secretary.

As part of its Girmit commemoration, the FIA has for the second year running organised a Girmit Cup soccer competition. The Girmit Cup 2010 was won by Ba and nadroga was runner-up. Association Vice-President, Jitendra Pratap was Chair of the Girmit Cup tournament and Committee member, Krishna Gounder assisted. Mr Pratap was very impressed with the standard and behaviour of the teams which took part.

TRANSITIONS

A well-known and long-time Wellington resident, Mrs Najma Singh has passed away. Mrs Singh was the mother of Rodger Singh, Surya Singh, Dinesh Singh and Chandra Prakash Singh (Charlie). Mrs Singh, 77 passed away in Wellington Hospital on August 01. Apart from her sons, she is survived by several daughters and grandchildren.

Mrs Singh was originally from Lautoka and the FIA offers its heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family.

The death has occurred in Wellington of Fiji's former Auditor-General, Mr Tamesser Bhim. Mr Bhim played a leading role as a civil servant and became the first local Auditor-General. He was held in very high regard in that role and enjoyed the confidence of both the Government and the Opposition. Mr Bhim also played a leading role in religious and social activities. He is survived by his widow, five children and several grandchildren. Mr Bhim's eldest son is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Fiji Indian Association and the late Mr Tamesser Bhim always showed a keen interest in the affairs of the Association and was the Chief Guest at the ceremony to mark the opening of the FIA Hall at Petone

It is also our sad duty to report the passing away of a leading Nausori resident, Mr Ram Gopal Chetty, father of Mr Prakash Narayan, of Churton Park. Mr Chetty was from Wainisasa, Nausori and played a major role in cultural and religious issues.

Mr Narayan is a member of the Board of

Trustees of the Fiji Indian Association and Mr Narayan and his wife, Shanti are very active in the Wellington Indian community.

Our heartfelt sympathies go out to our committee member Sesh Ram and his family. Sesh has lost his two elder sisters in Fiji recently.

Mrs Madhu Ben, who was originally from Nadi has passed away in Wellington. Mrs Madhu Ben was a Churton Park resident and mother of Mrs Sushma Brunt, of Aintree Grove, Churton Park. Mrs Ben is survived by five daughters and several grandchildren.

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Well known former Radio Fiji presenter Daven Nair of Newlands passed away recently. FIA offers its heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family.

We would also like to convey our sincere sympathies to Mrs. Maina Stechmen who lost her husband Mr. Cedrick Stechman of Island Bay. Cedrick was a well known resident of Wellington.

The angels are always near to those who are grieving, to whisper to them that their loved ones are safe in the hand of God.

Acknowledgments

The Association would like to thank the following for their contribution to the FIA.

Mr Ajendra Jokhan

DJ Bobby Singh

DJ Babu

Mrs Shashi Jokhan

Mrs Aparna Prakash

Mrs Kamil Lakshman

Mrs Nirmala Balram

Mr Balram

Mr Raj Patel

Mr Umesh Chandra

Mr Jiten Pratap

Mr Atish Anand

Mr Vinod Kumar

Mr Dinesh Prakash

Mr Subhash Muneshwar

Mr Sanjay Dixit

Ms Astuti Balram and Richard

Mr Prabodh Mishra

Mr Shaheed Khan

Mr Suresh Pratap

Mrs Meena Pratap

Mrs Shanti Narayan

Mr Prakash Narayan

Mr Manikam Gounder

Mr Chinnaiya Naidu

Mr Narain Gounder

Mr Hitesh Gounder

Mr Sachil Naidu

Mr Raj Pratap

Mrs Rahimun Ali

Mr Johnny Lal

Mr Ishwar Chand

Mr Alphonsus Giborees

Mr Dev Narayan

Mrs Sunita Narayan

Ms Anuksha Narayan

Mrs Nazrin Singh

Mr Navin Shankar

Mr Gyan Pandey

Mr Shailendra Pratap

All FIA officials and their families

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No one who achieves success does so without acknowledging the help of others. The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude.

Thank you for all your support and encouragement during my term as your President.

Salim Ashwin Singh