

India Fest Milwaukee

Celebrated for the 9th year, it featured a colorful cultural program and commemorated India's 75th Independence Day

BY A STAFF WRITER

The 9th year of India Fest Milwaukee & 75th Independence Day of India was celebrated recently in Wisconsin on Aug. 21, 2021, at the natural amphitheater at Humboldt Park which was decorated with tricolor Indian flags, traditional Indian cot, Buddha, temple, peacocks, wheels and a display of Natraj & Ganesh. It was organized by Spindle India Inc.

Governor Tony Evers declared Aug 15th, 2021, as India Day in the State of Wisconsin.

"IndiaFest, which has been celebrated in Milwaukee since 2013, is the largest celebration of India Day in Wisconsin, drawing thousands of attendees and cultural program participants every year," a press release from organizers said.

In his proclamation, Gov. Evers recognized IndiaFest's contributions in celebrating Indian culture and diversity beyond borders, boundaries, language, region and religion, and providing a platform for collaboration, connection, education, and growth by fostering cultural exchange and appreciation.

Former Governor Scott Walker first recognized India Day in 2018, and since then it has been recognized every year till now.

Chief Minister of Tripura, India Biplab Kumar Deb commended Founder and President of Spindle India, Inc, Purnima Nath, for her initiative.

Former Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Danial Kelly said he and his wife were "enchanted with the beauty with which we were surrounded, the aromas of your incomparable cuisine, and the unmatched welcome we received throughout the day."

The blessings of freedom should never be taken for granted, Justice Kelly said, adding that America's culture is far richer because of the contributions of Indians who call Wisconsin home.

Mayor of Milwaukee Tom Barrett proclaimed India Day on Aug 15 noting Nath's hard work in securing a proclamation, and organizing IndiaFest as did State



Milwaukee India Fest in Wisconsin Aug. 21, 2021. From left, Paul Truess presenting Certificate of Special Senatorial Recognition of Spindle India to Purnima Nath. From Left to right – Joseph Scala, Paul Truess – Regional Director Office of US Senator Ron Johnson, Steve Ponto – Mayor Brookfield, Purnima Nath – Founder, Chairwoman & President Spindle India, Inc., Bob Spindell – Chair, RPW Congressional District 4 Chair, Megha/Neha Patil – Youth Volunteers.

Senator Chris Larson.

Regional Director Paul Truess from the office of U.S. Senator Ron Johnson handed a Certificate of Special Senatorial Recognition to Spindle India, Inc., commending the organization for continued dedication, and efforts to bring visibility to the Indian community in Wisconsin.

Praises also came from Chair of 4th Congressional District of Wisconsin Bob Spindell, who said IndiaFest reminded him of his visit to India several years ago.

India's flag was hoisted by all the guests, national anthem of India was sung by children of Hindu SwayamSevak Milwaukee Chapter, and national anthem of America was sung by Appleton resident Joseph Scala wearing a dhoti.

A parade was led by Dhol and the American youth army followed by guests and children cheering "Vande Mataram", "Bharat Mata Ki Jai", "God Bless America" while waving both Indian and U.S. flags.

International participants engaged through newly launched program called IFM Global Engagement

Initiatives (IFMGEI) with beautiful artworks under the theme of "Ancient Bharat until 1000 AD" were showcased and prizes were given to those judged the best.

Folk art – womanby Kuku Kacher (7) won the 1st place in Young Bud category.

In the youth category, Divyangana Saha (11) drew a Raj darbar (royal court)– King enjoying folk music grabbed the 1st, Advaita Naik (12) portrayed the beautiful Brihadeeshwara Shiva temple of TamilNadu built by King Raja Raja Chola won the 2nd, and pencil sketch of display of Bharat – Ashok Stambh (pillar) built between 268-232 BC, Hindu God Ganesh and Krishna temple by Neha Patil (14) and pencil sketch of old temple premise by Megha Patil (11) won joint 3rd

Under the adult category a beautiful depiction of Sujata offering milk rice to the Lord Buddha by Krishna Nath Bhowmik won 1st place.

Youth emcees Deeksha Pidikiti, Megha Patil, Neha Patil, Alabhya Prasad under the guidance of IFM Program Coordinator Shubhra Prasad managed the flow of the program.

Dance judges Rakhi Sinha, Anuri Shah, and Susan Abraham declared –

Neha/Megha Patil winner of the 1stplace; Ria Kotur /Adviti Vemuri 2nd, and Raima Sinha/ Saanvi Sudipta Sahoo/Archisha Dutta/Peethu Das in 3rd

Under adult category, Anoushka Prasad/Riya Lahoti won 1st and Subhi Kumar/Muskan Ahuja grabbed 2nd Restaurants and businesses from near and far joined IndiaFest with their specialties.

Other highlights at the festival were a classical flute performance by Illinois resident Raju Bankapur, classical Indian instrumental duet with Sitar by Indrajit Banerjee from Texas, and Tabla by Shankhachur Lahiri from Florida.

Bollywood Dhamaka was performed by Parth Patel, Radhika Chimata with Hitesh Master and orchestra Sa Re Ga Ma of Illinois.

Founded in 2013, Spindle India, Inc, through IndiaFest Milwaukee has been able to bring thousands of people from all ethnic backgrounds to celebrate India in Wisconsin, the press release said.

Indian-American Physicians Launch Adopt-A-Village Initiative For India

BY A STAFF WRITER

The American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), launched the Adopt-A-Village initiative with a view to helping rural areas in India, Friday, August 27, 2021.

Chaired by, Dr. Satheesh Kathula, members of the committee overseeing the project include President of AAPI Dr. Anupama Gotimukula, Dr. Jagan Ailinani and Dr. Ram Singh.

Ambassador of India to the United States, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, lauded the numerous efforts of AAPI in India, especially during the pandemic. India's Consuls General of Chicago, New York, Houston, Atlanta and the Deputy Consul General of San Francisco participated live during the launch of the initiative.

"A lot of effort is being put into this initiative, "Adopt a Village" Project where AAPI in collaboration with Global TeleClinics, Inc.,(GTC) plans to adopt 75 villages in honor of 75 years of India's independence," she said, according to a press release from AAPI, Dr. Gotimukula said, according to a press release from AAPI.

The 75 villages in India selected for the project are in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Telangana, where free health screenings will be conducted and



President of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin Dr. Anupama Gotimukula, speaking during the zoom call Aug. 27, 2021, on the Adopt-A-Village campaign launched by AAPI.

results analyzed by GTC for follow up.

"This is a small contribution from AAPI to Mother India in celebration of Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav." Dr. Gotimukula added.

Ambassador Sandhu thanked AAPI and its members, saying, "As India is entering the 75th year of independence, honoring men and women, who fought for the freedom, we rededicate ourselves to build an India where the dreams and aspirations of India's 13 billion people are realized." He urged Indians abroad to join in the year-long celebrations.

Dr. Kathula noted that three out of four Indians and about 77 percent of the poor live in villages, and a majority has no access to safe drinking water and sanitation. "By adopting one village at a time and working with the

government and NGOs, NRIs can make a difference," said Dr. Kathula.

President-Elect of AAPI, Dr. Ravi Kolli, noted India's progress using life expectancy as a measure, but stressed the need for primary care at the local level, calling for the building of a Family Medicine corps which could deliver accessible and affordable preventive and primary care to the poor.

Dr. Ailinani, who was instrumental in founding the program and set an example by adopting his own birth village in Telangana, said, "A majority of the NRI's hail from villages and would like to do their part to bring progress to villages in our state and country."

Dr. Ram Singh said "There is a real will and desire on the part of governments, both at the state and the center to work with NRIs and NGOs to bring development to rural India."

Dr. Kusum Punjabi, chair of AAPI Board of Trustees, thanked AAPI members who have committed to adopting a village as these kinds of projects and programs require consistency in funding to make them sustainable.

Consul General of India in Houston, Aseem Mahajan, in his address on "Indo-US Relationship In Healthcare -Rural Health Perspective" praised AAPI members calling them "heroes and partners" especially during Covid. "We can work together, collaborating and sharing of knowledge

and expertise, including Medical Education," he told AAPI.

Dr. Suresh Reddy, past President of AAPI and currently an elected Trustee of Oakbrook Village in Illinois, announced that he is adopting his native village in the state of Telangana.

Consul General Kumar spoke about "Rural Health In India, The Current Situation," and focused on technological areas in healthcare development in the rural parts of India.

Consul General of India in Atlanta Dr. Swati Kulkarni focused on "How AAPI and Doctors can Help India." Dr. Kulkarni said where "India needs overseas expertise, and you are best suited to offer," it. She pointed to India's rapidly growing healthcare industry and medical tourism.

Consul General in New York, Randhir Jaiswal, focused on "Rural Health in India: The Challenges and Solutions" reiterated Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to rebuild a new India. In light of that, "AAPI's initiative is even more meaningful and fits well into PM's vision for India," CG Jaiswal said.

San Francisco Deputy Consul General Rajesh Naik also spoke, as did other AAPI members including, Dr. Sujeeth Punnam, a renowned cardiologist; Dr. Anjana Samadder, vice president of AAPI; Dr. Krishan Kumar, treasurer of AAPI; and Dr. Lokesh Edara, chair for AAPI's global initiative.