



NEWS LETTER

*Bringing Fiji Indian
communities together*

Autumn Edition

May 2009

Namaste, Greetings

WELCOME!

Hello Everyone!

Almost half of the year has gone by! However, we have achieved a lot as a community group. The Association sends everyone its warm greetings and hopes that your outstanding support and well wishes will continue to be with us.

From the President's Desk

Ram Ram, Assalam Alaikum,
Namaskaram, Shastri Akal and Masih ki Jai,

I trust this edition of the FIA Newsletter finds you all in the best of health and spirits.

This year marks the 130th anniversary of the arrival of Indians in Fiji and it is a time to reflect on the trials and tribulations suffered by our fore parents and their triumph over a form of abject slavery and degradation.

The success of Fiji Indians throughout the world is in no small measure due to our genetic resilience inherited from those brave souls who endured the cruelty of the British Government and the CSR overseers, without losing their dignity, culture and religious values.

As Fiji Indians commemorate the 130th anniversary of our arrival in Fiji, we must pay tribute to the tenacity, courage and integrity of our forebears and we must try to instill these virtues in our day to day existence, wherever we live and ensure that our children and grand-children never forget the odyssey from India to Fiji. We should also keep our head high and remember the gauntlet of shame should hang over the heads of those who made our people suffer.

May God bless our forebears and their descendants

SALIM ASHWIN SINGH
PRESIDENT

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Girmit Diwas -our major event for 2009

The Fiji Indian Association of Wellington is to commemorate the 130th anniversary of the arrival of Indians in Fiji at a public ceremony in Lower Hutt – Horticultural Hall on May 17th, 2009.

Cultural items, speeches by two Members of Parliament, Dr Rajen Prasad (the first Fiji Indian MP in New Zealand) and Mr Kanwaljit Singh Bakshi will be the speakers. Mr Bakshi, a National MP, will speak on behalf of the Minister of Ethnic Affairs, Ms Pansy Wong.

Entry is free and a vegetarian meal will also be served. Please phone the FIA members on 04-9389012, 9386004, 9392247 or 2356309 to confirm your attendance.

Please bring your friends and families and together we will celebrate the 130th Girmit Diwas.

Appointment of FIA Board of Trustees

In line with amendments to the FIA constitution, at the last annual general meeting, we now have appointed the Board of Trustees. The three who were appointed were: Master Lal Singh (Chairman), Mr Prakash Narayan and Mr Veerendra Bhim. While the Executive Committee will have full responsibility for the running of the Association and will be responsible for decision-making, the Board of Trustees will play a key role in ensuring that decisions are made in line with procedures laid down in the Constitution. The Constitution of the FIA directs the President to appoint the Board of Trustees, with the agreement of the Executive Committee. The three board members have a proven record of public service and have always shown full commitment to the FIA and its aims and objectives and we congratulate them on their selection. The Board will serve a three-year term.

FIA EXECUTIVES FOR 2008/09

The following are the executive members of the Association for the year 2008/2009.

President	Ashwin Salim Singh
Vice President	Jiten Pratap
Secretary	Naren Lal
Assistant Secretary	Vijendra Mishra
Treasurer	P.N. Verma
Assistant Treasurer	Vinod Kumar
Communications Advisor	Meena Pratap
Committee Members	Alphonsus Giborees
	Jai Chand
	Krishna Gounder
	Meena Chandra
	Paresh Hari
	Prem Singh
	Vimal Verma



Front Sitting from Left:

Meena Pratap, Ashwin Salim Singh, Meena Chandra

Standing from Left

Vijendra Mishra, Jiten Pratap, Paresh Hari, Prem Chand, Prem Singh, P.N. Verma, Vinod Kumar, Alphonsus Giborees, Naren Lal, Krishna Gounder

Absent: Jai Chand, Vimal Verma

MEMBERSHIP

The Association's membership drive has been excellent so far and continues to grow. By becoming a member of the Association one benefits in many ways, in particular the chance of networking with others within the community.

The annual membership cost is only \$10.00 per person.

If you are not a member and would like to become one, please contact one of our executive members. You can become a member at any time.

Upcoming events / festivals

- **17 May – Girmitt Diwas** to be held at Horticultural Hall, Lower Hutt from 2 pm.
- **23 May – THERUKOOTHU in Lower Hutt.**
Organised by the Wellington Sangam Association. Tickets are: Adults \$20, children 5-12 years - \$5.00 and children under five – no charge. Wellington Sangam President, Krishna Gounder says the whole idea of the programme is to make people aware of this exciting form of South Indian dance. Vegetarian dinner will be served. For further details, contact Krishna Gounder on 04-2329881 (H) 04-2380601 * 4 (W) and on cell: 027 5679329
- **6 June – Jimmy Nathu Show cum dinner evening.** The show will be held at Bharat Bhavan in Kilbirnie from 7 pm. Tickets are \$30A, \$75 for family, & \$20 for students. For further inquiries you may contact Jagdish & Sudha Prasad on 477 6116 or Meena Pratap on 938 6004.
- **25 July – Bollywood show and fundraising dinner** at Bharat Bhavan in Kilbirnie from 7 pm. Tickets are: Adults \$20.00, children between 5 -10yrs - \$10.00, & under 5 yrs – free. For ticket inquiries Please contact:
*Shanel and Shyama Kumar ph (04) 389 8258
mob 0274454205*
Raju Singh ph 021 458972
*Pandit Mukesh Sharma ph (04) 387 3898
mob 0274884868*

- **5 August** - Raksha Bandhan
- **14 August** -Krishna Janmashtami
- **27 September** – World Vegetarian Day to be organised by ISKCON Wellington. For further details contact Jagdish Prasad on 477 6116.

CELEBRATIONS

THE FESTIVALS CELEBRATED IN THE LAST COUPLE OF MONTHS –

- Prophet Mohammed's birthday
- Maha Shivratri – 23rd February, 2009
- Ram navmi – 3rd April, 2009
- Easter – 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th of April
- Baisakhi – 13th April
- ANZAC Day – was on 25th of April

COMMUNITY NEWS

SPORTS

Girmit Cup

The Fiji Indian Association organised the inaugural Girmit Cup tournament at Crawford Green, Miramar on Sunday, May 10. The eight teams which took part were named after some of the ships which brought the Girmityas from India. Rewa Poonah won the tournament against Ba Syria by 3-1.

FIA Vice-President, Jiten Pratap, who chaired the Girmit Cup tournament said it was gratifying to see the players turning up and making the Girmit Cup tournament a success despite the extremely cold weather.

The trophies donated by Kamleshwar Singh and Manikam Gounder will be presented at the Girmit Diwas function at the Horticultural Centre in Lower Hutt on Sunday, May 17, 2009, commencing at 2pm.

Battle of the Giants in Wellington

For the first time ever, Wellington hosted a Battle of the Giants soccer tournament. The competition, organised by the Fiji Football Association of Wellington saw a riveting final between Suva and Nadroga, with Suva winning 1-0, making it the winner of the inaugural BOG trophy, donated by the FFAW. Nadroga was the runner-up and won a trophy donated by Cairns Motors, of Wellington. Lautoka (a team which is fielded by Fiji people living in Palmerston North) was third and Nadi won fourth place. The best disciplined trophy was won by Rakiraki. The trophies for third and fourth place and for the best disciplined side were donated by Sanjesh Lallu, of the Wellington Sanatan City side. FFAW President, Salim Singh said the tournament was graced by excellent display of soccer and superb sportsmanship. Coming on the heels of the first ever Inter-District tournament in Wellington last October, Mr Singh said it was great to watch Fiji people of all races enjoying themselves.

Further, in sports, the Airport Rangers team (otherwise known as Ba) hosted a seven-a-side tournament in Wellington in the last weekend of April and six teams participated. Suva won the final against an Assyrian team, comprising players from Iraq. Tournament chairman, Jiten Pratap complimented the players for their skills and professionalism.

Religious

Muslim League

The New Zealand Muslim League has acquired a property in Tawa, Wellington, which will be developed as an Islamic Centre and future plans include designating it as a Mosque. League spokesperson, Mr Nazrul Ali says the Centre will be Tawa's first Islamic Centre.

The League also recently celebrated the birth of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) at a function at the Onslow College in Broadmeadows, which was attended by a wide cross-section of the community from Wellington, Auckland and from other places in New Zealand. The Chief Priest from the N Z Muslim League Centre in Tauranga, Maulana Gulam Abbas, who is originally from Pakistan and a senior executive of the Wellington City Council were guest speakers.

ISKCON Temple

Year ended March 2009 has been excellent for ISKCON Wellington. The new temple was constructed in a timely manner. Although the temple is small, it's nice and beautiful.

The Hare Krishna Higher Taste restaurant expanded further in to the café and bar space. The restaurant now has a large hall for parties and weddings and can cater up to 200 people. Further, ISKCON Wellington purchased 103 Newlands Road (next door to the temple) property, a commercial property for its grand temple complex.

Hindu Heritage

Hindu Heritage is working to build Wellington Shiva Mandir in various stages. Four weeks ago Nitin Kishore from Brooklyn kindly donated his efforts to bulldoze the site for next step. Mr Yunus from Mira Shahib donated his bulldozer. The committee thanks both these gentleman for their support towards this community project.

The next step is already under progress. Architects are currently invited to the site to give us an idea about the first stage to building this project. Every 2nd Sunday the committee gathers at the site to do some work.

Please contact: HHA priest- Pundit Mukeshwar or Mr.Raju Singh if you wish to donate your time.

Fiji Flood Appeal

An appeal by the Fiji Indian Association of Wellington for the victims of the devastating floods in Fiji earlier this year has led to a cash contribution of \$7,574 being channeled through the FIA. Of the funds collected, your Association contributed \$1,000.00 from its resources

The funds were sent to three organizations: the Stri Sewa Sabha, Sangam and J P Bayly Trust for use at Ba, Nadi and Labasa.

We imposed a strict caveat that the funds were to be used only for victims of the floods.

The FIA would like to record its sincere appreciation to all those who contributed so generously.

FIJI NEWS

The current statistics on Fiji Population shows there is a decline in Indian population.

POPULATION	
2007 Population Census	
Total Fiji:	837,271
Fijians:	475,739
Indians:	313,798
Others:	47,734
Rural Sector:	412,425
Fijians	264,235
Indians	135,918
Others	12,272
Urban Sector:	424,846
Fijians	211,504
Indians	177,880
Others	35,462
Population Aged 15 & Over	594,150
Economically Active (In the labour force)	326,988
Not Economically Active (Not in the labour force)	267,162

Transitions

Deaths

- A well-known Lower Hutt person, ANDREW BALI died recently and we would like to express our condolences to his family. Mr Bali was a very popular person in the community and hailed from a much respected Nadi family. He was farewelled by family and friends at a Christian funeral.
- We sadly record the passing away of MRS DULARI MUSADILAL, who died in Wellington. Mrs Musadilal was the widow of Mr Mohan Musadilal, whose family owned Musadilal & Sons in Cumming St, Suva. She was cremated, according to Hindu rites in Wellington.
- It is our sad duty to report the passing away of MRS KASIMBI ALI, widow of Mr Mohammed Ali and mother of two well-known Wellington people, Ahmed and Rahmat Ali. Mrs Ali, 93, was buried at the Makara Islamic cemetery.