



# NFIA Activity Report

## ● Gandhi Memorial at Seattle, Washington

NFIA (National Federation of Indian American Associations), under leadership of its current President Chandu K Patel “CK”, was instrumental in getting a resolution (NO. 603) moved in the House of Representatives on June 26th 2009 to commemorate the 140th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. This resolution, supported by six congressmen, acknowledges the visionary leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, which enhanced the rapidly growing and deepening friendship between India and US.



NFIA did it again when under the leadership of Chandu Patel and with the sheet anchor role of Anjali Sachdev and her entire NFIA Seattle team, continuous guidance and direction by former NFIA President Subash Razdan in this monumental project; and the tremendous support that we received from all NFIA past Presidents and current NFIA leadership, a life size statue of Mahatma Gandhi, gifted so kindly by the Govt. of India to

KCLS (King County Library System), State of Washington and NFIA, was unveiled by Ambassador of India to the US, Honorable Meera Shankar in the City of Bellevue, Washington on October 17<sup>th</sup> 2009. Consul General of India, San Francisco, Honorable Sushmita Thomas and US Congressman Jim McDermott were present on this occasion. This was a dream that we all envisioned in the NFIA Convention in Seattle in Nov' 2008. It is highly praise worthy that our NFIA leadership has been able to turn that dream into reality within a short time of less than 12 months, especially when they had to deal with several governmental authorities and various local and State level entities.



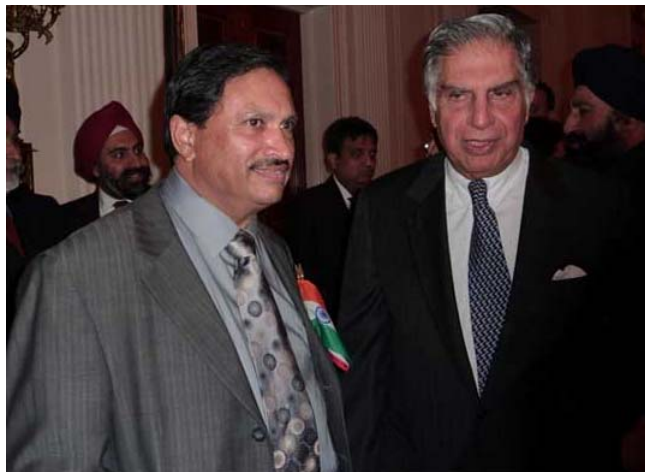
NFIA's current leadership has been persuading for long that implementing Gandhian philosophy in our lives is the

only solution to get this world rid of menace of terrorism and all violence that is so prevalent in today's society.

- **NFIA visit to the White House for Welcome Ceremony for Dr. Manmohan Singh**

On November 24<sup>th</sup> 2009, Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, during his State visit to the United States of America, was hosted by US President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle Obama in the White House along with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. There were many other Indian and the US dignitaries and diplomats present on this historic occasion. This was the 1<sup>st</sup> State Dinner being hosted by President Obama in honor of Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh.

White House was gracious to welcome NFIA (National Federation of Indian American Associations) and its leaders to this historic event. NFIA has been instrumental in maintaining strong ties between India and the US relationship. NFIA was represented by Chandu Patel, Sachin Amin, Anjali Sachdev, Lal Motwani and others.



Among attendees were US Vice President Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton, Indian Ambassador to the US Meera Shankar, top Indian Industrialist Rata Tata, Sam Pitroda and many other prominent personalities.

Dr. Manmohan Singh and President Obama discussed various issues concerning India and the United States. They especially discussed the growing need for better understanding and cooperation between these two countries to lead the world into a peaceful era of progress and unity. This visit

and the enhanced friendship between India and the US is seen as a major step towards a solid collaboration between two largest democracies of the world for a great future for both countries.

- **NFIA hosts Congressional Luncheon 2010 at Capitol Hill, Washington DC**

National Federation of Indian-American Associations (NFIA) hosted Congressional Luncheon 2010 at the Capitol Hill, Washington D.C. on May 18th 2010. Dr. Parthasarthy Pillai, Chairman of Congressional Luncheon Committee, welcomed all community leaders for attending this prestigious event. He appreciated the hard work put in by NFIA veteran Dr. Joydeb Roy, Harihar Singh and Satish Mishra. It is only due to their combined efforts that US Majority leader Steny Hoyer, House and Means Committee Chairman Charlie Rangel from New York, Ranking Leader and Co-Chair of India Caucus Ed Royce from California, Ranking leader and Energy and Commerce Committee member Phil Gingrey from Georgia and; Congressman and Democratic

Congressional Campaign Committee Chairman Chris Van Hollen from Maryland came to attend this Congressional Luncheon.

Chandu Patel welcomed everybody and thanked all congressmen for their continuous support to



NFAIA President Chandu K Patel "CK"  
Speaks at Congressional Luncheon 2010

India. Chandu Patel added that the US and India should become strategic partners in finding a solution to global terrorism. He also mentioned that these two great nations should also set examples in curbing the global warming and green house effects. He further said that Indian hoteliers have invested millions of dollars in the hospitality industry which has benefited both countries. He further mentioned that Indian people have been providing great service in the US in the fields of medical, science, technology and business. He, however, mentioned that there is a need to do much more in the areas of preserving the Indian culture for our 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, involving the local American

communities in NFIA activities so that they understand our culture better.

Majority leader Hoyer said that two largest democracies in the World, US and India have common purpose to achieve the global peace while tackling the terrorism in the world. He also mentioned that Dr. Manmohan Singh's recent visit to the US for a State Dinner was the start of new era for US-India relations. He assured NFIA community that he will do whatever he can to make US-India relations stronger.



US Congress Majority Leader  
Steny Hoyer



House & Means Comm. Chairman  
Charlie Rangel

House and Means Committee Chairman Charlie Rangel from New York said that Indian community has added a lot of value in almost every field and he thinks that US and India should be close allies in resolving a lot of global problems.

Ambassador, DCM Arun Kumar Singh and Sanjay Sinha, Minister of Personnel and Community Affairs from India were also present. Ambassador Singh said that a premier association like NFIA can truly play a major role in furthering US-India growing relationship.



Ambassador and DCM  
Arun Kumar Singh



US Congressman and India Caucus Member  
Ed Royce

Congressman Ed Royce from California, who is also Co-Chair of India Caucus, personally thanked Chandu Patel for his close friendship over the years and his continued support and leadership in the community affairs. Ed Royce further added that he has worked with Chandu Patel in the India Caucus when there were only seven members. Now the India Caucus has grown to 150 members. He also mentioned that many past US Presidents including Bill Clinton, George W Bush

and the current President Barack Obama think that the US and India should work more closely in many sectors such as global terrorism, trade, business, technology and global warming.

Congressman and Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chairman Chris Van Hollen shared with everyone his personal affection for India because he has studied in India. He said he was overwhelmed by the support he has received from the Indian community. He added however that US can help India a great deal in improving the existing infrastructure in India to match International standards.



Congressman Phil Gingrey from Georgia, who is also a member of Energy and Commerce Committee, said that him being a physician, he knows a lot of Indian doctors who have been serving the people of the US for so many years and have added a lot of value to the medical field here. He added that he will work closely with NFIA in future to assist in any way he can. He personally thanked Subash Razdan and praised his leadership in the community services.

After the conclusion of the congressional luncheon, NFIA also conducted its board meeting and announced that next NFIA Convention will be held in New York in September 2010. Lal Motwani from New York will be the Convener of this convention. Lal Motwani presented a report on planning of the Convention. Board members approved and welcomed FIA-NYNJCT and FIA-Washington to the NFIA family.



**House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer with Indian Delegation**

Later in the evening, Indian Ambassador Arun Kumar Singh and Minister Sanjay Sinha hosted a dinner for more than 200 Indian community leaders in appreciation of the work they are doing for Indo-US relationship. NFIA leaders raised several questions regarding terrorism, social structure in India, India-Pakistan relations, continuous threats from Pakistan, corruption, NRIs' difficulties in renewing Passports and visas etc. Indian embassy was quite helpful in providing answers to these questions. A documentary was also shown by the Indian embassy on 26/11 attacks in Mumbai.

NFIA President Chandu Patel thanked all community leaders for their active participation in making this historic event a grand success. He especially thanked Dr. Parthasarthy Pillai and Dr. Joydeb Roy for planning and organizing; and the executive committee and the board members for their enthusiastic approach in supporting this event. Chandu Patel also thanked the sponsors Rahul Chaturvedi of Moollex LLC, Anjali Sachdev, Lavanya Reddy, Sudip Gorakshakar and Vishwa Prasad from NFIA Seattle team, Ashok Madan and Anju Garg from FIA-California and Anil Yadav from San Francisco. He also appreciated past NFIA President Subash Razdan and Dr. Sambhu Banik for doing a great job of masters of ceremonies. Chandu Patel also appreciated

the volunteer work done by NFIA board of trustee Kewal Kanda, NFIA Vice-President Ashok Madan and many others. The entire NFIA family wished NFIA Foundation Chairman Dr. Rajen Anand a speedy recovery and good health. The event was a great success as more than 250 Indian community leaders participated from all over the USA.



## **Other NFIA Activities undertaken since Nov' 2008;**

1. Indian Task Force organized a meeting with US Congressmen in Jan' 2009 in Washington DC in protest against Mumbai attacks. Task force was jointly formed by USINPAC and other Indian associations. The protest was proudly supported by NFIA, represented by Dr. Rajen Anand, Ritesh Aggarwal and Lal Motwani.



Congressman Jim McDermott addressing members of the task force.

2. NFIA along with GOPIO and a large Indian-American community in the Greater Los Angeles area organized a Prayer meeting on Nov 30<sup>th</sup> 2008 in Anaheim, CA for the families and victims of Mumbai attacks. The community expressed shock at the dastardly acts of terrorism unleashed in the financial and tourism hub of Mumbai in the previous week against the civilian population of both Indian and foreign nationalities. NFIA leaders urged the Govt. of India to take strict and bold action against the perpetrators of this barbaric act of violence on the Indian land. The community also paid homage to the members of the police force and the NSG commandos who laid down their lives in the

service of the country. A Resolution was passed urging the Govt. of India to take immediate corrective action to address the serious situation that this incident has caused. NFIA leaders added that the Indian Government should work closely with the Opposition parties in the creation of tougher anti-national laws and in the creation of federal investigative agencies that would be able to enforce the law and deliver swift justice without being hamstrung by State governments. It was emphasized that the Govt. of India should launch an international diplomatic offensive to stem the flow of support and finances to the terrorists ensconced in Pakistan or Pakistan occupied Kashmir. The U.S. Government should be urged to stop aiding Pakistan.

3. NFIA played a major role in getting US-India Nuclear deal signed. NFIA leaders had gone from door to door to gather support for this important deal for both countries. NFIA also advocated this deal in the US Congress by visiting many Congressmen on individual basis. NFIA leaders worked hard to get this deal approved by the US Congress. These agreements broke new grounds on Bush administration's deal between the United States and India that allows the sale of civilian nuclear technology to India for the first time in three decades. In return, India will grant U.N. inspectors access to some of its civilian nuclear facilities. One agreement gives U.S. companies exclusive rights to sell civilian nuclear reactors to two sites in India. The second agreement ensures that highly sophisticated arms technology sold to India is not leaked to other countries. It is also expected to lead to a boost in U.S. arms sales to India.

4. NFIA paid tribute to outgoing Ambassador Ronen Sen. He has been widely credited for his relentless work in taking US-India relations to new heights of cordiality and cooperation. The event held on Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009 attracted a capacity crowd of 200 people. Ambassador Sen delivered an inspiring speech to a crowd comprised of all regional, religious and professional affiliations.



Community leaders with Ambassador Ronen Sen

5. In New York during our board meeting in the month of Aug 2009, President Chandu Patel invited tri-state FIA-NYNJCT leaders to join NFIA and they have accepted the offer now and they are now a proud member association of NFIA family. There has been a long time rift between this tri-state FIA and NFIA but because of Chandu Patel's perseverance and continued efforts in convincing the tri-state FIA leaders to join NFIA, finally they agreed to join hands with NFIA to make NFIA family stronger than ever.



Prof. Kiran Walia

6. On Jan 5<sup>th</sup> 2010, 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of NFIA India Council was launched by President Chandu Patel in New Delhi in the presence of Overseas Indian Affairs Minister Vayalar Ravi. It was coordinated by Munish Gupta. Prof. Kiran Walia, Minister of Health & Family Welfare applauded the launch of NFIA India Council and said in

her message to the NFIA that this India chapter will bolster the growing US-India relations especially between the people of these two great democracies.

7. NFIA successfully protested against Indian Govt's new rule of Indian passport renunciation for Indians who have acquired citizenship of other countries. A meeting was organized in Artesia, CA in collaboration with GOPIO and combined representation was sent to the Govt. of India. Two days later, GOI modified its rule and changed the renunciation



(L to R) Inder Singh, President GOPIO, Chandu Patel, President NFIA and Sachin Amin, Secretary NFIA at the meeting

conditions accordingly. Fee for obtaining a passport surrender certificate was also reduced from proposed \$175 to \$20 only.

8. Chandu Patel, using the NFIA banner, also hosted a public function in Gandhi Asharam, Ahmedabad to honor Sunita Williams, Nasa astronaut of Indian origin when she came back to earth after spending six months onboard International Space Station. Nearly 25,000 school children, and local community leaders and members

came to see Sunita Williams who shared her experience of living in



space for six months with the massive gathering. Later on, after the successful response to this NFIA organized function, the office of Indian Prime Minister and Sonia Gandhi also invited Sunita Williams in New Delhi.