



Host: India Day Parade, NYC

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community grand marshal; singers Shibani Kashyap and Mickey Singh and actress Pooja Kumar.

The South Asian Times, one of the grand patrons of the parade, spoke to a few participants to elicit their views on the 72nd Independence Day of India and the FIA's 38th parade. The publication, which brought out a special Independence Day issue, had a float as well as a stall distributing free copies of the special issue.

R. Radhakrishnan, a former FIA president, was upbeat and expressed optimism about the future. "You see the parade is getting bigger every year," he said, while marching and pointing toward the crowd. "You see their enthusiasm. Despite the drizzle, you witness constant smiles on their faces."

Kundan Lal, 85, expressed happiness to appear as the Father of Indian Nation. "I am here every time as the Mahatma and this parade is no exception," he noted. Wearing Gandhi's trademark glasses, a loincloth and holding a stick (and the Tricolor) with the typical desi chappals, Lal could not be mistaken for anybody else.

A Jersey City couple was another attraction. Shashikant and Chetna Kamdar wore a Gujarati tribal dress and cheered onlookers. Though they had earlier heard of the parade, this was the first time they took part in it and that, too, in an ethnic attire.

A 64-year-old retired Mumbai accountant, Kundan Singh Dosad, who was visiting his son based in Washington DC, decided to witness the parade. Though the onlooker on the sidelines visited the US previously a few times, Dosad made sure that this time around his son would take him to the Big Apple to witness the "largest Indian parade in America." His son, who works in the IT industry and stood next to him, concurred.

Among the segments that drew great attention and wide applause from the onlookers was a dance-and-music troupe from the Dol-Tasha cultural group from neighboring New Jersey. Wearing colorful saris in Maharashtrian and Punjabi styles, the women – playing their own instruments -- danced to the rhythmic music rendered by a band.

One of the floats that inspired awe was from the Chhatrapati Foundation. A man dressed as

Float to spread message of peace

International Ahimsa Foundation (IAF) proudly participated in the FIA parade on Aug 19. IAF's mission is to promote non-violence and peace among today's young generation as they are our future and will make this world a better place to live. The IAF float was joined by Bollywood celebrities Ishita Dutta and Vatsal Sheth and by Prasoon Sharma, Director of India Global Everyone, including young children, enthusiastically carried messages of peace in their hands. The float's main attraction was Mahatma Gandhi's statue at the front and was accompanied by many organizations in a march for non-violence and peace. The organizations included AIA, Dropadi Jigyasu Ashram, Gujarati Samaj of North America, Hindu Center, Jain Samaj of USA, NJ, JAINA, Lohana Samaj of NY, New York Tamil Academy, Young Jains of America, and Young Jain Professionals.

The Consul General of India New York, Ambassador Sandeep



Neeta Jain, founder of International Ahimsa Foundation, with Rep Carolyn Maloney, who is introducing legislation to honor Mahatma Gandhi with a Congressional Gold Medal.

Chakravorty, joined the float and congratulated IAF for its initiatives. Congresswoman Carolyn

Maloney made the historic announcement that she is introducing legislation to posthu-

mously honor Mahatma Gandhi with a Congressional Gold Medal.



A tableau with Maratha warrior Shivaji.



New Jersey couple Shashikant and Chetna Kamdar wore a Gujarati tribal dress and attracted attention.

Shivaji, who established a Hindu kingdom in present-day Maharashtra, was with a sword in his hand heading a darbar (public audience) with mother Jijabai in the background.

A couple sought donations for Kerala flood victims and held out boxes to receive the same.

The four-hour event, in which nearly 100,000 participated, was extended for a few hours by cultural dances held on a stage set up at 24th street. There were also food stalls and booths for various commercial firms.



While DACA hogs the headlines, the plight of spouses and dependents of South Asians caught in the green card limbo cannot be highlighted enough.