



THE ASSOCIATION OF INDIANS IN AMERICA

SOUTH FLORIDA CHAPTER

1624 NW 85th Drive, Coral Springs, FL 33071



December 2011, VOLUME XIII

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear members,

Hope you all had a great summer. We had busy summer. India's Independence Day was celebrated by AIA in collaboration with the local Indian organizations on August 21st at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts. I would like to thank the 21 participating organizations for making this event a great success.

This year we added a new feature, the 'Parade' to the celebration. We thank all the associations who participated in the parade for its success. We also included decorated cars in the parade. I appreciate all the cultural show participants for the great entertainment they provided in showcasing our Indian culture. Special thanks to the event chair, Ramola Motwani for a fabulous job. I would like to thank my executive committee and the volunteers for their hard work and effort. It is not possible without all your support.

Eid Mubarak to our members who celebrate Ramadan. We wish you all a safe festival season as Navratri and Diwali are around the corner.

We are proud to announce our next event, AIA's Festival of India to be held on Sunday, October 9th, 2011 at the Coral Springs Center for the Arts. Please save the date for a wonderful day filled with entertainment, exotic Indian cuisine, henna tattoo, cooking Demo, yoga and plenty of shopping. Please come with your family and friends to enjoy the event. Stay tuned for more details about the Festival. Feel free to contact Uma Eniasivam (954-341-9346), Maya Kirpalani (561-241-1746) or Naveen Mehan (954-294-8610) for information regarding the Festival. Admission is free for current AIA members. So please renew your membership promptly. For our members who have already renewed, we thank you for your patronage.

At present, executive committee is busy planning for the India's Independence Day celebration to be held on August 21st, 2011 at the Broward Performing Arts Center. As a tradition, AIA in collaboration with local Indian organizations will once again celebrate this India's Independence Day. It will be a fun filled event with cultural activities, delicious Indian food and much more. Please come with your family and friends to enjoy the event. Stay tuned for more details about the Independence Day celebration.

My team and I welcome fresh ideas for programs and events that the community can benefit from. Please renew your membership promptly so we can stay in touch.

Sincerely,

Uma Eniasivam

President, AIA S. Florida Chapter

AIA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Uma Eniasivam	Felix Campos	Naveen Mehan
Ramola Motwani	Hovi Shroff	Pradeep Sudan
Vijaya Kumar	Ujvala Bhuta	Maya Kirpalani
Piyush Goyal	Karan Munuswamy	Alefiya Ghadiali
Purnima Deshpande	Sharmistha Dutta	Viji Ranganathan
Srinivas Suram		

**FESTIVAL OF INDIA
October 9, 2011**

**Come one, come all
Bring your family and friends!
Enjoy an exhibition of Indian
Culture, Dances, Foods Arts,
Jewelry and Clothes!**

**HAPPY DIVALI!
To you and your family!**



In This Issue

PRESIDENT'S LETTER.....	pg. 1
2011 Graduates	pg. 2
Cooks Nook	pg. 3
New Visa Rules for India	pg. 4
Reception for Speaker.....	pg. 8
Independence Day	pg. 8
Website: www.aiaflorida.org	
Email: aia.sflorida@gmail.com	
Phone: 954-341-9346	

**All members are invited to
send contributions. Send to
uji_bhuta@hotmail.com**

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES !

2011 Graduates from AIA Membership

1. **Amrit Basu**, son of Dr. Abhijit Basu and Chandrima Basu, graduated High School from Pine Crest. He has won several awards for debate including Florida Forensic League policy debate state champion for 2011 and the Florida Forensic League Novice State Champion in 2008. He was a quarter-finalist for the National 2011 Stanford Invitational for Varsity CX Debate. He is attending Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.
2. **Janine Campos**, daughter of Joyce and Felix Campos, graduated in December 2010 from University of Central Florida with a Master's Degree in Speech Language Pathology. Currently employed as a Speech Therapist at the Boca Speech Center.
3. **Archna Eniasivam MD**, daughter of Uma and Sivam Eniasivam, graduated from University of Florida – Medical College. She has joined the Medicine – Pediatrics combined residency program at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.
4. **Neha Govindaraj**, daughter of Padmaja and Govindraj Rangaswamy graduated with honors from Pinecrest High School. She will be pursuing her undergraduate degree at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.
5. **Padmaja Govindaraj**, wife of Govindraj Rangaswamy graduated with Masters in Business Administration from Nova Southeastern University in Davie.
6. **Priyanka Govindaraj EI**, daughter of Padmaja and Govindraj Rangaswamy graduated with a BS in Civil Engineering from University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign. She will start her career as a Management trainee with Union Pacific in Omaha, Nebraska.
7. **Yashraj Narang**, son of Namrata and Mukesh Narang graduated from Stanford University with a degree in Bio-Mechanical Engineering. He is the recipient of 2008 Fulbright-Hays Program and Frederick E. Terman Award for Scholastic Achievement in Engineering. He served as the Director of Public Relations for Stanford's chapter of Engineers for a Sustainable World. He will join D-Lab program at MIT which focuses on Innovations in International Health.
8. **Dr. Anil Nasta**, son of Jaya and Naresh Nasta, graduated from St. Mathews University School of Medicine, Doctor of medicine, and has started his residency at Mid-Hudson Family Practice Residency program at Kingston Hospital, Kingston, New York.
9. **Sangita Sahasranaman**, daughter of Drs. Bhagi and Palghat Sahasranaman, graduated from Tulane University's Freeman School of Business undergraduate program with a major in Legal studies in Business, coordinate major in International Development and a minor in Public Health.
10. **Vanita Sahasranaman MD**, daughter of Drs. Bhagi and Palghat Sahasranaman, graduated from University of South Florida Medical College. She has joined the Psychiatric residency program at the University of Florida Medical College in Gainesville.

11. **Renuka Tolani**, daughter of Chandni and Naresh Tolani, graduated from John A. Ferguson Senior High school. She will be attending University of Miami to pursue a degree in biology.

COOK'S NOOK

Recipes by Ujvala Bhuta

DUDHI HALVA

(Italian Squash Halva)
High fiber and delicious!



Ingredients

Dudhi	4 cups peeled, seeds removed and finely grated	Almonds Slivered	¼ cup + 1 tbsp (garnish)
Whole Milk	1 cup	Pistachios sliced	¼ cup + 1 tbsp (garnish)
Butter	2 tbsp	Cardamom	1 tsp finely ground
Sugar	1 lb or 2 cups	Nutmeg	¼ tsp finely grated
Khoya	½ cup (concentrated milk)*	Rose Essence	½ tsp or to taste

Method

Place grated dudhi in a heavy non stick pan. Add the whole milk and butter. Cook on moderate heat till the dudhi is cooked and the milk is reduced to tiny flecks stirring the mixture all the time. The dudhi mixture will absorb all the milk. Add the sugar. The sugar will melt. Stir the mixture till the dudhi appear glossy and the sugar is absorbed. Crumble the khoya and work into the dudhi till evenly distributed. Add ¼ cup almonds and pistachios each, followed by cardamom, nutmeg. Stir gently till all liquids are absorbed and the “halva” leaves the sides of the pan to gather in the middle of the pan. Add the rose essence and mix thoroughly. Transfer halva to a serving dish and garnish with reserved almonds and pistachios. Halva may be served hot or cold. Serves 10-12

Kaju Katri

The most common Divali Treat



Ingredients

Cashews raw 2 Cups finely powdered *
Sugar 1 cup
Silver paper/foil (Varak)*

Water ½ cup
Cardamom ½ tsp
* Available in Indian markets

Method

Grind the cashews to fine powder. Set aside. Place sugar and water in a non stick heavy bottom pan on moderate heat. Allow the mixture to come to a boil, till syrup forms. Add the cashew powder and cardamom all at once and stir till the mixture leaves the side of the pan and gathers in the middle. Place mixture on a flat surface and roll out to a ¼ inch thickness. Apply the silver foil. Set aside to cool about 20 minutes. Cut into diamond shapes. Lift the diamonds on to a decorative plate.

NEW VISA RULES



Americans of Indian Origin – BEWARE!



I guess the flamboyant title attracted your attention? A more appropriate title would be “Americans of Indian Origin, **Be Aware**” or better still “Americans of Indian Origin, **Prepare!**”, because without this preparation, many of us that came from India and have now become US citizens are liable to get engulfed in bureaucratic red tape **if/when you want to visit India**. I am just going through these gyrations myself and am writing this article in the hope that it will make it easier for others when they want to visit India. So let me take you through my personal experience!

All this started with my wanting to go visit my father – who is approaching 90 years of age – in Mumbai. That is when I learnt that the Indian Government has recently updated their policy that exercises tighter controls on a visit to India by foreigners – and since we now have US citizenship, we are “foreigners”. This policy reads:

*“ As per the extant instructions of the Government of India, a **Tourist Visa** can only be granted to a foreigner who does not have a residence or occupation in India and whose sole objective of visiting India is recreation, sight seeing, casual visit to meet friends and relatives etc. No other activity is permissible on a Tourist Visa.*

*The Tourist Visa is **non-extendable and non-convertible**.*

It has come to the notice of the Government that there has been abuse/misuse of the Tourist Visa. With a view to curb the abuse/misuse of the Tourist Visa, instructions have been issued by the Government imposing the following restrictions: -

*1(a) In respect of foreign nationals holding Tourist Visas with multiple entry facility, **there should be a gap of at least 2 months between two visits** to the country on such a Tourist Visa.*

*2(b) If any foreign national is required to visit the country again within a period of 2 months of his last departure, such foreign national **should obtain special permission from the Mission/Post concerned. The Mission/Post may consider such requests on merits of each case.***

*3(c) In all such cases, **the foreign national should register himself with the FRRO/FRO concerned within 14 days of arrival. An endorsement to this effect will be made on the visa sticker.***

Now, while the purpose of my immediate trip was to visit my father and other family members and friends, I had no desire to go visit the FRRO/FRO officer in Mumbai. BUT, I have heard that without this registration, departure – after 14 days in Mumbai – can become a problem because the Indian Immigration Officer may demand this FRRO endorsement. Such situation has caused one friend to miss his return flight ! Those of us travelling on a Tourist visa need to take this seriously.

The restrictions of not being able to re-visit India within couple of months of my visit is also restrictive. We may have aging parents needing our presence there for medical reasons or have young family members that are getting engaged or married. A re-visit back to India may be very necessary. The new guidelines requires that if a re-visit is essential, then the person needs to (a) apply for Permit to Re-Enter India and (b) justify the reason for this re-visit to the visa authorities. This can easily become a bureaucratic nightmare for such trips, the last thing I wanted to do was apply for a re-entry visa, get bogged down with the "mail and wait" process ! I checked with the Indian Visa office in Houston and found that the approval for such Re-entry permission depends solely on the Counsel and whether he/she feels that this urgency is justified ! For example, they insisted that a family member's sickness was only considered "urgent", only if the relative was in a hospital ICU and for that the applicant had to produce a doctor's certificate outlining the medical problem along with the doctor's prognosis! In our conversation, they stated that if this was truly urgent, it would require my flying to Houston (or New York), giving the details in person to the visa approver and hopefully getting their approval on the spot. This translates to - upon being notified to be present in India, I would have to (a) collect justification documents from India (b) start my travel with a trip to Houston (or New York), get this Re-Entry approval and then (c) embark on the actual flight to India ! This would be a horrible way to start any such journey!

To visit India with minimal bureaucracy then their suggestion is "Apply for **an Entry Visa**" – as opposed to a Tourist visa. An Entry Visa is given to folks that originally have come from India, or whose parents or grandparent came from India. The Entry Visa can be obtained for up to 10 years, has minimal restrictions regarding frequency of trips, *but its process is a lot more complex than the application for a Tourist Visa. And that's where the "Be Prepared" comes in!* The Visa requirements start with (a) proving that the applicant is of Indian origin but (b) that they have given up i.e. Renounced, their Indian citizenship, (c) have not used an Indian passport to travel back home after they gave up Indian citizenship and (d) now desire entry back into India. Of course there is a fee for this privilege. So let's take each of these step-by-step.

For proof of Indian citizenship, one is required to provide their **last** Indian Passport. In my case, I acquired US citizenship about 20 years ago and have not used the Indian passport since. So finding my old Indian passport was no easy task. I called the visa office and was pleasantly surprised when they picked up the phone after the second ring ! But reality set in when they – upon hearing that I could not find my expired Indian passport – provided me with a suggestion of "Please look around your house Sir, the old passport must be there somewhere". Not to disrespect this suggestion, I went through my files for the fifth time and not finding any trace of a 20 year old document, I called them back and explained that I had tried but my Indian passport was still not found. Now they provided another suggestion. This was "Well can you prove you are from India by producing your birth certificate ?". I could have snapped back with "If I had a hard time finding my 20 year old Indian passport, the chances of finding a hand-written piece of paper, certifying my birth in some obscure hospital in a remote Indian village was not very good either ! But I knew that the person in Houston, who now sat in front of a 4 GHZ, Quad Intel processor based computer would not grasp the complexity of what I was going to say. So I went on to the Indian Visa web site <https://indiavisa.travisaoutsourcing.com/requirements/gather?apply=inperson>. There I found out that one item that could be substituted for an expired passport or handwritten birth certificate, was my School Leaving Certificate.

The second item they wanted was proof that I had renounced my Indian citizenship. I had acquired my US citizenship 20 years ago, and with that I had put my Indian passport and other documents away and put them

so “away” that I completely forgot about their whereabouts! So there was no renouncing certificate with me! So I called Houston. And guess what they told me? If you guessed “Sir, we need your old Indian passport!”, then you are very correct. Frustrated, I went directly to the Web site above. It directed me to download a form and declare that “I renounce my citizenship” on it. This was lot simpler and easier to do.

Now came the easy part of adding my fees for this process. Thought I would just write a check and mail it with the other paperwork. But I thought wrong! To determine the amount to send, I had to prove that I had not traveled on my Indian Passport after I became US citizen. If this was true, I had only to send \$ 20. But in case I had traveled on my Indian passport – 3 months after I became a Naturalized US citizen, then I had to pay \$ 250 for every trip that I had made as a penalty. And for that the Indian government needed the exact date of when I became a US citizen and to prove that they needed a copy of my US Naturalization certificate! The logic, that based on the fact that my passport was missing, there would be no way of determining if I had used that passport or not after the date of my US Naturalization was totally lost the visa officer! Their response was very simple. It was “No copy of US Naturalization, no Entry Visa”. This also precipitated a thought in my mind. The US Naturalization Certificate clearly states that it should not be copied! Needless to say, the reader needs to resolve this if they want an Indian Entry Visa.

As I stated at the very start, you need to get **PREPARED!** The above documents need to be augmented with the actual application, photographs, proof of residential address and more. You get the complete list at the web site mentioned above. Once all of these are assembled, you need to send them to the Houston address. The Indian Visa internet site states that getting an Entry Visa takes about 2 weeks, but doing my own research and talking to a few friends, it seems that about a month is normal and in case you have a document missing from the above set or your fees are not calculated correctly, this can easily become a 3 – 4 month, back and forth process. And therefore I repeat “**Be prepared!**”!

In going through the above experience, I did some analysis which I would like to share with you. I found that there could be a better alternative than getting an Entry Visa. Once again, this depends on each individual’s situation, but if you desire frequent trips to India, an Entry visa enables you to do this. **BUT so does a PIO card!** A PIO card is also granted to a person of Indian origin and this in conjunction with a US passport, also allows unrestricted trips to India. **And, the requirements for a PIO card are very similar to those for an Entry Visa application.** So based on the above, applying for PIO can be more beneficial than getting an Entry visa and the amount of bureaucracy and paperwork needed is nearly the same. The fees for PIO are higher by about \$100 or so, but the time taken to get a PIO card seems to be a 2 – 3 weeks when compared to an Entry Visa which can take about a month or more.

There is one more option that is available to most of us, and that is OCI. OCI stands for Overseas Citizen of India. Based on what I have researched on the internet, OCI gives very similar privileges as the PIO, with two exceptions. First is that OCI gives you a lifelong visa for India while PIO is valid for 15 years. Second is that if a person wants to become a citizen of India, then having an OCI for 5 years and a continuous stay for 1 year allows them to apply for Indian citizenship, while a PIO card holder is required to stay in India for 7 years. But, the OCI card does take approximately 6 months to get approved!

So in summary, if you want to make trips to India, please start to prepare. Be aware that India is changing the rules for anyone wanting to visit India, and to close on the same note as the one we started with, if you are not prepared, then **BEWARE** of the bureaucratic process to get your visa and immigration approval to visit India. Start by visiting the following internet sites:

<https://indiavisa.travisaoutsourcing.com/guidelines>

<https://indiavisa.travisaoutsourcing.com/pio/homepage>

<https://indiavisa.travisaoutsourcing.com/pio/explain-services>

And best of luck! Hopefully this article will help you make your travel less stressful and more enjoyable.

Finally, I am just sharing my experiences with you in the hopes of decreasing or possibly eliminating any frustration on your part. I am not the authority on this. Please check the above web site and other knowledgeable people to verify that the information provided above is accurate for what you want on your India visit. If I am wrong, please forgive me and post or blog updates at this site. But one thing I shall re-iterate. For your next travel to India, please PREPARE EARLY.

Mahesh Bhuta.

RECEPTION TO HONOR THE INDIAN LOK SABHA SPEAKER

Dr. Piyush Agarwal had organized a reception for the visiting Indian delegation headed by the Honorable Speaker of the Indian Parliament, Ms. Meira Kumar on April 21st, 2011 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Miami. Thanks to our Consul General, Honorable Arora Ji for giving us an opportunity to host such an outstanding person and a great leader as Ms. Meira Kumar. The reception was attended by the leaders of the local Indian organizations. Here are some of the photographs from the reception.

Please follow the link for more pictures:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/109539672437570706524/AIAAtSpeakerOfIndianParliamentDinner#>



India's Independence Day Celebration

AIA hosted the 2011 India's Independence Day Celebration on Sunday, August 21st, 2011 at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts in collaboration with the local Indian organizations. The event was inaugurated by the Mayor of the Broward County and the Mayor of Fort Lauderdale. Broward county Mayor unfurled the Indian flag. The event was well attended and this year a new feature was added by introducing the Independence Day parade which included the car parade as well. The Zoroastrian Association of Florida won the Best Decorated Booth award. The cultural program was


very successful in showcasing our different region and style of music, dance and history. There several food and non-food vendors to cater the people who attended the event. We thank everyone for making this event a success.

Please follow the link for more pictures:

https://picasaweb.google.com/109539672437570706524/AIAIndependenceDay2011?authkey=Gv1sRgCK69y_DDwf_6fw#



UPCOMING EVENT



**Free Admission -
AIA members and
Children Under 5**

**General
Admission \$5.
Free Parking.**



**ASSOCIATION OF INDIANS IN AMERICA,
S. FL. Chapter Presents the 14th**

FESTIVAL OF INDIA

**Date: Sunday, October 9th, 2011
Time: 11 am - 5 pm**

Venue:
CORAL SPRINGS CENTER FOR THE ARTS
2855 Coral Springs Drive, Coral Springs, FL 33065

Contact
Uma Eniasivam: (954) 341-9346
Naveen Mehan: (954) 294-8610
Maya Kirpalani: (561)241-1746

www.aiaflorida.org

AIA is a non-profit organization under section 501(c) (3) of the IRS



Funding for this event is provided in part by the Broward County Board of County Commissioners as recommended by the Broward Cultural Council.