



FICCI E-NEWS

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"BE SEEN & BE HEARD"

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE:

by Pushkar Misra, VP Externals

As part of the Chamber's development cooperation for sustained global partnership, FICCI Philippines continues to support its global partners' projects and events, which provide mutual accessibility for members to broaden their network.

FICCI supported the initiatives of its major partners in India, namely: Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI); Confederation of Indian Industry (CII); PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry (PHDCCI) and Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI). There was enthusiastic participation from FICCI's Board and Members in these initiatives.

FICCI India - FICCI Philippines partnered with FICCI India in over 10 major webinars between September 2020 and March 2021. The most notable ones were The Textile and Home Furnishing Expo, FICCI Leads 2020 - Reimagining the World, Virtual Global Healthcare & Hygiene, FICCI's 93rd annual convention, Virtual Expo on Manufacturing & Services Sector and Prarambh - India International Start-Up Summit.

CII India - FICCI Philippines participated in 4 major CII virtual events between August 2020 and February 2021: 1st Indo-Asian Business Summit & Expo, CII Flagship Event with the theme "Partnerships for Lives, Livelihood and Growth", Global Unicorn Series "Inspiring Entrepreneurship" and Interaction with Mr. Tarun Bajaj, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.

PHDCCI - FICCI Philippines partnered with PHDCCI in one of its key events "Workplace Wellness for Better Immunity and Higher Productivity" in June 2020.

TPCI - FICCI Philippines supported TPCI's F&B event in October 2020 to organize virtual buyer - seller meetings.

Other than these events, FICCI attended the 1st Commonwealth Networking Night in March 2020 along with CANCHAM, ANZCHAM, BRITCHAM and others.

FICCI Philippines also organized a major event entitled "Perspective of Doing Business in the Philippines: A way forward for domestic and foreign investors" which was co-attended by India Business Forum and FICCI India. This event was co-hosted by SGV & Co Philippines.

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BRINGING HOPE IN THIS PANDEMIC

BIOCARE LIFESCIENCES INC. may be a small company in the health care industry if size is the norm, but it certainly plays a big role in the continuing fight against COVID 19 in the Philippines, bringing hope in this pandemic.

Headed by Managing Director Dileep Tiwari, who in 2012 decided to get out of employment and start a local drug distribution business with local partners/investors right here in the country, he was the first to bring in Remdesivir and Favipirir, medicines used by doctors against COVID 19.

Recently, the company just launched the first branded generic, Tocilizumab (IL 6) receptor blocker to treat severe Covid 19 patients with Cytokine Release Syndrome, another big step against the virus that has become a world wide pandemic.



This is our responsibility as a health care company, to make available in the country medical products with the highest quality standards and at the right costs," said Tiwari who put up the business in a small 23 sq.m. office with only two staff but in less than ten years has managed to grow it to a much bigger office with 20 staff plus 70 field sales personnel all over the country and continued growing business over 30% year on year.

Tiwari was even willing to share the key factors to the company's success, "we are really focused on the marketing side aided by strong team of professionals & a continuous search worldwide for the right product to introduce at the right time with the right cost. We look at the uniqueness of a product and develop it here as a brand," added Tiwari , representing around 40 brands that serve both government and private hospitals.

I believe with our proven track record, we are now a preferred supplier by local doctors whom we have taken as partners in our search and sourcing for the best products, right suppliers, and so on. We support healthcare professionals to various local and international conventions and seminars so they can meet with different people of varied backgrounds, new technologies and innovative products in the market," shared Tiwari.



Presently he sources his products from Argentina, Brazil, Turkey, Egypt, Korea, India and Bangladesh while for conventions and seminars, he looks at Asia, Europe and South America.

"There was a time we assisted a team of doctors straight to a manufacturer in another country that enabled them to see the actual production processes with high quality standards," he related.

His efforts must be working, looking at the growth of his business, even during this time of the pandemic, being an essential product, he was posting good growth rates but adding that even if the country has the capability to be a manufacturing hub, not just in pharmaceutical but other industries, major changes in policies have to be introduced by the government and the private sector.

Another area he pointed out is the need for both public and local doctors to change their long held perception that good products can only come from Europe, " I believe we have made some headway here though as a result of bringing doctors abroad and their becoming more aware with other drugs outside Europe."

On his decision to join FICCI, he was direct to the point, " FICCI is a good business organization and community, here we can help each other out even with different industries, it is like a platform for us in business."

In the end, Tiwari agrees that bilateral relations , whether between individuals or countries, would be at the heart of the situation and by bringing local doctors abroad for international conventions, seminars, and familiarization visits to learn of new products in the market and for him, the result is expanded knowledge and network for everyone concerned.

And it seems the company has mastered the art of trade relations.

By Lito Cinco

LOOKING BACK

FICCI had its GMM last May 8, 2021 where members together with their family attended as Prof. Andy Ferreria shared case studies of how businesses have transformed and thrived during the COVID pandemic.

LOOKING AHEAD

FICCI is looking forward to the third delivery of vaccines for the 2nd quarter of the year, once it arrives, vaccination of members can be scheduled.

NOW YOU KNOW

Filipino Sindhi community - The entrepreneurial Ambassadors of the Indian sub-continent

by Arvind TJ Kumar, VP Agriculture



It was on the 08th October, 2018. I was standing at a corner of the SMX Convention Center, Pasay, where the 2nd ASEAN Agriculture summit just ended, with the internationally known, who's who of agriculture industry were leaving the hall. I represented the FICCI (Filipino Indian Chamber of Commerce of Philippines) at the event. Suddenly a firm hand patted my shoulders! It was Secretary Manny Pinol, the former Agriculture Secretary of Philippines and present Chairman of the Mindanao Development Authority (Minda). A farmer by heart, agriculturist, seasoned journalist, veteran political leader and experienced government executive - all rolled into one

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- the ever dynamic Secr. Pinol called me "Arvind....do you know Sunny Verghese ...the co-founder and CEO of Olam International, Singapore? I just gave an award to Olam for championing the inclusive business in the ASEAN agricultural sector! I said "Yes, Secr., also I am not surprised, as the inclusive growth of the small holder farmers has been one of your life-long advocacies and Olam globally represents the same"! Many of my Sindhi community friends in Jakarta and Manila were surprised, before they felt proud, on knowing from me that, Olam International, one of the world's largest agri-biz multinationals, was originally promoted and made into a global giant by a prominent Sindhi entrepreneurial family from Indonesia, before the Singapore Government's Temasek holdings acquired a major shareholding. Coming from an international agrizib industry, I personally witnessed Olam's remarkable entrepreneurial growth story, which itself now a case study in the major business schools around the world. Olam's global success was due to its Sindhi entrepreneurial DNA and Indian professional talent!

Besides contributing to the economic recovery and food security of Philippines in a small and symbolic way, the success and impact of this project will serve as a catalyst for developing various MSME business models across the agri-food value chain of the Philippines. Creating such an Agri-food MSME supply chain and integrating with the export-import ecosystem of RCEP free trade agreement, requires the DNA of the Filipino sindhi community - the entrepreneurial ambassadors of the Indian sub-continent!

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT Words of Wisdom from Pishu

One advantage in sitting down and interviewing the more senior members of the local Fil-Indian business community is the



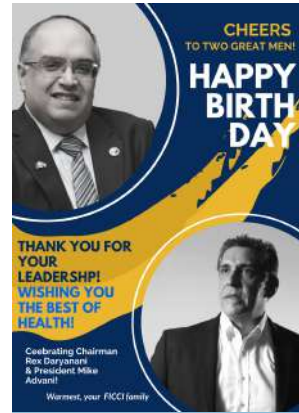
opportunity to hear words of wisdom from them. And listening to Euro Group's founder Pishu Mirpuri gives credence to this observation as he traced his group's humble beginnings from way back 1974 upon his arrival from Hong Kong to what it is now.

Though it his son Mahesh Mirpuri, a director in the previous FICCI board who is now at the helm to give his father more "Me Time" with the family. " I came here after suffering business losses in my textile company, plus the stock market which crashed," related Pishu. He had no idea of what he was going to do in the Philippines except that it was going to be the big change in his life. Pishu looked around and liked what he saw, friendly people and lower labor costs, and started a small import business. " It was a struggle for us for the next 6 years, but in 1980, his Hong Kong friends needed garments in big numbers for shipment to other countries, and since then, there was no turning back for the company. Pishu started a small garments manufacturing but relied more on local sub contractors coming from all over Luzon," at one time we were giving work to 2000 to 3000 people, until things started to change , labor costs were going up, labor problems were emerging, and we had to adjust to these changing conditions just as we are adapting to the business situation because of Covid 19. Even then, we knew we had to go on and this we did by expanding our product lines and started importing goods.

Philippines, which is currently facing very many challenges in the agriculture and food security can greatly benefit from the inherent entrepreneurial knowledge and skills of the Filipino sindhi community. One of the weakest links of the Philippine agriculture sector is the lack of MSMEs in the agri-food value chain. MSME sector is key to the inclusive recovery of the Philippine economy from this Covid-19 Pandemic. If the FICCI members come together and support my proposed initiative of building a technologically innovative 'Farm-to-Fork' B2C integrated digital supply chain platform, it will not only provide fresh and healthy vegetables, fruits and fresh produce to the Indian community, but also help to bring impact to the livelihood of the small and marginal Filipino farmers and fisherfolk.

I can say these are two important factors in surviving, the ability to respond to changes and expanding one's horizons, and thank God we are still moving on," said Pishu. It was not an easy decision to move away from the garments business but when other countries like Vietnam, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Pakistan started producing with lower labor costs, plus the fact that the textile industry here failed to modernize, we really had to change directions, importing finished goods with lower duties and taxes" added the Euro Group patriarch. Moving forward to current times hit by the world wide pandemic, " now everyone is starting to change ways of doing business, since people are not going to the malls, these malls had to find a new way to get their goods into the consumers, giving birth to on line selling with on line sales shops., " adding the fact that the labor situation here has improved with the workforce focused on getting jobs because they need to work. " I don't know what kept us alive but I certainly did not want to fold up and we remain focused on our business, trying to keep all stakeholders happy, our employees, clients, suppliers, to enable us to follow our promise of delivering more for less. These are hard times for sure and everyone needs to adapt to current realities," according to Pishu. Changing topics, and talking about FICCI this time, he says " FICCI has never functioned better than before, the previous and the present administrations have brought the group to a higher level, raising the bar further. We are very proud of what we are seeing and I believe using today's technologies has enabled FICCI that capability" he added. " The group has gone beyond just business and included philanthropic programs to help the needy, I take pride in that. I am happy where we are and no other way but to look up, " concluded Pishu. From someone who has been in FICCI for a long time, and having occupied practically all the positions in the organization Pishu certainly knows what he is talking about, the past the present, the future. His final advise to young entrepreneurs, go into on line businesses or pharmaceutical and healthcare, essential businesses during this pandemic.

By Lito Cinco



AND THEY SAID... Well done, great initiative. Kudos to the board, - Sunder Hamandas Wonderful endeavor by Pres Mike and all you directors in the board. This keeps us well informed and updated. - Past President Ramesh Dargani Thank you Mr. Chairmam, Mr. President, Hon Ambassador & the Board for continuing to actively do all the good work; inspire of all this Menace caused in our philippines and more so in our Beloved India. - Past President Pishu Mirpuri

- MAY BIRTHDAY CELEBRANTS: 1 - Dinesh Melwani - Hassaram's 5 - Cristina Ramirez - AscentHR Inc. 5 - Raj Advani - C.P. Optics Inc. 5 - Mr. Arvin Kumar TJ - Vice President for Agri - Tech 5 - Ruigi Dumlao - Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company 8 - Philip Samson - Howden Insurance & Reinsurance Brokers Inc. 8 - Mr. Rex Daryanani - Chairman 11 - Mr. Mike Advani - President 12 - Narendra Sagrolkar - Indofil Philippines Inc. 12 - Vashi Badlani - MB Garments Manufacturing Inc. 22 - Mohit Mahtani - Transpacific Distributors Inc. 25 - Mr. Ram Sitaldas - Past President 25 - Bhagu Sitaldas - Sitaldasos International 26 - Lacchu Baxani - RS Eye Perfection Center Inc. 26 - Mahesh Mirpuri - Eurogroup Garments Corp.

We welcome your suggestions for FICCI E-NEWS, just as we welcome informative articles you may want to contribute.