



FICCI E-NEWS

VOL. 4 | JUNE 2021

"BE SEEN & BE HEARD"

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE:

by Shankar Sinha
VP for Membership

FICCI GMMs are hallmarks of camaraderie, bonhomie and fellowship, which binds members together and give chance to interact with new members. Regrettably Covid changed all of this and face to face GMMs could not take place since start of pandemic. Certainly, all of us miss fun filled GMMs of FICCI.

But Covid could not deter the resilience character of FICCI and of its members. In keeping up with the demands of the present, FICCI smoothly adjusted and adopted itself to virtual world. FICCI quickly leveraged with videoconferencing and webinars. Since start of the year 2021, already four full fledged meetings involving general membership have successfully been conducted. Annual GMM was also conducted on 20 January and another with FICCI India on Feb.'26. In the month of April, members were invited for step by step explainer on virtual doctor access, to cope up with problems arising from lock down and Covid.



Considering the hardship due to Covid, BOD has approved special discount in annual membership fee for renewal as well as for new member subscription. And it is a whopping 40%!! .

The number of members stood as on date is 183 and even when the world is virtually closed, FICCI could add six new members in 2021 (January to May'21). Others are currently in the process.

The importance of FICCI membership has found much significance and is helpful during this difficult time. Rest assured, the FICCI team is trying earnestly to guide and assist members whether this is in covid testing; helping in creating protocols/ assistance in ambulance/hospitalization/ or in vaccine procurement or by providing data bank for different service providers. We hope FICCI will come out with flying colors from this pandemic and its utility and importance will be much more significant in the eyes of its membership in the coming days. From your BOD, we extend our best wishes for staying safe and healthy to its entire membership and looking forward to have a real GMM with all its glory by coming Christmas.

EDITORIAL TEAM:

Mike Advani; Editor-in-Chief | Sharon Vaswani, O.D.; Associate Editor | Ella Gan & Zarah Corrales; Editorial Assistants | Lito Cinco; Editorial Consultant & Content Writer

SSH MOLECULAR DIAGNOSTIC LAB INC A BIG BOOST IN FIGHT AGAINST PANDEMIC

Lead Story by LITO CINCO:

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce Inc (FICCI) can certainly take pride in the fact that one of its members has given a big boost in the country's fight against the Covid 19 pandemic.

SSH Molecular Diagnostic Lab , owned by the Dave family, Sanjay the father, Deepa, the wife, and son Harshil, put up the company with making profit a secondary objective for setting up the business.

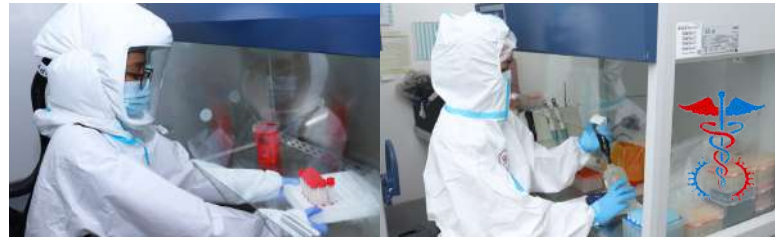
It formally opened at its current address in Paranaque last November even as construction if its building started 5 months earlier.

According to Harshil, " it was a very challenging and difficult business to start with a lot of technical issues to face in the building specifications and a lot of uncertainties on getting supplies and equipments. But we were committed to it not because we were out there to make a profit from the current pandemic but rather to help the community."

"Our biggest motivation was to try and help the public , living in fear of the pandemic, not wanting to leave their homes nor go to the hospitals for Covid testing and other ailments, it was like a life and death situation already, and even as we were not sure of what we were getting into, what we were seeing became the reason to start the company as fast as we could," continued Harshil.

On his part, Sanjay felt the pandemic will not be leaving any time soon but he remained confident that it will, "We will get back to normal but we still have a lot to do, and in the area of testing, this is where felt we could help, providing tests with an assured quality and within 24 hours."

It was Sanjay with a doctor friend of his who first thought of opening a complete diagnostic laboratory with Harshil not believing it at first that they were serious about it.



"Aside from needing a big capital to start it, there were were so many things we did not know about this business but I found out they were really going to do it. When we first opened our doors, we only had about 26 staff.

But in a short time, we were averaging 175 cases a day. It grew steadily with end users as first clients, including hospitals, walk ins, LGU's, and corporates. My father is very good at marketing. " related Harshil.

"Now we have around 80 staff working with us and from about 600 a day a few months ago, we are now at 700 to 800 a day. We believe this is due to the fact that our services were not just complete but accurate and timely as well. We now even cater to babies as well and we are open 24 hours a day, even house calls at odd times, " the father added.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is an integral part of the business and in the past, " we have done testing in the past in squatter areas, for one, thanks to a Canadian who donated a dozen Personal Protective Equipment (PPE's) for our staff. We have been all over Luzon, including Baguio and Palawan among others servicing companies, hospitals, and LGU's. In the Visayas, we also have partners working with us," according to Harshil.

The company puts a lot of emphasis on accuracy and double checking test results to avoid false positives or false negatives. Harshil says "We are 100% accurate and have returns in less than 24 hours."

They are already constructing a second branch in the south of Manila with the size twice the original one, allowing them to expand services including normal diagnostic tests, preparing itself beyond the current pandemic.

"I guess the biggest impact we 've had is the increase in number of covid tests done, an area where it was definitely lacking" , the elder Dave said. And with what they have accomplished, they have certainly earned the trust of the public and their ever increasing clientele .

FICCI congratulates and commends the SSH Molecular Diagnostic Lab for a job well done.

LOOKING BACK

- FICCI helped secure a win for the private sector. The creation of an agency like that of the ARTA was part of the position paper, the chamber helped draft and sent to Senator Zubiri which was included in the Ease of Doing Business Law. This will lead to express action from FDA moving forward.
- A social campaign for mass vaccination was launched by the FICCI on June 1, 2021.
- In support for our Filipino brothers in Bicol, 42,000 pcs of masks were donated to the office of Cong. Joey Salceda.



LOOKING AHEAD

- FICCI is planning for the next General Membership Meeting in the month of July. Once finalized, details of the event will be circulated.

NOW YOU KNOW

FICCI BACKS VACCINATION CAMPAIGN

By LITO CINCO:



"Much as we share your your disappointment with the delay in the delivery of our vaccines, we believe this is something beyond our control," this from FICCI President Mike Advani.

And as such, he believes focus should instead on the controllable, "what we can do individually and collectively is to encourage our employees to have themselves vaccinated whenever and wherever possible," he added.

Local Government Units (LGU's) are rolling out their respective vaccination programs but there are still people out there unconvinced and wavering on whether to be vaccinated or not, these are the people that need encouragement to get back to near normalcy sooner than later.

This is also the reason why we FICCI recently launched its own campaign where each member company is requested to come up with their own company slogan in support of the on going vaccination program, accompanied by a creative photo showing employees being one with the program.

"We hope for everyone's cooperation on the matter," concluded Mike.

A VISION FOR LIFE FOR BRANDED LIFESTYLE INC.

By LITO CINCO:

The current pandemic has certainly resulted in a lot of major changes in the personal lives of people, more so in the way companies run their businesses.

Take one of FICCI's latest member company, Branded Lifestyle Inc., which aside from changing its business processes because of the pandemic, has also changed the way it looks at the future and the role the company will play in the community.

"Since the pandemic, we pivoted and decided to change, asking ourselves how can we can give back and help the community. This new journey for us started in these difficult times , and we realized we can help people by taking care of their eyes, " explained family patriarch Lal Gopwani who set up the Vision for Life program for his company.

His daughter Neelam, who returned to the Philippines after finishing her studies in the United States to help her father manage the business, clarified further,"It is not that we are doing this Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for the first time as our company has long been involved in such programs in the past, working with optical schools and their students, donating machines and eyeglasses to those in need, we are simply taking it to the next level with a focused approach through Vision for Life."

Branded Lifestyle Inc., after all, is the country's pace setter in the eye wear market, and over the past 20 years has been retailing and distributing branded eyewear here. Vision Express, their Retail arm is the leading premium optical chain in Philippines including the iconic Ray Ban and other high end brands, something that the local market has embraced, according to Neelam.



vision express®

Bli branded lifestyle inc



"As to the question of how we can help families particularly during these times, with emphasis on the elderly and farmers, our doctors have been helping them out. We have started with free eye check ups, inviting the less fortunate by setting aside at least two hours every morning for them.

We have rolled this out in around 15 branches, eventually to all of our 80 Vision Express stores all over the country," added Neelam who mentioned the acquisition of Vision Express as one of the many milestones the company has reached over the years.

Lal predicted that eventually 70% of people will be wearing glasses, myopia being one of the biggest causes, "Going to the future, we would like to address other eye problems like cataracts and blindness with our Vision for Life advocacy," he added.

On the matter of doing business during this pandemic, Neelam admits that like most businesses, it has been a traumatic experience for all retail companies, " we shifted to doing online business including s as it has more reach, same with making distribution easier, we have maximizing what digital technology has to offer, but it still an uphill climb for most businesses.We look at 2022 as the time business conditions will really change for the better."

The company also has a lot of expectations with its recent membership in FICCI, Neelam says that "as a chamber, we know FICCI, has access to a lot of big businesses, a network that can help us grow our company, it has good relationship with the government which issues guidelines to businesses, all of these things can help companies to expand faster."

She concluded the interview with a very good suggestion for FICCI, which is to create a new directory for the different industries as it would help in communicating with the right companies , depending on one's needs.

AND THEY SAID...

Keep up the good work. Congrats 🎉

- Past President Ramu Sitaldas

Commendable Work👏👏

- Rakesh Rao

Kudos to the newsletter team for a job well done. Keep it up 🎉

- Ravi Samtani

Visually, mentally and spiritually appealing FICCI E-Newsletter. From health security to food security to the acutely needed Words of Wisdom, the FICCI is in the forefront of crisis management, by immunizing both the community and country, with hope, solutions and light.

-- Arvind Kumar TJ

JUNE BIRTHDAY CELEBRANTS:

- 1 - Paul Vanjani - D. Fortune Philippines Inc.
- 2 - Javish Abichandani - AGlobal Care Inc.
- 2 - Anand Mahtani - CostPlus Inc.
- 6 - Manu Chulani - Orogem Jewellers Inc.
- 7 - Dilip Mansukhani - Metroshoppers Trading Inc.
- 7 - Renu Daryanani - New India Department Store
- 8 - Jose Conrado Yap - Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company
- 9 - Danny Chandiramani - Joytis Inc.
- 12 - Hridesh Parwani - Alpha Omega Implex Phil Co.
- 12 - Angela Thakur - RSLink Commercial
- 13 - Girish Sitaldas - Sitaldason's International
- 20 - Kardy Lakhmani - The Optoline Inc.
- 20 - Prashant Laungani - Cibes Lift Philippines Inc.
- 21 - Jocelyn Buencamino - Howden Insurance & Reinsurance Brokers (Phil) Inc.
- 26 - Ramesh Menghani - RK Enterprises Ltd. Co.
- 27 - Nalini Sehواني - Individual Member
- 30 - Deepak Kapahi - Coral Stone Corp.

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

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

Lal Gopwani

