



FICCI E-NEWS

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"BE SEEN & BE HEARD"

70 YEARS OF SERVICE AND EXCELLENCE FOR FICCI

By LITO CINCO:

Just to reach 70 is an achievement by itself. What more if those years are characterized by service and excellence?



And in the case of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce Inc. (FICCI), this year's 70th year is definitely a big celebration, more so that part of it will be on India's biggest cultural festival, the Diwali, celebrated annually by the local Fil-Indian communities in their homes and in the offices.

The focus though will be on FICCI's reaching its platinum year, the organization is one of the very first ethnic group in the country to be formed, and with the succession from the original founders to their second and third generations, FICCI has not only grown older but has expanded its role in the community.



From the initial objective of fostering brotherhood among the members, FICCI has gone a long way in responding to the needs of the economy expanding bilateral and trade relations between the Philippines and India, undertaking Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs to help the less fortunate, and recognizing and giving awards to people who have been involved in such projects.



The month long celebration kicked off with a learning session last October 14 with FICCI'S "foreign ambassador of goodwill" Ishwar Chugani on how different countries have adjusted to the pandemic and offered post pandemic business operations suggestions.

Next event is set on November 2, first day of the Diwali Festival to be highlighted by the lighting of a giant diya or lamp in the SM Mall of Asia with Indian ambassador H.E. Shambhu Kumar to be joined by members of the Sy family as special guests.



FICCI has also initiated talks with Miriam College for a planned tree planting project within the university grounds while honoring UNESCO awardees Anamika and Vedant Budhrani, who won a recent international event on environmental sustainability.

A community project, Gift of Sight, as part of FICCI's participation in the World Sight Day, is also included in the celebration with military camps and a barangay in Marikina as intended venues.

The highlight event though will be the virtual annual awards night set on November 27 to honor not only the excellence in government service but for the first time, even members will be recognized.

Hosting the event is Teresa Anthony Herrera with an original song composed by Nilo Alcalá just for this year's celebration. A superstar performer will be the surprise of the evening.

FICCI members will receive their own individual surprise from the association in appreciation of their continuous support to and active involvement with FICCI.

Indeed, it will be a special year and a special platinum celebration by FICCI this 2021.

HAPPY 70TH ANNIVERSARY, FICCI!

LOOKING BACK

- The celebration for the 70th anniversary started with a kick-off webinar from FICCI's Foreign Ambassador of Goodwill, Mr. Ishwar Chugani, on the topic *Mindset of an Entrepreneur*, which was well-attended by the members.



LOOKING FORWARD

- The celebrations continue with *Spreading the Light of Hope*; a Giant Diya installation at the SM Mall of Asia.
- On November 15, the Dita-Saptarni Tree will be planted on the grounds near the MG Bust as a symbol of the Evergreen friendship between India and the Philippines.
- The Virtual Celebration event of the Annual Awards Gala on November 27, 2021.

NOW YOU KNOW CELEBRATING CULTURAL FESTIVALS

By LITO CINCO:

Festivals, by its definition, are meant to be celebrated, plain and simple.

This is easy when one is living in his own country where the whole nation practically is one in celebrating a festival, but the challenge is when one is an expatriate assigned in a different country where the prevailing culture is very much different from what he is accustomed to.

Taking the Diwali Festival for instance, it is considered as one of India's biggest cultural festivals and with a relatively big and organized Filipino-Indian Community in the Philippines, it follows that it should be celebrated.

But then people do not do things automatically, and that includes celebrating festivals while living in other countries, they need reasons to do so.

The question to be answered then is why celebrate at all? One can start with the self, then the family, and lastly the outside world.

Living in another country with a totally different culture is a challenge to expat workers, but then what can be a better way to retain one's culture, traditions, and practices than by celebrating them wherever one may be.



Then go to the family, the children in particular, growing up kids face the challenge of what culture to assimilate, their adopted countries or their parents' original, particularly true for families who have relocated for good.

Celebrating a traditional festival is a way for kids to understand and appreciate their parents more, knowing how the old country's tradition and culture have affected their parents' way of thinking and behavior. And even with the work family as most, if not all Fil-Indian companies, celebrate Diwali with their employees in common and different ways in the work place.



Lastly, outside the family, celebrating one's cultural festivals can be the perfect way to introduce culture to other people, a reason to invite others to one's home and co-celebrate an event with his family. A perfect example can be the celebration of Diwali last year with the #Diwaliwanag project a laudable sharing of light among different people.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

Kamal Abichandani AMBICA INTERNATIONAL CORP.: DETERMINATION AND RESILIENCY RESULTED TO SUCCESS

By LITO CINCO:



If there are words that would best describe Ambica International Corporation, this issue's featured member, perhaps these would be Determination and Resiliency.

Company Chairman Kamal Abichandani had been doing business with India, including the traditional retail business since the late 90's and it was this time he saw the window of opportunity to enter the pharmaceutical retail industry, without yet realizing it was going to be a real uphill climb.

"The biggest challenge we faced in the first year up to the 10th year of our operations since we started in 2003, was the general perception here that generic medicines were inferior to branded ones. It took a long time, and a lot of educational programs for us with doctors before they were convinced of what we already had established, generic medicines are as effective as branded ones," related Kamal.



But he has never regretted his decision to go in this direction, from a small office with 7 people including the owners already, the company has grown to around 300 employees with nationwide operations and even overseas like in Vietnam and just recently in Canada with other Asian countries like Cambodia in their sights.

But it was not an easy journey as aside from the Europe vs India mentality on medicines, the company also went through a big flood and a disastrous fire that affected their business operations, in the end though, they overcame all these adversities.

At least until the world wide pandemic started in 2020, and even being in an essential industry did not spare the company from the negative impact of covid on the business.



"First challenge was bringing in people daily for work, we cannot do a work from home operations in this kind of business, what we did was provide stay in housing facilities plus transport services to avoid commuting to work. Second problem was on our supply chain as India got hit by the virus pandemic that they had to stop exporting medicines, a big effect on us as we were getting maybe 80% of our products from India," said Kamal who had to increase their imports from other suppliers like Bangladesh for a while.

The company was also affected by the fact that their non-Covid related products were not moving even as the increase in demand for the virus-related medicines cushioned the impact, "our sales went down but we still came out alright we had to reduce our orders abroad, and ended up donating medicines to hospitals before they could expire," he added. Overall though, he believes that the industry remains healthy and that their company will not only survive but cope well with the current conditions.

On being long time member of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce Inc. (FICCI), Kamal believes it has helped them a lot address concerns with the governmental regulations and relations, "not really on the marketing side but just being a member of this organization gives us pride that we are working together with other Indian companies, he concluded.

Determination and resiliency definitely worked for Ambica International Corporation.

OCTOBER BIRTHDAY CELEBRANTS:

- 2 - Muri Sabnani - JMS International Inc.
- 5 - Dayal Sajani - Provincial Member
- 5 - Raul Tan - Howden Insurance & Reinsurance Brokers (Phil) Inc.
- 8 - Deepak Bhatia - Ambica International Corp.
- 10 - John Theophilus - AscentHR Inc.
- 10 - Deepak Menon - SLK Global Philippines Inc.
- 11 - Ravin Sehwan - ITSP International Inc.
- 11 - Ken Jeswani - Kams International Inc.
- 12 - Arun Hemandas - Games & Garments International Inc.
- 18 - Raaj Balani - Renuka International Traders
- 20 - Haresh Mirchandani - Ramesh Trading Corp.
- 20 - Juan Placido Mapa III - Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company
- 25 - Lachu Idnani - Black Prince Communication Inc.
- 30 - Jaskaran Singh - JK Capital Finance, Inc.
- 31 - Chandru Budhrani - Chandru Trading

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

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