



# FICCI E-NEWS

VOL. 11 | JANUARY 2022

## "BE SEEN & BE HEARD"

### DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE:

By Manesh Sujanani  
VP - Pharmaceuticals  
Glass Half Full

As we begin this new year, I can't help but feel nostalgic. I approach this new year as beginning but also an end as 2022 marks the culmination of my 4 years of serving this esteemed Chamber and its members. Under the guidance of many of our elders and support from peers and fellow members, my tenure as a Director of the board has been a journey of enlightenment.

Over the last 4 years we've experienced both highs and lows but nothing quite like what we've all gone through in the last two years of the pandemic, which defined most of this current Board's agenda. As the Vice President for Pharmaceuticals, it was part of my responsibility keeping you informed about the virus, testing, and pandemic related resources. While at the same time understanding the needs of your businesses during the lockdowns, and getting access to several vaccines for you, your families, and staff. It was a team effort, and we thank you for your continued support.



It's difficult to predict what 2022 will bring but as an optimist I view the glass as half full. I'm hopeful that others will heed the call to serve and lead our Chamber.

To continue the spark of change that has been built upon by previous generations and be the voice for a new one. There are still first steps to be taken, new grounds to cover, and bridges to be crossed.

My fellow members, it has been one of my greatest fortunes to serve you and our community. I am truly humbled and grateful. May this new year bring about the change we have been hoping for and may our Chamber continue to achieve great things. VP Manesh signing out.

### FICCI AT THE FOREFRONT ANEW

By LITO CINCO:

Super typhoon Odette hit Mindanao and the Visayas a little over a week before Christmas Day, and devastated several areas reminiscent of the power of Typhoon Yolanda in Tacloban in 2013.

Strong winds, storm surges, heavy rains, and river flooding conspired and laid waste to parts of Surigao, surf capital Siargao, Butuan, Bohol, Ilo ilo, Cebu, all the way to Palawan rendering thousands of people homeless, without food, drinks, and electricity...

And once again, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce Inc. (FICCI) was among the first to respond to the call for help, donating relief goods through the Office of the Vice President and the Office of the Governor to the typhoon victims in Bohol.

"We look at our CSR outreach program as a proactive one, not just a reactive process. We try to be responsive, consistent and adopt sustainable programs. This latest assistance we provided to typhoon victims is just one example of how FICCI has evolved its programs," said FICCI President Mike Advani. On her part, Sharon Vaswani, FICCI VP - Healthcare and Advocacies

disclosed that the Chamber, through the cumulated funds shared by the members has already donated 10,000 kilos of rice, 24,000 bottles of drinking water, 26,400 packs of noodles, 18,750 cans of sardines, and 100 pieces of rechargeable and solar powered lamps.

"Usually, we course our donation through the various government offices, be it OCD, OVP or the House of Representatives for example or through LGUs across the nation. In this particular case, we specifically chose Bohol to ensure that areas not immediately reached by regular donations, will get the aid. Also, we have good standing relationships with the leadership at the provincial government of Bohol," explained Vaswani.

The current pandemic has also seen FICCI consistently donating various items from the onset, starting with millions of face masks in a joint effort with other private sector groups, initiated by the Chamber.

"During this pandemic, even as businesses are struggling to cope with the situation, we still donated equipments and RT PCR machines to the PCMC, together with vaccines that have benefited thousands of employees of FICCI member companies and the general public," added President Mike. And just for the record, in the past, FICCI has rendered assistance to the Marawi City rebuilding efforts, continued its eye camps that have

benefited people all over the country, provided medicines as needed, even helped out displaced students in war-torn Sulu to enable them to continue their studies in Cavite, and assisted several Filipino families to travel to India for badly needed medical treatment." I believe the Chamber has been doing all of these since time immemorial, our kind-hearted members, have always helped generously in various CSR programs that have been undertaken. Our Board and officers, no matter who sits on it, have been pretty consistent in these efforts and I know we have already reached that high level of sustainability, enabling us to carry out our poverty alleviation advocacy," added President Mike.



### LOOKING BACK



Congratulations to the young entrepreneurs Mr. Jiten Lalwani, Mr. Rajan Uttamchandani being featured in this month's issue of OneMega, & Mr. Ken Jeswani for his learning-filled podcast. You make us proud!

### LOOKING FORWARD

The members are reminded to settle their membership dues for FY March 1, 2022 to Feb. 28, 2023 at the soonest.

### NOW YOU KNOW



The Departments of Health (DOH), Labor and Employment (DOLE), and Trade and Industry (DTI) would like to remind employers to look for the private and public sectors to strictly enforce maximum public health standards. Observe especially during the period of expected increase in cases to encourage work from home setup or provide alternative work arrangements, whenever possible.

- Further, for those working on-site, EMPLOYERS are reminded to:
- Assign and designate health safety officers to remind employees of MANDS as well as to monitor and track symptoms.
  - Encourage ventilation and avoid closed spaces.
  - Close down parties or areas where people can overtop mask policies.
  - Facilitate isolation for symptomatic (for 10 days) or quarantine for close contacts (14 days) respectively, if case suspected and testing of symptomatic employees.
  - Provide adequate assistance for individuals who are undergoing quarantine and isolation (support for medical, food and other).
  - Promote the use of handgels or walking to the office to avoid exposure in crowded places.
  - Comply strictly on respecting proof of vaccination in premises or business operations where these are required by DTI.

Employers with symptoms should stop leaves, isolate, and maintain the use of telemedicine services with health care providers. Head to the link for our latest column: [BIMBUDSITESTIMATE](#)

All employers are strongly encouraged to coordinate with the local government units' epidemiological and surveillance unit for specific response and reporting outcomes.

### MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Mike Buxani, Manila Bambi Foods Company

### FROM A LOCAL TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY



A lot of businesses certainly had humble beginnings, but for Manila Bambi Foods Company, a grocery specialty store that started in 1978, the company's history is worth sharing, again and again. From originally serving house-to-house a local community of neighbors, friends, and relatives with hand made pizzas and a line of pre-cooked party foods in a home-based business, the company has gone a very long way indeed and now serves an international market based in the Middle East and Asia.

"My mom simply started offering her products to people close to us, and they became popular items for 'pasalubong' for trips to Hongkong by local folks," related Mike Buxani of his entrepreneurial mother, Satu, who up to now is involved in the business even as son Mike runs the business already and is responsible for its steady growth and expansion the past 20 years. Soon after, the client base started growing, we started catering to canteens in different colleges and universities, even to supermarkets. It reached the point that we needed to put up our manufacturing facility in Paco to meet the demand," continued

Mike, an Accounting major by education from Centro Escolar University but since 2000 has involved himself with the sales side of the business, then went into it full time in 2005. Presently it is Tramigo GPS Solutions with branches in Paranaque, Cebu, and Davao.

With the limitation on its initial resources, it was not easy but we never gave up, slowly, we diversified our product lines and services, introducing mango chutney, chicken pies, later on Mexican taco shells, lumpias, kimchi, spring rolls.



In 2010, we added another brand to go with Bambi's, CASA DE TORTILLA manufacturing US Corn Tortilla chips, Flour tortillas for burritos, quesadilla and brought in imported Mexican and American ingredients, and catered to restaurants, said Mike whose love for searching and discovering new things in life was a major factor in the company's expansion. "I enjoy new things, new foods, new restos, new technologies and innovations, I do tests on my own on possible product lines and I work closely with our partner suppliers for the same things," added Mike.

And just last year, despite the pandemic, Manila Bambi Foods opened its export lines, focusing on the Middle East market where the its products like lumpia rolls and siomai have become hugely popular, " he related, but clarifying that opening restaurants is not part of their plans saying he will not compete with their clients. Manila Bambi Foods will also open its new plant in Laguna that includes cold storage facilities to support the company's expansion.

The company joined FICCI a few years ago and for Mike, it has been a big help in terms of developing new friendships, gaining new knowledge, and getting to know what is happening in our local community," it has become a social club of sorts for me," he admitted.

His business advise, " focus on products and services you are good at and advertise and market them well, there will always be room for good ones despite this pandemic," he concluded.

[manilabambifoods.com](https://www.manilabambifoods.com)  
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### JANUARY BIRTHDAY CELEBRANTS:

- 12 - Harish Abichandani - Aglobal Care Inc.
- 13 - Surinder Pal - Brother's Bro
- 13 - Chander Chandnani - Self Garments Trading Co.
- 18 - Lachu Tahiliani- HLN Phil. Trading Inc.
- 18 - Dleep Menghrajani- Indra Garments Manufacturing Inc.
- 18 - Japjit Sobti- SLK Global Philippines
- 22- Bhavna Thakur - RSLink Commercial
- 25 - Rajan Gidwani - Redstone Apparel Inc.
- 27 - George Mirani- Bhagi's Int'l Trading Corp.
- 28 - M. Gunanathan - Elegant Infoventures Inc.
- 28 - Dilip Buhdrani - Loanstar Lending Corporation

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

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