



Samachar

INDIAFEST SPECIAL EDITION

OCT-DEC
2015

Official Newsletter of the India Association of Memphis

Note from the President of IAM

Namaskar!

It is that time of the year, when you start seeing the sun coming up later and going to bed sooner. Also, there is that indefinable thrill, that frisson of excitement in the air that we all look forward to every year. Yes, it is much awaited India Fest time, showcasing India's rich culture and heritage.

On behalf of the India Association of Memphis (IAM), I welcome you all to the 13th India Fest. It has been a wonderful opportunity and once again this year, I feel privileged to serve the community of greater Memphis.

The theme for our annual festival is "Weddings of India". With more than 1.2 billion people in India, approximately 1000 spoken languages, and 29 culturally different states – the theme brings a lot of enthusiasm in the community. Traditional Indian weddings are known for their vastness, grandeur, and richness. The diversity is seen in every realm of Indian life starting from food and clothing to rich customs and traditions, and is extremely well reflected in Indian weddings. There will be colorful décor highlighting the traditions of different states, cultural extravaganza, and different cuisines to tempt and tantalize your palate, plethora of dance performances, cool traditional henna designs, kid's activities, and a whole lot more.

The fest has been supported by the corporate sponsors FedEx, Hilton, Methodist, Regional One Health, St Francis Hospital, Syntel,

International Paper, Autozone, Service Master, Mphasis, Cummins, Landers and SunTrust. I thank all our sponsors from the bottom of my heart be-

cause without their support this would not have been possible. Apart from our sponsors, the fest has been recognized by the Memphis community leaders. This year we have received Proclamation from all city Mayors (the Mayor of Memphis, Mr. A C Wharton, the Mayor of Shelby County, Mr. Mark Luttrell, the Mayor of Germantown, Mr. Mike Palazzolo, and the Mayor of Collierville, Mr. Stan Joyner). I extend my sincere gratitude and take this opportunity to thank them for their incredible support. I also thank all our commercial vendors for their time and participation.

India fest is not only a celebration of Indian music, different cuisines, ethnicity, art and culture that we take pride in, but also a way that brings the Indian-American community together, promoting cultural diversity in the mid-south. There is great participation from local businesses, regional and charitable organizations and various schools. The kind of effort and energy that goes this festival to make it a successful one is unbelievable. I sincerely thank each and every organization for their incredible support.

(Contd....)



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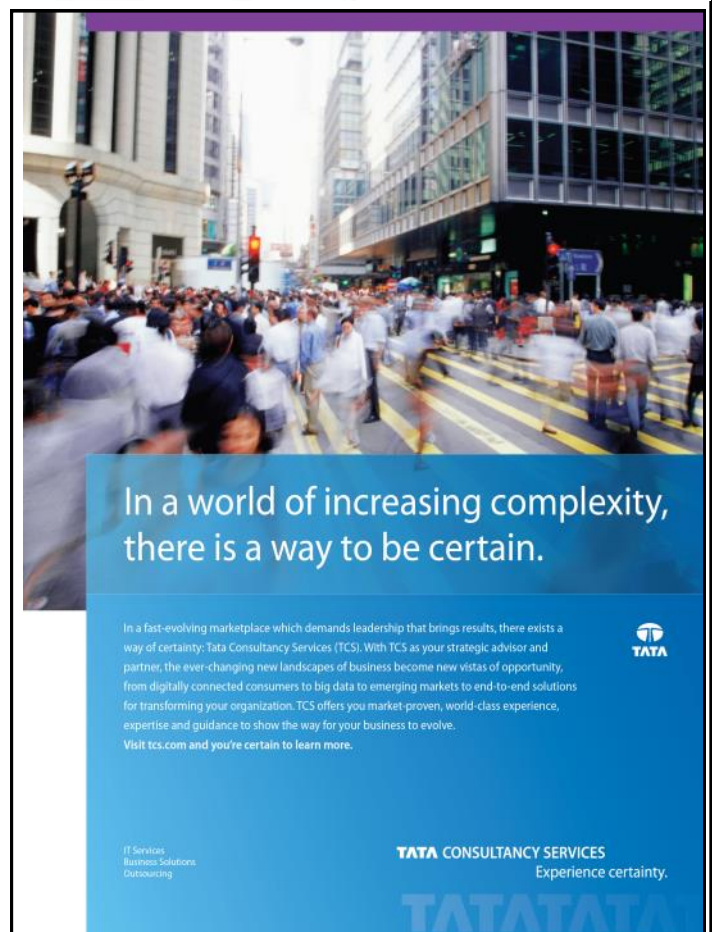
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Note from the President of IAM

....contd

I would like to felicitate leadership team for being a pillar of strength throughout the fest — Trustees Anil Menothuparambil and Vishal Chheda and advisors Vijay Kalaga and Anil Nair. It's been a pleasure working with them as one big family. Kudos to you!

There are dedicated and committed volunteers putting in their heart and soul, determined and keen for months to make this event a grand success.

Thanks to volunteers for giving their precious time and exceeding all expectations. I have had the pleasure of working with talented and amazing people, Girish, Parmil, Anith, Rakesh, Amarjit, Nabih, Farquan, Terry, Leena, Maya, Simanti, Vidya, Swati, IAM youth committee, Ramki, Shankar, Soumya, Ruth, Amin,

Sam, and all volunteers of India fest. Kudos to IAM-India Fest team for putting up a great show year after year and doing such a commendable job.

In the end, I thank my husband Dr. Sridhar Shankar and my children Nikita and Rohan for their extreme patience, bearing with me and supporting me.

Here I invite you all to India Fest on Nov 7st at the Agricenter. Be a part of this huge celebration "Weddings of India". I hope you return home with a splendid experience to share with your family and friends.

Manjit Kaur

EDITORIAL - YEAR IN REVIEW

- MAYA NAIR



December, the last month of the year when all you want to do is cozy up in your PJ's and drink something warm all day. But there's also much to enjoy while preparing for holiday gatherings and visiting with friends and relatives, stepping out at night to attend dinners & parties and making plans on how and where to spend New Year's Eve. That was one of the reason for the delay in this last edition of the year. Although prepping up for this issue started in December, I never got to finish it on time....Sigh !

Recapping 2015 - In India, many state governments made beef illegal to eat, in Kerala only five star restaurants are allowed to serve alcohol, in Goa kissing in public is banned! With all this India doesn't seem to sound as urban as we would like it to be. A lot has happened here at IAM too in the past year. Depending on your perspective, 2015 for IAM was not only a year with innovation, creativity and opportunity, but also a year of high uncertainty and low resources. The telling signs are that we are at a turning point in the way we approach our future.

But with that being said, let's not forget to keep up the optimism! It is also that time of the year when you look back at the year at a glance and be grateful for all the

good times and celebrate the year's successes. Reviewing the year, we had a good number of events like Republic Day, Independence Day, Workshops and the mega scale annual event 'India Fest' that were executed successfully. IAM also generously contributed to Nepal Earthquake Relief and Chennai Flood Relief supporting the noble causes.

We live in a world where there is so much conflicts, poverty, disasters, etc. So no matter where we ring in the New Year, enjoy this season with your loved ones, and make sure to reflect on all the things that make you thankful. The mantra for rolling into the new year – bid the bad memories a goodbye, and let's move forward with what we've got and execute in unexpected ways.

We also thank all of readers, volunteers, and contributors of IAM, and we hope you will do the same in the new year. Here's hoping this season is filled with warmth and comfort, family and friends, and joy. Thanks for coming along with us in 2015. We hope you'll stick around for 2016.



EMPOWER IMPRESS

FedEx is proud to recognize the achievements and accomplishments of the India Association of Memphis. We applaud and admire how they're strengthening their community with a job well done.

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SELFLESS SERVICE, A SERVICE TO GOD

- C. P. CHANDRA DAS

(I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I woke up and found that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy - GURUDEV RABINDRANATH TAGORE)

I have found, that the next minute in human life is unpredictable to all. To some, it is pleasant. To some, it is as in the past. And to some others, it is unbearable and shocking.

The story of Nazir family belongs to the third category. They have roots in Kerala. They are now in the Middle East at Sharjah. The main bread winner of the family is in business. The lady of the house is a bank employee at Dubai. They are blessed with four children aged 10, 7, 4 and I at this point of time. In July last, they planned a tour to USA and boarded a plane to reach Atlanta to stay with close relatives for few days and to reach specific tourist locations in this land. They reached here on 15th July. The return journey was scheduled on 10th August they were getting ready for the return trip on 10th August. At about 2 pm on that day, the infant suddenly vomited, and immediately became unconscious. The child was rushed to a hospital nearby and was subjected to an emergency operation for tumor in the brain. The child was in the hospital for two weeks under investigation and he was transferred to St. Jude children hospital at Memphis. The family was shattered. They knew none at Memphis, TN. The relatives of Nazir contacted a doctor friend at Birmingham, who in turn contacted Phillip a company official here in. Before the arrival of the patient here, Phillip was there in the hospital to receive them. They came here in the first week of September. The child was admitted for detailed investigation, and after one week observation, the parents were informed, that the patient will have to be in the hospital for minimum three months. A flat in the Target home was allotted to the parents, and arrangements were made for the supply of provisions needed for the family members. They were told, that all the hospital expenses will be free, if the child was not insured. Considering the long duration of treatment, Phillip contacted his friends through the various group contacts and as on date 50 families have expressed readiness to render all help to the family. Hearing this, I went there to see the parents and to pray for the child. A Gujarati lady is staying with them in the flat and she is attending to all the needs of the child, purely on a voluntary basis. Community members are taking Indian food to the family and keeping company with Nazir's on a day to day basis according to a schedule.

Nazir's were all praise for the hospital management, doctors and the staff. "What would have happened, if the child was in the plane?" The mother asked me. They praised KROGER and TARGET for the supply of all provisions freely. But to them, the help from the community was the greatest, when they lost their balance. "We found, that we are not alone in this distant land". So say-

ing, the father and mother looked at each other and gratitude was writ large on their faces. They continued. "Phillip and all others have been angels in our life". After reaching my house, I contacted Phillip, a young friend of mine here. He was not there and I gave a true account to Mrs. Phillip of the happenings. "We are bound to help all, and that gives meaning for our life". She continued "It was just physical help, through our group contacts. We are happy, the response was gratifying". Mrs. Phillip planned a trip to Kerala in the second week of December 2015.

Before leaving for Kerala, she went to the hospital to inform the child's parents that she will be away for two weeks. She gave full information of her travel plans to the parents. They collected all the details. She prayed for them. They prayed for all the community members at Memphis, a big family from India, who solidly stood with them, while in distress. After reaching Abu Dhabi. Within an hour, there was a phone call to Mrs. Phillip from the relatives of Nazir. The family members of Nazir wanted to meet her on the next day for expressing their gratitude to them. She requested them not to undertake the long trip from Sharjah to Abu Dhabi. But they persisted and she could not say no. I am extracting below her emotions on this meet, which speaks volumes on service. "We reached Abu Dhabi at 10 pm on Dec 10. We had to report at the airport, the next day at 7pm. The next day, there was a phone call from a member of the Nazirs family at Dubai. She wanted to meet us, to say THANK YOU for all help at Memphis. We knew the importance of a Friday for Muslims. A day for prayers and rest. They will have to travel for more than 2 hours, one way. She was very particular about the meet. We could not say NO. We agreed to meet at the adjacent mall at 10 am. I spotted her at the parking lot. She was not alone. There were more than 20 in that group. Elders, middle aged and the kids. Why this trip? After all, what is it that we have done? Contacted some friends for help to a family in distress. We were in deep thoughts. We realized their sincerity. They wanted to enter our hearts and say thanks. They did it. There was divinity and grace. We became emotional and were in tears. A great thank you without boundaries. We will remember this forever". True. Selfless service radiates divinity. The giver and the receiver enjoys heavenly bliss.

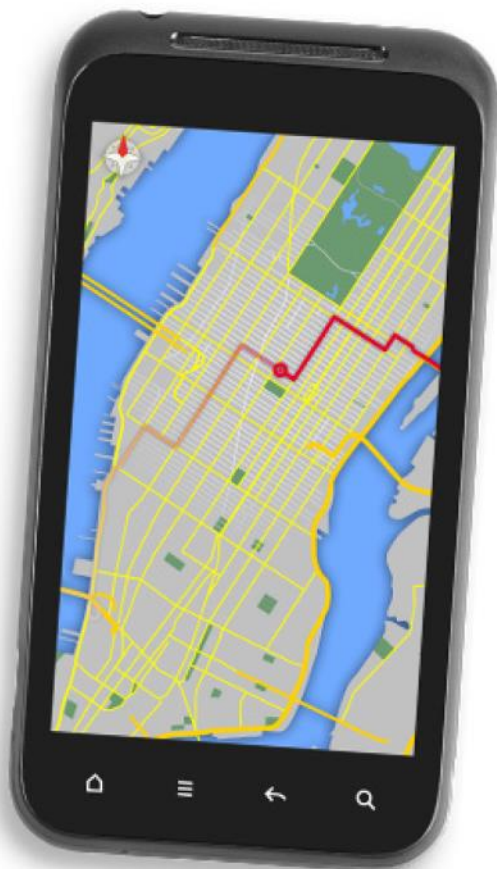
I am now picturizing the excitement and joy of many family members at Memphis, Dubai, when the young kid steps out of the hospital with all energy.

We will say thank you to the superior force, for guidance at critical times.

*(Note: This is a real life story but the names of the individuals have been changed)

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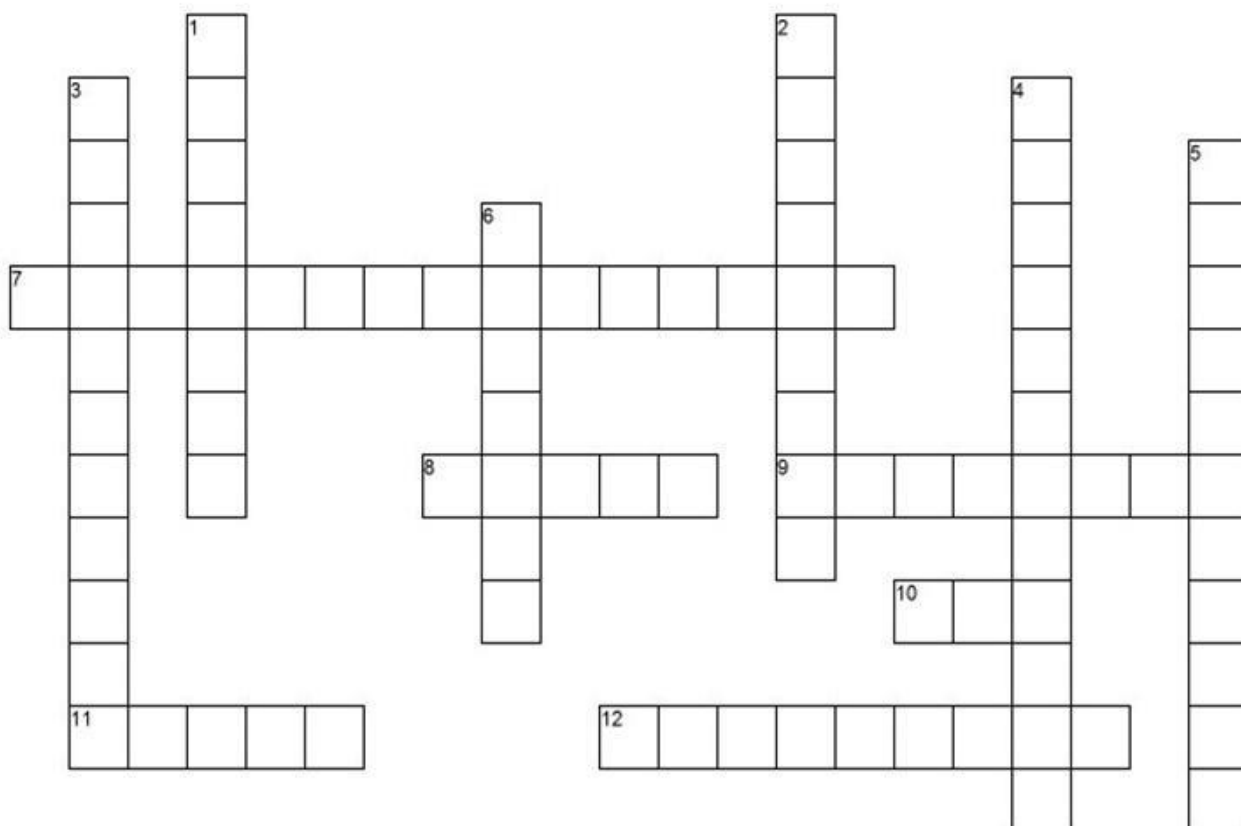


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Crossword puzzle - India 1



ACROSS

- 7 15th August is celebrated as Indian

- 8 National flower of India
- 9 It is one of the New Seven Wonders
of the World
- 10 Smallest state of India in terms of
area
- 11 National Animal of India
- 12 Largest state of India in terms of
area

DOWN

- 1 Capital of India
- 2 On every Republic day, the Prime
Minister pays homage to the soldiers
at _____
- 3 Number of States in India
- 4 National song of India
- 5 26th January is celebrated as Indian

- 6 National bird of India

IAM PARTICIPATED IN 'HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD'


Memphis City School kids had an opportunity to learn about the festivals around the world celebrated during the month of Nov-Dec at Memphis Botanic Garden. 'Holidays around the world' focused on how children all over the world celebrate the holiday season. They got to experience Posada, Diwali, and Hanukkah by making piñatas, creating Diwali ornaments, and decorating dreidels.



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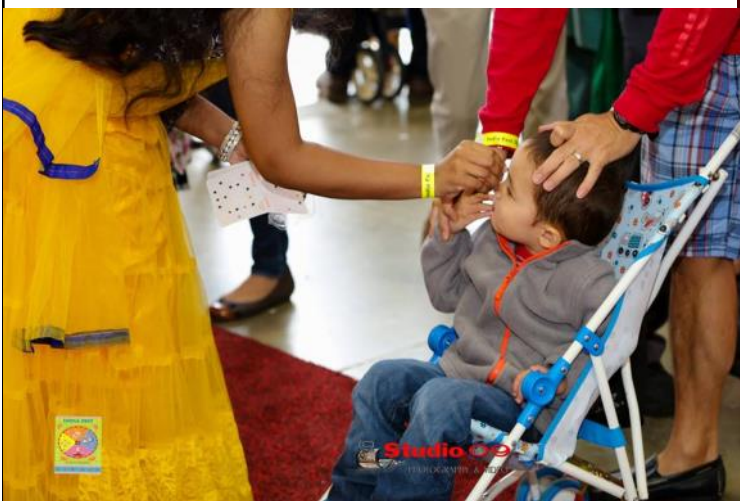


LEARNING WITH THE LONG RUN

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GLIMPSES FROM INDIA FEST 2015

In India, weddings are a grand affair where parents usually have an upper hand to plan their child's marriage. And then there is also huge Bollywood influence on our minds. Most girls want their grand nuptials to be just like a grand movie wedding. Most wish for a house full of people singing and dancing for just about every ritual in matching themed outfits and so on. We can blame Yashraj Films for that. It is the way they portray larger than life houses and sets, haute couture, fancy honeymoon destinations, and lets not forget, a song for every occasion. This time at indiafest, we attempted to bring you a glimpse of Indian Wedding in Bollywood style ! Hope you all loved it as much as we did.



GLIMPSES FROM INDIA FEST 2015



GLIMPSES FROM INDIA FEST 2015



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INTERNATIONAL PAPER

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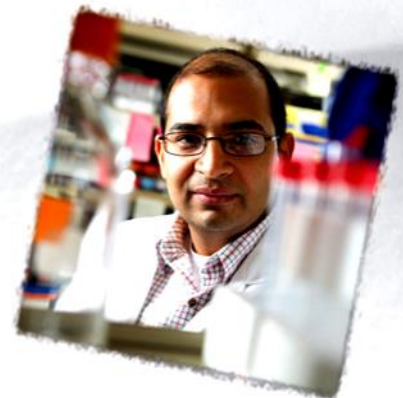
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ANNOUNCEMENT

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There are numerous round the year events for Indian community to stay in touch with the Indian Culture:

- **INDIA REPUBLIC DAY**
- **HOLI**
- **INDIA INDEPENDENCE DAY**
- **INDIA NIGHT/ DIWALI SPECIAL**
- **INDIA FEST**
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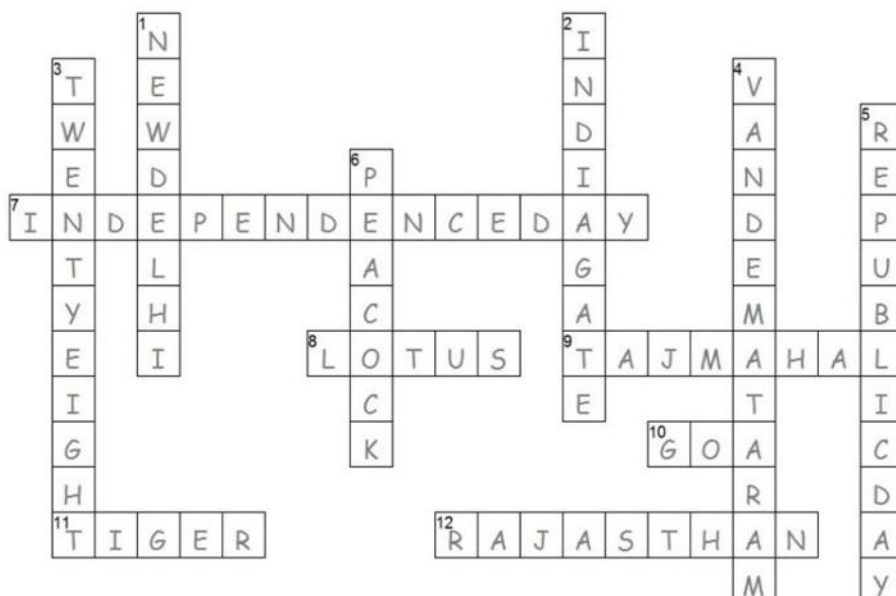
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Solution to Crossword Puzzle (from page 13)



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