

Honorary advisor Uncle Gary Harilela, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honoured and grateful to have been elected to the position of President of the Association and will do my best during my term to prove myself worthy of it.

I learnt a long time ago not to make speeches too long. Moreover, if you are making a speech via the impersonal medium of Zoom, you need to make every word count.

I just have three small topics I would like to address:

1. A few thank yous;
2. My vision for the next year; and
3. I would be remiss if I didn't say a few words about the current unusual circumstances.

1 Gratitude

I think the first and most important thank you must go to the outgoing President Arun Nigam who has made a huge success of his term under very unusual circumstances. He is a hard act to follow and I can happily confess that there is nobody I would rather have at my side as the *ex officio* member.

I am grateful for the tireless support of both our patron the consul general, Mrs Priyanka Chauhan and our honorary advisor, Uncle Gary Harilela. I also would like to particularly mention our other patron, Uncle Bob Harilela whose work we build on.

Gratitude also in advance to the fantastic committee. I digress, only partly in jest, to say that you have to have a little sympathy for me when easily over half the committee consists of past presidents with more experience than me. At least I will have a reservoir of knowledge to draw on.

2 What do we want to do?

My vision is one of continuity but also of increased focus. In particular, I think that we must:

a) continue to advocate for issues that affect those in our community. The extraordinary access that we have to senior government officials and the disciplined services has been built over many years by Mohan Chugani, Nanu Lachman, Vijay Harilela and others and it is important that we continue to work hard in this area;

b) at the same time, we must not forget that we are an Indian Association committed to preserving our culture and heritage where Notan Tolani has long been flying the flag;

c) kudos also to Raj Manik in his role as outgoing *ex officio* adviser, Vice-President Anita Gidumal for practically single-handedly running the dental fairs, Ramesh Mahtani for managing our participation in the Community Chest Walk, Richard Albuquerque for keeping us on track financially, Kavi Khiytani for performing the essential but sometimes thankless task of being the Association's Honorary Secretary and to Ram Ramadasan for participating in every event; and

d) in the longer term, I would like to see more events for members. The Happy Hour drinks are truly superb and hats off to Kamal Nankani and Tony Ahluwalia for running them.

3. Current circumstances

These are unusual times, evidenced not least by the fact that this meeting is taking place remotely. It is easy to sometimes be a little despondent.

I will say this though. As generations of speculators have learnt to their cost, a bet against Hong Kong has always been a losing bet.

I remain confident that our best days are ahead of us, both as an Association and as a city. I am equally confident that our homeland India will continue to go from strength to strength.

Thank you all, good evening and Jai Hind!