

Mr. Arun Nigam's President Report 2020

The India Association is the oldest Indian community based organization in Hong Kong and has been recognized as one of the most active organisations covering community, social and the arts events over a period of 70 years. The India Association has since its founding in 1949 come a long way, and branched out in many avenues, including looking into the interests of the ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, particularly in the areas of education, employment, health and immigration.

I would like to thank the Indian Consul General Mrs Priyanka Chauhan for agreeing to become our Patron following her arrival in Hong Kong last May. We have always had a good relationship with the Indian Consulate in Hong Kong and look forward to their continued support and friendship. Our sincere thanks to our Honorary Advisor, Gary Harilela JP for his wise counsel and guidance. We wish our Patron Mr Bob Harilela JP a speedy recovery from his long illness.

With the protests in Hong Kong since last summer, and now the coronavirus pandemic, this has not been an easy year for the India Association. Notwithstanding this we have managed to host several events and participated in other events including:

- 1) Lunch with Mr C. Y Leung on Wednesday 3rd April, 2019 and dinner with Mr Donald Tsang on Thursday 25th April, 2019, at the Pacific Club attended by the Executive Committee and our Honorary Adviser.
- 2) Welcome lunch at the Hong Kong Club for Mrs Priyanka Chauhan held on Wednesday 29th May 2019, shortly after her arrival in Hong Kong as the new Indian Consul General, which was attended by the Executive Committee and our Honorary Adviser.
- 3) Meeting with Mr C.Y Leung on Friday 31st May, 2019 in connection with the India Association organising an Indian art exhibition.
- 4) The 73rd Independence Day reception held at the Hong Kong Club on Thursday 15th August, 2019. Despite the protests it was a most successful function and attended by over 250 guests including prominent members of the government, our consul general, consul generals from other countries, and leaders of the Indian community.

The Chief Executive Mrs Carrie Lam attended the function for a short while, as she was hosting another function, as did the past three Chief Executives, Mr Tung Chee Wah, Mr Donald Tsang and Mr C.Y.Leung. The guest of honour was the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah who said a few words and assisted in the presentation of excellence and other awards to outstanding members of the community.

My thanks to our comperes, Anita Gidumal and Vishal Melwani who ensured the smooth running of the event, to Nanu Lachman and Mohan Chugani for arranging the VIP seating and to all other members of the Executive Committee in their

various roles.

This year's event was kindly sponsored by Mrs. Purvis and the late Mr. Rusy Shroff, and by the Harilela family to whom I extend our sincerest thanks for their support.

- 5) Attending a lunch hosted by DAB on Wednesday 21 August, 2019 at the Kowloon Cricket Club to which members of several ethnic minority associations were invited.
- 6) A lunch meeting at the India Club on Thursday 31st October, 2019 which was attended by representatives from Hong Kong Unison, CHEER and the Justice Centre during which we exchanged ideas on how to best support the ethnic minorities in Hong Kong and how we could work together in this regard.
- 7) The Community Chest Walk on Sunday 7 January, 2020 with thanks to our convenor Ramesh Mahtani for which we had a large Indian contingent including our Consul General, and participants from the Indian banks.
- 8) Kalyani, at the Asia Society on Saturday 18th January, 2020 a celebration of women in the Indian arts organised by In Harmony Arts & Culture. I was pleased that we were co-sponsors for this event as it showed that we were doing events for our members and their families, and our commitment to the community and the arts.
- 9) Being a member of CHIA (The Council of Hong Kong Indian Associations) we attended their quarterly meetings and continue to provide our strong support.
- 10) Holding bi-monthly Happy Hours for our members and their guests during which we were able to recruit several new members to the India Association. My thanks to Kamal Nankani and Tony Ahluwalia for arranging these events.

We have over the year increased our involvement with the ethnic minorities by launching the Federation of Hong Kong Ethnic Communities, to which other ethnic minority associations are members. Members of our Executive Committee have also attended various meetings kindly arranged by Mohan Chugani with government departments, government officials and NGOs including representatives of the Pan Democrats and the Hong Kong Tourist Board, Ms Priscilla To, Deputy Secretary for Education, Mr John K.C.Lee, the Secretary for Security and our Consul General during which we discussed our concerns and interests relating to the ethnic minorities in Hong Kong.

I am also pleased with our other community service events that we were involved in including arranging for flu and pneumonia vaccinations and other medical services for our members and the Indian community; attending events organised by CHEER, the Yaumatei Kaifong Association School's graduation ceremony and supporting cricket events for South Asian teams organised by Mrs Preeti Wadhwa.

Unfortunately due to the protests and the corona virus, we were unable to attend several events usually organised by government departments, NGOs, political parties and some

ethnic minority associations or chambers to which we were invited in earlier years as these were either cancelled or postponed. In particular, we were unable to participate in the dental care programme for ethnic minorities organised by the dental department at the Hong Kong University, for which our Vice President Anita Gidumal is our convenor, due to its postponement this year.

I am pleased to say that our finances are in good shape on which our Honorary Treasurer Richard Albuquerque will give us his report after me.

As mentioned earlier it has not been possible to hold several community events this year including a celebration of our 70th anniversary and other events for our members and their families, or to arrange vocational visits for them to the Chief Executive's residence and the fire services which we have done in past years together with a few other visits that I would have liked us to arrange during the year. Hopefully the incoming Executive Committee will be able to do so once matters settle down.

I have very much enjoyed being your President over the past year and thank my fellow committee members for all their support and assistance without which we would have been unable to hold the above events in difficult circumstances.

I apologise that I have been unable to mention everybody on the Executive Committee but would like to particularly thank our Honorary Secretaries Kavi Khiytani and Tony Ahluwalia who are too often taken for granted but without whom it would not be possible to keep the India Association's wheels oiled over the year.

Dear members, thank you for attending the Annual General Meeting for we always welcome your support and participation to serve the community.