

"India is the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend, and the great grand mother of tradition." **Mark Twain**



# The India Link

## Monthly Newsletter



From the  
Editor's Desk



On behalf of the India Link Committee, I am honored and delighted to bring out this first issue of the India Link Monthly News-letter.

India Link is going through some very intriguing times, to say the least. The Committee is gearing up to organize a glorious Spring festival in March. Significant efforts are also underway to raise food and funds for God's Kitchen scheduled for delivery around the end of the year. Committee members are energetically brainstorming to identify new programs and activities that will make everyone feel more welcome.

Furthermore, India Link is reviewing and redefining its "vision". The mission, and strategic goals will be derived from its vision which will be guiding beacons for a grass root movement. Mr. Makkar, the President of India Link, has his work cut out for as far as the eye can see.

The mission of the India Link newsletter is to keep you apprised of local, regional, and international news that impacts the people of Indian subcontinent here in west Michigan in significant ways. The letter will also bring the information about the programs and events of interest to the notice of India Link community. Finally, the letter is committed to bring the latest developments as India Link committee reshapes its philosophy, strategy, programs, and activities.

I would exhort you, especially our young friends, to join India Link and shape it the way you want. It is YOUR organization. The committee is all "open-arm" to embrace you.

Finally, do not hesitate to e-mail me any news item—anything out of the normal—that you believe arouses interest or deserves public attention.

ashok.ak.kumar@gmail.com  
http://www.ashok-kumar.org

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Grand Rapids, Michigan

### Diwali Celebrations at Whitehouse: Obama Reaches Out to Asian Indians with a Personal Touch

President Obama displayed his uncanny penchant to reach out and touch people of different faith and origin as he became the first President of the United States to personally grace the Diwali celebrations in the East Room of the White House on Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2009. He lit the traditional lamp (diya) with a candle as a Hindu priest, with a ceremonial *tilak* on his forehead, chanted "Asatoma Sadgamaya" (Lead us from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light, from death to liberation). As President Obama lit the lamp and



greeted the people all over the world with "Happy Diwali and Saal Mubarak," he delivered a profound message of peace and optimism to the world: "This coming Saturday, Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and some Buddhists, here in America and around the world, will celebrate this holiday by lighting diyas, or lamps, which symbolize the victory of light over darkness, and knowledge over ignorance."

India Link wholeheartedly endorses and supports all gestures and efforts that serve to bring the people of the world together and promote harmony. Keep it Up, Mr. President!

### Websites Of Interest

- India Link: [www.india-link.org](http://www.india-link.org)
- West Michigan Hindu Temple: [www.westmichiganhindutemple.org](http://www.westmichiganhindutemple.org)
- Gurdwara: [www.grsikh.com](http://www.grsikh.com)
- Asian Center : [www.asian-center.org](http://www.asian-center.org)

### India Link Prepares to Feed the Hungry and the Needy

Continuing the past practice, India Link volunteers are working diligently to raise funds and food for the needy and the hungry to be channeled through God's Kitchen—a prominent Christian charity organization, in Grand Rapids. If interested in helping or donating to God's Kitchen, please e-mail India Link ([indialink2010@gmail.com](mailto:indialink2010@gmail.com)).

## India Link to Reinvigorate Inclusion Efforts; Solicit Participation of Regional Communities in India Link Core Programs

Just a few years back, India Link's Diwali festival celebrations used to be buzz with people from all sects, segments, and regions from India. Diwali and Baisakhi festivities and the cultural functions, summer picnic, and other activities brought parents and progenies; husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, friends and acquaintances together regardless of caste, creed, or region they hailed from in India. Today, the picture is different. We can blame it on what is perhaps India's strongest characteristic — diversity of its thriving, rich culture of its multifarious regional

communities. Many regional groups, in search of an identity, have formulated and developed their own culturally customized programs that quench their identification needs. South Indian groups, for instance, organize annual cultural programs like Pongal and Onam; Bengali's celebrate Durga Pooja, Punjabis celebrate Baisakhi, etc. An inadvertent consequence of these regional programs, admittedly well-meaning and well intentioned, has been a copious drain on the size of the India Link program audience. This structural problem can only be solved by involving opinion makers

and leaders from these regional communities in India Link programs and activities from the word go. They should be proactively sought to serve in positions on India Link Board as the ambassador of their community so that they feel ownership in shaping India Link as an organization that belongs to all.

In a recent meeting, a vigorous brainstorming session was conducted with distinguished leaders of a community. The results appeared promising—at least to begin with. This is a long and arduous process. Patience, perseverance, and consistency of efforts are indispensably needed for success.



### Say Cheese!

During a visit to the mental hospital, I asked the Director 'How do you determine whether or not a patient should be admitted to the hospital.'

'Well,' said the Director, 'We fill up a bathtub, and then we give a teaspoon, a teacup and a bucket to the patient and ask him to empty the bathtub.'

'Oh, I understand,' I said. 'A normal person would use the bucket because it's bigger than the spoon or the teacup.'

'No.' Said the Director, 'A normal person would pull the drain plug.'

Well... Would you prefer a bed near the window?'

### Proud to Serve: The India Link Committee 2009-10 ([indialink2010@gmail.com](mailto:indialink2010@gmail.com))

Board member	E-mail	Board member	E-mail
Arora, Renu	<a href="mailto:renuarora@sbcglobal.net">renuarora@sbcglobal.net</a>	Kumar, Ashok	<a href="mailto:ashok.ak.kumar@gmail.com">ashok.ak.kumar@gmail.com</a>
Bagga, Kuldip S.	<a href="mailto:ksbagga@gmail.com">ksbagga@gmail.com</a>	Kumar, Manjusha	<a href="mailto:manjusha.kumar@gmail.com">manjusha.kumar@gmail.com</a>
Bagga, Rani	<a href="mailto:ranibagga@gmail.com">ranibagga@gmail.com</a>	Majumdar, Smiti	<a href="mailto:smitisanyal@yahoo.com">smitisanyal@yahoo.com</a>
Bhargava, Alka & suresh	<a href="mailto:suralka@yahoo.com">suralka@yahoo.com</a>	Makkar, Satpal	<a href="mailto:satpalmakkar2@gmail.com">satpalmakkar2@gmail.com</a>
Chandra, Smita & Amit	<a href="mailto:amitsmita@comcast.net">amitsmita@comcast.net</a>	Mander, Tejinder	<a href="mailto:Tejmander@aol.com">Tejmander@aol.com</a>
Dalmia, Arun	<a href="mailto:akdalmia@gmail.com">akdalmia@gmail.com</a>	Naqvi, Syed	<a href="mailto:syedn37@hotmail.com">syedn37@hotmail.com</a>
Dalmia, Sonia	<a href="mailto:dalmias@gvsu.edu">dalmias@gvsu.edu</a>	Rai, Baij & Nina	<a href="mailto:baijraj@hotmail.com">baijraj@hotmail.com</a>
Husain Isamat	<a href="mailto:husain.l@att.net">husain.l@att.net</a>	Rajadhyaksha, Pankaj	<a href="mailto:pankaj@tboh.com">pankaj@tboh.com</a>
Kanvinde, Atul	<a href="mailto:Indialink2010@gmail.com">Indialink2010@gmail.com</a>	Rajgopal, Arun & Ishita	<a href="mailto:ar_raj@yahoo.com">ar_raj@yahoo.com</a>
Kanvinde, Richa	<a href="mailto:Indialink2010@gmail.com">Indialink2010@gmail.com</a>	Reddy, Prasad	<a href="mailto:preddy430@hotmail.com">preddy430@hotmail.com</a>
Kloac, Pearl & Bill	<a href="mailto:Indialink2010@gmail.com">Indialink2010@gmail.com</a>	Saxena, Mona & Dilip	<a href="mailto:saxena5@hotmail.com">saxena5@hotmail.com</a>
Koche, Manohar	<a href="mailto:usha2493@yahoo.com">usha2493@yahoo.com</a>		