

# IAAC announces the appointment of Dr. Nirmal Mattoo as incoming Chairman of the Board

Aroon Shivdasani, Executive and Artistic Director retires after 20 years of glorious service. Says, will continue as Brand Evangelist Advisor.

**NEW YORK CITY (TIP):** Dr. Nirmal Mattoo has been appointed by the Board of IAAC as its new Chairman effective July 1, 2018. In its evaluation, the Board concluded that Dr. Mattoo's background as a philanthropist supporter of the arts and artists, educator, author, humanitarian doctor and successful businessman with a strong track record of building non-profit centers of excellence made him uniquely qualified to head and lead a precious asset of the Indo American community, says a press release issued by Sunil Hali.

This announcement was made at a gala gathering at the Indian Consulate in New York on July 30th attended by over 160 people from the arts, media and Indo American community. Consul General Ambassador Sandeep Chakravorty welcomed the IAAC members in his opening remarks.

The IAAC Board thanks Aroon Shivdasani who has announced her retirement, for her exemplary sacrifices and contributions over the course of a lifetime in founding and building IAAC to the point that it is the premiere art and cultural organization of the Indo American community. The existing Board members and advisors have also retired, and their services are acknowledged with gratitude. Finally, the heart and soul of any community is its volunteers and it is gratifying that they will all continue to serve IAAC.

contd on Page 6



Left to right - Sunil Hali, Yakub Mathew, Rakesh Kaul, Anurag Harsh, Aroon Shivdasani, Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty, Dr Nirmal Mattoo and Rajeev Kaul



Executive Director, IAAC, Sunil Hali addressing the gathering



Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty presents a plaque to Aroon Shivdasani



Rajeev Kaul, Board Member IAAC, Aroon Shivdasani and Dr Nirmal Mattoo, Chairman IAAC

## Sohum Sukhatankar wins 2018 South Asian Spelling Bee



Jaideep Janakiram, Head of North America, Sony Entertainment Television-Asia, Sohum Sukhatankar (National Champion) and Father, Abhijay Kodali (National First Runner Up) and Father, and Rahul Walia, Founder of South Asian Spelling Bee

**EDISON, NJ(TIP):** Sohum Sukhatankar of Dallas, TX correctly spelled the word "Dasypus" (a family of marsupials that includes the native cats, pouched mice, banded anteater, Tasmanian devil, and related forms) during the 2018 South Asian Spelling Bee finals to clinch the title of national champion and took home a cash prize of \$3,000.

Abhijay Kodali from Flower Mound, TX was the National 1st Runner-Up at the

Touchdown Media initiative on Aug.2, which was taped live for broadcast on Sony Entertainment Television.

The initiative was organized by leading multicultural advertising firm, Touchdown Media Inc. Sony Entertainment Television Asia will broadcast the initiative across the globe in over 120 countries, Kawan Foods returned as the powered by sponsor for the initiative which is now in its 11th year.

contd onPage 6

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## The 4th Indian Person to lead the Rotary: Sushil Kumar Gupta selected to be 2020-21 Rotary President



*In the 110-year history of the Rotary International Rtn Gupta is the 4th Indian to lead the organization, which consists of 1.2 million Rotarians in over 170 countries.*

**NEW YORK (TIP):** Sushil Kumar Gupta, of the Rotary Club of Delhi Midwest, Delhi, India, is the selection of the Nominating Committee for President of Rotary International for 2020-21. He will be declared the president-nominee on 1 October if no challenging candidates have been suggested.

Gupta wants to increase Rotary's humanitarian impact as well as the diversity of its membership.

"As individuals, we can only do so much," Gupta said in a statement. "But when 1.2 million Rotarians work together, there is no limit to what we can achieve, and in the process, we can truly

change the world."

Gupta has been a Rotarian since 1977 and has served Rotary as district governor, training leader, and resource group adviser, and as a member, vice chair, or chair of several committees.

Sushil Kumar Gupta, of the Rotary Club of Delhi Midwest, Delhi, India, is the selection of the Nominating Committee for President of Rotary International for 2020-21.

He was awarded an honorary Doctor of Science degree by the IIS University, Jaipur, in recognition of his contributions to water conservation.

He has also received the coveted Padma Shri Award, the fourth-highest civilian award in India, conferred by the president of India for distinguished service to tourism and social work.

Gupta has also received the Distinguished Service Award from The Rotary Foundation for his support of its humanitarian and educational programs. He and his wife, Vinita, are Major Donors to The Rotary Foundation and members of the Arch Klumph Society.

Gupta is chair and managing director of Asian Hotels (West) Ltd., and owner of Hyatt Regency Mumbai and JW Marriott Hotel New Delhi Aerocity. He has served as president of the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India and on the board of directors of Tourism Finance Corporation of India Ltd. He is the president of Experience India Society, a public-private partnership between the tourism industry and the government of India that promotes India as a tourist destination.

He is also vice chair of the Himalayan Environment Trust and serves on the board of Operation Eyesight Universal in India. There are 16 members of the Nominating Committee for the 2020-21 President of the Rotary International.

Sushil Gupta is a founding patron of the Gift of Life India, since its inception in 2002. He currently also serves an advisor. Past District Governor Ravishankar Bhooplapur honored him in 2012, at the Crest Hollow Country Club on Long Island, with an Angel Award for his outstanding humanitarian services and help for setting up Gift of Life India project. Gift of Life India so far has saved 6,000 children's lives.

In the 110-year history of the Rotary International he is the 4th Indian to lead the organization, which consists of 1.2 million Rotarians in over 170 countries. We have no doubt he will take the Rotary to the next level. (Contributed by Teresa Schmedding)

## Drive East Festival Featuring ICCR sponsored Artists to be presented in New York and San Francisco

**NEW YORK CITY (TIP):** On Thursday, August 02, 2018 Consulate General of India & Navatman Inc. presented Drive East Opening Night at the Consulate wherein Navatman's Co-Artistic Director - Sridhar Shanmugam and Sahasra Sambamoorthi announced the schedule for their annual Indian dance and music festival - Drive East. This year Consulate is participating in "Drive East" with an ICCR sponsored Kathak! Ensemble.

Navatman, Inc., is an organization dedicated to supporting the Indian classical arts, emphasizing Indian classical music and dance. This year, Navatman will present 35 concerts in 14 days and in 2 major cities - New York (August 13-19) and San Francisco (August 22-26) at the LaMama

Experimental Theater Group and in San Francisco, California, at the Joe Goode Annex.

From Bharatanatyam to ghazals, Drive East will present international, award-winning artists from all over the world. However, the highly anticipated performance is in New York on Friday, August 17 of Kathak, by a group of acclaimed performers from India produced by Battery Dance Company, sponsored by Indian Council of Cultural Relations and Consulate General of India, New York. Kathak will feature acclaimed Kathak dancers - Sandip Mallick & group with Anuj Mishra and group. Joining them will be Piyush Chauhan and Preeti Sharma. The entire schedule for Drive East is available on <http://www.driveeastnyc.org/index.html>

contd from page 3

## IAAC announces the appointment of Dr. Nirmal Mattoo...

Dr. Mattoo stated, "Aroon has been a trailblazer in fostering the arts and the artist community in a non-judgmental, nurturing manner that has inspired love, understanding, pride and joy. Her pioneering effort has resulted in a vibrant week-long film festival, a stimulating book festival, ecstatic dance and music festivals, an art festival and much, much more. She has built a supportive group of patrons that exceeds 64,000 in the Tri State area which is an outstanding accomplishment. Many cultural organizations across America have been incubated by Aroon by interning those who wanted to emulate her creation."

Aroon Shivdasani stated, "The IAAC Board had a choice among many parties who wanted to take responsibility for IAAC but concluded that nobody else could match the fiduciary spirit that Dr. Mattoo would bring to the IAAC mission and in taking it to the next level. I am truly fortunate that IAAC brand has generated such a positive response over the years from the community. I thank my key team members Aseem Chhabra, Ramneek Kang, Nili Lakhani, Rohan Gupta, Monty Kataria, Abhi Chintakunta, Suman Gollamudi and the hundreds of volunteers who joined me in this cause. I truly look forward to supporting the team and the new Board in achieving their goals."

Ambassador Chakravorty presented Aroon Shivdasani with an award plaque and also a shawl in recognition of her services. He stressed the importance of propagating Indian arts. Dr. Mattoo also presented Aroon with a plaque on behalf of IAAC.

Dr. Mattoo announced the appointment of the new Executive Director of IAAC, Mr. Sunil Hali, as also incoming Vice Chairman of the Board, Rakesh Kaul, Board Members Anil Bansal, Anurag Harsh and Rajeev Kaul while Professor S. Sridhar, Yakub Mathew and Gaurav Verma join the Advisory Board.

Dr. Mattoo stated, "Sunil Hali is a leader in the field of South Asian media, art and entertainment field and marketing. Besides founding and guiding premium media properties such as The Indian Express North American Edition and Divya Bhaskar and biggest South Asian Radio Zindagi, and television channels such as GARV SHREE and PTC Punjabi, he has launched several iconic corporate brands in North America. He was the organizer for historic The Music Festival of India (1997), Building India Excellence Awards (2016), Zee Gold Bollywood Awards (2000) among others. In total, he has organized over 200 community festivals-events which is a testimony to the formidable strengths that he brings to the IAAC mission of community goodwill and understanding. We are fortunate that he has accepted this role."

Sunil Hali said, "I am humbled by the community opportunity that has been entrusted in me by Dr. Mattoo. I will count on his support, and that of the Board and my IAAC executive team. I thank Aroon for her commitment to continue as an advocate of IAAC and support me. I am pleased to announce that our very first event will be a literary event with noted author Ramchandra Guha on October 2nd followed by a grand music festival featuring the world famous Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, and his sons Amaan Ali Khan and Ayaan Ali Khan, at the Zankel at Carnegie Hall in October 2018. We will hold the always exciting New York Indian Film Festival from May 7th to May 12th, 2019. More details and event announcements will follow in due course."

Dr. Mattoo continued, "I am pleased to announce new IAAC Board appointments. They bring an eclectic background and exemplify the renaissance spirit that IAAC promotes."

Rakesh Kaul will be joining as Vice Chairman of the Board and will support Dr. Mattoo in the mission ahead. Rakesh is a successful author, technologist, business leader with a strong record of contributing to the arts and nurturing non-profit initiatives. His experience and learnings as Chairman of the Board of the largest marketing services company in the world, serving the non-profit sector, will be invaluable in scaling up IAAC.

(Read full story on [www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news))

contd from page 3

## Sohum Sukhatankar wins 2018...

The South Asian Spelling Bee celebrated a decade of bees, which included some special guests at the finals such as 2017 South Asian Spelling Bee National Champion, Sravanth Malla and 2014 South Asian Spelling Bee National Champion, Gokul Venkatachalam.

"It fills my heart to see such talented young spellers from across the country who make us proud as a community. The initiative is unique in its reach and engagement and this year with the introduction of the SAS-Bee program we were able to give even more spellers the opportunity to win it all and raise the bar even higher. My heartiest congratulations to the winner," said Rahul Walia, Founder.

The initiative was open to children up to 14 years of age and was held in 7 regional centers across the United States. These areas included, New Jersey, DC Metro area, Dallas, Chicago, Bay Area, Charlotte, and the returning international center in Ghana.

Over 600 spellers from these centers participated from

which 24 finalists took the stage at the Finals. 12 of which were through the new SAS-Bee program introduced this year.

"We are extremely happy with Sohum's win at the Bee as today's South Asian kids are all-rounders and highly dedicated to their craft. We produced a special section called "Meet the Spellers where the viewers will have an opportunity to get to know some of the spellers including Sohum better," said Tim Tan, Managing Director, Kawan Food, makers of the world's most popular Roti Paratha Brand in the world - Kawan Paratha.

"Nail Biting contest year after year and I personally was unable to get up during the bee! It's amazing to see the pool of talent from our community and am happy for Sohum Sukhatankar's win and excited to get to know him and some of the other spellers better in the "Meet the Speller" series airing shortly on Sony," said Jaideep Janakiram, Head of North America, Sony Entertainment Television-Asia.

Children up to 14 years of age were eligible to participate and the contest saw spellers of even 6 years of age compete and make it past a few rounds. Registration for 2019 will open in October this year and for more information and to register your child, please visit [www.SouthAsianSpellingBee.com](http://www.SouthAsianSpellingBee.com).

Find us on Facebook at South Asian Spelling Bee and you can follow us on our Twitter handle at Spell South Asian.

**About Touchdown Media Inc.:** Touchdown Media Inc. is a specialized South Asian advertising and promotions firm based in New Jersey. Now in its 16th successful year, Touchdown has helped clients, both mainstream and otherwise, reach out to the lucrative South Asian market. Touchdown Media represents more than 35 years of collective experience in this niche market. As a full-service ad firm, Touchdown has helped many clients achieve their media and marketing goals within the South Asian diaspora in the United States.

**About Sony Entertainment Television Asia:** Since its launch on the Indian subcontinent in 1995, Sony Entertainment Television (SET) has enjoyed rapid success, leading to the establishment of European, North American and African feeds known as SET Asia. SET and SET Asia are now available in over 150 countries. The channels offer their viewers a distinctive blend of entertainment programs twenty-four hours a day, including, soap operas, dramas, sitcoms, concerts, movies, and game shows. For more information, visit [www.setasia.tv](http://www.setasia.tv).