

UN Issues Stamp To Honor Gandhi

United Nations: (IANS) The United Nations has released a one-dollar colorful postal stamp of Mahatma Gandhi to commemorate the 140th birth anniversary of the apostle of peace observed as the International Day of Non-violence.



The stamp, released here by the UN Postal Administration, the world body's postal agency, has been designed by Miami-based artist Ferdie Pacheco, with the Father of the Nation in red, blue and gold.

First Day Covers marked with the stamp and the United Nations' seal were also put on sale.

A successful pharmacist and doctor, who has worked as a corner man for 12 world champions, including Muhammad Ali, Pacheco has also served as a commentator for NBC and won two Emmy awards. The artist was represented by his daughter Tina and granddaughter Alexis.

Several UN envoys, present at a function organized by the Indian mission to celebrate his 140th birth anniversary, reiterated the influence of Mahatma Gandhi's life.

"In many ways, Mahatma Gandhi pre-visualized the UN. Much of the work that we do in the area of human rights owes its genesis in the struggle against racial discrimination, which he focused on," said Hardeep Puri, India's permanent representative to the UN.

Paying tribute to Gandhi, US envoy to the UN Susan Rice said, "Gandhi had influenced millions of Americans. Gandhi believed that physical force could be turned aside by moral forces."

Manmohan To Make First State Visit Of Obama Presidency

Washington: (IANS) Highlighting the strong and growing strategic partnership between India and the United States, President Barack Obama will welcome Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to the White House Nov 24 for the first state visit of his presidency, it was announced here Friday.

Obama and his wife Michelle will also host an official state dinner that same evening for Manmohan Singh and his wife, Gursharan Kaur, White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said in a statement. "This visit will be the first state visit of the administration and will highlight the strong and growing strategic partnership between the United States and India, and the friendship between the American and Indian people," he said.

"During the visit, the two leaders are expected to discuss a range of global, regional, and bilateral issues of shared interest and common concern," Gibbs said. "The two leaders will also likely discuss the strategic dialogue that was launched in July and review progress made in the dialogue."

"President Obama looks forward to welcoming Prime Minister Singh to Washington and working with him to strengthen and enhance their partnership for the benefit of the people of both nations, and the world," he added.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton hand-delivered the state-visit invitation from Obama during her July trip to India.

State visits typically include an elaborate arrival ceremony on the White House South Lawn, one-on-one time with the president and, in the evening, a state dinner.

Obama administration's nod of recognition for the world's largest democracy and its emergence as a global player comes just four years after President George W. Bush welcomed Manmohan Singh at a July 2005 state dinner and set the ball rolling for the landmark India-US nuclear deal.

The signal honour just 10 months into Obama's presidency may go a long way in allaying perceptions that engaged as he is with Pakistan to secure greater military cooperation in dealing with extremists there and in neighbouring Afghanistan, Obama may not be as warm toward India as Bush.

The Obama administration has also reassured India that it would go forward with the nuclear deal pushed by the Bush administration to resume civilian nuclear trade with India after 30 years. In fact, the new administration has used that accord as a foundation for improving ties and hopes of cooperation on the president's priority issues, such as climate change and countering terrorism.



Activist Mallika Dutt Wins Courage Award

Washington: (IANS) Indian American civil rights activist Mallika Dutt was honored by the Asian American Justice Centre (AAJC), a leading US civil rights organization, with the American Courage Award Oct 1.



Dutt is executive director of Breakthrough, an innovative, international human rights organization using the power of popular culture, media and community mobilization to transform

public attitudes and advance equality, justice, dignity. Through initiatives in India and the US, Breakthrough addresses critical global issues, including violence against women, sexuality and HIV/AIDS, racial justice and immigrant rights.

Anita Botti, deputy director of the President's International Women's Initiatives InterAgency Task Force, will present the award on behalf of Ambassador-at-Large, Melanne Verveer at a ceremony here.

Mallika Dutt has a long history of activism and commitment to social change and has addressed global issues ranging from women's rights to racial justice and immigrant rights, AAJC said.

For the last decade, she has been spearheading efforts to stop the erosion of fundamental human rights in the US, particularly in the aftermath of 9/11. Most recently, Breakthrough has partnered with the AAJC, along with 25 other leading organizations, to produce "Restore Fairness", a powerful documentary that calls on the government to bring back due process to immigration in the US.

AAPI President Meets Obama, Pledges Support To Healthcare Reforms

Washington: President of American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) Dr. Vinod K. Shah met with President Barack Obama in Washington recently and pleaded for increased residency slots for medical graduates while extending AAPI's support to his healthcare reforms.

Presenting a letter on behalf of AAPI in a stylishly prepared book containing rare photos of President Obama, some of which were shot by him and his quotes, Dr. Shah explained on behalf of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin, being a US citizen with kinship with 1.8 million Indians in the US - 60,000 of whom are medical professionals - he would like to express great pleasure and profound gratitude for providing genuine leadership at such a crucial moment in the history of the nation.

Dr. Shah was accompanied by Congressman Steny Hoyer, House Majority Leader who introduced Dr. Shah as president of AAPI and his close friend. Dr. Shah also invited President Obama as a chief guest to the annual convention of AAPI June 23-26, 2010 in Washington.

"On the 20 Jan 2009, I was extremely fortunate and privileged to be on the platform when you took the oath of Office of the President. The memory elicits a myriad of emotions that still stir my heart, along with those of countless others within our borders and around the world. In a glorious moment of democratic triumph, our nation leaped out of a poignant past and into an

unprecedented present, and forever unfolded the future of endless possibilities," he noted in the communication to the president.

He narrated 35 years since he cared for his first patient in Southern Maryland, a community



only 50 miles from the Nation's capital, is still deficient in the number of physicians it requires to meet residents' health care needs. Sadly, this is the story of scores of communities across the length and breadth of America. It is indeed ironic that a nation founded on sound ideals, inhabited

by highly talented individuals with honest intent and sincere actions, must still endure such a stark reality - even as we celebrate the triumph of the freedom to choose, a freedom that ushers in a new era for humanity that recognizes the oneness of all, Dr. Shah elaborated in the note.

"As a physician - and I can speak for thousands of my professional colleagues - I take enormous pride in the quality of healthcare we provide. I truly believe it is the best in the world. When faced with serious medical problems, most people - Americans, and others around the world - would have complete trust in what we can do and rank America as best. However, the best is not enough until it reaches the rest," he wrote in the communication. "As an active member and officer of the American Association of

Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), I have had the privilege of countless personal contacts. I had the opportunity to hear many questions and concerns, answers and ideas; varied views concerning what ails our healthcare system; and what would remedy it. We have been able to imple-

ment this in our community with clear advantage, by providing efficient and cost-effective healthcare."

Touching upon the lack of residency slots to qualified medical graduates, he said: "I have met many bright young men and women from around the world who arrived in America in much the same manner as I had forty years ago. Many of these are international medical graduates, and easily some of the world's brightest minds; many have already successfully completed the rigorous American Board examinations. Thousands of these very motivated professionals are floundering in the dark because they are unable to practice what they have been educated for, are committed to, and excel in. It is a tragic irony that individuals with the potential to help others are languishing in their untapped potential. This group can easily become part of the solution for the problem our healthcare system is facing. What lies between our country's success and their failure is three years of residency," he explained.

Praising the president for taking Herculean task of reviving financial institutions, auto industries and overall economy, he said the bright young professionals are knocking on door in hopes for a chance to realize their full potential. "They are asking for a small opportunity to take their first step towards the American Dream. In return, they will provide years of medical service, fighting disease and disorders, relieving pain and suffering," he noted in the memorandum submitted to the president