

# 25th FOG India Day Mela and Parade



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Today it has become a national event attracting participants from as far away as East Coast, says Dr Romesh Japra, Convener of FIA and Chairman, FOG.

The celebrations kicked off with a flag hoisting ceremony on August 11 at the San Jose City Hall. The event was hosted by Councilmember Ash Kalra. The event was attended by Consul General Venkatesan Ashok, Rajesh Verma, Yogi Chugh to name a few. Dr Japra, Chairman and Convener of the FIA, spoke about what the flag raising ceremony meant to him, "Every year it keeps getting better and bigger - I think we realize how fortunate we are to have this freedom, unlike many others. This flag hoisting makes us proud and makes us realize who we are and what we are."

The festival opened on August 12 at 10 a.m. in Paseo Padre Parkway with the "Free Health Fair". The Health Fair had about 20 Indian American physicians and other medical professionals providing free medical services and follow up. The fair was organized by FIA team members with physicians and other medical professionals from Pacific Cardiology, Arable Light MD, Kaiser Permanente, Capsule RX, Imotion physical therapy, Regeneron, Gilead to name a few. Health fair was coordinated by Naresh Sodhi, Raju Mantena and team.



### MOST AWAITED EVENT

FOG parade, the most awaited event started at 11:30 a.m. and lasted for over two hours on August 13. Grand Marshal Bollywood star Manoj Bajpayee led the parade with FIA Chairman Dr Romesh Japra. The Parade route was on the main street of Paseo Padre Parkway. Bajpai, who rode through the parade in a horse-drawn carriage, said the pride he sees in the younger participants and watchers is "very much visible." "They love America, and being Americans, but at the same time they feel so rooted to the place where they come from," said Bajpayee.

Manoj Bajpayee, also credited as Manoj Bajpai, is an Indian film actor who predominantly works in Hindi cinema and has also done Telugu and Tamil language films. He is the recipient of two National Film Awards and four Filmfare Awards. Bollywood director Vivek Agnihotri and Actor Prashantt Guptha graced the parade as co-grand marshals.

The Parade was coordinated by Deepak Chhabra, Chair, Parade and there were about 20 floats showcasing the rich culture and heritage of India. Many local ethnic groups such as Sindhi association, Bay Area Tamil Manram, Kannada group, Telangana, Maharashtra, West Bengal participated in the parade with colorful floats and entertainment programs highlighting the state's culture and heritage.

Deepak Chhabra (Chair, Parade) said, "The Parade continues to be the main attraction of Festival of India every year. There is renewed interest, enthusiasm and participation from various parts of community in making the parade a grand success. We are planning to increase the number of floats significantly and leave an indelible impression of rich Indian culture this year."

Cultural events showcasing the talent of Bay area kids and adults went on for all two days. The dance competition was coordinated by Jyotsna Bendapudi, FOG cultural chair.

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