

Indian-Americans celebrate Independence Day with fervour in US

17/08/2015 13:36 by admin

New York: Thousands of people from the Indian diaspora converged here on Sunday to celebrate India's 69th Independence Day at one of the largest parades outside India, attended by Harayana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor and Bollywood celebrities.

The 35th India Day Parade organised by the Federation of Indian Associations will run through about 20 streets in Madison avenue in the heart of Manhattan and features tableaux by various Indian-American organisations, marching bands, police contingents and cultural performances by young Indian-American children.

Khattar, accompanied by India's Consul General Dnyaneshwar Mulay, congratulated the huge gathering of Indians on the country's independence day and lauded the achievements of the diaspora in his brief remarks.

Bollywood star Arjun Rampal was the Grand Marshal at parade while Parineeti Chopra was the Guest of Honour.

Ahead of the parade, Chopra posted a picture of herself in a blue Manish Malhotra gown.

Chopra said : "Indians have the perfect balance between modern and traditional and have great cultural values."

Tharoor joined the Indian National Overseas Congress float at the parade and was thronged by supporters of his party.

Before the parade began Tharoor told PTI that the event has been growing in importance and visibility over the years, pointing to the increasing "consciousness" of Indians in the world.

"This shows Indians have really arrived and a made a mark in this society. It is a great celebration of the motherland in the new country," he said.

Tharoor noted that India has come a long way from the condition in which the British left the country in 1947.

He cited the dismal growth and literacy rates, life expectancy and maternal and child mortality figures when India got its independence and said that India has made tremendous improvements in the past 68 years "but we can't afford to be complacent".

Former Indian cricketer Virender Sehwag also expressed pride in attending the parade and said it was a matter of "great privilege and honor" for him to commemorate the Independence day with his fellow countrymen in the US.

Sehwag also expressed hope that the large number of Indians, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans and Bangladeshis living in the US will come together to create a US cricket team.

"I hope in the coming years there will be a US cricket team that plays international cricket soon," he said, adding that authorities should take responsibility to encourage the young cricketers in the US and give them an international platform.

The parade showcased India's cultural richness as well as the achievements of the diaspora through colorful floats.

The organisers also aim to create a Guinness World Record for organising the world's largest India Day Parade outside

India.

Among the highlights of the parade was the presence of 14-year-old Karan Menon, who won the National Geographic Bee this year.

Menon, a resident of Edison, New Jersey, waved to the crowd from the float of the Indus American Bank, the Indian American Community bank (IAB).

"We are pleased to honor the young man, who has made our community proud. It is a tradition of the IAB to support the youngsters to come up in their career. Menon hails from the same area where the bank has its headquarters and it is natural that we honor him," the bank's Executive Chairman and Founder Anil Bansal said.

The parade will end in a colorful Indian fare which will feature cuisine from across India, Indian handicraft and textile stalls.

- PTI