



# Ontario Konkani Association

e-Samachar (November 2022)

[www.ontariokonkanis.com](http://www.ontariokonkanis.com)

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## President's Message

Dear OKA Family,

We are deep into the fall season now and it is apparent that winter is just around the corner. We can all hibernate for a little bit and get ready for the Holiday season of Christmas, Hanukka etc. now that our OKA core festivities of **Dandiya on a Chandni Raat** on October 15th 2022 and **Sunehri Diwali** on November 20th 2022 have been celebrated in a grand way with lots of dhoom-dhaam with our extended OKA family and friends.

We would like to highlight the recent accomplishments of two of our community members who we consider the pillars of our community. Hearty congratulations to both of them and their families on behalf of OKA! We are proud of their achievements.

Our OKA founder president Raghunath Nayak received a Lifetime Achievement Award from IIT Alumni Canada at their Annual dinner on November 19th 2022. It is the highest award given by IITAC to its members in recognition of their extraordinary contribution to IITAC.

Our past president Sadanand Manikar was nominated by the Ontario Konkani Association's 21-22 Executive Committee for Ontario Volunteer Service Award for 15 years of continued service with the organization for all his wonderful contributions to senior's forum and events over the last several years. The nomination has been accepted and he will be given the award in a ceremony being held on November 29th 2022.

We hope you enjoy this edition of E-Samachar. Please consider contributing to the E-Samachar on a regular or one-time basis. We look forward to hearing from you at [OKApresidents@gmail.com](mailto:OKApresidents@gmail.com)

Anjana and Pravin Pai

# Ganesh Chaturthi - Down the Memory Lane

BY NIRANJAN KAMATH

It would not be an understatement to say Ganesh Mahotsav is the most popular festival in Maharashtra. For Mumbaikars the calls to welcome “Maaje Bappa” starts soon after the Gopala’s have broken the last Matki of Makkan. The city is abuzz with so many Pandals and many nukkad’s, societies, chawl’s gullies have their own favourite Ganesh Bappa. When you look at the historical chronology, it is almost certain that Ganesh Chaturthi festivities done in a very public way originated in Pune and more so as a clarion call to gather people in one place.



Back in 1892, Lokmanya Tilak’s idea of “Swaraj is my Birth Right” played a huge part in the transformation of this household festival into a grand public event much against the wishes of the Colonial British.

Ganesh Chaturthi as a festival has been traditionally observed in Pune since the time of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the founder of the Maratha Empire, since Lord Ganesh was the family god or Kuldevata of the Peshwas. With their fall, the festival lost state patronage and became a private family celebration in Maharashtra until its revival by Indian freedom fighter and social reformer Lokmanya Tilak.

For all of us, Amchigele’s, Ganapati is one of our most important deities we pray to along with our Venkatraman Dev. Moggani ami Ganapati Bappa saangche. Ganesh Chaturthi in its current form was introduced in 1892, when a Pune resident named Krishnajipant Khasgiwale visited Maratha-ruled Gwalior, where he witnessed the traditional public celebration and brought it to the attention of his friends, Bhausahab Laxman Javale and Balasaheb Natu back home in Pune. Javale, who was also known as Bhau Rangari installed the first sarvajanik or public Ganesha idol following this.

Lokmanya Tilak praised Javale's efforts in an article in his newspaper Kesari in 1893 and even installed a Ganesha idol in the news publication's office the next year, and his efforts transformed the annual domestic festival into a large, well-organised public event. Tilak was the first to install large public images of Ganesha in pavilions and established the practise of submerging the idols in rivers, the sea, or other bodies of water on the tenth day of the festival.

Encouraged by him, Ganesh Chaturthi or Ganeshotsav, became a meeting ground for people from all castes and communities at a time when the British discouraged social and political gatherings for fear of any uprising. The festival facilitated community participation and involvement in the forms of intellectual discourse, poetry recitals, plays, concerts, and folk dances.

Tilak recognized Ganesha's appeal as "the god for everybody". He popularised Ganesh Chaturthi as a national festival to "bridge the gap between Brahmins and 'non-Brahmins' and find a context in which to build a new grassroots unity between them", generating nationalistic fervour in the Maharashtran people to oppose British colonial rule.



At the time Ganesh Chaturthi in Goa was more of a family affair than a public festival due to the Goa Inquisition by the Portuguese due to which Hindus, who refused to convert to Christianity were severely restricted from expressing their religious beliefs. Many families worship Ganesha in the form of patri or leaves used for worshipping Ganesha or other gods, or a picture drawn on paper or small silver idols. Lord Ganesha idols were hidden in some houses due to a ban on clay Ganesha idols and festivals by the Jesuits as part of the Inquisition.

The date of Ganesh Chaturthi falls on the fourth day of the waxing moon period (Shukla Chaturthi) in the Hindu lunar month of Bhadrapad — either August or September each year. According to the Hindu lunar calendar, the festival is celebrated for 10 or 11 days, with the biggest spectacle taking place on the last day, a festival named Anant Chaturdashi. In 2022, Ganesh Chaturthi is on Aug. 31 & Anant Chaturdashi is on Sept. 9. In 2023, Ganesh Chaturthi is on Sept. 19 & Anant Chaturdashi is on Sept. 28 and in 2024, Ganesh Chaturthi is on Sept. 7 & Anant Chaturdashi is on Sept. 16.

### **Little about Ganesh Chaturthi:**

Ganesh Chaturthi commemorates the birthday of Lord Ganesh. Hindus believe it to be the most powerful day to worship the beloved elephant-headed god who is revered for his ability to remove obstacles. On this day, beautiful handcrafted idols of the Lord are installed both in homes and in public. Prana Pratishtha is performed to invoke the power of the deity into the idol, followed by a 16-step ritual known as "Shodashopachara Puja." Ganesh Bappa loves Modak amongst various sweets, so along with coconuts and flowers this is offered as well. The ritual should be performed at an auspicious time around midday (Madhyahna) when Lord Ganesh is believed to have been born. As per Vedic astrology, it extends from about 11 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. depending on the location in India.



It is important, according to tradition, not to look at the moon during certain times on Ganesh Chaturthi. If a person sees the moon, according to Hindu mythology, they will be cursed with accusations of theft and dishonored by society unless they chant a certain mantra. This came about after Lord Krishna was falsely accused of stealing a valuable jewel. Sage Narada said that Krishna must have seen the moon on Bhadrapad Shukla Chaturthi (the occasion that Ganesh Chaturthi falls on) and was cursed because of it. Furthermore, anyone who saw the moon from then on would be cursed in a similar way.

The idols of Lord Ganesh are worshiped every day, with an "aarti", a ritual of worship, in the evening. The largest Ganesh statues, on display to the public, are taken out and immersed in water on Anant Chaturdashi in grand street processions featuring a cacophony of traditional drumming and crackers. Many people who keep an idol in their homes conduct the immersion much before this though. However, such immersions only take place on certain days -- one and a half, three, five, and seven days after Ganesh Chaturthi.

### **Anant Chaturdashi**

You may be wondering why the immersion of Ganesh idols concludes on this day. Why is it special? In Sanskrit, Anant refers to eternal or infinite energy, or immortality. The day is devoted to the worship of Lord Anant, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu (the preserver and sustainer of life, also referred to as the supreme being). Chaturdashi means the "fourteenth". In this case, the occasion falls on the 14th day of the bright half of the moon during the month of Bhadrapad on the Hindu calendar.

Ganapati Bappa Morayya

### **Ganesh Bhajan Links:**

**GANESH AARTI, JAI GANESH DEVA BY ANURADHA PAUDWAL**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yuex2EnsGiY>

**SUKHKARTA DUKHHARTA – ANURADHA PAUDWAL**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZdchtP\\_-O40](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZdchtP_-O40)

## Seniors Forum

By Sadanand Mankikar

### **THE GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY OF THE JEEVAN NIWAS – SOUTH ASIAN RETIREMENT VILLAGE IN BRAMPTON.**

On September 30th, over 200 people including dignitaries from local, provincial and federal levels gathered at 9664 Goreway Drive in Brampton to partake in the groundbreaking ceremony of Jeevan Niwas, South Asian Retirement Village.

Work on this premium retirement village is a collaboration between Chacon Developments and Origin Active Lifestyle Communities. Once completed, the retirement village will offer 103 full-service supported independent living rental apartments, combined with 36 suites for assisted living and a dedicated neighbourhood of 16 memory care units. This \$80 million project is privately owned and funded.

At Jeevan Niwas, residents will be provided with a choice of lifestyles that include flexible care, housekeeping, exceptional dining with dedicated kitchens catering to specific dietary requirements, organized activities, excellent amenities, social events and cultural/religious excursions.

The retirement village is set to open in the summer of 2024. It will create a community that matches the unique values, culture, languages and culinary practices of the South Asian population.

For additional information, visit [www.jeevannivas.com](http://www.jeevannivas.com) or contact Sandep Dhupar 1 833-553-3826 Or email [sdhupar@chaconddevelopments.com](mailto:sdhupar@chaconddevelopments.com)



**LECTURE BY DR. JAGANNATH DIXIT**  
**“EFFECTIVE WEIGHT LOSS FOR OBESITY AND DIABETES PREVENTION”**

On Saturday, October 1, 2022 well over 150 people gathered in the SVBF Community Centre to listen to the SVBF/OKA sponsored lecture by world renowned Dr. Jagannath Dixit. Following the lecture, a large number of attendees lined up to have a personal chat with Dr. Dixit. With kind permission of Dr. Dixit and Mr. Varaha Suri Apparao Suriseti, I am sharing the following links:

Lecture at SVBF

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2031219263686041/permalink/2672973016177326/>

Other lectures can be watched on our YouTube channel: \*Drdixitdiet\*

<https://youtube.com/c/DrDixitDiet>



## **OKA EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM:**

Estate, Will and Power of Attorney and End of Life Planning are two major elements of this OKA Seniors Forum Program.

For **preparing Wills and Powers of Attorney** you may contact Marvin Talksy (905) 405-0199 ext. 257 or Mary Bojkovski (905) 405-0199 ext. 276 of Nanda & Associate Lawyers. For additional information or assistance, you may also contact Raghunath Kamath or Ashok Bhatt.

For **End of Life Planning** one may contact Harjinder Bilku of Chapel Ridge Funeral Home at (905) 305-8128 or (647) 966-0093.

**OKA AADHAR CHAT:** This interactive web-based chat was established in 2017 as a part of the OKA Seniors Forum to facilitate communication amongst seniors and soon to be seniors. Since then, we have started posting upcoming events and relevant information on this chat. Members can post any questions and we will attempt to get answers. We invite everyone, young and old, seniors or not, to join this chat and share information including their experiences and expertise. To join this chat group, please send an email to [shraddhapai.home@gmail.com](mailto:shraddhapai.home@gmail.com)

**Additional information about OKA Seniors' Forum is posted on [www.ontariokonkanis.com](http://www.ontariokonkanis.com)**

## **OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION**

**INDUS COMMUNITY SERVICES:** This organization provides very helpful service to South Asian seniors. They had held a Town Hall on Monday, November 29, 2021. At this highly informative session, the Director of Health Services shared updates on Health Services and programming while the CEO shared updates on a



Long Term Care facility that Indus will be running for the South Asian community. The session also involved discussions about what supports the community requires. For the presentations, please visit <https://www.induscs.ca/seniorstownhall/> If you want to stay connected with Indus, you may sign up for their newsletter here [Subscribe- Indus Current](#)

### **A few upcoming events/programs by Indus Community Services:**

- Sewing and Alterations Entrepreneurship Program
- Career Mentorship Program for Internationally Trained Professionals.
- SWAGAT Senior Wellness Activity, Growth, Arts and Technology
- Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LING)

### **C.A.R.P.**

Are you a member of C.A.R.P. - Canadian Association of Retired Persons? If you are over 45, you may want to consider becoming a member of C.A.R.P. It is a national organization with chapters all over the country. Its mission is to “Promote and protect the interests, rights and quality of life of Canadians as we age”

C.A.R.P. is an advocacy group and from time to time they arrange interesting and informative seminars and workshops. Their monthly magazine Zoomer consists of useful articles and provide information on topics related to insurance, travel, health, entertainment and lifestyle.

For additional information, you may contact them by email: [support@carp.ca](mailto:support@carp.ca)  
Phone: 1-833-211-2277 Website: [www.carp.ca](http://www.carp.ca)

**ONTARIO GUIDE TO PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR SENIORS:** Please click on the following link for the latest upgraded guide. [A guide to programs and services for seniors.](#)

**SENIORS HOUSING AND HOME CARE DIRECTORY:** Help for Mom has developed this very helpful publication which is about 130 pages, softcover and Readers Digest size. To get a copy send an email to helpformom.com or call Mary (647) 967-9821.

The following organizations disseminate very useful information either through regular news release and/or seminars, webinars and workshops:

Canada India Foundation [www.canadaindiafoundation.com](http://www.canadaindiafoundation.com)

C.A.R.P. (Canadian Association of Retired People) [www.carp.ca](http://www.carp.ca)

Diabetes Canada [www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca)

Indus Community Services [www.induscs.ca](http://www.induscs.ca)

UHNF (University Network Foundation) [www.uhnfoundatiom.ca](http://www.uhnfoundatiom.ca)

(ARTICLES BY AND FOR SENIORS FOR THIS SECTION ARE ALWAYS WELCOME)

## OKA Sunehri Diwali Special Honours

The OKA 2022-23 Executive Committee wanted to recognize and honor those OKA members or their direct family members who have selflessly served / or are serving on the front-lines, in uniform, to protect the country as well as those who served the community in the fight against the pandemic since 2020. This included professions such as those in uniform serving / served on Canadian Armed Forces, First Responders, Health Care Professionals who provided Covid Pandemic related services, exemplary volunteers etc. who served during the pandemic.

Accordingly, the community was requested to submit nominations of such individuals. There were eleven (11) nominations submitted for deserving individuals. These persons were recognized and honoured during the Sunehri Diwali event on November 20th, 2022. Those nominees or their families who attended the event were awarded a certificate as a mark of respect to the applause of the event audience. OKA recognized that there may be many more such individuals within the community who fall into this category and respects and honours them as well. Thank you to all our heroes!!!

1. Captain Prakash Rao
2. Rajesh Kini
3. Smitha Kudva
4. Mahesh Nileshwar
5. Lata Surkund
6. Dr. Shraddha Pai-Stein
7. Captain Nirmal N.Sthalekar
8. Madhu Rao
9. Bulu (Taposi) Pai
10. Late Dr Pallavi Nadkarni
11. Dr. Menaka Pai

Please see more details in the YouTube Video:

<https://youtu.be/d1JfwB-f86l>

## Covid – 19 Vaccinations – Update

By Veena Shanbhag

Pharmacist

In this article, I will mainly address boosters in the covid-19 vaccination series in adults.

We are hearing of a rise in cases of Covid-19 infections in the community. Why is this happening?

First of all, this does not mean that the vaccines are not working. However, immunity starts waning after a period of time putting people at risk of infection even after the first series of vaccinations. It has been observed that people are not getting as sick as when we first encountered this pandemic. So the vaccine and subsequent boosters do protect us from severe disease, hospitalization or worse.

What if someone has had a Covid infection after their first series of vaccinations? Should they still get the booster dose?

Yes. The reason for this is that immunity from Covid infection is not long lasting. One must consider a booster dose 3 months after symptom onset (or positive test if asymptomatic) and at least 6 months after completing primary series of vaccinations.

Currently there are two Covid vaccine options available as booster.

Pfizer Bivalent Corminaty which is effective against the original strain of SARS-CoV-2 virus and Omicron BA4 and BA5 variants. It is recommended in people 12 years and older.

Moderna Bivalent Spikevax which is effective against the original strain of SARS-CoV-2 virus and Omicron BA1 variant. It is recommended in people 18 years and older.

A booster dose with a bivalent vaccine is recommended if at least six months (168 days) have passed since the last dose. Individuals may choose to receive the booster dose in less than six months as long as three months (84 days) have passed since they received their last dose.

You are considered at higher risk of infection and complications from infection if you are

- A Resident of long-term care home, retirement home, Elder Care Lodge, or an adult living in other congregate settings that provides assisted-living and health services
- Individual aged 70 years and older
- Individual who is 12 years and older with moderately to severely immunocompromising conditions
- Pregnant
- A health care worker

If you are in any of these high-risk categories, a booster dose is highly recommended as it is very effective in protecting against severe infection, hospitalization or death.

Currently, it is also time for the influenza vaccine. You can get the flu vaccine and the Covid vaccine at the same time if you are due for both vaccines.

Please consider getting your booster dose if you are due for it. Vaccines are safe and effective.