On August 16th, 2015 - Indian Americans from the NY-NJ-CT tristate area celebrated Indian Independence day in the heart of New York City on Madison Avenue. The occasion was marked by the largest India Day parade (outside India), attended by thousands of people of Indian origin and non-Indian origin as well. Started in 1980, this was the 35th India Day parade in the New York City which has now become a permanent and awaited part of NYC’s very packed event calendar.

In an official theme of "Unity in Diversity", organizers - FIA (Federation of Indian Associations), which is an umbrella organization of Indian organizations in the country, there were about 30 floats and 36 marching groups, representing almost all the facets of the vibrant Indian diaspora in United States.

For the first time Jain community of the tri-state area took part in this India Day Parade, proudly displaying their rich Indian heritage and spreading the message of Ahinsa (Non-violence), Satya (Truthfulness), Moksha (Liberation of Soul). The parade started about 12 noon and ended around 2:30PM followed by the vibrant cultural program on a specially setup stage adjacent to the Madison Square park.

About 75 Jains comprising of young and old, sharply dressed in Indian tricolors (orange, white or green), marched under the banner of "Jains of America". The spokesperson of the group Chinmay Jain shared that the Jains of America (JoA) is an informally formed group of like-minded Jains in the tristate, who have been witnessing the India day parade from past many years and always thought of the...
participation of Jain community in this event. JoA is not directly affiliated to any of the several established Jain organizations in the region but members of JoA contingent are also the members of the different Jain centers in the region.

Though it was a very hot and humid day, the group had kids aged from 3 to 10, marching in the front with small Indian and US flags, followed by the grownups, carrying flags, banners and placards on Non-violence, Live and Let Live, 24 Teerthankaras, and Jain Way of Life. Through out the 2.5 hours long parade the group emphatically cheered all the way with the patriotic slogans like "Vande Mataram" (Salute to Motherland), "Barat Mata ki Jai" (Hail Mother India) and Jain messages like "Live and Let Live".

The group members comprised of all the 5 traditions practiced with in the Jain religion - all coming from different parts of tri-state area expressed great satisfaction and proud in being part of this group and hoped that this will now become a permanent part of the India Day parade every year.

Since ancient times, Jains have contributed tremendously to the rich Indian heritage and philosophy. In present times there are only about 5 million Jains in the world but their impact is still significant. For more information on Jains of America, and the parade pictures, please visit

https://www.facebook.com/jainsofamerica

Group leaders also expressed Thanks to FIA office bearers - Nishil Parikh, Sauril Parikh and others for being very welcoming and helpful in having the Jain community participating for the first time.

______________________________

For any questions, please contact:
Chinmay Jain
917 551 0097
chinmayjain@gmail.com