



Veerashaiva Samaja of Asia Pacific Inc. (VSAP)

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VSAP-Newsletter December 2010

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 2nd Edition & last newsletter of 2010.

1 VSAP Website Update:

Please visit the VSAP website. The site is updated with inauguration function report and function photos. www.veerashaivasamaja.org

2 VSAP Delegation visits Canberra:

VSAP delegation recently visited Canberra to attend the Community Forum organized by the Indian High Commissioner. Sri: Onkaraswamy Goppenahalli, the VSAP Vice-President lead the delegation. Sri: Suresh Bangalore, Secretary and Sri: Vijaykumar Halagali Public, Officer & Asia-Pacific Co-ordinator were the other members of the delegation.



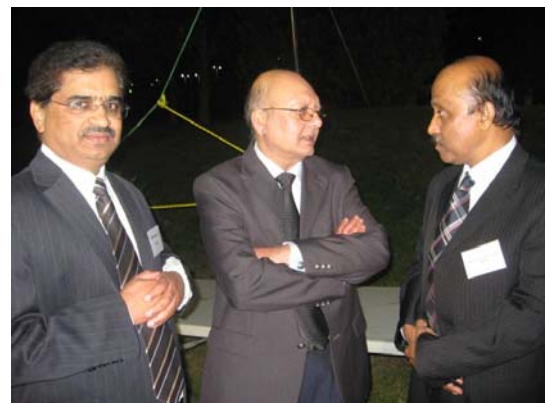
Mr Suresh Bangalore VSAP Secretary, Mr Padmanabhan, Mr Vijay Halagali, VSAP Asia Pacific Co ordinator-Public officer

This is an annual meeting of Indian Community leaders from all states and territories of Australia. This time community leaders from Perth, Hobart, Darwin, Townsville, Brisbane, Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney attended and shared their experience along with the community work being carried out.

Many burning issues relating to Indian community were discussed. Domestic violence in Indian community, Indian Students issue, Indian Women's issues were the main topics.



Onkaraswamy VSAP Vice President, Mrs Sujatha Singh High Commissioner of India, Mr Vijay Halagali, VSAP Public Officer and Asia Pacific Co ordinator



Onkaraswamy VSAP Vice President, Mr Amit Dasgupta Consul General of Sydney, Mr Vijay Halagali, VSAP Public Officer

Her Excellency Mrs. Sujatha Singh, High Commissioner requested for the community input and support to improve the image of the Indian community. Sri: Amit Das Gupta, CG Sydney and Smt: Anita Nayar, CG Melbourne and Deputy High Commissioner represented the High Commission. Mr: Loren D'Souza lead the Delegation from VFS, the external agency handling the consular services.

- Mrs: Singh took note of all the speakers' comments and community achievements.
- The very hot discussion session was about the consular services and the difficulties experienced by the community. Following were some of the issues raised
- VFS service is not upto the mark. Service is very slow and VFS staff are arrogant.
- VISA and OCI info is not communicated to the community and just by putting the info on WEB does not help.
- VISA and OCI fees are very high and not par with fees in US.
- Hotline phone rates are high.
- Mrs: Singh agreed that there are issues and they are being addressed. She said the frequent changes to the rules are partly responsible for the confusion. She said she understands the frustration and requested the community to understand their position as well. Indian Government changes the rules and they have to be followed. The recent terrorist attacks are the reasons for the changes to the immigration laws and regulations.

3 Travelling to India? THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- When you travel to India carry your Australian PASSPORT and OCI card. Your passport should have the OCI sticker. Carry the old passport as well if your current passport does not have the OCI sticker.
- If you are aged 50 and over, your current Australian passport must have the OCI sticker. Get the sticker on your new passport from VFS. Fees apply for this service. Carry your OCI card always along with your passport.

4 Old Indian Passport

If you have taken the citizenship of Australia/ New Zealand etc. Then:

- You must surrender the cancelled or not cancelled Indian Passport/s to the nearest Indian Consulate office. Now it is an offence to hold or carrying such Indian passports under the new law.
- You need to fill up the form available on the website of VFS and Indian High commission.
- There is a fee to surrender such passports. The current fee is \$25.00 for each passport.

5 Note the changes regarding VFS Phone Nos.

- With effect from 7th December 2010, VFS help line number will change to **1900 969 969**. Customers may also use the existing help line number i.e. 1900 960 960 until 24th December 2010
- With effect from 7th December, 2010, the Police Clearance Certificate and India Drivers License Verification Help line will change to **02 8223 9909**. Customers may also use the existing help line number i.e. 03 9008 7832 until 24th December 2010

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