

Reinauguration of damaged statue to mark Gandhi Day

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The Gandhi International Institute for Peace will hold a ceremony today, on Mahatma Gandhi Day, to celebrate the restoration and reinauguration of the Gandhi statue in Waikiki.

The statue, which was knocked down in August 2023, has undergone nearly 11 months of restoration, costing nearly \$38,000.

The 90-minute event, expected to draw 150 to 200 attendees, will take place at the statue's location in Kapiolani Park, near the Honolulu Zoo. This year's theme is "World Peace."

The statue, titled "A Fistful of Salt" and created by artist Stephen Lowe, was found toppled from its base on Aug. 8, 2023.

The cause of the incident remains unclear, with officials suggesting either high wind or vandalism as possible reasons.

City officials announced its full restoration in July, returning it to its original spot



COURTESY CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

The Gandhi statue in Waikiki was knocked over in 2023 by either high wind or vandalism.

at the corner of Kalakaua and Kapahulu avenues.

Raj Kumar, founder and president of GIIP, explained that the organization waited until Gandhi Day for the statue's blessing.

The program today will include Hawaiian blessings of peace by Kahu Kaleo Patterson and an Indian spiritual invocation by Veda Das.

Gandhi Day was designated as an official state day

in 2015 when then-Gov. David Ige signed a bill into law.

"Mahatma Gandhi's teachings have inspired the work of Nobel Prize winners and other peacemakers who have, each in their own way, shared Gandhi's view that we must hope for peace even when peace appears to be impossible," Kumar said in a statement.

GIIP has been celebrating this day since 2006, and

today marks the 19th annual celebration of Mahatma Gandhi Day and the International Day of Nonviolence.

The event will feature performances by the Royal Hawaiian Band, including India's national anthem and "Hawai'i Pono'i," along with a keynote speech by former state Sen. Suzanne Oakland.

Indian classical dance performances will be presented by Janani Lakshmanan, Elizabeth Mager and Arini Shankaralingam. Kumar emphasized that the purpose of the celebration is to unite the Hawaii community, raise awareness about nonviolence and promote peace.

The day will conclude with a crystal bowl sound healing session, an ancient practice that combines sounds and music to promote overall well-being.

"By holding the annual event, we are bringing people from different walks of life together and bringing peace from the land of aloha to the rest of the world," Kumar said.