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| Three ministers from the central government cabinet are participating at the Convention. While the chief guest at the Final Banquet on Jan. 20th evening is General V.K. Singh, Minister of State for External affairs, the keynote address will be delivered by Tourism Minister Alphons Kannanthanam. Earlier in the afternoon, Minister of State for Human Resources Dr. Satya Pal Singh will chair and deliver the keynote address at the conference session on **Indian Academic Conclave on Indian Diaspora**. Maharashtra Minister Raj Purohit will deliver a keynote address at the session **Opportunities, Development, Business and investment in India and UP.**  **Central Ministers at the GOPIO Convention 2019 in Varanasi**  Photo: Central Ministers participating at the GOPIO Convention 2019 in Varanasi on Jan. 20th., From l. to r.: General V.K. Singh, Alphons Kannanthanam and Dr. Satya Pal Singh  **GOPIO COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS AND GOPIO HONOR ROLL**  GOPIO will induct three political leaders who have participated and helped in GOPIO activities to its Honor Roll. They are New Zealand Member of Parliament Kanwaljit Singh Bakshi, Maharashtra minister Raj K. Purohit and South Africa Member of the Parliament Aumsensingh (Omie) Singh. Past recipients include former Prime Minister Inder Gujral, Dr. L.M. Singhvi, Lord Bhikhu Parekh, They will be honored at the Valedictory Session on Jan. 20th evening.  **GOPIO HONOR ROLL RECIPIENTS**    **Kanwaljit Singh Bakshi - New Zealand**    Indian origin Member of New Zealand Parliament, Kanwaljit is serving his fourth term as a List Parliamentarian for the New Zealand National Party. Currently serving as a spokesperson for Internal Affairs and Justice portfolios for the New Zealand National Party. Also served as Chairperson of Parliamentary Law and Order Select Committee. Prior assignments, as a Member of Parliament, included serving on numerous Parliamentary committees. In 2015, he was conferred Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award. Bakshi has been supporting GOPIO chapters in New Zealand    **Aumsensingh (Omie) Singh - South Africa**    Omie Singh is a Member of Parliament serving National government since 2014. Prior to that he served as a KwaZulu-Natal Member of the Provincial Legislature from 1999 to 2014 and as a Councilor from 1996 to 1999. He is a well-known and respected community leader amongst the Indian community in Phoenix where he serves in various capacities. Omie is a member of GOPIO-Durban Chapter.    **Raj K. Purohit - Mumbai, India**    Adv. Raj K. Purohit, Cabinet Minister in Maharashtra Government, is a name of Public Service itself.  He got elected as an M.L.A. Four times consecutively and served chief whip of BJP party for two decades. He is a dedicated social-political worker, non-violent, fierce and workaholic leader of BJP. He started his political journey when he came from Sirohi (Rajshthan) to Mumbai. He had an ascending graph in political and social field and represents all segments of the society. Apart from politics, Adv. Raj K. Purohit is active in dozens of social, cultural, religious and educational institutes. He served as an advisor to GOPIO from March 2016 to January 2018. He helped to officially launch GOPIO International Chamber of Commerce (GICC) in Mumbai in January 2017.    GOPIO 2018 Honor Roll  Photo above: Kanwaljit Singh Bakshi, MP, Minister Raj K. Purohit and Aumsensingh (Omie) Singh, MP    **GOPIO COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDEES**  Every year, GOPIO honors those who have done outstanding . This year's GOPIO community Service Awards will be presented at the Final Banquet after the Valedictory Session. This year's awardees are: Veena Khosla from France, Parsram Punj from Australia, Dr. Indrani Rampersad from Trinidad, K.V. Shamsudheen - Sharjah, UAE and Dr. Deepak Kant Vyas - Saint Louis, USA.    Recipients of GOPIO Community Service Awards  Photo above: Veena Khosla, Parsram Punj, Dr. Indrani Rampersad, K.V. Shamsudheen and Dr. Deepak Kant Vyas  **Veena Khosla - France**    Veena Khosla graduated and Gold Medalist for being First Class First from the Panjab University in India. She settled in France for fifty years with her husband Vimal. Both of them are very active and play significant roles in serving many Indian community associations in France. One of the major achievements of Veena is the launching of the Indian Women's Friendship Association (IWFA). She was its President for a long time and Founder member together with Mrs Sathe, wife of the then Ambassador of India to France. Veena made whole-hearted contribution to many social causes. Veena KHOSLA did her research work at Centre European and Centre Dramatiques of Nancy. She is presently working as Pedagogical Advisor with "Relais Universitaires" in France. She continues to work tirelessly with full convictions and displays exemplary devotions in many fields of activities with GOPIO France.      **Parsram Punj - Australia**    Parsam Punj has been in Australia for over 40 years and has been actively involved in the Indian community since his arrival in Australia. In 1998, the president of India appointed Mr. Punj as the first Honorary Consul of India in Queensland. In that capacity, he served the community for five years. He is a founding Member of Federation of Indian Communities of Queensland. He also a founder of the Queensland Chapter of GOPIO International.      **Dr. Indrani Rampersad** **- Trinidad**    Dr. Indrani Rampersad is an educator, researcher, journalist, cultural and women's activist and Independent Researcher in Indian Culture and Hindu Dharma. In 1993, she became Trinidad and Tobago's first state certified female pandit/priest. Among her several awards is the Government of Trinidad and Tobago's **National Award (GOLD)** in 2013 for Development of Women. She has published in international journals and Encyclopaedias and is a scholar in the Ram Lila performance in the indentured diaspora of Trinidad, Guyana, Suriname, and Fiji, and also in North India. She earned the BA Hon. Degree from Benares Hindu University, India (1976); and Masters Degree (1998) and PhD (2003) in Communication and Journalism from the University of Pune, India.      **K.V. Shamsudheen - Sharjah, UAE**    KV Shamsudheen established the Pravasi Bandhu Welfare Trust, an organization dedicated to assisting troubled lower-and middle-income non-resident Indians (NRIs) in the South Indian state of Kerala in 2001. The group offers a wide range of services including financial education for low and middle-income NRIs living in GCC countries. Since setting up the organization, Shamsudheen has conducted more than 400 financial awareness programmes across the GCC and in India, 800 interactive radio programmes and over 500 TV programs. Outside of his philanthropic work, Shamsudheen is also the founder and director of Barjeel Geojit Securities.    **Dr. Deepak Kant Vyas - Saint Louis, USA**    Dr. Deepak Kant Vyas, from Saint Louis, Missouri, is Chairman and Owner of Redberri Corporation who owns Timber Creek Inn and Suits and Convention Center in Sandwich, Illinois near Chicago IL. Dr. Vyas is Visionary Businessman, Investor, Philanthropist, Civic leader and an Indian Community Stalwart. The World Affairs Council of Saint Louis Missouri has presented him with Life Time achievement award-2018. He has served as Chairman of D.K Vyas Group of Companies, Redberri Foundation, Member of board of directors for St. Louis Regional Chamber, President- World Affairs Council, Member- Chancellors Council, University of Missouri at St. Louis. Deepak has been quite involved in Indian community activities. He has donated a bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi which was unveiled in Oakbrook IL headquarter of Lions International. It will be permanently installed in Chicago IL. He was guest of Honor at FIA Chicago India Day Gala-2018.  **SPECIAL AWARDS**    GOPIO will also honor two people with special awards, GOPIO Associate Secretary and community volunteer Jaswant Mody from the US and Confluence Founder Smita Srivastav from New Delhi, India.    GOPIO Special Awards to Jaswant Mody and Smita Srivastav  Photo above: Jaswant Mody and Smita Srivastav  **Jaswant Mody, New Jersey, USA**    Jaswant (Jay) B. Mody, an engineer by profession, volunteers considerable amount of time with various community groups in the New York Metro Area. He came to the USA in the 1960s and completed a Masters program in Mechanical Engineering from New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT). Currently, he servs as the Secretary of Gujarati Literary and Academy of North America and Society of Indo American Engineers and Architects (SIAEA) and Associate Secretary of GOPIO Int'l Organization. Associated with FIA at present and in past Associated with Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, zoning board and planning board of Piscataway, NJ. Married to Chandrika, they have four grandchildren.    **Smita Shrivastav - New Delhi, India**    Smita has been conferred with various accolades to her name like the Make in India Award and NRI Achievers Samman just to name a few. Confluence is a creation of Smita that has been registered under the Indian Trust Act 1882. With the aim of reaching out those millions of artisans living on the brink of extinction and reviving their trade, Confluence has turned out to be a successful support system and also a ray of hope for their survival. Smita was born in Benares, the cultural capital of India. Being blessed with a family business in the field of textiles, she has been very close to the art of weaving since childhood. Being exposed to the dire condition of the artisans, Smita decided to commit her passion to the cause of reviving the dying art form. She pursued her higher education in Textile designing adding in depth technicalities of textile to her knowledge pool.  \*\*\*\*\*\*  **GOPIO ANNUAL CONVETION VARANASI**    **Jan. 19th to 21st, 2019**    **Conference Venue -   Taj Gateway Hotel , Varanasi, UP**      **PROGRAM DETAILS**  **Saturday, January 19th, 2019**    **1.00 pm - 3.00 pm                 GOPIO Executive Council Meeting**                                                       (Not Open to General Public)  Chaired by GOPIO President **Sunny Kulathakal**             Remarks form International Chairman - **Dr. Thomas Abraham**              President's Annual Report - **Sunny Kulathakal**  Secretary's Report - **Dr. Rajeev Mehta**              Treasurer's Report - **Kewal Kanda**             Report on Councils - **Exec. VP Ishwar Ramlutchman**              Report on Chapters - **Vice President Ram Gadhavi**              Global Ambassador's Report - **Issac John**              GOPIO Foundation Chair's Report - **Inder Singh**  GICC Chair's Report - **Niraj Baxi**  Chapter Review Committee Chair's Report - **Dinesh Mittal**  **3.00-pm - 5.00 pm  Reports from GOPIO International Coordinator and GOPIO Council Chairs**  (Open to General Public)  i. Oceania and the Pacific              - Jagdish Lodhia (Australia)  ii. North America                              - Harbachan Singh (USA)  iii. Europe                                          - Mehen Poinoosawmy (France)  iv. Africa                                             - Rita Abraham (South Africa)  v. Middle East                                   - Johny Kuruvilla (UAE)  vi. South Asia                                    - Kurian Abraham (India)  vi Central/South America               - Dr. Asha Samant (USA)  ix. East and South/North East Asia - Lal Motwani (USA)    **Reports from GOPIO Councils**     |  |  | | --- | --- | | **ACADEMIC COUNCIL** | **NAME** | | Chairperson | DR. NEERJA GUPTA | | **CULTURAL COUNCIL** |  | | Chairperson | RAJINDRE TEWARI | | Co- Chairperson | DR. VINOD DANIEL | | **HEALTH & WELLNESS COUNCIL** |  | | Chairperson | DR. TUSHAR PATEL | | Co- Chairperson | DR. SAI GIRDHAR | | Co- Chairperson | APARNA HANDE | | Co- Chairperson | DR. PRADIP KUMAR SEWOKE | | Co-Chairperson | RANI KUUSTO | | **HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL** |  | | Chairperson | UMESH CHANDRA | | Co- Chairperson | MICHELLE MICHAEL | | **MEDIA COUNCIL** |  | | Chairperson | NAMI KAUR | | Co - Chairperson | MARLAN PADAYACHEE | | Co - Chairperson | MINI GULERIA | | Co- Chairperson | JEAN REGIS RAMASAMY | | Co- Chairperson | BALVINDER RUBY | | **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL** |  | | Chairperson | DR. PRASAD YARLAGGADA | | Co - Chairperson | SURESH REDDY | | **SENIOR'S COUNCIL** |  | | Chairperson | SUDHA ACHARYA | | Co-Chairperson | DR. INDRANI RAMPERSAD | | Co-Chairperson | SUMAN KAPOOR | | **WOMEN'S COUNCIL** |  | | Chairperson | MOLLY BANERJEI | | Co - Chairperson | KRITILATA RAM | | **YOUTH COUNCIL** |  | | Chairperson | NISHA DHINGRA | | o - Chairperson | SHWETHA SUREDIN | | Co - Chairperson | HEMAL DHAVALIKAR | | Co - Chairperson | LEENA DOOLEE |     **6.00 pm - Convention Inauguration**    **Book Release of Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela**    **7.45 pm - Entertainment             9.00 pm ------------Dinner**    **Sunday, Jan. 20th**    9.30 am - 1.00 pm - **GENERAL BODY MEETING**    Chaired by GOPIO Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham  President's Annual Report - Sunny Kulathakal  Secretary's Report on GOPIO Activities for 2018 - Dr. Rajeev Mehta  Financial Report from the Treasurer - Kewal Kanda  GOPIO Bylaw Amendments - Harry Walia, Dr. Thomas Abraham and Harbachan Singh  Endorsement /Election of GOPIO International Chairman    **1.00 pm- 2.00 pm............................................. Lunch**    **CONFERENCE SESSIONS Jan.20th**  **2 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.**  *Theme:*  ***STRENGTHENING Global Connections of Diaspora '***  ***India 2030 An Economic Powerhouse'***    Dr. Asha Samant, Conference Chair, GOPIO Annual Convention, Varanasi    **Plenary Session 1**  **2.00 - 3.00 pm**    **Topic; Strengthening India's Relations with Global Community Through Indian Diaspora**    **Session Chair:** Dr. Thomas Abraham Chairman, GOPIO International, Stamford, CT, USA    **Keynote Address:** Aumsensingh (Omie) Singh, Member of Parliament, Cape Town, South Africa    **Speakers/Panelists:** Purnima Voria, Chair, National India USA Chamber of Commerce, Denver, USA  Dr. Markandey Rai, Chancellor, GTAMSU, Senior Advisor UN Habitat Delhi  Nirmal Sinha, GOPIO Founding Member and FIA Columbus, Ohio and Recipient Civil  Rights Hall of Fame, State of Ohio    **Resource Person**: Pooja Thomre, Board Member, National Federation of Indian American Asso.      **Plenary Session 2**  **3.00-4.00 pm**  **Topic; Opportunities, Development, Business and investment in India and UP**    **Session Chair** - Harbachan Singh, GOPIO Intl. Coordinator for North America, New York, USA    **Keynote Address:** Shri Raj K. Purohit, Minister, State of Maharashtra, Mumbai    **Speakers/Panelists:** Loganathan Naidoo, Speaker Municipality of Durban, South Africa                                      Manohar Jetley, MLC, Lucknow, UP, India                                      Chandran Pillai, Managing Director, Bit technology Singapore                                      Parsram Punj, Parsram Foods Pty Ltd, Queensland, Australia    **Resource Person:** Radha Krishnan, GOPIO Life Member, Detroit, USA    **4.00 - 4.15 p.m. TEA   BREAK**    **Plennary Session 3**  **4.15-5.15 pm**  **Topic; INDIAN ACADEMIC CONCLAVE ON INDIAN DIASPORA**    **Session Chair and Moderator:**Dr. Neerja Arun Gupta, Chair, Director cum Coordinator, Study  Abroad Program and Diaspora Studies, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad & Chair, Academic Council of GOPIO Intl.    **Keynote Address:** Shri Satyapal Singh, Minister of State Hum an Resource  Development (Higher Education) and Minister of State in the Ministry of  Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation.    **Speakers/Panelists:**Prof. N. K.Taneja, Vice Chancellor, Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut  Prof. Manoj Dixit, Vice Chancellor, Dr. RML Avadh University, Ayodhya    **Closing Remarks:**     Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Sharma, Hon. Sec. IPSA    **Valedictory Session, Presentation of Community Service Awards, Entertainment and Dinner**  **6.00 p.m. to 9.30 p.m.**  **\*\*\*\*\*\*\***  **Monday, Jan. 21st**  9.30 am -12.30 pm  **Plenary Session - 4**  **9.30-10.30 am**    **Session Chair** - Mehen Poinoosawmy, GOPIO Intl. Coordinator for Europe, Paris, France    **Speakers/Panelists:**Jean Regis Ramsamy, Co-Chair, Media Council, Reunion Island,                         Vikas Talwar, President of GOPIO France                                     Charlotte Gressier,French Carribean Islands .Martinique   Resource Person - Jagdish Lodhia, GOPIO Intl. Coordinator for Oceania, Sydney, Australia    **TEA BREAK**  **10.30 -10.45 am**  **Plenary Session - 5**  **10.45 am-12.0 noon**  **Topic: Empowering Indian and Diaspora Women**  **Session Chair**: Rita Abraham, GOPIO International Coordinator, Africa,    **Speakers/Panelists:** Mini Guleria, Co-Chair, GOPIO Media Council, Tarzana, California, USA                          Suman Kapoor, Co-Chair, GOPIO Council on Seniors, New Zealand  Charu Pragya, Bharatiya Janta Yuva Morcha National Incharge (Legal Cell)  Rini Johar, President, GOPIO-Redwood City/San Francisco, CA, USA                          HinaTrivedi, President, GOPIO-Chicago, USA                          Anju Garg, President, GOPIO-Los Angles, California, USA    **Resource Person:**     Dr. Indrani Rampersad, GOPIO Life Member, Trinidad, West Indies    **Plenary Session - 6**  **12 Noon -1.00 pm**  **Topic: Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Investment and Start Up India**    **Session Chair:**Kurian Abraham, GOPIO International Coordinator for South Asia, Kochi, India    **Speakers/Panelists:** Dr. Deepak Kant Vyas,Redberri Earth Foundation, Illinois, USA                          Navin Pathak, Partner, Entry India, LLC, New Jersey, USA  Dr. Ramewshwar Singh, President, GOPIO Moscow, Russia                          K.V. Shamshudeen, Chairman, Pravasi Bandhu Welfare Trust, Sharjah, UAE                          Prof. H. A. Pandya, Vice Chancellor Gujarat University. Ahmedabad, India  Achal Mehra, Visiting Professor, Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar    **Resource Person:** Sunil Rawla, CA, S Rawla Associates, GOPIO official for Liaison with GOI  **Session -7 Conclusion Session and Resolutions**  **1.00-1.30 pm**    **Chair:** Dr. Thomas Abraham, Chairman, GOPIO International  **Conference Conclusions:** Dr. Asha Samant, Conference Chair, GOPIO Convention  **Resolutions:** Dr. Rajeev Mehta, Secretary, GOPIO International  **Closing Remarks:** Sunny Kulathakal, President, GOPIO International |