



# GOPIO NEWS BULLETIN

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A Publication of the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO)

June 20, 2024

## GOPIO PASSES RESOLUTION FOR FULL DUAL NATIONALITY AT THE CONVENTION

The Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) celebrated its 35th Anniversary on April 26-28, 2024, at its Convention 2024 at Royal Albert Palace, Fords, New Jersey, USA. The convention focused on India's Present and Future and what role the Diaspora Indians can play in helping to realise this desirable future, with the theme 'Opportunities for Diaspora Indians in India's Big Manifest Future'.

The convention ended with the General Body passing four resolutions, including one demanding entire dual nationality for Overseas Indian Citizens (OCI) card holders. The General Body also re-elected Dr. Thomas Abraham as Chairman of GOPIO International. The chief guest was Guyana's



Ambassador to the USA, His Excellency Samuel Hinds, who earlier served as Guyana's Prime Minister and President.

India's Deputy Consul General in New York, Dr. Varun Jeph, delivered the keynote address. The inaugural session started with a welcome by Convention Convener Prakash Shah, who also serves as GOPIO's Global Ambassador.

GOPIO President Lal Motwani said that since the new team was elected last year, the organisation has been involved in more activities and has restarted its newsletter, GOPIO News bulletin, with Umesh Chandra, OAM of Australia, as the editor-in-chief. A full report on the conference is available in the convention's special May issue of the Bulletin.



## GOPIO NEWS BULLETIN

A Publication of the  
Global Organization of People  
of Indian Origin (GOPIO)  
Published Monthly

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## GOPIO NEWS BULLETIN

20 JULY 2024

**SUBMISSION  
DEADLINES**  
15 JULY 2024

Email:  
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## Editor's Note



Welcome everyone to our June Newsletter. We are halfway through the year, and hasn't it just flown by? Wherever we are in the world at this stage, we are in the peaks, so be it summer or winter, this is the peak. Here, down under, we are in our peak winter, it is cold; the 22nd of June will mark the shortest daylight on this side of the hemisphere.

I trust you all enjoyed our Convention's special edition. A special shoutout to Prakash Shah and his team for their exceptional work and a highly successful convention. As mentioned in the previous note, I could not attend due to health issues. I have been discharged from the hospital and am on the road to recovery, but I still have to attend the clinic three days a week. I am deeply grateful for your understanding and support during this time. I have managed to work my schedule around these days.

Since June, we have been back on track with our news bulletin, which means the deadline for submission remains the 15th of every month, and the release date is the 20th of every month. Your contributions are what make our bulletin so informative and engaging. Looking forward to your submissions, please note that articles should be separated from the Word document; a high-quality Jpeg is desirable for the images. I realise that it is hard to put together media releases when you are busy doing community work, but it is essential to let everyone know about the good work that you are doing out there, a good PR person is very important for any organisation.

In the last bulletin, we anticipated a BJP win. As Narendra Modi traversed the country recently, campaigning for a third term in power, he repeated the same refrain. The past decade "was just a trailer," the prime minister told crowds, adding, "There is plenty more to come."

His Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and most analysts and pollsters expected that India's election would quickly return him to power with the same—if not stronger—supermajority he has enjoyed over the past decade.

How this coalition arrangement impacts Modi's ability to implement his agenda for a third term remains to be seen. Some have argued that it could provide necessary restraint; others fear he will double down on divisive, oppressive methods and policies.

Analysts said that as he entered his third term, Modi was likely to prioritise economic reforms that initially had eluded him. The chronic issue of unemployment and a lack of quality jobs was a significant reason for the BJP's losses in the election and is widely seen as a pressing problem.

India's economy remains strong, and following the election, investors are still cautious in the settling-in period, which is understandable. I have been busy with many community events. I have slowly started attending selective functions again; it lifts my spirits as that is where I belong.

Until next month, Happy reading

—Umesh Chandra OAM  
Editor in chief

GOPIO International News Bulletin

# HISTORIC GIRMIT DIWAS AT QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENT HOUSE

**G**OPIO Queensland created a significant milestone in our shared history by hosting the first-ever Girmit Diwas at the esteemed Queensland Parliament House. This momentous event, which

saw the largest gathering of attendees to date, was a testament to our community's rich heritage. The memorial service began with a solemn prayer, followed by a heartfelt welcome to the country by

Aunty Betty McGrady, further deepening our connection to this historic occasion.

President Arpit Singh played a pivotal role in introducing everyone to the historic event at Queensland Parliament





House. He shared his personal journey of discovering Girit, a term he was unfamiliar with before joining GOPIO. Girit, a word coined from the term 'agreement', refers to the agreement between the British Raj and the indentured labourers taken from India to

various British colonies in the 1800s. The Girit Diwas at Queensland Parliament House was a tribute to the first Indians to arrive in Fiji on the 14th of May 1879.

GOPIO Queensland has been organizing the Girit Diwas for the past twelve years, and





this year, it was held at the Queensland Parliament House for the first time. The event was coordinated by Umesh Chandra OAM, who has been the driving force behind the Girit Diwas for all twelve years. In his presentation, he spoke about the Global Girit context and the involvement of GOPIO International in commemorations across many countries.

He was instrumental in getting the Kolkata memorial inaugurated. He served on the committee and was present at the inauguration in 2011. Umesh Chandra OAM has visited many diaspora countries and attended commemorative functions. GOPIO Queensland has a life-size photo of the text from the monument on an easel, and every one offers flowers and tea light candles as tribute.

Following his comprehensive

presentation on Global Girit, he introduced a special Girit Song (Bidesia) sung by Shradha Satwik Das of Fiji. The moving song in the true spirit of Girit tells the story of the stolen generation; the translation of the verses was displayed on the big screen. Tears rolled down the eyes of many with the emotional song.

After Umesh's presentation, Pravind Kumar was invited to shed light on the first Giritirys on Vanua Levu, the second Main Island of Fiji. Following his speech, Vinita Khushal, trustee and former president, introduced the GOPIO Queensland Girit Awardee 2024. This year's recipient was Shree Hari Dutt Sharma. The three trustees, Umesh Chandra OAM, Yousuf Alikhan, and Vinita Khushal, presented the award. Dr Sunil Sharma responded on behalf of his father, and he

spoke on the achievement of Fiji Indians in various fields.

Councillor Vicky Howard represented Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner, John Paul Langbroek represented the leader of the opposition, and James Martin represented the premier. In their speeches, they spoke about the importance of observing this day in its true spirit, paying tribute, and remembering the pain and sorrow of the Giritirys.

Following the speeches, the floral tribute and tea light candle tribute were offered; this was led by invited VIPs first and followed by everyone present. Mrs Usha Chandra and Bob Pillay moved the vote of thanks. The event sponsors were Globenet Realty and Cornerstone Law offices. The staff of the Queensland Parliament Annexure served a lovely spread of refreshments.





# GOPIO WRITES TO RUTGERS UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT HOLLOWAY ON PROTESTING STUDENTS' DEMAND TO DISPLAY FLAGS OF DISPLACED PEOPLE



**D**r Thomas Abraham, Chairman of the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO), wrote a letter to Rutgers University President Jonathan Holloway on Protesting Students' Demand to Display Flags of Displaced People on the Rutgers campus. Students had demanded to display flags of occupied peoples - including but not limited to Palestinians, Kurds, and Kashmiris - in all areas displaying international flags across the Rutgers campuses.

"We are amazed to read that you are considering the demand of protesting students to display the flags of occupied peoples - including but not

limited to Palestinians, Kurds, and Kashmiris - in all areas displaying international flags across the Rutgers campuses. This is a dangerous territory for Rutgers to get involved. Even considering this demand, you are questioning India's integrity. Kashmir is very much a part of India. There is no separate flag for Kashmir. Kashmir residents are not displaced people. The displaced people are the Hindu minorities who had to leave Kashmir because of violence against them. If Rutgers displays such a flag of Kashmir, that will be the beginning of more sit-ins by students who are opposed to such flags."

"As a public educational

institution that belongs to everyone, Rutgers University has no business getting into the internal conflicts of countries around the world," the letter continued.

GOPIO is a non-profit, community service, and advocacy group with chapters in 35 countries. It has seven active chapters in the New York area and three chapters in New Jersey. GOPIO was started in 1989 at the First Convention of People of Indian Origin in New York. From the beginning, one of its major activities has been advocating for civil and human rights violations of people of Indian origin around the world.



# GOPIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY TO BE LAUNCHED WORLDWIDE



GCCI Meeting held on May 23rd in New York City.

After relaunching the GOPIO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) at the GOPIO Convention 2024 in April 2024, GCCCI held a brainstorming session.

GOPIO officials and prominent businesspeople from the New York area met

on May 23rd at Braj Aggarwal, CPA PC's office to discuss the impact of GCCCI's worldwide launch. The meeting also included the opportunity to host Ahmedabad Advocate Nachiket Dave, who practices at the Gujarat High Court and Supreme Court in New Delhi.

Advocate Dave will be active

in GOPIO-Ahmedabad and also plans to launch GCCCI-Ahmedabad.

GOPIO Chairman Dr Thomas Abraham and GOPIO Global Ambassador Prakash Shah led the discussion. GOPIO Chapter officials from Manhattan, Connecticut, and North Jersey also attended the meeting.



# GOPIO-NY CENTRAL CHAPTER CELEBRATES INDIAN IMMIGRATION DAY TO GUYANA AND CARIBBEAN



GOPIO-Central New York Chapter Premenauth Singh and his team with keynote speaker Dr. Narine

**G**OPIO –NY CENTRAL CHAPTER’s event on Indian Immigration Day to Guyana and the Caribbean took place on May 4, 2024, at the Caribbean Cabana Restaurant and Lounge in Richmond Hill, Queens, New York, with a brunch event.

The guest speaker was Dr Dhanpaul Narine, a well-known community activist with a Doctorate from the London School of Economics and a retired History and English teacher from the Department of Education, New York City.

He was very knowledgeable on the subject and had his



Dr. Dhanpaul Narine as the keynote speaker.

audience riveted throughout his presentation. Chapter President Premnauth Singh

started the chapter’s first post-pandemic community event with welcome remarks.

# GOPIO-CT HOSTS VIRTUAL SEMINAR TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS IN SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITY



Notable speakers at the virtual seminar, a significant initiative by GOPIO-CT to mark Mental Health Awareness Month, Top row, l. to r. Mini Santosh, Japa Daptardar; Bottom row: from l. to r. Dr Mohini Ranganathan and Dr Thomas Abraham

The Global Organization of People of Indian Origin – Connecticut Chapter (GOPIO-CT) recently held an engaging virtual seminar in honour of Mental Health Awareness Month.

Dr. Thomas Abraham, Chairman of GOPIO International and Trustee of GOPIO-CT, set the stage for the seminar by introducing GOPIO and its Connecticut chapter,

outlining their various activities and ways to get involved. He then introduced GOPIO-CT President Jaya Daptardar, who spearheaded the organization of this highly successful wellness seminar and panel discussion on May 30, 2024, via Zoom. The event was met with an overwhelmingly positive response from the attendees, instilling a strong sense of hope and optimism for the future of mental health awareness in the South Asian community.

The seminar's theme was "Embracing Wellness and Cultivating Mental Health Awareness," and it was graced by a panel of highly distinguished and diverse speakers. The

panellists included Dr Mohini Ranganathan, an associate professor of Psychiatry at Yale School of Medicine and a practising psychiatrist for two decades; Dr Jaya Daptardar, an Ayurvedic Doctor with 25 years of experience who also serves as the Chief Compliance Officer for Bridges Healthcare in Connecticut; and Mini Santosh, an Early Childhood Director with the Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut, each bringing their unique perspectives and expertise to the discussion.

Dr Mohini Ranganathan underscored the universal nature of mental health issues and the crucial role of open conversations in addressing



**Mohini Ranganathan, MD**

**Associate Professor  
Yale University  
School of Medicine  
Staff Psychiatrist  
VA Connecticut  
Healthcare System**



**Mini Santosh**

**Masters in Education and Child Study  
Early Childhood Director**



**Jaya Daptardar BAMS, MHA**

**Ayurvedic Doctor  
Chief Compliance Officer  
Bridges Healthcare**

them. She highlighted the lack of sufficient awareness and dialogue about mental health within the South Asian American community but also noted a growing willingness to learn about it. “It is crucial not to shy away from discussing behavioural health issues,” she emphasized, encouraging the audience to participate in these important discussions.

Dr Jaya Daptardar stressed the universal nature of behavioural health challenges, reassuring the audience that these challenges are not confined to any particular race, ethnicity, or gender. She highlighted the significance of recognising early signs of behavioural changes and challenges and initiating conversations to seek help. Dr Daptardar also discussed various therapies and treatments available, as well as simple prevention and wellness

methods such as breathing techniques, meditation, and yoga, making the audience feel understood and less isolated in their experiences.

Mini Santosh, an educator specialising in early childhood education, spoke about the heightened need for mental health attention, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic. She highlighted the stigma surrounding mental health in Indian communities and emphasised the importance of providing support and access to mental health services.

The panel discussion elicited insightful questions from the participants, and the Q&A session provided valuable insights for parents and attendees. It was clear that more panels and community discussions are necessary to raise awareness of mental health in South Asian and Indian communities. GOPIO-CT

has a robust platform to offer health and wellness-related seminars for the community.

Over the past 18 years, GOPIO-CT, a chapter of GOPIO International, has evolved into an active and dynamic organisation. It hosts interactive sessions with policymakers and academicians, community events, youth mentoring and networking workshops, and collaborates with other local organisations to foster a better future. GOPIO-CT serves as a non-partisan, secular, civic, and community service organisation, promoting awareness of Indian culture, customs, and contributions of people of Indian origin through various community programs, forums, events, and youth activities. The organisation seeks to strengthen partnerships and create ongoing dialogues with local communities.

# GOPIO-CT PARTICIPATES IN THE ETHNIC FESTIVAL TO CELEBRATE STAMFORD DAY



Young Bollywood Dancers at the Celebration

The Global Organization of People of Indian Origin—Connecticut Chapter (GOPIO-CT) has been

participating in the Annual Stamford Day Celebration for the last three years. Stamford Day is a celebration of

Stamford's history and diversity. Stamford was founded on May 16th, 1641, 383 years ago, and has grown into one of the most



Gujarati Dancers at the Stamford Day Celebration

diverse cities in the country.

Stamford Mayor's Multicultural Council and Mill River Park Collaborative organised Stamford Day 2024, a free, fun, family-friendly event celebrating the rich history and cultural diversity of Stamford through presentations, activities, art, music, and dance on Sunday, June 2nd, at Mill River Park in Stamford.

GOPIO-CT put together a fabulous program of Indian dances performed by five dance groups and coordinated by Program Chair Mrs. Yaashi Jhangiani. Most non-profit civic, cultural, and educational groups from Southern Connecticut participated in the festival. The Indian American community had the largest participation, with 40 dancers.

GOPIO-CT's Exec VP Mahesh Jhangiani spoke about the chapter's impactful work at the event. Over the last 18 years, GOPIO-CT has been serving the Southern Connecticut community, raising funds for various charities, sponsoring soup kitchens at the New



**Stamford Mayor Caroline Simmons with GOPIO-CT officials, from l. to r.: Exec. VP Mahesh Jhangiani, Advisor Dr. Thomas Abraham, Mayor Simmons, Trustee Prasad Chintalapudi and Jayashri Chintalapudi**

Covenant Center of Stamford, and participating in the annual walkathon for Bennet Cancer Center, which provides crucial support to Cancer patients and their families.

Stamford Mayor Caroline Simmons, in her speech, expressed her gratitude and recognition for all community groups, including GOPIO-CT, for

their significant contributions. The large crowd that attended the celebration was a testament to the community's appreciation and support for the event, which featured ethnic dances from different communities.

Mill River Park is located in Downtown Stamford, like Central Park for Stamford.



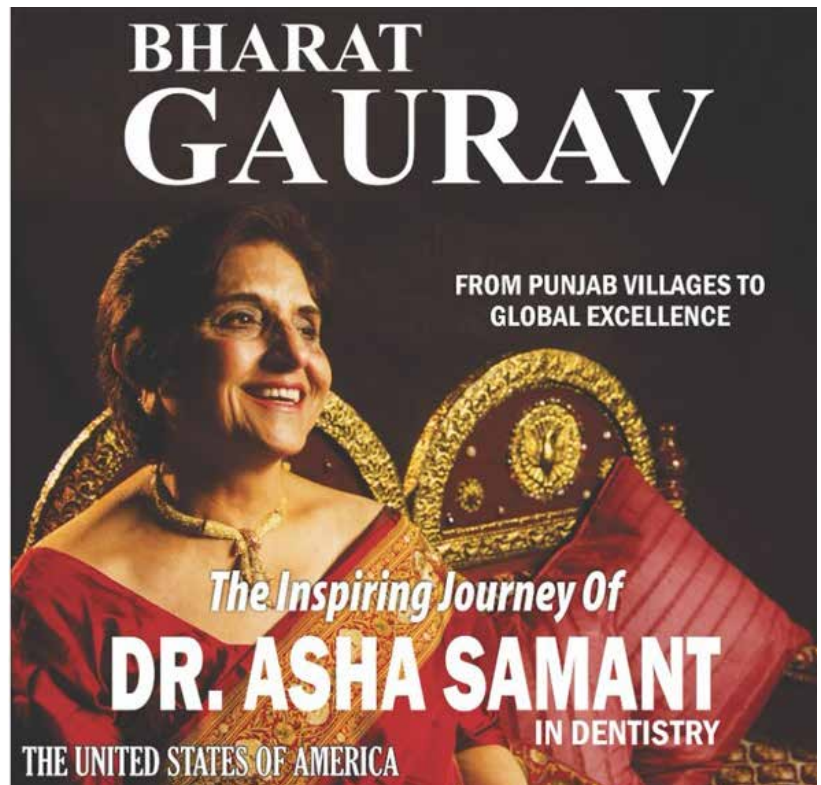
**All dancers, parents with GOPIO officials**

# DR ASHA SAMANT, GOPIO INTERNATIONAL COORDINATOR AT LARGE AWARDED “BHARAT GAURAV”

**B**harat Gaurav 2024 Awardee Dr. Asha Samant is a shining example of perseverance and achievement in dentistry. Rising from humble beginnings in rural Punjab, her journey to becoming a stalwart in the dental community on the East Coast of the United States is a testament to her unwavering dedication and passion for her profession.

Dr. Samant’s relentless pursuit of excellence has earned her widespread recognition and positioned her as a guiding light for aspiring dental professionals worldwide. Her story inspires us to reach for the highest standards and never underestimate the power of determination.

Dr Asha Samant has been the founding sponsor of GOPIO Manhattan NYC



Asha Samant with Padma Shree Begum ji of Rajasthan

# CELEBRATING AND HONOURING WOMEN FOR THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S AND HAPPINESS DAY

**G**OPIO Triolet North took the opportunity to celebrate and honour thirty-five exceptional women who, through their inspiring actions, continue to uplift and make a significant impact in

our lives. Mrs. Kritilata Ram, our esteemed president, highlighted that these women have demonstrated the courage, vision, and intelligence to navigate life's challenges. She also

emphasized that there are no limits to what women can achieve in this world.

These incredible women, from all walks of life, are at the core of our mission at GTNM. They are the embodiment of







our commitment to women's empowerment. They are the Teachers, Registrars, Specialised Dentists, Carers, Bhojpuri Singers and Dancers, Directors, Presidents of Associations, Rectors, Youth Officers, Managers of EDB, Housewives, businesswomen, Village Councillors, and more. Our goal is to see the happiness on their faces, and we pledge to implement interventions that will

**These incredible women, from all walks of life, are at the core of our mission at GTNM. They are the embodiment of our commitment to women's empowerment.**

contribute to the fight against life challenges such as poverty, inequality, and violence against women.

Happy Women's Day to all those who break the glass

ceiling and pave the way for a better future. We salute these wonderful and incredible women who can promote happiness, well-being, and a more compassionate world.

Happy Women's Day to all those who break the glass ceiling and pave the way for a better future.

We salute these wonderful and incredible women who can promote happiness, well-being, and a more compassionate world.



# INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP ON LOWERING CHOLESTEROL BY MAC AND GOPIO CANBERRA

In the realm of health and wellness, knowledge is power. Recently, the Multicultural Association of Canberra (MAC) teamed up with the Global Organisation of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) Canberra to host an enlightening workshop focused on lowering cholesterol.

LDL and total cholesterol levels among Indians are like that of whites but higher than for other Asians. However, for any given level of cholesterol, heart disease risk among South Asians is double that of other ethnic groups. Therefore, the optimal or goal level of total and LDL cholesterol is lower among South Asians.

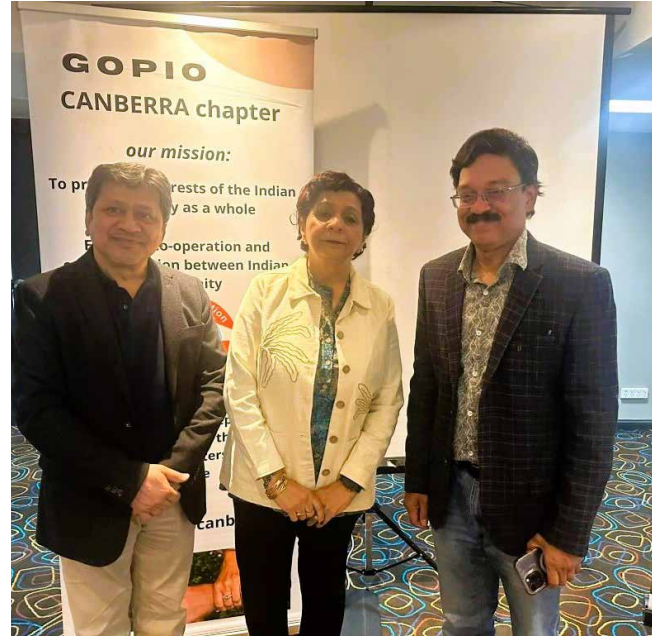




President Nishi Puri said “We express our sincere appreciation to Dr. Nalini Pati for orchestrating a remarkable interactive workshop centered on

Cholesterol Reduction. Dr Pati skilfully addressed and answered every participant’s queries and concerns. One of the key messages emphasized by Dr. Pati was the

significance of maintaining healthy cholesterol levels. He highlighted the role of a balanced diet and the need to reduce the consumption of trans fatty foods”



# MAC AND GOPIO CANBERRA ELDER ABUSE LAW WORKSHOP

On June 2nd, MAC and GOPIO Canberra organized a vital workshop focused on Elder Abuse Law. Legal Aid ACT lawyers Fiona and Karan facilitated the event, they provided in-depth insights into the legal protections available for elders.

GOPIO Canberra president Nishi Puri Said “We would like to express our gratitude to individuals and organizations who supported our event, including MPs David Smith and Peter Cain, MLA Rebecca Vassaroti, First Secretary Ms Rathod, MLA Nicole Lawder, MLA Elizabeth Kikkert, and more. We also appreciate the contributions of our new patron Jacob from the Liberal Party, as well as community leaders from various ethnic groups, including Hindu,



Legal Aid Senior Lawyer Susan speaking on Elder Abuse Law

Muslim, Chinese, Sri Lankan, and Indian communities.

We extend our thanks to all attendees who made the event a success, as well as MAC and GOPIO committee members and volunteers for their help. We are also grateful to Owen for sound services, Udaya for

photography, and Taj Agra for delicious food. Finally, we thank Senior Lawyer Fiona from Legal Aid for discussing the importance of EPOAs and wills for seniors”.

She thanked everyone involved for making this workshop a tremendous success.



Members of Indian Diaspora with MP David Smith and MLA Peter Cain attending the Elder abuse workshop

# GOPIO CANBERRA INVITED TO REFUGEE WEEK AND CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY IN CANBERRA

**G**OPIO and MAC president Nishi Puri was invited by MP for immigration and Citizenship Hon Andrew Giles to attend a citizenship ceremony for the refugees. Eight refugees from different parts of the world were conferred citizenship by His Excellency the Governor General Hon David Hurley.

## Pathways to Become an Australian citizen

### (by conferral)

Child 15 years or younger applying on their own

This is for permanent residents aged 15 years or under who apply on their own

Born to a former Australian citizen

This is for children of former Australian citizens where the parent lost their Australian citizenship under specific circumstances

### (by adoption)

Child adopted under Full Hague Adoption Convention/bilateral agreement by Australian citizen.

This is for a child born overseas who is



Members of the community with MP Andrew Giles discussing Refugee issues and attending citizenship ceremony to mark Refugee week

adopted by an Australian citizen outside Australia through an international adoption arrangement under the Hague Adoption Convention or a bilateral agreement.

### Become a citizen (by conferral)

Person born in Papua before independence in 1975.

This is for people born in Papua before independence from Australia in

1975 and who had a parent born in Australia as it is now known

### Become a citizen (by conferral)

Person with an incapacity or impairment

This is for people who have an incapacity or impairment that prevents them from sitting the Australian citizenship test.

### Become an Australian again

This is for people who used to be Australian citizens

### Become a citizen (by conferral)

Born in Australia and are stateless

This is for people who are born in Australia and are stateless.

# GOPIO SYDNEY NORTHWEST CHAPTER DONATES \$2000-00 TO THE CANCER COUNCIL

**G** OPIO Sydney Northwest chapter donated \$2000.00 to Cancer Council NSW. GOPIO Sydney North West is a very progressive chapter and has a solid community connection

Harmohan Singh Walia, International Coordinator Oceania and Prof. Balkar Singh Kang (Treasurer) of GOPIO Sydney North West chapter donated \$2000.00 to Cancer Council NSW on 15 May 2024 at their Parramatta office.

Vaisakhi was celebrated at Little India (Harris Park) on 13 April 2024, where Harmohan Singh Walia, GOPIO International Coordinator of Oceania region, was awarded



the "Community Person of the Year 2024" award by The Hon. Steve Kamper MP, Minister

for Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism and Sport.





# GOPIO GOLD COAST CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY

**W**hat an incredible International Yoga Day morning! Thank you to everyone who joined us and made it truly special.

A heartfelt thanks to our excellent instructors:

- Radhika Sood from the Art of Living Organisation, who guided us through a sequence of transformative Asanas.
- John Smith from The Heartfulness Institute led us in an experience of meditation, which is the primary basis of rejuvenation and cleansing techniques.

This event was about coming together to celebrate International Yoga Day by revitalising our spirits and rejuvenating our bodies. Your participation and energy made it unforgettable. Here's to more moments of connection and wellness!



# GOPIO GOLD COAST CHARITY GALA

**G**et ready for the Event of the Year! Limited Tickets. BOOK Now.

Join us for the GOPIO GC Charity Gala, supporting Life Global Australia and GC Homeless Youth.

Experience an electrifying

evening of glitz and glamour with sensational live performances, culinary delights, and unforgettable moments!

Please note the new date: Saturday, August 3rd, 2024, at 6 PM at the Sheraton Grand

Mirage Resort Gold Coast.

Secure your tickets now: <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1218174>.

Don't miss this chance to enjoy a spectacular night while making a difference in our community!



The poster features a black background with gold and white text and graphics. At the top left, there is a decorative gold mesh graphic. The GOPIO Gold Coast Inc. logo is at the top center, with the tagline 'Voice of Indians on the Gold Coast'. To the right, it says 'SUPPORTED BY STUDY GOLD COAST. Part of a network GOLD COAST'. The main title 'GOPIO GC PRESENT Charity GALA' is in a large, elegant script. Below this, it lists 'LIVE SINGING & DANCE PERFORMANCES' and 'BUFFET DINNER'. The date 'AUGUST SATURDAY 3 AT 6 PM 2024' is prominently displayed with horizontal lines. The venue 'SHERATON GRAND MIRAGE RESORT GOLD COAST' and address '71 Seaworld Drive Main Beach QLD 4217' are listed. Ticket prices are given as 'Member Tickets \$89' and 'Non Member Tickets \$99'. A note states 'Ticket includes buffet dinner, welcome drink and goodie bag' with a booking link. Contact information for enquiries and sponsorships is provided at the bottom. The bottom right corner features logos for 'Life GLOBAL AUSTRALIA' and 'GC Homeless Youth', with the text 'SUPPORTING THE CHARITIES:' above them.

GOPIO GOLD COAST INC.  
Voice of Indians on the Gold Coast

SUPPORTED BY  
STUDY GOLD COAST.  
Part of a network GOLD COAST

GOPIO GC PRESENT

*Charity*  
GALA

LIVE SINGING & DANCE PERFORMANCES  
BUFFET DINNER

AUGUST

SATURDAY 3 AT 6 PM

2024

SHERATON GRAND MIRAGE RESORT  
GOLD COAST  
71 Seaworld Drive  
Main Beach QLD 4217

Member Tickets \$89  
Non Member Tickets \$99

Ticket includes buffet dinner, welcome drink and goodie bag  
<https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1218174>

FOR ENQUIRIES AND SPONSORSHIPS  
PRADIP: 0423335718 AND MOK: 0401946966

SUPPORTING THE CHARITIES:

DRESS-CODE: BLACK TIE  
Men: Formal suit or formal Indian suit  
Women: Gown or Indian traditional formal attire

Life GLOBAL AUSTRALIA  
ESTD 2019

GC Homeless Youth

# INDIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY HONOR CONSUL A.K. VIJAYAKRISHNAN AT HIS FAREWELL DINNER



Indian Community Organizations honor Consul A.K. Vijayakrishnan at the Farewell and Send-Off Dinner. GOPIO Chairman is presenting an honour plaque on behalf of all sponsoring organisations. Also seen in the middle are Kerala Center President Alex Esthappan, Mrs. Jalaja Vijayakrishnan, and Consul Pragya Singh.

**G**lobal Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) chapters in New York and Manhattan joined hands with Indian American Kerala Center in Elmont, New York, along with

several other community organisations, including Kerala Cultural Association of North America, Pioneer Club of Keralites, Kerala Samajam of Greater New York, World Malayalee Council NY Province,

FOMAA Metro Region, FOKANA Metro Region, Long Island Malayalee Cultural Association and Indian American Malayalee Association of Long Island, Milan Cultural Association to give warm send-

off with a dinner to Consul for Community Affairs Shri A.K. Vijaykrishnan from the Indian Consulate in New York after 4 ½ years of service.

Consul Vijaykrishnan has been a ranking diplomat with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, with experience of over 36 years in a variety of exciting and challenging assignments with earlier postings in the High Commission of India in Pakistan as well as other countries and different sections of Ministry of External Affairs. Since Vijaykrishnan was retiring from the service, the send-off dinner was held at the Indian American Kerala Center.

The program started with Kerala Center President Alex Esthappan, who, in his welcome address, highly praised Consul Vijaykrishnan during his term of office.

GOPIO International Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham said that although many Consuls come and go, the community organisations decided to give Consul Vijaykrishnan an appropriate send-off since he conducted his service above his call for duty by making himself available to serve the community 24/7 by sharing his cell phone to everyone.

“Whenever I called him to alert a community issue or the death of an Indian citizen in the USA, he was already on the case, and the community greatly appreciated that,” said Dr. Abraham.

Representatives of other community organisations spoke at the farewell, including

**Consul Vijaykrishnan has been a ranking diplomat with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, with experience of over 36 years in a variety of exciting and challenging assignments with earlier postings in the High Commission of India in Pakistan as well as other countries and different sections of Ministry of External Affairs. Since Vijaykrishnan was retiring from the service, the send-off dinner was held at the Indian American Kerala Center.**

Beena Kothari, President GOPIO-NY; Suresh Sharma, President Milan Cultural Association (Hartford, CT); Johny Zachariah, President, Pioneer Club of Keralites; Manohar Thomas, President of Sargavedi; Jose Kadapuram of Kairali TV; Philip Madathil, President, Kerala Cultural Association of North America; Sibi David, President, Kerala Samajam of New York; Thomas T. Oommen, Long Island Malayalee Cultural Association; Sibi David of Kalavedi and Biju Chacko of World Malayalee Council. Others who spoke at the event were Democratic Party leaders Dr Sumita SenGupta, Kalathil Varghese and Koshy Thomas; May Philip and Mathew Kutty Easo.

Consul Vijay Krishnan was presented with an honour plaque for his sincere service to the Indian Diaspora community by these organizations together.

In his reply to remarks, Vijaykrishnan said that he enjoyed fully working for the

benefit of the Indian American community. He said that he encountered many family disputes, including violence against spouses, and suggested that the community must pursue non-violence in any disputes.

Vijaykrishnan said that he had attended many regional community festivals and suggested that community organisations invite members of other Indian community organisations whenever any regional festivals are held. This would help us better understand and know Indian festivals in all our communities.

The Consul for Visa at the Indian Consulate, Pragya Singh, will be in additional charge of the Consul for Community Affairs. At the meeting, she said that she would continue the work of Consul Vijaykrishnan and look for community support.

Kerala Center Secretary Raju Thomas delivered the vote of thanks.

# GOPIO TEAM 2023-'24

After the GOPIO election, which was completed in February/March 2023 with the new team sworn in on March 4th, 2023, the GOPIO Executive Council appointed the Secretary, Joint Secretaries and as well as Chair/Co-Chairs of various Committees. The Chairs and Co-Chairs of various GOPIO Councils are being appointed and confirmed now.



| NAME                 | POSITION                         |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Dr. Thomas Abraham   | Chairman                         |
| Lal Motwani          | President                        |
| Umesh Chandra OAM    | Executive Vice President         |
| Kewal Kanda          | Vice President/Treasurer         |
| Prakash Shah         | Global Ambassador                |
| Ram Gadhavi          | Secretary                        |
| Dr. Asha Samant      | Int'l Coordinator-at-large       |
| J. (Nami) Kaur       | Int'l Coordinator-at-large       |
| Harmohan Singh Walia | Int'l Coordinator, Oceania       |
| Ved Prakash Goojha   | Int'l Coordinator, Europe        |
| Dhiraj Ahuja         | Int'l Coordinator, South Asia    |
| Deo Gosine           | Int'l Coordinator, Caribbean     |
| Roger Laxman         | Int'l Coordinator, Africa        |
| Ashok Madan          | Int'l Coordinator, North America |
| Kritilata Ram        | Int'l Coordinator, Francophone   |
| Jay Bhandari         | Associate Secretary              |

| NAME                        | POSITION                             |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Chitrnanjan Sahai Belwariar | Associate Secretary                  |
| Mahavir Arya                | Chair, Chapter Review Committee      |
| Pramod Kamdar               | Chair, Bylaws Committee              |
| Dr. Neerja Arun Gupta       | Chair, Academic Council              |
| Dr. Vimal Goyle             | Chair, Health & Wellness Council     |
| Aparna Hande                | Co- Chair, Health & Wellness Council |
| Dr. Parveen Chopra          | Chair, Human Rights Council          |
| Parsram Punj                | Co-Chair, Human Rights Council       |
| Rohit Vyas                  | Chair, Media Council                 |
| Ashok Motwani               | Co-Chair, Media Council              |
| Prof Prasad Yarlagadda      | Chair, Science & Technology Council  |
| Dr. Ramesh Pandey           | Chair, Seniors Council               |
| Molly Banerjei              | Chair, Women Council                 |
| Soruba Rani Kuusto          | Co-Chair, Women Council              |
| Charu Shivakumar            | Co-Chair, Women Council              |
| Vasu Pawar                  | Chair, Youth Council                 |