

*Happy New Year!*

2025

from



**GOPIO INTERNATIONAL**



# GOPIO NEWS BULLETIN

Vol 24-25 | Fol 12-01 A Publication of the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO)

DEC'24 - JAN 20, 2025

## GOPIO ANNOUNCES INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION IN BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA: "THE DIASPORA'S ROLE IN SHAPING FUTURE TECHNOLOGIES"

The Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) is excited to announce its upcoming International Convention, scheduled from March 28-30, 2025, at the Brisbane Marriott in Australia. This year's theme, "The Diaspora's Role in Shaping Future Technologies," aims to explore the critical contributions of the Indian diaspora in the ever-evolving landscape of technology and innovation.

### A Platform for Dialogue and Insight

The convention will serve as a dynamic platform for thought leaders, industry professionals, and community members to engage in meaningful discussions about

how the Indian diaspora can lead to technological advancements. Attendees can expect various informative sessions and workshops to explore the intersection of culture, innovation, and global progress.

**In addition to the primary theme, the convention will feature a variety of additional conference sessions focusing on:**

• **Indian Diaspora Culture:** Exploring the rich traditions and contributions of the Indian community worldwide.

• **Youth Empowerment:** Addressing the concerns and aspirations of young members of the diaspora.

• **Women's Leadership:** Highlighting the vital role

of women in the diaspora and their impact on various sectors.

• **Senior Citizens:** Discuss the unique challenges and opportunities faced by the elderly community.

• **Writers' Forum:** Providing a space for authors and literary enthusiasts to share their works and discuss the influence of literature on cultural identity.

### Tailored Experiences Post-Convention

Following the convention, GOPIO has organised tailored trips to explore some of the region's most beautiful destinations, including Sydney, New Zealand, and Fiji. These trips will allow attendees

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## GOPIO NEWS BULLETIN

A Publication of the  
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of Indian Origin (GOPIO)  
Published Monthly

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**From the Editor:**

If you would like us to publish your letters, feedback, comments on any of our stories or suggest ideas columns or features, please send your submissions to:  
ceo@chantex.com.au



## GOPIO NEWS BULLETIN

**20 FEB 2025****SUBMISSION  
DEADLINES****15 FEB 2025**

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## Editor's Note



I hope this message finds you well and thriving. I want to take a moment to sincerely apologise for the delay in releasing this edition of the GOPIO International News Bulletin. Unfortunately, I have been managing some health challenges and am deeply engrossed in the preparatory work for the much-anticipated GOPIO Convention 2025. Your patience and understanding

during this time mean a great deal to me.

As we approach the end of the year, I am filled with optimism and excitement for what lies ahead. The upcoming Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is just around the corner, a significant event that celebrates our diaspora's contributions and fosters connections across borders. I encourage everyone to participate and engage in the rich discussions that will take place. This event provides an excellent opportunity to share our stories, strengthen our ties, and promote our collective vision.

As we turn the page on this year and welcome a new one, I want to extend my heartfelt wishes for happiness, health, and prosperity to all of you. May the coming year bring new opportunities and successes, personally and professionally.

I would also like to invite you to warmly attend the GOPIO International Convention 2025. This event promises to be a landmark gathering, bringing together members from around the globe for engaging discussions, workshops, and networking sessions. Your participation will not only enrich the experience for all attendees but also reinforce our shared commitment to the advancement of our communities.

Please keep in mind the submission deadlines for our future editions. Your insights and stories make the GOPIO International News Bulletin a vibrant and informative resource. I encourage you to share your thoughts, experiences, and achievements with us, as they contribute significantly to our collective narrative.

Serving as the Editor-in-Chief of the GOPIO International News Bulletin has been an incredible journey. I am immensely grateful to all our regular contributors who consistently provide us with valuable content. Your dedication and creativity are the lifeblood of our publication, and I cannot thank you enough for your ongoing support.

Additionally, I want to remind everyone that the GOPIO International elections are currently being conducted. This is a crucial time for our organisation, and I wish all the candidates the best as they seek to serve our community. Your engagement in this process is vital, as it shapes the future direction of GOPIO.

Thank you once again for your understanding and support. I look forward to sharing more updates with you and hope to see many of you at the upcoming convention.

Warm regards,  
—Umesh Chandra OAM

Editor in Chief,  
GOPIO International News Bulletin



# GOPIO ANNOUNCES INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION IN BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA: "THE DIASPORA'S ROLE IN SHAPING FUTURE TECHNOLOGIES"

## CONTD. FROM PG 1

to immerse themselves in the local culture, network with fellow participants, and experience these magnificent locations' stunning landscapes and vibrant communities.

### Registration Information

Convention participants are encouraged to register their interest through the provided link. Early registration is advisable to secure a spot

at this prestigious event, as spaces may fill quickly due to high demand.

This International Convention promises to be a landmark event, providing a unique opportunity for members of the Indian diaspora to connect, collaborate, and contribute to the future of technology and culture.

For more details and to register interest, please follow the link below.

### Register Here

Join GOPIO in Brisbane as we explore the diaspora's transformative role in shaping future technologies and celebrate our rich cultural heritage together!

Registration and a detailed program are still being developed and will be mailed to you soon. We hope that you will fully support this Indian Diaspora convention, which is being held for the first time in the Oceanic Region.



**GOPIO International Convention 2025**

Join us for an enriching experience at the Brisbane Marriott from

**March 28th to 30th, 2025** Location: **Brisbane Marriott**

**Event Highlights:**

- Welcome Reception:** Kick off the conference with an evening of networking and camaraderie.
- Full Day Conference:** Engage in insightful discussions and workshops led by esteemed speakers from around the globe.
- General Body Meeting:** Participate in shaping the future of our organization and community.

**Mark Your Calendars!**  
This is an event you won't want to miss!  
**Stay tuned for more details!**

**For inquiries, contact: Umesh Chandra, [ceo@chantex.com.au](mailto:ceo@chantex.com.au) - Conference convenor**

**Theme: The Diaspora's Role in Shaping Future Technologies**

# GOPIO AND UBS HOST INSIGHTFUL TALK BY PROF. PRABHU GUPTARA ON DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES



On Friday, November 1st, 2019, the GOPIO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI), in collaboration with UBS, hosted a compelling discussion featuring Prof. Prabhu Gupta, Executive Chairman of Salt Desert Media in the UK. The event occurred at the UBS Headquarters in New York City, where attendees gathered to explore the theme: "Technology

and the Future: What are the Implications, Risks, and Opportunities."

Prof. Gupta, a respected thought leader and former advisor to UBS, brought a wealth of knowledge to the conversation. His expertise encompasses a range of transformative technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, the Internet of Things, Robotics, and Quantum Computing. Throughout his talk, he delved into the significant impact these disruptive technologies have on society and their potential challenges and benefits.

The event began with a networking lunch at noon, allowing participants to engage with one another before the presentation commenced. Prof. Gupta's insights sparked meaningful

dialogue among attendees, highlighting the critical need to understand both the risks and opportunities that lie ahead in our rapidly evolving technological landscape.

This event not only emphasized the importance of staying informed in an age of technological advancement but also showcased GOPIO's and UBS's collaborative efforts in fostering discussions that shape our understanding of the future.

For those interested in learning more about future events or the implications of these technologies, please contact Ranjeet Gupta, Senior Vice President and Senior Portfolio Manager at UBS Financial Services Inc., at (310) 595-1069 or via email at [ranjeet.guptara@ubs.com](mailto:ranjeet.guptara@ubs.com).





# AN INSIGHTFUL SESSION ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE BY GOPIO CANBERRA



**T**oday, MAC and GOPIO hosted another very informative and interactive session on Artificial Intelligence facilitated by Vijay Koul. The session provided attendees with a fundamental understanding of AI, which proved particularly beneficial for the senior group present.

Vijay explained that AI represents a combination of technologies that enable computers to perform tasks traditionally reserved for humans. He emphasised the importance of using AI with caution and responsibility, ensuring it is implemented ethically and transparently.

While AI is undoubtedly a game changer, Vijay also highlighted its environmental impacts, noting that AI technology's development, maintenance, and disposal all contribute to significant carbon footprints.

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# AN INSIGHTFUL SESSION ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE BY GOPIO CANBERRA

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Whether AI will eventually take over human roles was posed, setting the stage for further discussion in the next series of AI sessions scheduled for the upcoming year. Attendees can look forward to more insights and debates on this pressing issue.

The event saw a large turnout, and we thank the audience for their enthusiastic support. The Burns Club's generous contributions also helped make this event possible. We will keep you posted on future sessions and developments in AI.





# GOPIO CANBERRA CELEBRATES DIWALI WITH CHIEF MINISTER: A FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS AND UNITY



**G** OPIO Canberra was honoured to attend the Chief Minister's Diwali celebration, a vibrant event that brought together the local community to celebrate the Festival of Lights. This year's festivities were particularly special, as they highlighted not just the cultural significance of Diwali but also the importance of unity, diversity, and inclusivity in our society.

Diwali, celebrated by millions

worldwide, symbolises the victory of light over darkness and good over evil. It is a time for joy, reflection, and renewal, and the celebrations in Canberra were a testament to this spirit. The event featured traditional music, dance performances, and a showcase of delicious Indian cuisine, creating a festive and welcoming atmosphere.

As representatives of GOPIO Canberra, we were thrilled to

participate in this celebration, which underscored the strength of multiculturalism in our community. The Chief Minister's presence at the event emphasised the government's commitment to fostering a diverse society where all cultures are respected and celebrated. Through such initiatives, we can strengthen community bonds and promote social harmony.

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# GOPIO CANBERRA CELEBRATES DIWALI WITH CHIEF MINISTER: A FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS AND UNITY



## CONTD. FROM PG 7

The celebration also allowed community members to come together, share stories, and engage in meaningful conversations. It was heartening to see people from various backgrounds united in the spirit of Diwali, embracing the values of compassion, kindness, and understanding that the festival embodies.

In addition to the festivities, the event served as a platform to raise awareness about critical social issues. Discussions focused on the need for unity in diversity and the role of community organisations in supporting

those in need. As we enjoyed the festivities, it was a reminder of our shared responsibilities to uplift one another and work towards a more inclusive society.

GOPIO Canberra is committed to promoting cultural awareness and fostering dialogue within the community. Attending the Chief Minister's Diwali celebration was a joyful experience and a reaffirmation of our mission to build bridges across cultures. As we celebrate the triumph of light and positivity, we are reminded of the importance of collaboration in addressing the challenges faced by our society.

As we look forward to future

celebrations, let us carry the essence of Diwali—love, peace, and unity—into our everyday lives. Together, we can continue to weave a tapestry of cultures and traditions that enrich our community and inspire future generations.

In conclusion, attending the Chief Minister's Diwali celebration was a memorable experience reinforcing the values of togetherness and mutual respect. GOPIO Canberra is proud to be part of a community that celebrates diversity and champions the spirit of inclusion. Here's to many more festivals of light, love, and unity in the coming years!

# CELEBRATE THE 76TH INDIAN REPUBLIC DAY WITH GOPIO GOLD COAST

The GOPIO Gold Coast (GOPIO GC) warmly invites you to join in the festivities for the 76th Indian Republic Day, coinciding with Australia Day. This vibrant celebration promises to be a delightful experience filled with music, cultural dances, and an exciting quiz with prizes, all while enjoying delicious Indian cuisine available for purchase.

## Event Details:

**Date:** January 25, 2025

**Venue:** Southport Community Centre, 6 Lawson St, Southport

**Time:** 9:30 AM for a 10:00 AM start (event runs until noon)

This is a **FREE EVENT**, making it accessible for everyone who wishes to partake in the joyous atmosphere and rich cultural exchange.

## What to Expect:

### Live Music

Enjoy performances that celebrate the diverse musical heritage of India.

### Cultural Dances

Witness traditional dances that bring the vibrancy of Indian culture to life.

### Quiz with Prizes:

Test your knowledge and



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

## Indian Republic Day Celebrations!

Celebrating the 76th India Republic Day together with Australia Day with music, cultural dances, special quiz with prizes and Indian food available to purchase

Date : 25th January 2025  
Venue: Southport Community Centre, 6 Lawson St, Southport QLD 4215  
Time : Doors open at 9:30 am for 10 am start to 12 noon

Contact for sponsorship and performances:  
Mokhtiar Singh 0401946966 or Preetham Krishna 0402537209

Booking link <https://www.trybooking.com/CXZSX>



stand a chance to win exciting prizes in our special quiz segment.

### Delicious Indian Food:

Savor various authentic Indian dishes available for purchase.

Join us in this unique celebration that beautifully intertwines Indian and Australian cultures. Whether you're of Indian descent or simply interested in experiencing India's rich traditions, this event is the perfect opportunity to gather with the community and

celebrate together.

### Reserve Your Spot:

To ensure your place at this festive gathering, please book your tickets through the following link: Booking Link. <https://www.trybooking.com/CXZSX>

We look forward to celebrating with you on this momentous occasion! Let's come together to honour the spirit of Republic Day and embrace the joy of community.



# A MEMORABLE VISIT: GOPIO CANBERRA MEETS THE NEW GOVERNOR-GENERAL



On October 25th, the members of the Global Organisation of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) Canberra and the Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC) had the distinct honour of meeting Her Excellency Ms Sam Mostyn, the newly appointed Governor-General of Australia. The gathering occurred at the historic Government House, a venue steeped in tradition and significance.

The event was marked by a warm welcome, allowing attendees to engage in

meaningful conversation with the Governor-General. Her Excellency's commitment to fostering inclusivity and diversity resonated with the values upheld by GOPIO, an organisation dedicated to promoting the interests and contributions of people of Indian origin.

During the meeting, the GOPIO committee members expressed their gratitude for the invitation and shared insights about their initiatives to enhance community engagement and multiculturalism in Australia. The discussions highlighted

the importance of unity in diversity, a principal integral to Australian society's fabric.

One of the most memorable moments of the visit was the presentation of the Governor-General's Special Coin to the GOPIO representatives. This token symbolises recognition and appreciation for the contributions made by the Indian diaspora to the Australian community. Receiving this unique coin was an honour and a reminder of the shared values and aspirations that bind communities together.

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# A MEMORABLE VISIT: GOPIO CANBERRA MEETS THE NEW GOVERNOR-GENERAL



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Her Excellency Ms. Sam Mostyn expressed her enthusiasm for engaging with various cultural groups across Australia and emphasised the significance of community involvement in shaping a harmonious society. The meeting was a testament to the collaborative spirit between the Governor-General's office and community organisations like

GOPIO.

The visit concluded with a sense of hope and optimism for the future, as both the GOPIO committee and the Governor-General recognised the power of dialogue and collaboration in addressing the challenges faced by multicultural communities today.

In summary, the invitation to meet the new Governor-General was a momentous occasion for GOPIO Canberra

and MAC. It not only celebrated the contributions of the Indian community but also reinforced the importance of unity in diversity within Australia's multicultural landscape. As Her Excellency continues her term, the GOPIO looks forward to fostering an ongoing relationship that promotes inclusivity and understanding among all Australians.



# GOPIO CANBERRA ATTENDS PEACE SYMPOSIUM: A STEP TOWARDS WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND SOCIETAL CHANGE

On a bright day in Flynn, members of GOPIO Canberra had the privilege of attending a poignant peace symposium organised by the Ahmadiyya community women's group. As one of the guest speakers, it was an honour to be part of an event that centred on the central themes of women empowerment and their indispensable roles in peace-making and driving societal change.

The symposium was a gathering of diverse voices, all united by a shared vision of fostering peace in a world often marred by conflict. In times when violence and discord dominate the headlines, forums like this are not just beneficial—they are essential. They provide a platform for individuals from various backgrounds to share ideas, network, and build camaraderie within and across communities.

One of the most potent messages echoed throughout the event was encapsulated in the motto of the Ahmadiyya community: "Love for all, Hatred for none." This principle is a call to action and a vital necessity in our current global climate. As we witness the repercussions of war and division, it becomes increasingly clear that



promoting non-violence and advocating for human rights is fundamental to achieving lasting peace.

The symposium emphasised the critical role that women play in peace processes. Historically, women have often been marginalised in conflict resolution and peace-building

discussions. However, their perspectives and contributions are invaluable. Women possess unique insights and experiences that can lead to innovative solutions and a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by communities.

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# GOPIO CANBERRA ATTENDS PEACE SYMPOSIUM: A STEP TOWARDS WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND SOCIETAL CHANGE

## CONTD. FROM PG 11

Empowering women and amplifying their voices can foster environments where dialogue and understanding flourish. The symposium's discussions highlighted the importance of creating safe spaces where women can express their thoughts, share their experiences, and take an active role in shaping their societies.

Moving forward, we must cultivate more such forums. In a world facing myriad challenges, from political strife to social injustice, the need for collaborative dialogue and mutual respect is more urgent than ever. By coming together to discuss ideas, share resources, and support one another, we can build a network of peace advocates dedicated to creating a better future.

As we reflect on the inspiring conversations from the symposium, let us remember that the journey towards peace is a collective effort: every voice matters, and every action counts. Together, we can work towards a world where love prevails over hatred and where the rights of all individuals are upheld.

In conclusion, the symposium organised by the Ahmadiyya community



Empowering women and amplifying their voices can foster environments where dialogue and understanding flourish. The symposium's discussions highlighted the importance of creating safe spaces where women can express their thoughts, share their experiences, and take an active role in shaping their societies.

women's group was not just an event; it was a celebration of hope and a call to action. Let us carry forward the

spirit of collaboration and compassion and strive to be agents of peace in our communities and beyond.



# GOPIO-LA HOSTS SUCCESSFUL DIABETES SUMMIT IN ORANGE, CA



**C**ity of Orange, CA – November 16, 2024 – The Global Organization of People of Indian Origin – Los Angeles (GOPIO-LA) held its signature Diabetes Summit on Saturday, drawing over 100 attendees to raise awareness during Diabetes Awareness Month.

The event featured six medical professionals from various specialties who provided valuable insights on diabetes prevention and management. Attendees learned about the disease's impact on critical areas of health, including the kidneys, teeth, eyes, and heart. The interactive format allowed participants to engage with the doctors, who answered questions and offered personalised advice.

Yatri Shukla, Secretary of GOPIO-LA and a Food

**The event featured six medical professionals from various specialties who provided valuable insights on diabetes prevention and management.**

Scientist, highlighted the benefits of incorporating millets into the diets of diabetes patients, emphasising their nutritional value. The event also welcomed GOPIO-International Global Ambassador Prakash Shah from New Jersey, alongside notable GOPIO life members Ashok Madan, Kewal Kanda, Aparna Hande, and Rani Kuusto.

Charu Shivakumar,

President of GOPIO-LA, Aparna Hande, and Rani Kuusto organised the summit. In a show of support, the president of GOPIO-International called in from New York to congratulate the organising team on their efforts.

Attendees praised the summit as a well-organized and informative event, expressing gratitude for the opportunity to learn about managing a disease that affects millions. "I am so happy I was able to attend and benefit from this excellent and timely seminar," remarked one participant.

The Diabetes Summit reflects GOPIO-LA's commitment to community health and education, providing essential resources and knowledge to combat this silent killer.

# REMEMBERING KRISHNA V SRINIVASA: A PIONEER IN US-INDIA RELATIONS

**W**ith profound sadness, we share the news of the passing of Krishna V Srinivasa, the Executive Director of the US India Security Council. He left us after being hospitalised in Florida, leaving a legacy that will long be remembered by those who knew him and benefited from his work.

## A Legacy of Advocacy and Leadership

Krishna was not just a figurehead; he was a trailblazer advocating for software development and IT staffing within US-India relations. His efforts significantly strengthened the ties between the two democracies, fostering collaboration and understanding that have proven essential in today's global landscape.

As a Delegate to the National White House Conference on Small Business, Krishna championed the interests of small business owners, emphasising the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship in both countries. His tenure as Past President of the Indian American Forum for Political Education further cemented his commitment



to empowering the Indian American community and advocating for their interests in the political arena.

## A Lifelong Commitment

Krishna's contributions were not limited to policy advocacy; he was actively engaged in community building. He has participated in numerous events since the 1980s, including the historic 1989 First Global Convention of People of Indian Origin, where the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) was formed. His presence in these gatherings was not just as a participant but as a leader who inspired many to further the cause of Indian Americans and their

role in shaping US-India relations.

## A Personal Loss

The news of Krishna's passing is not just a loss for the political and business communities but a personal loss for many who had the privilege of knowing him. His warmth, dedication, and vision touched countless lives, and his absence will be felt deeply.

We encourage everyone to keep Krishna, his family, and his friends in their thoughts during this challenging time. His legacy will continue to inspire future generations to work towards a strengthened partnership between the United States and India.

In this grief, we extend our heartfelt condolences to his family. May his soul rest in peace, and may we honour his memory by continuing his passionately pursued work.

## Conclusion

Krishna V Srinivasa's life was a testament to the power of dedication and advocacy. As we reflect on his contributions, let us commit to his vision of collaboration and friendship between the United States and India, ensuring his legacy remains alive in our efforts and actions.



# GOPIO QUEENSLAND CELEBRATES THE OPENING OF THE NEW INDIA CONSULATE OFFICE IN BRISBANE



**G** OPIO Queensland (Global Organization of People of Indian Origin) recently made headlines by attending the grand opening of the new India Consulate office in Brisbane, officiated by Shri Jai Shakar ji. This momentous occasion marked a significant milestone in strengthening the ties between India and Australia, fostering a deeper cultural and economic connection between the two nations.

**A Warm Welcome to Shri Jai Shakar Ji**

During his visit, Shri Jai Shakar ji was warmly welcomed by the members of GOPIO Queensland, who played an instrumental role in facilitating his itinerary. The highlight of the visit included a trip to the iconic Gandhi statue, a symbol of peace and non-violence that resonates with the Indian community. This visit underscored the importance of remembering and celebrating Mahatma Gandhi's legacy while also reflecting on the values of integrity and community service that GOPIO stands for.

## Engaging with the Community

Following the visit to the Gandhi statue, GOPIO Queensland members attended a public reception at the University of Queensland (UQ). This event provided a platform for the community to engage in meaningful discussions about the contributions of the Indian diaspora in Australia and the ongoing collaboration between the two countries. The reception was marked by a spirit of camaraderie and shared purpose, with

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# GOPIO QUEENSLAND CELEBRATES THE OPENING OF THE NEW INDIA CONSULATE OFFICE IN BRISBANE



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attendees exchanging ideas on further enhancing the relationship between India and Australia.

### Community Leaders Get-Together

In addition to the consulate opening and the public reception, GOPIO Queensland was honoured to receive an invitation to the Community Leaders Get-Together organised by the Home Affairs Regional Director.

This gathering brought together prominent leaders from various community organisations to discuss key issues affecting the Indian community in Australia. It was an opportunity for GOPIO to voice concerns, share insights, and collaborate on initiatives that promote cultural integration and community welfare.

### Conclusion

GOPIO Queensland's participation in these significant events highlights

its commitment to fostering a strong Indian presence in Australia. Through its involvement with the new India Consulate, community events, and leadership forums, GOPIO continues to pave the way for a vibrant and engaged Indian community in Queensland. As the relationship between India and Australia continues to grow, GOPIO Queensland remains dedicated to promoting cultural ties and serving the interests of the Indian diaspora.

# DIWALI, THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS, IS CELEBRATED AT FERGUSON LIBRARY



**T**he Stamford Public Library, GOPIO-CT Chapter (Global Organization of People of Indian Origin), and The Stamford Mayor's Multicultural Council invited the community to celebrate Deepawali!

On Sunday, November 17th, 2024, from 2 PM to 3:30 PM, a vibrant celebration of Diwali, the Festival of Lights, took place at the Ferguson Library Auditorium at 1 Public Library Plaza, Stamford, CT. This exciting event featured a cultural program, delicious food, and Mehendi, creating an atmosphere of joy and community.

## Diwali Gained Momentum in the U.S.

On that same day, the Global Organization of People of

Indian Origin (GOPIO-CT) hosted a successful Diwali celebration at the Ferguson Library in partnership with the Stamford Mayor's Multicultural Council. This growing recognition of Diwali across the United States reflected the festival's positive messaging, making it a meaningful event for political leaders and public institutions to endorse.

The Stamford Mayor's Multicultural Council aimed to celebrate and promote the diverse cultures that made Stamford unique. Following the Mayor's earlier Diwali program, this event attracted a packed crowd, showcasing the talents of 75 children performing in 15 vibrant group acts. These performances not only entertained but also highlighted the contributions

of the Indian American community, emphasizing the festival's significance in promoting cultural awareness and unity.

Founded in 1989, GOPIO initially focused on addressing human rights issues faced by people of Indian origin. While progress had been made over the past decade, challenges still existed for the diaspora. The increasing visibility of Diwali celebrations in public spaces, such as libraries, underscored the importance of recognizing and supporting the Indian community's rich cultural heritage.

The community came together at the Ferguson Library to celebrate Diwali, connect, and enjoy a day filled with joy, culture, and light!



# GOPIO-CT'S 'COLLEGE AND BEYOND' EVENT



## School and College-Going Students Enlightened at GOPIO-CT's 'College and Beyond' Event

On December 24th, the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin - Connecticut Chapter (GOPIO-CT) hosted a transformative event to empower high school students as they navigate the pivotal transitions to college and professional life. At the Hamilton Inn and Suites in

Stamford, the 'College and Beyond' event featured an impressive array of speakers, including college students, recent graduates, early-career professionals, and a distinguished professor, all eager to share their insights and experiences.

### A Focus on Empowerment and Guidance

The event's primary goal was to demystify the college

application process and provide attendees with a realistic glimpse into college life and the journey into the professional world. The program was designed to offer practical tips and strategies for academic and personal success.

The panel was moderated by Nandu Kuppuswamy, Head of Investor Relations at MCR Investors, and included an engaging lineup of panellists:

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# GOPIO-CT'S 'COLLEGE AND BEYOND' EVENT



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- **Sraavani Akarapu** – UPenn Graduate
- **Megha Gupta** - Alum, Purdue University
- **Dhruv Hill** - Freshman, San Diego State University
- **Arnav Jhangiani** - Junior, Finance Major, Arizona State University
- **Himani Narayan** - Junior, Pace University
- **Amrutha Nandakumar** - 1st Year, Oxford University
- **Brian Thomas** -

Sophomore at NYU Stern School of Business

- **Curren Iyer** - Senior Product Operations Manager at Ramp (Harvard and HBS alum)
- **Cecil Nazareth** - Faculty at Fordham University Business School, CPA, Author, Motivational Speaker

### Highlights of the Event

Several noteworthy features marked the event:

- **Dynamic Panel Discussions:** The panellists offered diverse perspectives

on critical topics, including crafting compelling college applications, balancing academics with extracurricular activities, and establishing a professional path.

• **Interactive Q&A Sessions:** Attendees engaged directly with the panellists, fostering a lively exchange of ideas regarding the challenges and opportunities in higher education and beyond.

• **Real-World Insights:** The discussions included practical

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advice on managing college life, building networks, and effectively transitioning from academia to the workforce.

- **Expert Academic**

**Guidance:** Professor Nazareth emphasised the importance of skills and purpose, advising students to focus on what they can do and how to contribute to something larger than themselves.

### Key Takeaways for Students

Attendees left with several valuable insights, including:

**1. Start Early:** Begin college applications and research well in advance to find institutions that align with your personal goals.

**2. Prioritize Self-Discovery:** Use college as an opportunity to explore interests and develop a growth mindset.

**3. Focus on Balance:** Learn to manage academics, extracurriculars, and social life to create a fulfilling college experience.

**4. Prepare for Professional Life:** Gain real-world experience through internships

and networking to set the stage for future career success.

### Memorable Quotes from the Panelists

The panelists shared poignant advice that resonated with many attendees:

- **Sraavani:** “Don’t do something just to see how it will look on college applications. Do something you are genuinely interested in.”

- **Dhruv:** “Rejection is redirection. It opens up opportunities you may not have considered.”

- **Himani:** “Get involved in your first year, but focus on what truly matters—don’t succumb to FOMO.”

- **Brian:** “Create a unique story for your application that sets you apart.”

- **Amrutha:** “Learn to say NO. It’s okay to prioritise your well-being.”

- **Professor Nazareth:** “Focus on skills and purpose, not just on obtaining a degree.”

### Closing Remarks

Remarks from GOPIO officials, including Dr. Thomas Abraham, GOPIO International

Chairman, further enriched the event. Abraham discussed the organisation's commitment to community service and the roles of various chapters in fostering local engagement.

### About GOPIO

The Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) is a non-profit organisation that promotes the well-being and advancement of people of Indian origin worldwide. GOPIO-CT has hosted sessions with policymakers, community events, and youth mentoring initiatives for nearly two decades to create a better future for its members.

For more information about this event or upcoming initiatives, contact GOPIO-CT Board Member Nandu Kuppuswamy at 617-938-3639 or nkuppuswamy@gmail.com.

The insights gained at the 'College and Beyond' event will undoubtedly guide students as they embark on their educational journeys and prepare for their future careers.



# PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS (PBD) IN ODISHA: A 2025 PERSPECTIVE

## Introduction

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is a significant event that celebrates the contributions of the Indian diaspora to the country's development. In 2025, Odisha is set to play a pivotal role in hosting PBD, showcasing its rich cultural heritage and the achievements of its expatriates. This article delves into the importance of PBD in Odisha, its anticipated events, and its implications for the state and the Indian diaspora.

## The Significance of PBD

PBD serves as a platform for the Indian government to engage with overseas citizens of India (OCIs) and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs). It aims to strengthen the bond between the diaspora and the homeland, facilitating discussions on issues relevant to the expatriate community. The celebration includes cultural programs, seminars, and discussions that highlight the diaspora's contributions to various sectors.

## Odisha's Unique Contribution

**Cultural Showcase:** Odisha is renowned for its rich cultural heritage, including classical dance forms like Odissi, intricate handloom textiles, and traditional crafts. The state plans to use PBD 2025 to showcase these artistic elements to the global audience, emphasising the

pride of Odia's heritage.

**Diaspora Engagement:** Many Odia individuals have made significant contributions abroad, particularly in technology, healthcare, and academia. PBD will provide a platform for these individuals to share their experiences and insights, fostering connections between them and local communities.

**Investment Opportunities:** The event is expected to attract investments into Odisha. The state government aims to highlight various sectors, including tourism, agriculture, and information technology, encouraging the diaspora to invest in local initiatives.

## Anticipated Events and Activities

**Seminars and Workshops:** PBD 2025 will feature seminars focusing on various topics, including entrepreneurship, technology transfer, and sustainable development. These sessions will encourage knowledge sharing between NRIs and local entrepreneurs.

**Cultural Programs:** T The event will include cultural performances celebrating Odia traditions. Dance, music, and art exhibitions will also be organised to engage attendees and promote Odisha's cultural diversity.

**Networking Opportunities:** Various networking events will allow NRIs to connect with government officials,

business leaders, and local entrepreneurs. This interaction can foster collaborations that benefit both the diaspora and the state.

## Challenges and Considerations

While PBD presents numerous opportunities, some challenges need to be addressed:

**Logistical Issues:** Organizing a large-scale event requires meticulous planning. Ensuring smooth logistics, including transportation and accommodation, will be crucial for the success of PBD.

## Engagement of the Diaspora

Engaging the Odia diaspora in different parts of the world will be essential to ensure their participation and contributions to the event.

## Conclusion

As Odisha gears up to host Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in 2025, the event promises to be a milestone in strengthening ties between the state and its diaspora. By celebrating the achievements of the Odia community abroad and showcasing its rich cultural heritage, PBD 2025 will honour the past and pave the way for future collaborations and investments. This initiative reflects the Indian government's commitment to recognising and leveraging its global citizens' potential for the nation's development.



# FASHION EXHIBIT OF INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM OF SAREES CONCLUDED



On December 11th, 2024, the highly anticipated exhibit, "Splendour of Silk & Beyond," hosted by the International Museum of The Saree, concluded after a successful run at City College in New York City. The opening reception, held on November 12th, welcomed a diverse audience, including leaders from Indian-South Asian, Caribbean, and Japanese diasporas, who engaged with a fashionable and virtual display of exquisite sarees, sherwanis, kurtas, dhotis, lehengas, kimonos, and more.

The curation showcased garments featuring Banarasi and South Indian sarees, historically significant Indo-Caribbean and South American apparel, and cancer awareness-themed wellness sarees. Attendees also enjoyed an exciting preview of the short documentary film "IM of The



Saree, Act 1," which included messages from the museum's founders and legendary musicians Pt. Anup Jalota and Ustad Kamal Sabri. Bollywood star Rahul Roy provided a teaser. Additionally, the exhibit featured audio recordings of lectures by the renowned Pt—

Ravi Shankar, who taught music at City College, CUNY.

The opening reception was further enhanced by performances from Terry Gajraj and Artiste Anjali, both of Guyanese heritage, following an electrifying set

**CONTD. ON PGS 24**

# FASHION EXHIBIT OF INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM OF SAREES CONCLUDED

CONTD. FROM PG 23

by Ustad Kamal Sabri and his ensemble. The City College of New York hosted the event in collaboration with the Colin Powell School of Civic & Global Leadership, City College Alumni, and various pop-up initiatives, including the Green Fashion, Art & Design Museum.

The exhibition, which began on October 15th and ran until December 11th, provided a unique opportunity for attendees to explore an eclectic array of legendary icons' apparel and accessories. To view this captivating exhibition in the Cohen Gallery & Archives, interested individuals were invited to RSVP at [imofthesaree@gmail.com](mailto:imofthesaree@gmail.com) for private curations.

This initiative is part of the ongoing efforts of the International Museum of The Saree to archive the development of arts, culture, and community, with participation from various organisations, including GOPIO International, SACSS, Nataraja Arts, Vivarta Arts, Sri Swaminarayan BAPS Temple, Mithila Center, Mala Desai School of Odissi Dance, Hearts of Change, Gracie Mansion Conservancy, as well as CUNY employees and alums. Leaders from diverse diasporas, representing countries such



as India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname, Guyana, Caribbean nations, Bangladesh, South Africa, Zambia, Pakistan, Europe, China, and Korea, also took part in this vibrant celebration of culture.

For further inquiries, the International Museum of Sarees can be reached through co-founder Ashvini Persaud at [imofthesaree@gmail.com](mailto:imofthesaree@gmail.com) or by calling 917-993-2557.



# SIVANANDA WORLD PEACE FOUNDATION COMMEMORATES 164TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDIAN INDENTURED LABOURERS' ARRIVAL IN SOUTH AFRICA



The Sivananda World Peace Foundation, in partnership with the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government and GOPIO International, marked the 164th anniversary of the arrival of Indian indentured labourers in South Africa. The event occurred at the Bayview Ubuntu Centre, where a vibrant and culturally significant gathering featured prominent figures, including the Honourable Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, Thami Ntuli, as the chief guest of honour.

Dignitaries such as Les Govender, Brandon Pillay, Omie Singh, and John Kisten were in attendance, and the lively atmosphere was filled

with cultural dances and performances. Guests, many of whom had made significant contributions to advocating for the rights of Indians, were honoured throughout the event.

Prince Ishwar Ram Lutchman Mabheka Zulu of the Sivananda World Peace Foundation emphasised the event's importance in reminding attendees of their collective responsibility to foster a better South Africa, where peace remains central to the nation's development and prosperity. He reflected on the historical context, noting that the arrival of the first indentured labourers from India began with the SS Truro, which docked in Durban Bay on November 16, 1860,



carrying 345 men, women, and children from Madras. The SS Belvedere followed shortly after on November 25, 1860. Within six months, the Indian population in South Africa had reached 1,029, with subsequent voyages bringing thousands more. Over the next 51 years, more than 200,000 Indians arrived in South Africa, including over 152,000 indentured labourers transported on 384 ships, establishing one of the largest Indian communities outside India.

Initially bound to sugar plantations under harsh colonial conditions, the Indian community made significant contributions to the region's economic and cultural landscape. Over time, many descendants of these early

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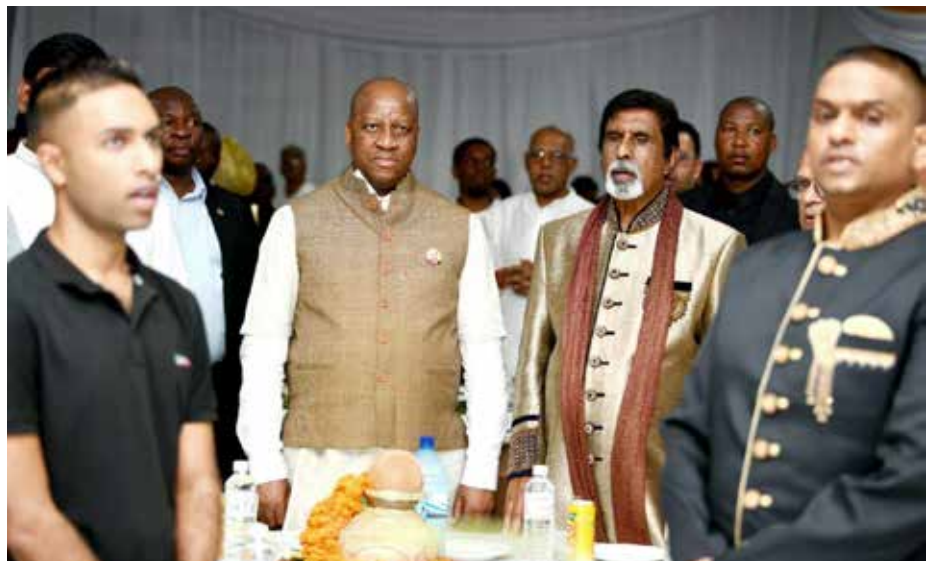
# SIVANANDA WORLD PEACE FOUNDATION COMMEMORATES 164TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDIAN INDENTURED LABOURERS' ARRIVAL IN SOUTH AFRICA

CONTD. FROM PG 25

immigrants overcame substantial challenges to excel in various fields, enriching South Africa's diverse society. Additionally, the community expanded with the arrival of 'passenger Indians,' who financed their journeys and brought trade, teaching, and craftsmanship skills. Together, they constructed enduring institutions—temples, mosques, and cultural centres—that continue to uphold and celebrate a vibrant Indian heritage.

Mabheka Zulu noted, "South Africa's Indian community commemorates the resilience, contributions, and cultural legacy of those first indentured labourers who arrived 164 years ago. Their journey and enduring influence remain essential to South Africa's multicultural history."

During the event, statues honouring the indentured labourers were unveiled, coinciding with Premier Ntuli's belated birthday celebration. In his address, Premier Ntuli reaffirmed his commitment to the Indian community, promising that actions would be taken to enhance the local landscape during his tenure.



GOPIO International and its Durban Chapter collaborated with the Sivananda World Peace Foundation and the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government to host the anniversary celebration. Premier Ntuli unveiled a monument dedicated to the

Indian indentured labourers at this significant event, which celebrated the rich heritage and culture of the Indian community. Many speakers paid tribute to the forefathers who worked tirelessly to shape South Africa into what it is today.



# STAMFORD CELEBRATED DIWALI FOR THE FIRST TIME AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS



It was a significant milestone for the Stamford community, as Mayor Caroline Simmons hosted the city's inaugural Diwali Celebration at the Stamford Police Headquarters Community Hall. In a heartfelt gesture, she issued a proclamation declaring Diwali Day in Stamford, recognising the importance of this vibrant festival of lights.

The Mayor's Multi-Cultural Council organised the event with active participation from the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin Connecticut (GOPIO-CT). Dr

**CONTD. ON PGS 28-29**







# STAMFORD CELEBRATED DIWALI FOR THE FIRST TIME AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS



CONTD. FROM PG 27

Jaya Daptardar, the President of GOPIO-CT, delivered an inspiring message highlighting the essence of Diwali, which celebrates the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil.

Following the ceremony, attendees were invited to an evening of joy and festivity. The atmosphere was filled with the lively beats of Bollywood music, prompting many to dance and celebrate together. Traditional Indian food was also served, allowing everyone to indulge in the rich flavours of Indian cuisine.

This celebration brought the community together and fostered a

The Mayor's Multi-Cultural Council organised the event with active participation from the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin Connecticut (GOPIO-CT). Dr Jaya Daptardar, the President of GOPIO-CT, delivered an inspiring message highlighting the essence of Diwali, which celebrates the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil.

greater understanding and appreciation for the diverse cultures that enrich Stamford. The successful event underscored the importance

of inclusivity and cultural exchange, setting a precedent for future celebrations in the city.

# 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
Chitranjan 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