



GOPIO - Global Organization of People of Indian Origin

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February 4, 2025

Press Release

GOPIO International Team Sworn in with Community Leader Prakash Shah as the New President

Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) conducted its election last month and the new team was sworn in on January 31st at a virtual Zoom ceremony with veteran community leader from New Jersey Mr. Prakash Shah as its president. Prakash Shah, former Chairman of New Jersey Development Authority, has been a Founder Life member from GOPIO inception in 1989 and was serving as the Global Ambassador and later as the Convener of the GOPIO Convention 2024 in New Jersey in his last term. Others sworn in at the ceremony are media and community leader Mr. Umesh Chandra from Brisbane, Australia as Executive Vice President; Los Angeles area community leader Kewal Kanda as Vice President, and former IBM official and New York Social Activist Ms. Jasbir “Nami” Kaur as Global Ambassador. Also elected were International Coordinators for Africa Mr. Ishwar Ramlatchman and for South Asia Mr. Dhiraj Ahuja,

The election was conducted according to the GOPIO bylaws by a four-member committee appointed by the GOPIO Executive Council. It was headed by Mr. Mridul Pathak along with Mr. Dinesh Mittal, Mr. Manohar Dev and Mr. Prashant Gupta providing technical support and was under the supervision of GOPIO Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham. The election was conducted for the position Vice President using eballot.com platform. All other positions were elected unanimously.



Photo - GOPIO Officials who were sworn-in. From l. to r. Prakash Shah, Umesh Chandra, Kewal Kanda, J. Nami Kaur, Ishwar Ramlutchman and Dhiraj Ahuja

Since the officers come from the different continents of the world, the oath ceremony was conducted virtually and started with a universal prayer by Ms. Devika Gadhavi, who is a young professional working in New York City. Dr. Thomas Abraham, Chairman of GOPIO International welcomed the participants from all continents and provided a brief introduction to the birth of GOPIO and many of its achievements in the last 36 years.



GOPIO Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham administering Oath of Office to the new team

“GOPIO chapters around the world have been doing a lot of organizational groundwork in many countries to promote leadership in public service and the thrust has been to promote and involve the Indian Diaspora in the larger society and local communities wherever they live,” said Dr. Abraham.

Outgoing president Lal Motwani spoke on the activities done during his term and thanked his team members. Dr. Abraham then administered the Oath of Office.

In his acceptance speech, President Prakash Shah said, “It is my ambition to try and activate those regions and Chapters which are not active now so that GOPIO does become a functioning Network for the 38 million strong India Diaspora, We need many

Young Leaders to get involved in the GOPIO to take GOPIO to a New Level. We will officially relaunch GOPIO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) in different parts of the world. We are having our next Convention in Brisbane, Australia March 28-30 2025 under the leadership of Umesh Chandra.

After the Oath ceremony, all elected officials spoke briefly on their plans for GOPIO. Many GOPIO chapter presidents and other community leaders made remarks complimenting the new officials.

Newly Sworn-in GOPIO Officials

President – Prakash Shah, Somerset, New Jersey, USA



Prakash Shah has been involved in Founding a number of Leading Community Organizations including Global Organization for the People of Indian Origin (GOPIO), Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA), National Federation of Indian American Associations (NFIA) and the NYC based India Chamber of Commerce of America (ICCA). He was a Presidential Appointee under President Clinton to the Southern Africa Fund and was Chairman of New Jersey Development Authority under Governors Florio and Whitman.

Executive Vice President – Umesh Chandra, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia



Umesh Chandra is highly respected nationally and internationally. He was awarded OAM -the highest civilian honour in Australia, in 2020. He is a founder member and board of trustee of the Queensland Multicultural Council and serves on the police ethnic advisory group and Lord Mayors Multicultural round table. He has been the founder and president of GOPIO Qld and serves as a Trustees of GOPIO Queensland. He is the chair of the White Ribbon Queensland State Committee and has been a long-standing ambassador for White Ribbon. He has won many community service awards, including the Bharat Gaurav award in 2011. Umesh and Usha Chandra were named Brisbane City Councils' citizen of the year in 2019 and own Globenet Realty.

Vice President – Kewal Kanda



Kewal Kanda retired from Boeing Company after 26 years of service as production planner, principal analyst and planning manager. Community service being his passion he is a member of many non-profit community organizations such as Founder of Rajput Association of America (1984), Founder president of GOPIO-LA Chapter, Treasurer of GOPIO International, and President FIA-SC, He organized RPBD in Los Angeles as NFIA RVP-Pacific South West core member, and four programs as chairman of committee to celebrate 75 years of India's Independence as Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, including publishing a its commemorative Coffee Table Book.

Global Ambassador – Nami Kaur, Yonkers, New York, USA



J. Nami Kaur successfully completed her 32-year Corporate professional career in Technology, Marketing and Communications at IBM. Since 2009, she has had been actively engaged in the Non-Profit Sector, donating her time and skills pro-bono to New York Botanical Garden, Children's Hope India, Riveredge Cooperative Board, and GOPIO (Global Organization of People of Indian Origin). She has served GOPIO as a volunteer since its inception in 1989. Since 2009 she has served formally as the Media Council Chair, General Secretary, Chair of GOPIO Election, and Editor of GOPIO Newsletter.

International Coordinator for Africa – Ishwar Ramlutchman, Durban, South Africa



Philanthropist and Humanitarian Prince Ishwar Ramlutchman (Mabheka Zulu) has received many awards. He is the first person of Indian Origin to foster relations with the Largest African Tribe and become part of Zulu Royal Family. He is a former Executive VP of GOPIO International and the President and Founder of the Sivananda World Peace Foundation . He has Supported the Indian diaspora in many of His cultural, peace initiatives and heritage programs. He upholds corporate social responsibility by building schools, feeding and providing health facilities for the poor and disadvantaged in South Africa.

International Coordinator for South Asia – Dhiraj Ahuja, New Delhi, India



A self-made businessman, Dhiraj Ahuja has an international network throughout globe and is a member of Indian Press Club. He has been working effectively as President of GOPIO-Delhi/NCR Chapter. Dhiraj is associated with a few prominent NGOs as well as business houses.

Formed in 1989, GOPIO is a non-partisan, not-for-profit, secular organization with Individual Life Members and over 100 chapters in 35 countries. GOPIO's volunteers are committed to enhancing cooperation and communication between NRIs/PIOs and the local communities, building networks, bonds, friendships, alliances, and the camaraderie of citizens and colleagues alike. GOPIO volunteers believe that when they help network the global Indian community, they facilitate making tomorrow a better world for the Indian Diaspora and the countries they live in.

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