

COMMUNITY:

Honoring Our Heroes: 2007 GOPIO Awards

Established to recognize and honor those NRIs and PIOs who have provided significant community and public service to the Indian Diaspora around the globe and/or to India, the GOPIO Pravasi Community Service Awards will be handed out to four NRIs at the GOPIO meet in New Delhi Jan. 6. A Siliconeer report.

The Global Organization of People of Indian Origin has scheduled its Convention 2007 in New Delhi Jan. 5-6 in conjunction with Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2007, according to a GOPIO press release. The theme of the conference is "Overseas Indians — Identity Preservation & Adoption of New Values in Pluralistic Societies." The conference will be formally inaugurated Jan. 5th at the FICCI Conference Room, followed by a reception.

The conference will conclude with the awards banquet Jan. 6, 2007 at the Ashoka Hotel. The GOPIO Pravasi Community Service Awards were established to recognize and honor those NRIs and PIOs who have provided significant community and public service to the Indian Diaspora around the globe and/or to India. "We at GOPIO believe that the NRIs/PIOs have contributed significantly to the countries of their adoption as well as to India, and have added a special glitter to the resurgence of India," said Inder Singh, president of GOPIO.

"GOPIO believes that the destiny of the Indian diaspora, in many ways, is intertwined inextricably with India," the GOPIO release added. "The NRIs/PIOs, individually and collectively, certainly have made numerous, significant achievements in their adopted lands but they are bound to India by the umbilical cord of history, culture, heritage, and tradition. GOPIO's conferences and conventions continue to bring the Indian Diaspora directly and indirectly closer to mother India."

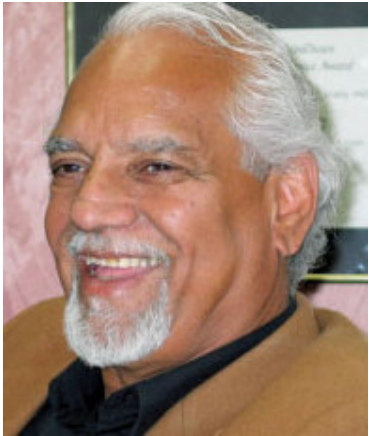
GOPIO chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham said, "By honoring those who have worked selflessly for Indian diaspora causes and India, we are providing exposure of such role models to the next generation. This will motivate more NRIs and PIOs to volunteer their time for community causes."

The awards will be presented by Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi. Other guests for the evening are Meghalaya Gov. M. Jacob, Dr. Karan Singh MP and former Prime Minister Inder K. Gujral.

The awardees for this year are: Charan Gill, Canada; George Abraham, Singapore; Nevin P. Megchiani, Bahrain, Middle East; and Wahid Saleh, The Netherlands.

Charan Gill, Canada

Charan Gill founded the British Columbia Organization



to Fight Racism, co-founded the Canadian Farm Workers Union, and is the president of the Progressive Indo-Canadian Community Services Society. He developed plans for a senior housing project and raised funds towards the purchase price. He was a member of the Task Force on Race Relations, and organized a conference on race relations. Gill has won numerous community service awards such as the Order of British Columbia, Vandusen Community Service Award from the United Way, Human Rights Award from MOSAIC, and the Golden Jubilee Medal in 2002.

George Abraham, Singapore



George Abraham has served in various capacities with the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Singapore Federation of Chambers of Commerce and the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry. He is Chairman of the GA Group which organizes country-focused seminars, conferences and publications; and the Global Indian Business Network Ltd, which assists cross-border trade and investment within Singapore, India and the region. Abraham serves on various government, civic and community organizations, and launched the Global Indian Business Summit in 2006.

Nevin P. Megchiani, Bahrain, Middle East



Nevin Megchiani has been serving and supporting various educational facilities for the benefit of the NRI community in the Gulf, serving in various capacities in several NRI community organizations. He has served as vice chairman of the Indian School Bahrain, the first and the largest community school today with more than 6,000 students. He also worked towards helping the NRI community children to get admissions in the top class universities in India over the quota system by adding or increasing the NRI quota seating. Megchiani is the director of the branch of Birla Institute of Technology of Ranchi which he succeeded in bringing to Bahrain where it established its first international centre abroad for NRI community children to pursue their degree programs

while living with their parents.

His efforts have been a Godsend for harried expatriate Indian families who worry that they are trading affluent living for an uncertain education of their children. Now, Indian parents can rest assured that as they make money, their kids are also getting educated in competitive schools.

Wahid Saleh
The Netherlands



Born in Assam, Wahid Saleh Wahid studied engineering in Kerala, Germany, and The Netherlands. He has served as a board member of the Netherlands-India Association, and guided the creation of the Dutch Indian Youth Association. He has also served in numerous civic, community and cultural organizations in various executive positions. In April 2002 Wahid was awarded the coveted Dutch honor, Ridder in de Orde van Oranje-Nassau (Knighthood of the Order of Orange-Nassau). Saleh also authored the book, “Indiawijzer — India in Nederland,” a reference guide on Indian culture in The Netherlands. For his services to the PIO/NRI community, Saleh was presented with THE Foundation for Critical Choices for India Silver Jubilee

Award. He established the Anwar Qadir Mohammed Salehuddin and Najmun Nisa Memorial Trust for Higher Education in Assam, and donated the required funds for this trust.

Prior to the conference inauguration, a scheduled GOPIO session will present reports on NRI/PIO issues from different countries. This will be followed by a media conclave with two sessions on “India & PIO Media Exchange and Deliberation” and “PIOs in Media: Their Perception of India & Indian Media, and, their role in the global perception of India and bridging Indians and PIOs.” Put together by U.S.-based GOPIO Media Council chairman Munish Gupta and RJR Ban Corp. CEO Sanjay Reddy, speakers include former Prasar Bharati CEO K.S. Sarma, Indian Express editor Shekhar Gupta and S. Mitra Kalita of Washington Post.

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