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Wahid Saleh: On-going Efforts to Promote Indo-Dutch Understanding

by Shirin Pais

Dutch Queen Beatrix has honoured **Wahid Saleh**, a prominent leader of the Indian community in the Netherlands, with the prestigious "Ridder va de Orange Nassau" in recognition of his many contributions to the promotion of Indo-Dutch ties and his efforts to encourage multi-cultural activities in the Netherlands. The Award Citation says that this is "a tribute to his commitment, devotion and years of dedicated work promoting knowledge about and understanding between the peoples of India and the Netherlands of the culture, history, philosophy, religious and social structure of the two countries."

Saleh is the first Indian to receive this "kighthood of the Order of Orange" which is generally conferred on Dutch citizens whose socio-economic contributions make a significant difference to life in the Netherlands. He was presented with this rare honour on the Queen's birthday, by M.E.B. de Goeij-Smulders, the Major of Berkel en Rodenrijs.

An Information Technology professional, Saleh originally hailed from Assam, India, and moved to the Netherlands in 1968. For many years he has played an integral role in helping people from South Asia, mainly India, settle down into the Dutch way of life. Saleh is also the Netherlands-India Association's secretary and a member since 1969. Almost 50 years old and 500 hundred members strong, this association has a rich history of promoting Indo-Dutch cultural relations through lectures, get-togethers and a range of cultural happenings.

According to Saleh, its aims are to promote knowledge and understanding of Indian and Dutch culture, history and social structure among the peoples of both countries. The association also hopes to further relations between the peoples of India and the Netherlands by deepening personal, cultural and social contacts, a through a wide range of lectures, exhibitions and social get-togethers that celebrate Indian culture

Other Trendsetters

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