

## NEW TEAM TAKES OVER THE MANTLE OF GOPIO INTERNATIONAL

Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) completed its election early last month and the new team was sworn-in on March 4th at a virtual Zoom ceremony with veteran community leader from New York Mr. Lal Motwani as its president. Motwani has been a Founder Life member from GOPIO inception in 1989 and was serving as the International Coordinator-at-Large and later as Executive Trustee of GOPIO Foundation in his last term. Motwani initiated GOPIO's first chapter, which was inaugurated by former Indian President late Dr. K.R, Narayanan in 2003. 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, New Jersey businessman Prakash Shah as Global Ambassador and former IBM official and community activist Ms. Jasbir 'Nami' Kaur as International Coordinator-at-Large.

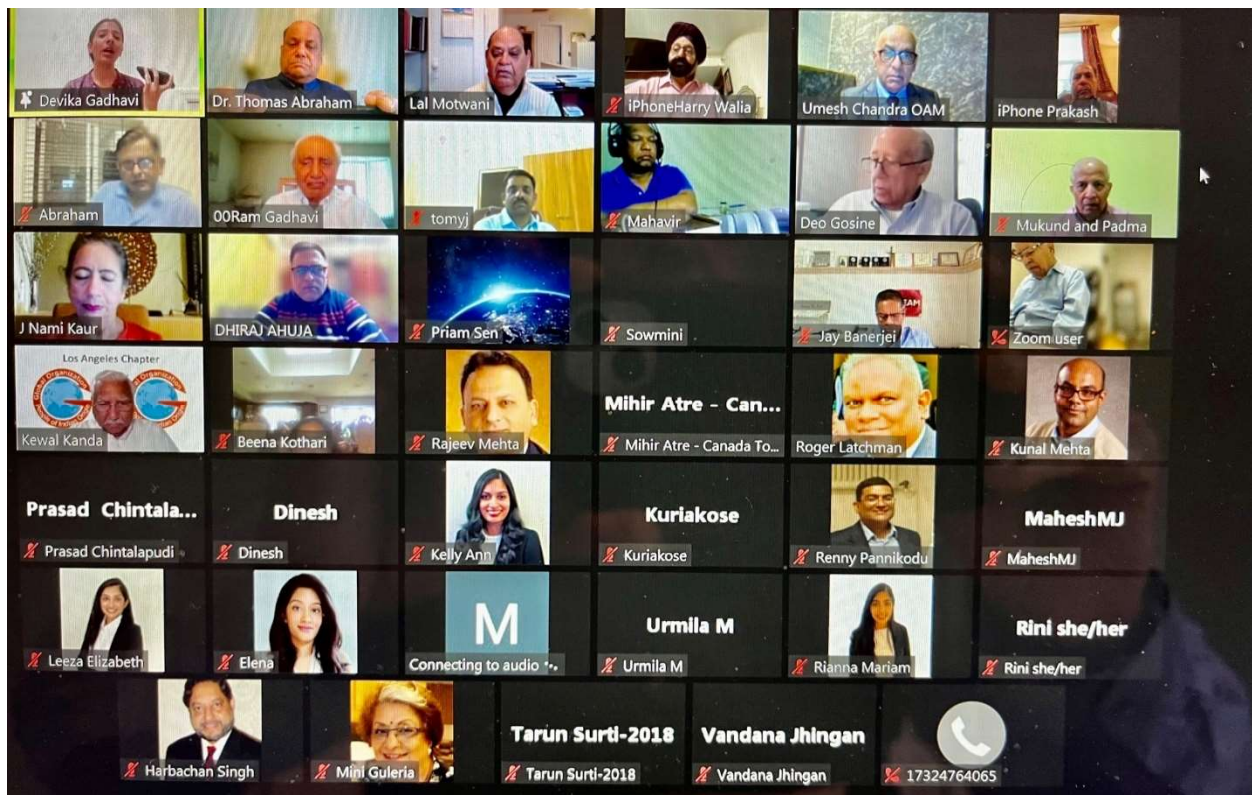
Five more Regional International Coordinators were sworn-in as follows: Businessman Roger Latchman from Johannesburg, South Africa as Africa Coordinator; Engineering Entrepreneur Deo Gosine (Trinidad and New York) as Caribbean Coordinator; Real Estate Investor Ashok Madan of Southern California as North America Coordinator; former engineer Harmohan Singh Walia of Sydney, Australia as Oceania Coordinator and New Delhi businessman Dhiraj Ahuja as South Asia Coordinator. Two others, Dr. Asha Samant of New Jersey (USA), Intl. Coordinator-at-Large and Mr. Ved Prakash Goojha, International Coordinator for Europe, were declared elected but couldn't join the oath ceremony. The new Executive Council appointed Mr. Sohan Joshi as Treasurer. GOPIO Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham will continue till the next General Body meeting which will be called by the new Executive Council. The current team is shown below:



Photo – The new GOPIO Executive Council: Top row: Dr. Thomas Abraham, Lal Motwani, Umesh Chandra, Kewal Kanda, Prakash Shah, Sohan Joshi, Dr. Asha Samant. Bottom Row: Nami Kaur, Roger Latchman, Deo Gosine, Ashok Madan, Harmohan Singh Walia, Dhiraj Ahuja and Ved Prakash Goojha

The election was conducted according to the GOPIO bylaws by a team of the Interim Committee which was appointed by the GOPIO General Body Meeting held on January 14<sup>th</sup> consisting of Mr. Ram Gadhavi (Wayne, New Jersey, USA), Mr. Mahavir Arya (Sydney, Australia) and Mr. Mridul Pathak (New York). In a spirit of unity, nominees with multiple nominations withdrew from their multiple nominations except one, making it a unanimous choice for all positions.

The ceremony started with a universal prayer song by Ms. Devika Gadhavi, who is a young professional working for the New York Times. Dr. Thomas Abraham, Chairman of GOPIO welcomed the participants from all continents and provided a brief introduction to the birth of GOPIO and many of its achievements in the last 34 years. Dr. Abraham also highlighted the great services provided by GOPIO Chapters during the pandemic such as providing food to the frontline workers at the beginning of the lockdown, getting N95 masks to the hospitals, replenishing food pantries and sending oxygen concentrators to India when the pandemic was at its highest level.



Part of the audience at the GOPIO Swearing-in ceremony on Zoom

“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 have been to promote and involve the Indian Diaspora in the larger society and local communities wherever they live,” said Dr. Abraham.

In his acceptance speech, President Motwani said, “We will soon activate those regions which are not active now and we will get all the councils to become active again. We need

many volunteers to get involved in the Councils such as Human Rights, Cultural, Academic, Women, Science and Technology, Youth and Young Professionals, Media, Health and Wellness and on Seniors. We will officially launch GOPIO Chamber of Commerce (GICC) in different parts of the world.”

Congratulating the new team, former GOPIO President Niraj Baxi said that the ceremony on March 4<sup>th</sup> signifies marching forward for GOPIO.

The program ended with a melodious Bollywood celebration song by GOPIO-Edison President Pallavi Belwariar of New Jersey.

GOPIO Executive Council will appoint the council Chairs and Co-Chairs at the next meeting., If you would like to actively involved and volunteer your time, please send a brief bio to President Lal Motwani at [lmotwani@outlook.com](mailto:lmotwani@outlook.com) and Executive VP Umesh Chandra, who is in charge of the GOPIO Councils at [ceo@chantex.com.au](mailto:ceo@chantex.com.au).

## **Profiles and Photos of GOPIO Officials Elected for 2023-‘24**

### **President – Lal Motwani, New York City, USA**



Lal Motwani has been termed a strong community leader who has been involved in several community groups and served as President of the National Federation of Indian American Associations (NFIA), Society of Indian American Engineers and Architects (SIAEA) and Alliance of Global Sindhi Associations. He was the Executive Trustee of GOPIO Foundation from Sept. 2021 to Jan. 2023. An architect by profession, Motwani retired as the Assistant Director of New York City’s Housing Authority, Office of Facility Planning and Administration. Motwani has been able to leave his “mark” on a number of New York City landmarks, be it John F Kennedy (JFK) airport, LaGuardia Airport, World Trade Center, American Express, Port Authority of NY/NJ, City Bank, Chase Manhattan Bank and New York City Housing Authority, the world’s largest public housing facility housing 1/8 of the NYC population.

### **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 Brisbane Indian Times, Australian Indian Radio and Globenet Realty.

#### **Vice President – Kewal Kanda, Norwalk, California, USA**



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 – Prakash Shah, Edison, 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.

**International Coordinator-at-Large – Dr. Asha Samant, DMD, BDS, MDA, FICD, Livingston, New Jersey, USA**



Dr. Samant is an Associate Professor at Rutgers School of Dental Medicine Newark NJ---since 1981. She has received 5 times Excellent Teacher Award and a prestigious University Master’s Educator Guild Award. A trained prosthodontist from New York, taught in Chandigarh, India and New York University. Dr. Samant has received Lifetime Achievement Award by Indentation College of Dentists for her dedicated commitment to Profession. She was honored with Lifetime Achievement Award for 50 Years’ service as Prosthodontist at Golden Jubilee Conference India in 2022. Dr. Samant served as International Coordinator at Large, 2018-2023; Conference Chair, GOPIO Convention in Varanasi, 2019, Co-Chair, GOPIO Convention 2009; Co-chair of GOPIO Health Summit 2010 and Chair, GOPIO Health Council, 2016-‘18

**International Coordinator-at-Large – 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 it's 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 – Roger Latchman, Johannesburg, South Africa**



Roger Latchman has a wealth of experience in corporate governance, compliance, anti-corruption, ethics, and integrity. He is the Honorary Consul-General for Johannesburg internationally Certified Compliance and Ethics Professional as well as a Chartered Director. He has completed several academic programmes, including the Global Executive Development Programme (GEDP) at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, and holds a Master of Laws degree in International Commercial Law from the University of Salford, Manchester, UK. He is also an active member of the Bretton Woods Committee, the French-South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the World Innovation Technology & Services Alliance (WITSA).

#### **International Coordinator for Caribbean – Deo Gosine, Port of Spain, Trinidad**



Deo Gosine is a Life Member of GOPIO, Past Co-Chair GOPIO Business Council and co-sponsor GOPIO 25th Anniversary Convention in Trinidad. He has been a practicing engineer in the Oil and Gas Industry for more than 40 years in the hydrocarbon and marine industries worldwide and as head of Amatech Corp., Labidco and Brighton Port Services, Gosine Quarry Ltd. And Granville Beach Development in Trinidad. Served as President of Society of Indo American Engineers and Architects Inc. in New York.

### **International Coordinator for North America – Ashok Madan, Los Angeles, California, USA**



Ashok Madan, a seasoned Real Estate Investor with a master's degree in Systems Engineering retired in 2010 as a Information Technology Manager from the County of Los Angeles. During his long career, Mr. Madan belonged to numerous professional & community organizations and has frequently taken a responsible and an active role in these organizations. Some of the organizations are: Global Organization of People of Indian Origin; Board Member, TIE SoCal; National Federation of Indian American Associations; Board Member, American Society of Engineers of Indian Origin; Founding Board Member, Peace Center Endowment at the Cerritos College Foundation.

### **International Coordinator for Europe – Ved Prakash Goojha, Paris, France**



Ved Prakash Goojha was born on the island Mauritius, formerly Ile de France. At the end of his higher education in a polytechnic school in London, positions at responsibility are entrusted to him as well in the economic, commercial, media and even in the function public. He works as deputy director at International Stores British American Tobacco Ltd, in London, Managing Director at Work International, in Paris, specialized in manufacture and export of ready-to-wear high-end feminine. He is also Commercial Director at Sina France, a Textile Import Export Company from China, Business Advisor International at "Off-Shore Banking" at Paris, etc. Goojha is the Founder President of Gopio France & Francophone Countries,

### **International Coordinator for Oceania – Harmohan Singh Walia, Sydney, Australia**



Harmohan Singh Walia successfully completed 45 years Mechanical & Industrial Engineering profession in Quality Management and Environmental Management in different industrial sectors, such as Automotive, Electronics, Electrical, Chemical, Defense, IT & Printing. Mr Walia is a founder member of GOPIO in Sydney in 2008. He was president of GOPIO Sydney Northwest chapter and now Secretary. Continuously helping disadvantaged school children in India by providing basic amenities every year. Chaired four terms in Bylaws/Constitution Amendment Committee of GOPIO International and Editor of GOPIO newsletter from Australia.

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



A self-made businessman, Dhiraj Ahuja has a huge international network throughout globe and is a member of Indian Press Club. He has been working effectively as President of GOPIO-Delhi/NCR Chapter. During the pandemic, Dhiraj organized two highly successful Zoom events titled Turn Setbacks into Turnbacks. Dhiraj is associated with a few prominent NGOs as well as business houses.