



# GOPIO NEWS BULLETIN

April 20, 2023

A Publication of the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO)

## 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.

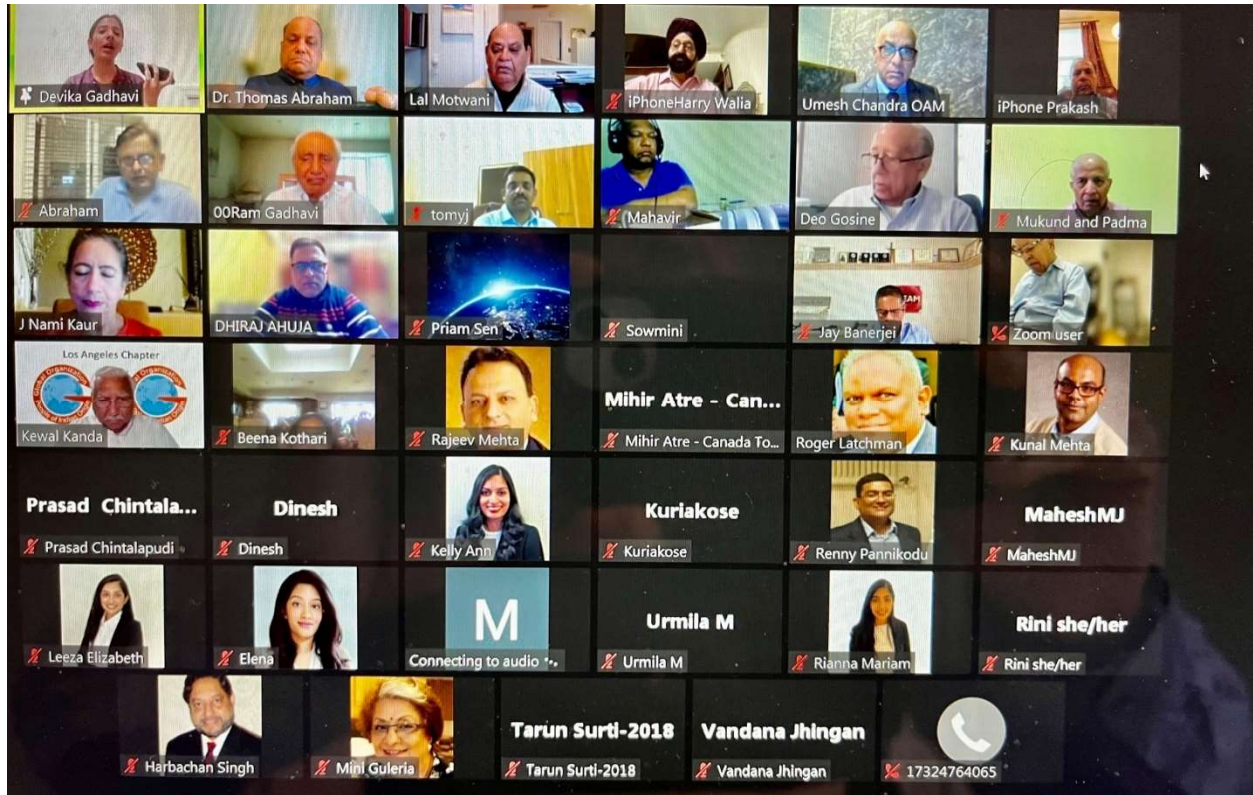
Five more Regional International Coordinators were sworn-in as follows: Businessman Roger Latchman from Johannesburg, South Africa as Africa Coordinator; Engineering Entrepreneur Deo Gosine (Trinidad and New York) as Caribbean Coordinator; Real Estate Investor Ashok Madan of Southern California as North 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 ground work 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).

## GOPIO CHAPTERS CONTRIBUTED TO THE MASSIVE TURKEY EARTHQUAKE RELIEF

As soon the massive earthquake hit Turkey and Syria in February, Indian community leaders, Bina Mehta of New Jersey and Ashok Nichani, Immediate Past President of the Connecticut Chapter of Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO-CT) got into the action to collect relief materials of Turkey earthquake victims.



Photo: Shipments delivered at the Turkey House in New York, From l. to r. Relief Material Coordinators Bina Mehta and Ashok Nichani along with GOPIO Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham

GOPIO-CT delivered several shipments of relief materials for Turkey earthquake including tents, sleeping bags, men's and women's winter jackets and clothes, baby food and clothes, diapers, food packets and orthopedic supplies at the Turkish Consulate in New York. All these relief materials were already shipped immediately to Turkey by Turkish Airlines free of cost.



Photo: Final shipments of relief materials to Turkey including orthopedic supplies, Left photo, from l. to r. Dr. Thomas Abraham, Coordinator Bina Mehta, Turkish Consul Tugay and GOPIO-CT Associate Secretary Ashvini Persaud, Right photo, Orthopedic supplies to Turkey

GOPIO-Bahrain volunteers assembled to pack relief materials to be sent to Turkey and Syria in February



Photo: GOPIO-Bahrain volunteers after packing relief materials

GOPIO Edison and SwarTaal Musicals (New Jersey) organized a musical evening fundraiser for the Turkey victims on the Zoom on March 12, the proceeds of the same will be used for serving food at the rehabilitation centers in Turkey.



GOPIO-Edison Virtual Fundraiser with musical evening, Photo left: clockwise from the top: GOPIO Edison President and Singer Pallavi Belwariar, Bina Mehta, GOPIO President Lal Motwani and Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham, Photo right: part of the virtual attendees.

For more info, contact GOPIO Inc., P.O. Box 1413, Stamford, CT 06904, Tel: 203-329-8010, [gopio@optonline.net](mailto:gopio@optonline.net), [www.gopio.net](http://www.gopio.net)

**GOPIO CHAPTER NEWS**

**GOPIO-CT LAUNCHES 2023 ACTIVITIES AND DONATES FUNDS FOR MILL RIVER PARK'S ACTIVITIES IN STAMFORD**

“Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) - Connecticut Chapter is a vibrant organization that brings rich contributions for Stamford spanning education to business, innovation, arts and culture,” said Stamford Mayor Caroline Simmons who was present to administer the Oath of office for the newly elected GOPIO-CT executive council and board of trustees on Friday, March 17, 2023 at the Stamford Hampton Inn and Suites in Stamford, Connecticut.



Stamford Mayor Caroline Simmons administers the Oath of Office to the GOPIO-CT Team

The program, put together by Ms. Ashvini Persaud and Dr. Anita Mathur, started with a prayer and an introduction about GOPIO by its founder and chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham, who said that Indian Diaspora has achieved political mainstream in many countries and currently serves heads of state in the UK, Ireland, Guyana, Suriname, Seychelles and Mauritius.

Dr. Abraham said, "Indian Diaspora is proud of its achievement in the political arena as well as in the corporate world with many persons of Indian origin heading large multinational companies."

All through the evening, fabulous singers Sreenivas Gunupuru, Sonali Gannu and Anthony Persaud with DJ Ryan Persaud, entertained the audience. Mayor Simmons started off thanking Dr. Abraham, all members of GOPIO-CT and the entire leadership team for everything they do for Stamford City and the generous contributions for the local community.

"How proud we are to the Indian American community and the rich contributions brought to our city for so many years – everything from education to business, innovation, arts and culture as well as the organization's activities have brought so much vibrancy to our city," said Mayor Simmons.

GOPIO-CT has been funding a local community service organization every year. For 2022, the chapter selected Mill River Park Collaborative (MRPC) which organizes activities for children and adults of all ages as well. A check for \$5000 was presented by GOPIO-CT's immediate past president Ashok Nichani to the MRPC Board Chairman Arnold Karp and the Director of Operations Dianne Houtz in the presence of Mayor Simmons.



Photo: GOPIO-CT presenting a check to Mill River Park Collaborative, from l.to r.: Vice President Prachi Narayan, Stamford Mayor Caroline Simmons, MRPC Board Chairman Arnold Karp and the Director of Operations Dianne Houtz, GOPIO-CT President Dr. Jaya Daptardar, Immediate Past President Ashok Nichani, GOPIO Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham, Secretary Sushanth Krishnamurthy and Treasurer Srinivas Akarapu.

The activities for the year were inaugurated by the Chief Guest Mayor Caroline Simmons. Mayor Simmons said that she and her team look forward to working with GOPIO-CT and supporting its initiatives to build a more inclusive and equitable society. She then administered the oath of office to the newly elected 2023 Executive Committee, Board, Trustees and the new president. Delegates from various service organizations were present at the event including Women's Mentoring Network, Future 5 and Stamford Public Library.

President Dr. Jaya Daptardar officially welcomed new GOPIO CT Executive board members team Executive VP Mahesh Jhangiani, Vice President Prachi Narayan, Secretary Sushanth Krishnamurthy, Joint Secretary Ashvini Persaud, Treasurer Srinivas Akarapu, Immediate past President Ashok Nichani who served from 2019 to 2022; Board members: Meera Banta, Dilli Bhatta, Ruby Chadda, Ravi Dhingra, Sonali Gannu, Nandu Kuppusamy, Manish Maheswari, Dr. Anita Mathur, Vikas Mathur, Ravi Nichani, Mangal Shah and Dr. Sujata Gadkar-Wilcox; Trustees: Shelly Nichani, Prasad Chintalapudi, Joe Simon, Shailesh Naik, Dr. Thomas Abraham and Neelam Narang. "We will all work together with GOPIO Chairman, trustees and board members to serve the community and will make sure to make the difference," Dr. Daptardar added.



Photo: GOPIO-CT 2023 team, from l. to r.: Prasad Chintalapudi, Ashvini Persaud, Prachi Narayan, Dr. Jaya Daptardar, Dr. Thomas Abraham, Ashok Nichani, Sushanth Krishnamurthy, Srinivas Akarapu, Dr. Anita Mathur, Santosh Gannu and Meera Banta (some team members are missing in the photo)

The newly elected President Dr. Jaya Daptardar spoke about the recent fundraiser. She said "On Feb 6<sup>th</sup> earthquake struck southern and central Turkey and northern and western



Syria. GOPIO CT executive team came together in raising funds for Turkey disaster relief. Our GOPIO CT immediate past president Mr. Ashok Nichani contacted Turkey embassy and found resources to send the required aid. We couldn't find reliable resources to send relief to Syria but we did as much as we could for the survivors in Turkey. Together 5000 dollars of needed supplies such as food, tent, men's and women's jackets, baby formulae, children's clothes and orthopedic supplies were sent by Turkish Airlines."

Dr. Daptardar presented the 2023 GOPIO events and activities overview which includes a seminar on investments and tax tips in April, Health and Wellness seminar in May on Mental Health as part of the Mental Health Awareness, "Hope in Motion' Walkathon on June 11<sup>th</sup> to raise funds for Bennet Cancer Center of the Stamford Hospital, India Day Celebration on August 6<sup>th</sup>, Welcome Dinner for Indian students at UConn in September, Diwali party in November and partnering with community Diwali event at Ferguson library in Stamford and finally Holiday Party in December which will raise funds for a local charity.

Sponsors of the event were International Museum of the Saree (Queens, NY), Infinity Solutions (Stamford, CT), Wayne Purville, of Cero Communications (Mount Vernon, NY), Braj Agrawal CPA (Jackson Heights, NY), Dr. Rajesh Kalra of NCR Care (Queens, NY). GOPIO-CT Vice President Prachi Narayan gave the vote of thanks. The program continued with Bollywood music and dance.



Photo: GOPIO-CT organizers, musicians and sponsors of the launch event

Over the last 17 years, GOPIO-CT, a chapter of GOPIO International has become an active and dynamic organization hosting interactive sessions with policy makers and

academicians, community events, youth mentoring and networking workshops, and working with other area organizations to help create a better future. GOPIO-CT – Global Organization of People of Indian Origin – serves as a non-partisan, secular, civic and community service organization – promoting awareness of Indian culture, customs and contributions of PIOs through community programs, forums, events and youth activities. It seeks to strengthen partnerships and create an ongoing dialogue with local communities.

Contact Sushanth Krishnamurthy, Secretary GOPIO-CT, Tel: 203-829-8412, e-mail: [sushanthK@yahoo.com](mailto:sushanthK@yahoo.com).

### **CHANGE OF GUARDS AT GOPIO-QUEENSLAND, INC.**

Brisbane, GOPIO Queensland held a special meeting to appoint a prominent Brisbane businessman Mr Indu Kant Sharma as the incoming president; the position became vacant, with Professor Prasad Yarlagadda OAM taking on the new engineering dean role at UniSQ. At the change-over dinner, Professor Yarlagadda welcomed Mr Sharma as the incoming president and wished him and his team all the best for the future; he also pledged his support and guidance as and when needed.

In his acceptance speech, Mr Indu Kant Sharma thanked Professor Prasad OAM for his leadership and wished him well in his new role; Mr Indu Kant Sharma said he would be drawing on Professor Prasad's experience. GOPIO International Gold Life member and mentor Pars Ram Punj congratulated the incoming team and noted that it was time for the younger generation to step up and control the reins. At the request of acting president Rakesh Sharma, and Umesh Chandra OAM, executive vice president of GOPIO International, he conducted the special meeting at Curry N Cask restaurant, Fortitude Valley.



Photo: GOPIO-Queensland outgoing President Prof. Prasad Yarlagadda handing over to the new president Mr. Indu Kant Sharma

GOPIO Queensland has its annual programs and events all lined with Girit Diwas on 14<sup>th</sup> May, India Day Fair fund Raiser on 2<sup>nd</sup> of June, India Day Fair on 19<sup>th</sup> August and Gandhi Jayanti on 2<sup>nd</sup> October. These annual events are, in addition to, any other events that the committee may see fit to host. GOPIO Queensland requests everyone to please mark their diaries. The new team is eager to welcome new members.

If you are not already a member, you are encouraged to join GOPIO Queensland; membership is open to all individuals who identify as people of Indian Origin, irrespective of your country of birth. Membership to GOPIO is for individuals, so you don't have to be an organization to be a member, and even if you are a member of another organization, you can still join GOPIO and be part of a genuinely global organization representing the Indian Diaspora since 1989.

Contact: GOPIO-Queensland President Indu Kant Sharma, Tel: +61 401 772 566

## **GOPIO CHAPTERS JOIN HANDS WITH INDIAN CONSULATE TO CELEBRATE SHAHEED DIWAS**

Shaheed Diwas or Martyrs' Day is observed on six days across India which includes January 30<sup>th</sup> and March 23<sup>rd</sup> each year to remember the sacrifices of the brave freedom fighters who devoted their entire lives to help us enjoy freedom.

As India and the people of Indian origin living around the world enjoy freedom, liberty, equality and success, it's due to the sacrifices, vision and foresight of men and women who dedicated their lives at the cause of freedom, fighting for independence from the 200-years of British Rule. There are millions who dedicated their lives, while there are some whose leadership and bravery inspired millions of others to fight for freedom.

Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) along with its chapters in the New York area (Manhattan, New York, Edison and Central Jersey) joined hands with the Consulate General of India in New York to organize and honor the martyrs during a virtual celebration of Shaheed Diwas 2023, which is the 92<sup>nd</sup> death anniversary of three courageous youngsters Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru and Sukhdev Thapar on March 18, 2023.

The celebrations, started with a welcome remark by GOPIO-Manhattan Co-Secretary Emcee Bhavya Gupta, touched many hearts as the hundreds of participants heard personal stories shared by family members of some of these brave men and women, who fought valiantly and gave up their lives at the altar of freedom for India. Bhavya then introduced the other Emcee of the event, poet and writer Anoop Bhargava, who spoke on the importance of Martyr's Day. Bhargava said, "On March 23 in 1931, three brave men, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar, and Shivaram Rajguru were hanged to death by Britishers, for fighting for freedom from British rule in India."

India's Consul General Randhir Kumar Jaiswal opened with Jai Hind. He shared his journey of 25-years since starting in the Indian Foreign Service in 1998 and pointed to the nine-fold growth in the same period within India. He further added that the next 25-years, known as Amrit Kal (100-years of independence); India will grow 9-fold or more. He praised the contributions of the Martyrs that led to the last 75-years of success and called upon the Indian Diaspora to join him this year and convey the message of India as it leads G20 Presidency to the people across the world. Also, this year India celebrates the International Year of Millets 2023 or Shree Anna (means auspicious). Millets are less consuming of water and highly nutritious. For more info on millets, click here: <https://twitter.com/IYM2023>



*Photo: Ambassador Randhir Kumar Jaiswal, Consul General of India in New York inaugurating the event.*



*Photo: Speakers at the Shaheed Divas, Top Row, from l. to r. Indian Consul Vipul Dev, Vermont State Senator Keshu Ram, Fil Producer and Author Dr. Bhuvan Lal; Botton Row: from l. to r.: Vice Chancellor Dr. Neerja Arun Gupta, New York City Univ. Professor Manu Bhagawan and Peot Gajendra Solanki*



*Photo: GOPIO International President Lal Motwani speaking at the Shabed Divas with GOPIO Organizers on the screen: Top Row, from l. to r. Anoop Bhargava, Lal Motwani, Ram Gadhavi, Middle Row: From l. to r. Dr. Thomas Abraham, Shivender Sofat. Siddarth Jain; Bottom Row, from l. to r.: Braj Agrawal, Bhavya Gupta and Pallavi Verma Belwariar*

The program started with a welcome by GOPIO Chair for the event and emcees Mr. Anoop Bhargava and Ms. Bhavya Gupta. GOPIO International Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham, who also serves as an advisor to GOPIO-Manhattan, encouraged the speakers to mentor, motivate and guide the youngsters especially the new students from India to the US.

Dr. Abraham said, “GOPIO caters to the 32 million Indian Diaspora. GOPIO has done pioneering work in connecting the diaspora with the motherland. He asked the distinguished speakers to join the attendees in celebrations those who were martyred and devoted their life for India”

Vermont State Senator Ms. Kesha Ram reflected on her roots and the involvement of her families during the partition of India and Pakistan. That event displaced millions and numerous lives were lost. Her Great-Great Grandfather was Shri Gangaram upon whom there is a hospital named in the Capital--New Delhi and Lahore, Pakistan.”

Dr. Bhuvan Lall, Film Producer, Entrepreneur, Speaker, Scriptwriter and Columnist, New Delhi, India. Author of *The Man India Missed The Most - Subhas Chandra Bose & The Great Indian Genius – Har Dayal*, reminded the audience of the importance of various dates before and after March 23<sup>rd</sup> starting with Jan 30<sup>th</sup>, Feb 27<sup>th</sup>, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, April 13<sup>th</sup>. Dr Lall reminded that the freedom struggle started in 1857 that caught fervor post hanging of the three martyrs and led to the freedom in 1947.

Dr. Lall narrated an incident that happened the year following on Jan 26<sup>th</sup> 1932 wherein the young men decided to march and unfurl their flag in front of the Town Hall. The police came to know and were prepared for this. Five men appeared singing the song "*Jhanda Ooncha Rahe Hamara*" (*Our Flag Shall Fly High*). The police led a lathi charge and dissipated the crowds and went to their respective locations and celebrated their victory. Much to their surprise, they heard the same song "*Jhanda Ooncha Rahe Hamara*" being sung by women with the flag in their hands headed to Town Hall. By the time Police got time to react, a large crowd gathered with the Flag almost ready to plant it at the Town Hall.

Dr. Neerja Arun Gupta, Vice Chancellor of Sanchi University for Buddhist and Indic Studies, added her comments on the occasion with Swaraj as a movement and highlighted the sacrifices of the martyrs. India is changing and Indians are becoming more Bhartiya. The growth is attributed due to the Swaraj or the Freedom Movement and the benefits are being seen today post overcoming the colonial hangover. The movie *Shaheed*, personified the struggle of Bhagat Singh as portrayed by Shri Manoj Kumar and his mother's role as essayed by Kamini Kaushal, the line that resonated with the citizens was the strength of the mother of Bhagat Singh "*Tu Na Rona kyon ki Tu Hai Bhagat Singh Ki Maa*" (*Do not shed a tear as you're the mother of Bhagat Singh*).

Kavi Gajendra Solanki mesmerized the audience with this spirited narration of the poetry related to Martyr's Day... His narration got the audience reinvigorated with this voice and message.

Mr. Lal Motwani, President of GOPIO International, in his remarks gave a background of his family during the partition and how they navigated from Lahore to Punjab India."

Dr. Manu Bhagwan, Professor of History and Human Rights at Hunter College and the Graduate Center-The City University of New York, and Senior Fellow at the Ralph Bunche Institute, illustrated the freedom struggle and provided an insight on the message of Mahatma Gandhi and Bhagat Singh. Both Gandhi and Bhagat Singh called on us to believe in something larger than ourselves and larger than themselves to hold on to some key values to recognize some essential truths and to fight for broader ideals to honor the sacrifices that they made and to recall these values of truths and ideals and to understand that the aspiration for these is ongoing and in fact Eternal and that it is through our constant quest for them that our Shaheeds/Martyrs achieve immortality.

Prof. Bhagwan said, "Bhagat Singh and Gandhi are often contrasted for having different visions one that of a young revolutionary and the other the apostle of non-violence yet the

two were closer in both means and ends than is commonly thought; both dreamed of a more equal and just world free from oppression and once imprisoned Bhagat Singh and his friends got recognition for *Fighting For Better Conditions* for those in jail specifically deploying a tactic more commonly associated with Gandhi a *fasting hunger strike* -- this non-violent form of self-suffering from Gandhi's point of view was premised on the belief that all of us and each of us are connected in deep and profound ways through what Gandhi called the bond of love."

Cultural Consul Vipul Dev from the Indian Consulate summarized the event "Keep the memories of our Martyrs alive and it's very important to let the future generations of our diaspora especially the children who are born and brought up here in the United States to acquaint them with the glorious history of India's Freedom struggle." He further added, "It took immense courage and immense sacrifices by the Shaheeds on their part, imagine someone you know as young as 23 years old like Bhagat Singh was and their other companions they were young men in their 20s, some were in their 30s, but imagine the kind of courage and sacrifice that they chose so we should learn and we should take inspiration from their life and we should understand their message and take it forward."

Consul Dev further said, "As we gather at the Consulate General of India with our community who are regular at our events and who are connected with us, that this year we are celebrating the 75th year of India's independence, Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and as part of that series of celebrations we are remembering so many of our freedom fighters especially those who we consider unsung heroes."

Shivender Sofat, President of GOPIO-Manhattan, in his passionate address, shared about the sacrifices of Freedom Fighters. "This is part of a series of events to pay homage to martyrs of India," he said. "It was planned in 2019, but today, we are fortunate to have this virtually connecting all of us from around the world for this solemn event." While referring to the different paths used by the freedom fighters, he said, "They all had one goal: freedom for our motherland. Our real homage to the martyrs is to work towards by preserving the ideals of the martyrs." He led the audience from around the world to salute India and the Martyrs in one voice, as they all called out "***Inquilab Zindabad.***"



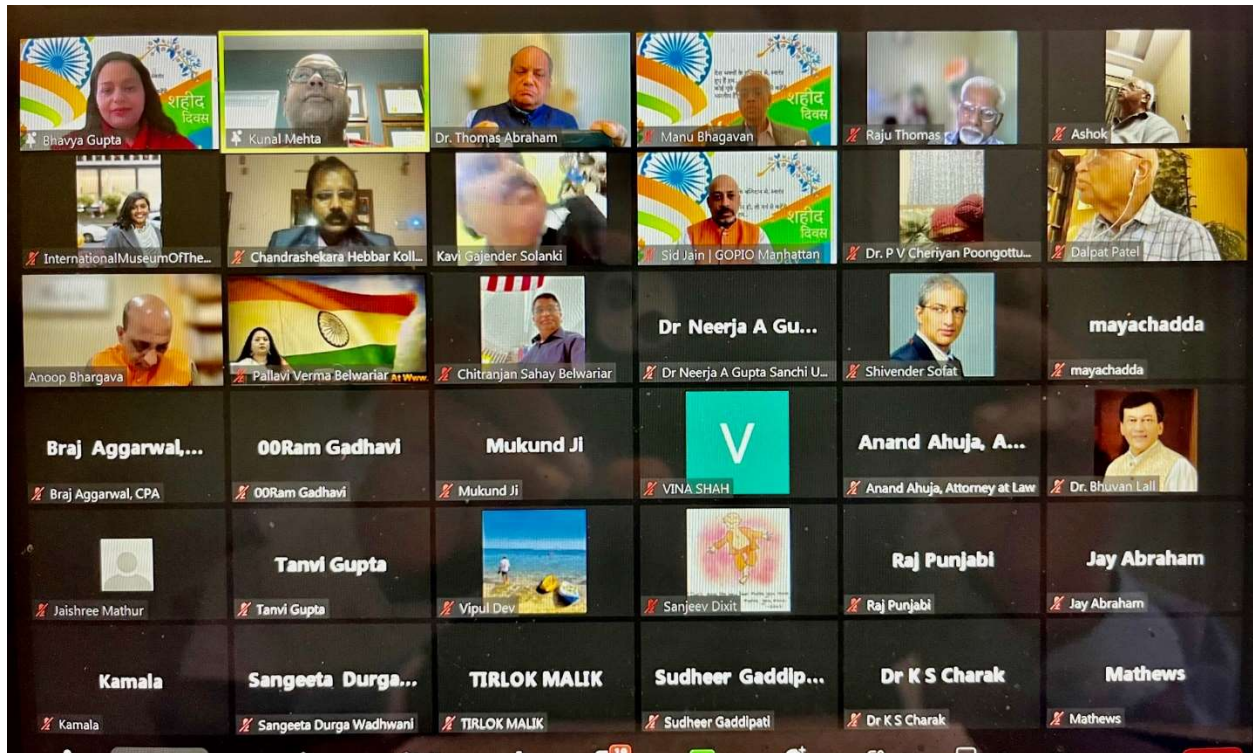


Photo: A screen of participants at the Shaheed Diwas Celebration on the Zoom

The ninety minutes long celebration was combined with patriotic songs: *Vande Mataram* and *Kar Chale Hum Fida*, patriotic songs, were sung by Pallavi Verma Belwarior, paying tributes to the martyrs.

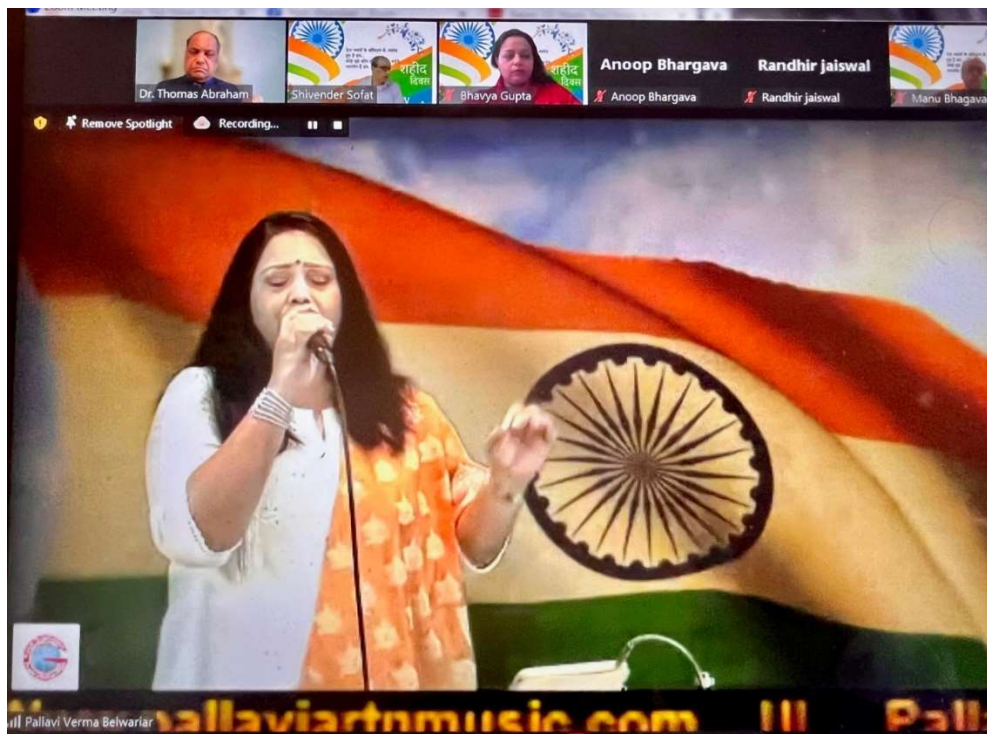


Photo: GOPIO-Edison President and Singer Pallavi Verma Belwarior singing the patriotic songs.

The program ended with conclusionary remarks and a vote of thanks by GOPIO-Manhattan Team, Anoop Bhargava, Bhavya Gupta, along with Shivender Sofat and Siddharth Jain. Technical support for the program was provided by GOPIO Manhattan Life Member and GOPIO Edison Board Member Chitranjan Sahai Belwariar.

Four ending lines

### कविता: देश के वीर सपूतों

*इतनी सी बात हवाओं को बताए रखना,*

*रौशनी होगी चिरागों को जलाए रखना,*

*लहू देकर की जिसकी हिफाजत हमने,*

*ऐसे तिरंगे को को सदा अपनी आंखों में बसाए रखना*

In accordance with its mission to serve the larger society and those in need, GOPIO-Manhattan Chapter has taken several initiatives in the recent past. A Community Feeding is organized by the Chapter providing vegan or vegetarian lunch for the homeless and needy at Tomkins Square Park in Manhattan on the last Monday of every month. The chapter appeals to the community to support the initiative by being a volunteer to serve the lunch and/or a sponsor.

### **GOPIO PARTICIPATES AT THE UN SESSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN**

GOPIO International and its chapters (Connecticut, New York, Manhattan and Edison) joined hands in participating at the UN Session on Status of Women in “Grassroots leadership and transformation: Charting the path of empowerment through technology and skill development” organized by The Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations in partnership with W20, the official engagement group of G20 on women’s economic empowerment held at the United Nations Conference Hall on March 16th. Moderated by Ms. Dharitri Patnaik, Chief Coordinator, W20 India and Chair of W20 Task Force on Bridging the Gender Digital Divide, the keynote speaker was Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj, India’s Permanent Representative UN. Other speakers included Dr. Sandhya Purecha, Chair of W20 and Dr. Jyoti Kiran Shukla, Economist & Policy Expert.



GOPIO delegation at the UN Session on the Status of Women



GOPIO Delegation with the panelists

## GOPIO-SYDNEY NORTHWEST HELPS DISADVANTAGED SCHOOL CHILDREN IN INDIA

GOPIO Sydney North-West chapter President Sumit Joshi, Secretary Harmohan Singh Walia, and other officials Prof. Balkar Singh Kang and Aman Singh travelled to India at their own expenses during 2022-23 and distributed basic amenities items to disadvantaged school children of Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana by using GOPIO Sydney North-West chapter's funds. Over 1500 students have benefitted this time and in the last 13 years over 8000 students have benefitted. The basic items include warm clothes, uniforms, shoes, socks, hand pump for drinking water, water filters, RO filters, water coolers, furniture, inverters with batteries, sports items, stationery, sound system for prayers and ceiling fans etc.



GOPIO-Sydney NW Chapter Helping Disadvantaged Children in 2023

GOPIO Sydney North-West chapter annually supports Cancer Council of Australia and National Heart Foundation of Australia. The chapter also helped victims of the NSW Rural fire, Blue Mountains fire, the Fiji cyclone, the Nepal earthquake, FoxG1 and the underprivileged kids in Nigeria. During Covid-19 period time, GOPIO Syd North-West chapter helped International Indian students of Sydney and Melbourne and provided two weeks rent to them. Chapter funds are raised in the annual "Caring & Sharing" event every year.

Contact: Harmohan Singh Walia, Justice of the Peace (JP), GOPIO International Coordinator for Oceania, Kellyville (Sydney), Australia, Tel: +61-402 842 375

## **NEW YORK INDIAN CONSULATE AND GOPIO MANHATTAN ORGANIZE 'MEET AND GREET' FOR STUDENTS FROM INDIA AT THE INDIAN CONSULATE**

The Consulate General of India in New York in cooperation with GOPIO Manhattan organized the 'Meet and Greet Students from India' studying in the Northeast to connect them to the community and providing mentoring opportunities as well as to raise awareness of Consular services to students from the Consulate. Students from many universities across the Northeast participated in person and via Facebook Live at the event hosted by the Indian Consulate on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

The program started with a welcome by Dr. Varun Jeph, Deputy Consul General with his welcome to the 135+ students in attendance and many more online. He summarized the event introducing the speakers and the topics that will be discussed by them and informed the services offered by the Consulate to the Students. He invited the students Consul General of India at New York Mr. Randhir Kumar Jaiswal to begin the evening's proceedings.

The host for the evening, Ambassador Randhir Kumar Jaiswal, commented, "Namaste to all Young friends. A very warm welcome to the Consulate, your Home and my office."

He further highlighted there are two sets of students we deal with, one that are here and the others that come here from India. This Student Meet & Greet is an effort in the direction of you connecting with each other and being there as you grow in this new land of opportunities. We are the fifth largest economy and climbing to become the third largest economy. He added that there are 1 million students among the 34 million Diaspora are going to play a very important role in that and be the real champions."



*Consul General Randhir Kumar Jaiswal and GOPIO Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham addressing the students*

Consulate official Ms. Satpadi Tagore invited GOPIO International Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham for his remarks. Dr. Abraham serves as an advisor to GOPIO-Manhattan and started with “Namaskar and addressed the students by reflecting on his journey fifty years ago with an example that a simple phone call back home would cost around \$3/minute. There was a concept of host families. With the advancement of technologies and ease of communication and growth in students, there is no more such need of host families. Starting in 2021 and following session in Oct 2022, and today, we are hosting these sessions to connect you with the community, professional achievers and the Consulate for help with issues or in case of emergency. He noted the number of students across Columbia, NYU, Pace, SUNY Bufallo, Touro College, UPenn, NJIT and other universities represented in the room.”



*Photo 3: Deputy Consul General Dr. Varun Jeph, speaker Dr. Bernadine Waller, Bhavya Gupta and Siddharth Jain*

GOPIO Manhattan Co Secretary and Chair for the event and emcee Ms. Bhavya Gupta then introduced and invited the panelists for the evening Mr. Akshat Tewary, an immigration attorney, Ms. Sanjyot Dunung, CEO & Founder of Atma Global, Moderator Prof Srikant Jagabathula from NYU, Mr. Anthony Irudhyanathan, President Zillion Technologies and Prof. Rajashekar Vangapaty.



*Photo Top, L to R: Mr. Akshat Tewary esq., Ms. Sanjyot Dunung, Prof. Srikant Jagabathula and Mr. Anthony Irudhyanathan, Prof. Rajashekar Vangapaty engaging in a Panel Discussion with students*

Mr. Srikanth Jagabathula, Robert Stansky Research Faculty Fellow and Associate Professor of Tech, Ops, and Stats at the NYU Stern School of Business, moderated the panel starting with giving each speaker a min to talk about their background. He channeled the conversations across the topics of immigration to job search to internships, teaching assistantships etc. with the fellow speakers and engaged the audience. He shared his experiences with the

students and said, “Wear different hats, multi-task, go out of your comfort zone, explore and discover.”

GOPIO-Manhattan Executive Vice President Professor Rajasekhar Vangapaty spoke about the importance of on-campus job and securing the teaching assistant role while at campus and its importance in job search. He added that “every skill-set you learn in your life will definitely benefit you somewhere in your lifetime. Never get discouraged, if you get hurdles.” He emphasized on the fact that “do not guess the answers. If you don’t know, ask. Whether you’re given or not that’s a different story.”

Ms. Sanjyot Dunung, CEO & Founder of Atma Global, shared her experiences with the students about her journey from India to England to Chicago as she experienced the culture shifts. She added that it doesn’t necessarily matter at what age you move to a new country. The concept of culture shock, learning new values, attitudes, understanding how people do things, can be startling at the very beginning. She bridged the two cultures with every summer trip to India to retain and touch that Indian cultural experience. She indulged the panel to assist students in formulating their choices of major and career path.

Mr. Anthony Irudhyanathan, President Zillion Technologies shared his journey as an Entrepreneur in the technology sector, started with \$400. He reflected on his journey and cited his motivation to be here was based on the fact that the Students from India have the chance to be a Game Changer and that he invests in the ideas from Students, a support not available when he started his journey in 1998. This platform of Meet & Greet is a good opportunity for Students to excel in being a game changer as 60% of top 100 companies have Indians as CIO/CTOs today. He added “students should immerse within the system, learn and connect with the people.”

Mr. Akshat Tewary, an immigration attorney added “reflected on his journey to the USA in Jan 1986 highlighting the sense of expectation, optimism, growth etc. as the cultural differences between homeland and USA.”





*Photo: Speakers and organizers at the 'Students Meet & Greet'.*

**1st Row l. to r.:** *Speaker Akshat Tewary, GOPIO Manhattan EVP & Speaker Professor Rajasekhar Vangapaty, Speaker Srikanth Jagabathula, Speaker Sanjyot Dunung, Ambassador Randhir Kumar Jaiswal, Speaker Dr. Bernadine Waller and Dy. Consul General Dr. Varun Jeph.*

**2nd Row l. to r.:** *Raj Punjabi, GOPIO Manhattan Board Member Siddharth (Sid) Jain, GOPIO Manhattan Board Member Chitranjan Belwariar, GOPIO Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham, GOPIO Manhattan VP Dr. Vimal Goyle, GOPIO Manhattan Board Member & Program Coordinator Bhavya Gupta, GOPIO Manhattan Treasurer Braj Aggarwal & GOPIO Manhattan Member Tara Shajan.*

Dr. Bernadine Waller, Columbia University “reflected on the mental health issues ranging from anxiety to depression and all in between. She highlighted the various reasons the stresses that are faced by Students such as job search, internship search, competitiveness, loneliness etc. The optimal way to deal with it is “One Bite At A Time.” She further added that we encourage the students to think of the career, plan for the present, think about the future, but come back to the present.

Mr. Shivender Sofat, President GOPIO-Manhattan, who joined virtually told the importance of mentoring to the students, discussed chapter activities and motivated everyone to volunteer and become members at future events held by GOPIO Manhattan.

Mr. Siddharth Jain, GOPIO Manhattan Board Member concluded with a quote from Rumi: ***“It’s your road, and yours alone, others may walk it with you, but no one can walk it for you.”***

Mr. Jain followed the quote with the vote of thanks to Host Ambassador Shri Randhir Kumar Jaiswal, Dy. Consul Shri Varun Jeph, Dr. Thomas Abraham, Distinguished Panelists, Ms. Satabdi Tagore and the Consulate staff. Other GOPIO-Manhattan officials present at the meeting included President Shivender Sofat (attended virtually), EVP Professor Rajasekhar Vangapaty, Treasurer Braj Aggarwal, VP Vimal Goyle, Board Member & Program Coordinator Bhavya Gupta, Board Member Chitranjan Belwariar, Members Raj Punjabi, & Tara Shajan.

“The students had an excellent time networking with students from different universities as well as with speakers and the Consulate and GOPIO officials and we plan to do a much bigger event next year,’ Dr. Abraham added.



*Photo Students from different universities and colleges with Consulate and GOPIO officials and speakers*

In accordance with its mission to serve the larger society and those in need, GOPIO-Manhattan Chapter has taken several initiatives in the recent past. A Community Feeding is organized by the Chapter providing vegan or avegetarian lunch for the homeless and needy at Tomkins Square Park in Manhattan on the last Monday of every month. The chapter appeals to the community to support the initiative by being a volunteer and/or a sponsor.

For more info on GOPIO Manhattan, call President Shivender Sofat at 731-988-6969, e-mail: [info@gopiomanhattan.org](mailto:info@gopiomanhattan.org) or visit here: <https://gopiomanhattan.org/>  
Facebook Link: [GOPIO Manhattan NYC](#)

## GOPIO-WAIKATO, NEW ZEALAND PARTICIPATES IN INDIGO MULTICULTURAL EVENT



Global organization of people of Indian Origin Waikato Chapter (New Zealand) participated in **INDIGO MULTICULTURAL EVENT** with Indian dance performance and also FLAG MARCH with Indian Flag.

Contact: Suman Kapoor, GOPIO-Waikato Chapter, Tel: +64 21 180 1234, [sumankapoor2002@yahoo.com](mailto:sumankapoor2002@yahoo.com).

## GOPIO-MANHATTAN'S MONTHLY COMMUNITY PROGRAM CONTINUES

GOPIO-Manhattan's community feeding held last Monday of the month for the homeless and those in need was started in December 2020. The last one was held on Monday, March 27th. The Community Feeding Program served a vegetarian lunch at Tompkins Square Park in Manhattan (New York City). Over 60 people turned up for a nutritious veg. lunch. Sponsor for this month was GOPIO-Manhattan President Shivender Sofat. GOPIO-Manhattan Coordinator of the program Dr. Vimal Goyle was present at the feeding to serve the food.



Volunteers from GOPIO-Manhattan and Interfaith Services at the Community Feeding. In the middle holding GOPIO banner is Dr. Vimal Goyle

One can sponsor in the name of your loved one who passed away or for someone's birthday. The food is prepared by volunteers of Interfaith Services in a nearby kitchen. Sponsors are welcome to come and serve the food, but not necessary. Sponsorship is only \$300. If interested to sponsor, call the program chair and the chapter Vice President Dr. Vimal Goyle at 316-371-7098 or write to [info@gopiomanhattan.org](mailto:info@gopiomanhattan.org). If anyone wants to sponsor please visit the link below and make the payment. [www.gopiomanhattan.org](http://www.gopiomanhattan.org), <https://www.facebook.com/105268841082397/posts/473536844255593/?d=n> or PayPal: <https://Paypal.me/gopiomanhattan>, Zelle: [donation@gopiomanhattan.org](mailto:donation@gopiomanhattan.org) or Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/GopioNYC/>

## **GOPIO-EDISON AND TOASTMASTERS CLUB ORGANIZE SESSIONS ON SPEECH DELIVERY FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

GOPIO-Edison and Sayreville Toastmasters Club joined hands to organize six free sessions for public speaking and to improve speech delivery, starting on March 23<sup>rd</sup> for high school students from Sayreville (New Jersey) Library. It is held in the evening at 7 pm (EST, USA and Canada). At the first session, Sayreville Councilwoman Donna Robert attended the event alongside members of Sayreville Toastmasters Club. Councilwoman Robert appreciated the effort of the Club and GOPIO-Edison and promised her full support.



Speakers at Toastmasters Club and GOPIO-Edison high school students coaching program at Sayreville Library. From l. to r. Sayreville Councilwoman Donna Robert, Chitranjan Belwariar and two other speakers

This program is for youth under 18 brought organized by Toastmasters International, District-83, Sayreville Toastmasters Club and sponsored by GOPIO-Edison. High School students from anywhere can join. The enrollment is currently full. Next series of sessions will start in May 2023. Mandatory registration at [HTTP://tinyurl.com/STM-YLP](http://tinyurl.com/STM-YLP).

Contact: Chitranjan Sahai Belwariar, GOPIO-Edison, Tel: 732-447-5960, [chitranjanbelwariar@gmail.com](mailto:chitranjanbelwariar@gmail.com).

## GOPIO-VIRGINIA ANNOUNCES AWARD OF EXCELLENCE BANQUET

**GOPIO VIRGINIA**  
GLOBAL ORGANIZATION OF PEOPLE OF INDIAN ORIGIN  
PROUDLY PRESENTS

**AWARD OF EXCELLENCE  
BANQUET & CELEBRATION**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2023**  
Time: 6 PM to 9 PM.  
BOMBAY TANDOOR, VIENNA, VA 22182

GUEST:  
Congressmen, Senators &  
Ambassador

DINNER:  
Tasty Indian Meal  
(Dance & Music Masti)

For Tickets & More Information  
Jay Bhandari (President)  
Contact: (301) 254- 4679

Senator Tim Kaine  
presenting awards

Website: [gopiovirginia.org](http://gopiovirginia.org)  
Email: [jay\\_bhandari@hotmail.com](mailto:jay_bhandari@hotmail.com)

*Don't miss it*

## GOPIO MEMBERS ACHIEVE

### GOPIO LIFE MEMBER AND MICROSOFT EXECUTIVE WRITES A BOOK, **REFLECTION – THE FLOW OF MY LIFE**

Its a family chronicle that guides the author to discover meaning in his life experiences and offer insights to heal hearts with love, hope and peace.

Now available worldwide through Amazon at USA: <https://www.amazon.com/Flow-My-Life-Reflections/dp/B0BVCTPP5M/> and India: <https://www.amazon.in/dp/B0BTZ65D8K>

### GOPIO-EDISON BOARD MEMBER CHITRANJAN BELWARIAR RECOGNIZED AT THE INDIAN CONSUALTE



Indian Consul General Randhir Kumar Jaiswal presenting a recognition plaque to Chitranjan Belwariar

Mr. Chitranjan Sahay Belwariar, Vice President, Bank of America and GOPIO-Edison Board Member was an invited panelist at a insightful discussion on the **Impact of Blockchain Technology in the Banking & Finance Sector**, organized by the Amity Education Group at the Consulate General of India in New York on April 17, 2023. Belwariar had also provided technical support to GOPIO's Interim Committee from Jan. 14<sup>th</sup> to March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

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This issue of GOPIO News was compiled and edited by GOPIO Chairman, Dr. Thomas Abraham