

India Empire Awards Celebrating India in Beverley Hills



(LEFT TO RIGHT) Mr Navneet Chugh (Master of Ceremonies), Dr Harvinder S Sahota (Philanthropy Award), Ms Manjusha P Kulkarni (Community Health Empowerment Award), Mr Subba Rao Gopavarapu (Excellence in Business Leadership Award), Mr K K Anand (Accomplishment in Legal Services Award), Ms Apra Bhandari (Excellence in Communication in Media Award), Mr Ashok Madan (Community Service Award), Mr Venu Sarakki (Excellence in Entrepreneurship Award), Mr Sayantan Chakravarty (Editor and Publisher of India Empire Publications)

Seven prominent members of the Indian diaspora in Southern California were honoured and recognized at the India Empire Awards held at a Beverly Hills restaurant on Friday, November 13, 2015. Also receiving an award was Mr K K Anand of Anand Law Practice, New Delhi for accomplishments in legal services.

Mr Sayantan Chakravarty, Editor and Publisher of the monthly print and electronic magazine India Empire (indiaempire.com) said that the awards were instituted to recognize and celebrate the success of India's diaspora in the West Coast of the USA. Previously similar awards have been held in New Delhi to honour and recognize diaspora figures from all over the world.

A prominent five member committee was set up in Southern California to recommend names of awardees, which were finally accepted by the magazine's editorial team in New Delhi. The award function was conducted with a combination of flair and humour by Mr Navneet S Chugh, eminent Attorney and Law and Certified Public Accountant.

Mr Subba Rao Gopavarapu (Excellence in Business Leadership) is the founder and CEO of GSR Technologies, Inc. He is a serial entrepreneur and software architect with more than 20 years of experience in custom software development and software solutions in areas such as PDM and PLM, DevOps Engineering and ALM, Mobile, Cloud, Big Data applications. Under his leadership, GSR Technologies received an "Emerging Small Business

award” from the Asian Business Association of Orange County in 2011. Under his leadership GSR Technologies, Inc has been selected to participate as a Program Partner of Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business in 2014. GSR Technologies is Siemens PLM Software Solutions Channel Partner in USA. Mr. Gopavarapu holds B.Tech in Electronics and Communication Engineering from Nagarjuna University, India.

Dr. Harvinder Sahota (Philanthropy) has donated U.S.\$1.5 million to the University of Irvine, California for a chair in Sikh studies. The chair will be named after Dr Sahota’s mother, Bibi Dhan Kaur Sahota. UI and Dr Sahota signed an agreement on August 12, 2015 which includes teaching graduate and undergraduate courses in Sikhism, starting in September 2016. Dr Sahota is a graduate of Patiala Medical College in Punjab. He is the creator of the perfusion angioplasty balloon. He is affiliated with four universities in Southern California— Claremont Lincoln University, Claremont School of Theology, Loyola Marymount University and U.C. Irvine.

Mr. Venu Sarakki (Excellence in Entrepreneurship) is the CEO of Sarakki Associates Inc, (SAI) a multi-disciplinary engineering firm based in Santa Ana, CA. SAI started in 1995 by providing their services in Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), which deals with improving traffic mobility by applying state of the art computer and communication systems. SAI currently provides IT services related to secure border systems along US-Mexico border and to enhance cyber security. SAI was recently awarded a multi-million-dollar contract by US Department of State for Cyber security project. On July 11, 2014, Mr. Sarakki was invited to the white house to meet President Obama to discuss small business issues and their impact on policy. Mr. Sarakki is a graduate of Indian Institute of Technology, Madras.



HONOUR ROLL (Clock wise from left): Mr Rao receives from Mr Shiv Ratan, Community Affairs Counsellor, Embassy of India in Washington, Mr Sarakki receives from Mr Sunil Gulati, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Haryana and Dr Sahota receives from Mr Ashook Bansaran, President, GOPIO International



HONOUR ROLL (Clock wise from left): Ms Bhandari receiving a shawl from Mr Keval Kanda, Ms Kulkarni receives her award,

Ms Apra Bhandari (Excellence in Communication in Media) graduated in Communications and Media from Cornell University and was selected as one of the Top 25 Most Influential Cornellians. Today Ms Bhandari owns the Adaa Indian and Bollywood Dance Academy, an award-winning dance school in the Orange County. She has worked as an Unit Production Manager with Warner Brothers Production during the making of “Chandni Chowk to China.” She acted as the lead actress in the Indian film Shambhu, as a supporting actress in the Indian film, Chand Sa Roshan Chehra, and in various international television commercials including those for UNICEF, Cadbury and Bank of Baroda. She has been a Production Intern with the NBC and a Reporter with TV Asia in Edison.

Ms Manjusha P Kulkarni (Community Health Empowerment) is an Executive Director of the South Asian Network, a community based organization dedicated to advancing the health, empowerment and solidarity of persons of South Asian origin in Southern California. Between 1999 and 2010, Ms Kulkarni served as Senior Attorney at the National Health Law Programme in Los Angeles, a capacity in which she worked towards improving access to quality healthcare for low-income individuals through administrative and legislative policy advocacy and litigation. In 2013, SAN was featured in the Los Angeles Times and on PRI’s radio programme, The World. In April 2014, Ms Kulkarni received the White House Champions of Change award for dedication to improving healthcare access for South Asian Americans.



Mr Inder Singh, Chairman of GOPIO International honours Mr K K Anand, distinguished Advocate from New Delhi (top left), and Mr Navneet Chugh, the MC for the evening and eminent attorney and CPA in Los Angeles



A view of the audience at the venue

Mr Ashok Madan (Community Service) is a veteran Real Estate Investor who came to the USA in 1970 to pursue a Master's degree in Systems Engineering. After graduating, he worked in the Information Technology field, and joined the County of Los Angeles in 1976 where he ascended to a management position. He retired from there in 2010, after putting in 33 years of service. Mr Madan has done yeoman service to the community over the years. He is currently President of the NFIA—the National Federation of Indian American Associations, Founding Member, COLAIAPA—County of Angels Indian American Professionals Association, Life Member, GOPIO—Global Organization of People of Indian Origin.

Mr Nakul Dev Mahajan (Excellence in Performing Arts) is the Founder and Artistic Director of the Bollywood Dance Company in the United States, NDM Bollywood Dance Productions and Studios Inc. located in Los Angeles. His unique dance style and choreography fuses a diverse repertoire including Indian classical styles, such as Kathak, Bharata Natyam, Bhangra, and Folk; and, western staples including Ballroom, Latin, Hip-hop, Contemporary, and Jazz. Some of his major Hollywood choreography credits include Superstars of Dance, America's Best Dance Crew and A.R. Rahman's World Tour: Jai Ho. However, Nakul is best known for his choreography on So You Think You Can Dance, which garnered him international interest and secured his role as Hollywood's Favorite Bollywood Choreographer.

Mr K K Anand (Legal Accomplishments) is the Founder of Anand Law Practice which is headquartered in New Delhi. The firm's NRI Legal Services and Solutions division is dedicated to handle property, matrimonial and other legal issues of NRIs, Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) and Overseas citizens of India. With regard to property / real estate, a team of legal experts provides services related to Land and property searches, Transfer of land/property, Partition/Division of property, Will or Succession certificates, Disputes/litigation cases regarding illegal possession of NRI property in India, Landlord and tenant disputes, Criminal litigation against NRIs and OCsI relating to property disputes, Investment in real estate in India. With regard to matrimonial discords, the firm provides services related to Cross border divorce cases, Matrimonial criminal matters, Inter country adoption, Child custody cases, Matrimonial property disputes, Rights of NRI spouses.