



Indian-origin scientist awarded top Royal honour

Around 40 British Asians have been recognised under different categories this new year

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Pratibha Laxman Gai, Professor and Chairwoman of electron microscope, University of York, has been awarded Damehood for her services to chemical science and technology by the Queen in her New Year Honours. She has the distinction of creating the first microscope that has the ability of perceiving chemical reactions at the atomic scale. Gai is the fourth Indian-origin woman conferred with the honour since it was instituted in 1917, following Maharani Lakshmi Devi of Dhar (1931), educationist Asha Khemka (2014) and medicine academic Parveen Kumar (2017).

Around 30 individuals of Indian origin are among 1123 people who have been recognised in Queen Elizabeth's New Year Honours List this year, for their contributions and services to the UK. Besides them there are around ten others of Asians origin who have been on the recipients' list this year. The list features few political donors, unlike before, same as sportsmen and businessmen. 49% of the recognised are women, and 9% (slightly less than their percentage nationally) are from ethnic minority background.

British Prime Minister Theresa May has however been accused of croynism after she authorised a knighthood for one of her main allies in the Conservative party, undermining her own pledge to end it in Britain's honours system. The list also includes fifteen officials from Home Office, her previous department- significantly more from last year. Most of them are from UK Border Force. The most controversial honours has probably been given to former deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, who has been presented with a knighthood.

OBE

Prominent among winners of the OBE honour include **Jarnail Singh Athwal** (for services to business and charity, Datchet, Berkshire); **Charanjit Bountra**, professor of translational medicine, University of Oxford (for services to translational medical research); **Ranjit Lal Dheer** (for services to local government and to charity, London) and **Rilesh Kumar Jadeja** (for services to people with disabilities, London), **Paromita Konar Thakkar**, deputy director, Energy Economics and Analysis, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (for services to energy analysis), **Rajan Madhok**, trustee, Darlindas Charity for Renal Research (for services to renal research and tackling health inequalities in Scotland). Other Asians on the OBE list includes **Raja Mohammed Adil**, Chairman of the Adil Group has received an OBE for hois services to business, job creation and charity. **Aina Khan** has been conferred with the same, for protection of women and children in unregistered marriages. **Aina Khan**, Director of Duncan Lewis Solicitor's Islamic Law department, has over 25 years' experience in Islamic Family law matters, supporting families in marriage and divorce proceedings, with specialist knowledge of Sharia law. Aina is the founder of "Register our Marriage" which campaigns for The Marriage Act 1949 to be amended to require all faiths to register their marriage to ensure all are protected by law. **Suranga Chandratillake**, partner at Balderton Capital has been presented with an OBE (for services tpo engineering and technology).

MBE

Those honoured with MBE include **Onkardeep Singh Bhatia** (for services to the community, particularly young people), **Bobby Gurbhej Singh Dev** (for services to the community, particularly young people in Sheffield, South Yorkshire), **Gillian Dillon**, senior executive officer, district employer and partnership manager, Department for Work and pensions (for services to employment and skills), **Nora Dillon** (for services to affordable housing credit management and the community in South Lanarkshire), **Atulkumar Bhogilal Patel** (for services to heritage and the community in the East Midlands, Leicestershire); **Mubeen Yunus Patel** (for services to public sector digital transformation programme, Leicestershire), **Gurmit Singh Randhawa** (for services to community cohesion in Vale of Glamorgan), **Shyamal Kanti Sengupta** (for services to interfaith relationships in Refrewshire), **Prof Vikas Sagar Shah**, member Industrial development, advisory board and CEO, Swiscot Group (for services to business and economy), **Rohit Shankar**, Consultant in adult development psychiatry, Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation trust (for services o people with learning disabilities in Cornwall), **Dr Mehool Harshadray Sanghrajka** (for services to the Jain faith and education), **Seema Srivastava**, safety programme and falls lead, North Bristol NHS Trust (for services to improving quality and patient safety), **Sanjiv Kumar Shridhar**, GP in Nantwich, Cheshire (for services to primary care), **Joan Mary Sanger** has also been conferred an MBE for her charitable services in Beckingham, South Yorkshire.

Anwara Ali a general practioner at the Spitafields Practice in East London has received an MBE for services to community healthcare. Neelam Farzana, co-founder and managing director of The Listening Service has been awarded an MBE for service to mental health in the community. **Mohammed Yaqub Joya** (for services to Army and the Muslim community in Northern Ireland) and **Alexander Khan**, chief executive officer at Lifetime Training (for services to apprenticeships), **Sadi (Mehmood Sajdah) Khan** (for services to cultural/religiousawareness training and voluntary services to vulnerable women) and **Sajda Majeed** (services to community in Burnley) have been recognised with an MBE.

BEM

A BEM has been given to **Caroline Anne Husain** for services to charity and community in Hampshire, **Buldev Kaur Angela Kandola**, the founder of AWAAZ charity for services to vulnerable people with mental issues, **Subhash Chander Mahajan** for services to the community in Hounslow, **Manju Rajawat** a higher officer in Border Force, Home Office for services to border security, **Suryadevara Yadu Purna Chandra Prasad Rao**, former Chair of Stoke on Trent Clinical Commissioning Group, services to health care, **Ashish Jaidev Soni** for voluntary and charitable services to homeless people in London, **Deveish Tankaria**, international youth Chairman, Sathya Sai International Organisation for voluntary services and **Kulbir Singh Brar** (for services to community cohesion, Berkshire).

The damehood and other honours will be conferred at the Buckingham Palace by the Queen and/or other members of the Royal family at various times in 2018.

Queen's Ambulance Service Medal

The recipient of this honour has been **Kuldip Singh Bhamrah**, East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

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Dame Pratibha Laxman Gai

Dame Pratibha Laxman Gai is a British microscopist and Professor and Chair of Electron Microscopy and Director at The York JEOL Nanocentre, Departments of Chemistry and Physics, University of York. She created the atomic-resolution environmental transmission electron microscope (ETEM) and is an outspoken advocate for women with careers in science.

Gai grew up in India, and was fascinated by science as a child. She was influenced by Marie Curie, her education, and her parents to study chemistry. However, at that time, it was not socially acceptance for women to have careers in the physical sciences. When she was a teenager, she was selected as a national science talent search scholar. She had said, "It would have been very difficult without the scholarships because societal expectations for women at that time did not include careers in the sciences or chemistry. I would say that societal expectations, even today, as to what is good for women, including in the UK, do not always include scientific studies."

Gai was educated at the University of Cambridge where she was awarded a PhD in 1974 for research on weak beam electron microscopy conducted in the Cavendish Laboratory.

Gai has pioneered advanced in-situ electron microscopy applications in the chemical sciences. With Edward D. Boyes, she co-invented the atomic resolution environmental transmission electron microscope (ETEM), which enables the visualisation and analysis on the atomic scale of dynamic gas-catalyst reactions underpinning key chemical processes. Her research has helped to understand better how catalysts function, leading to valuable new science. Her microscope and process inventions are being exploited worldwide by microscope manufacturers, chemical companies and researchers. In 2009, after years of development, Gai, who holds a chair in electron microscopy and is co-director of the York JEOL Nanocentre at the University of York, succeeded in creating a microscope capable of perceiving chemical reactions at the atomic scale. This is an advance on conventional microscopes at this scale, which can only view innate material in the "dead" conditions of a vacuum at room temperature. It is known as the atomic resolution environmental transmission electron microscope (ETEM).

With the help of colleagues, she built and refined the machine over two decades, beginning with a lower-resolution prototype when she was a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Oxford. She then spent 18 years in the US at chemical firm DuPont and the University of Delaware. Although her microscope is highly valuable to the scientific field, she made the decision to not patent it, saying, "I thought that if I patented it, no one else would be able to do work with it. I might earn some money, but I was not interested in that. I was interested in applications for many researchers, creating more fundamental science. So I decided not to patent it."

She often advocates for women's roles in science, and has spoken about the challenge of having children as a woman scientist. She says, "what's needed to keep women in science; it's a very competitive field and they [otherwise] lag behind whether they are working or not. So I keep telling my female students to aim high."

Her awards and honours include:

- 2010 Gabor Medal and Prize for in-situ atomic resolution environmental transmission electron microscopy (ETEM).
- 2013 L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Awards Laureate for Europe
- 2014 Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering
- 2016 Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS)

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Suranga Chandratillake

Suranga Chandratillake, partner at Balderton Capital has been presented with an OBE this year. Suranga joined Balderton as a General Partner in 2014. He was previously an entrepreneur and engineer. Suranga founded blinkx, the intelligent search engine for video and audio content in Cambridge in 2004. He then led the company for eight years as CEO through its journey of moving to San Francisco, building a profitable business and going public in London where it achieved a peak market capitalisation in excess of \$1Bn. Before founding blinkx, Suranga was an early employee at Autonomy Corporation - joining as an engineer in the Cambridge R&D team and ultimately serving as the company's US CTO in San Francisco.

Suranga has a MA in Computer Science from the University of Cambridge. He holds patents in the area of video discovery and online video advertising, was elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering in 2012 and was chosen as one of the World Economic Forum's Young Global Leaders in 2009. In 2017, Suranga joined the UK Government's Council for Science and Technology.

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Onkardeep Singh

Onkardeep is one of the youngest people in the world of South Asian heritage to be awarded an MBE . His drive and commitment for improving social cohesion in Britain over the last 15 years has helped create strong relationships between people from all communities across the UK. As a result he has been the very first Sikh speaker invited to speak at the largest yearly faith based events in UK such as Limmud (Jewish), Living Islam and Greenbelt (Christian).

His passion for building a stronger Britain through grassroots community cohesion led to him becoming in 2010 a Founding Member of City Sikhs, which is the largest network of Sikh professionals in the UK. His groundbreaking interfaith work has been purely voluntary and he has resourcefully used his skills as a design and technology professional to benefit a variety of communities and voluntary organisations by developing websites and branding for them.

He is also part of the consultative committee for leading interfaith charity Three Faiths Forum; Director of Equal International, a charity improving pre-school education in India; and a supporter of HWPL, an international world peace charity.

When not active in charity work, Onkardeep has his own design and technology company and provides design services for a variety of clients.

Jasvir Singh OBE, Chair of City Sikhs, said "I'm so proud to see Onkardeep getting recognised for his extensive interfaith work. He is a true role model for young people of all backgrounds, and his unwavering commitment to various community projects shows how each of us can have a positive impact in British society."

Onkardeep Singh MBE said, "I am extremely humbled by the prestigious honour. It is a testament of the dedication and support of all those I have worked with on the various projects I have been involved in, and I hope it will inspire other young people to give back to society however they can."

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Dr Mehoor Sanghrajka

Dr Mehoor Sanghrajka, Director and Trustee, The Institute of Jainology has been awarded an MBE in the 2018 New Year honours for services to the Jain Faith and Education.

For over 20 years Sanghrajka has played an important role in the Jain community and has substantially raised the profile of Jainism and improved interfaith relations throughout the UK and globally. Sanghrajka's hard work and dedication has been recognised and an MBE awarded for outstanding achievement from Her Majesty the Queen.

Upon receiving the invitation to receive such a prestigious award, Sanghrajka said, *"I am humbled. It's a real honour to receive this MBE. Education and Jainism are both very important parts of my life. This inspires me to do even more and I am grateful to all those who work with me in these endeavours."*

For the past 15 years Sanghrajka has been the Director and Trustee of the Institute of Jainology (IoJ) which represents the 32 Jain organisations in the UK in Inter-faith and governmental activities. The IoJ has helped to establish the Jain all-party Parliamentary Group and focuses on matters affecting the larger Jain community as a whole such as inclusion in the census and representation at Armistice Day. He is also a current trustee of the Navnat Vanik Association, the second largest Jain community in the UK.

Nemu Chandaria OBE, Chairman of Institute of Jainology said, "Thanks to Dr. Sanghrajka's tireless work Jains are now a more significant part of the religious landscape of the UK. I wish to wholeheartedly congratulate him for this award."

In addition to his work with the IoJ Sanghrajka is also the Executive Director of Jainpedia.org. The organization has digitised and contextualized the 4,000 Jain manuscripts held at major British Institutions such as the Victoria & Albert Museum, the British Library, the Wellcome Trust, the Bodleian Library and the Royal Asiatic Society. The Jainpedia website receives over 1 million page views a year and is the most authoritative website on Jainism globally.

For over 20 years, Sanghrajka has been dedicated to transforming education for students around the globe. He has developed e-learning solutions which improve outcomes for learners worldwide. Sanghrajka's key focus is on meeting the needs of learners in the digital age while enhancing and developing their digital literacy skills no matter where in the world they are located.

Currently Sanghrajka is founder and CEO of Learning Possibilities, the developer of the award-winning LP+ platforms which transforms education for schools across the globe, as well as serving education and government segments globally.



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