



# Silicon Valley's new flag bearers



Alok Bhatia, second from left, receives the Entrepreneur award at the Silicon Valley Awards in California.



Ankit Shah, second from left, receives the Technology award.

RITU JHA

The Silicon Valley Awards 2013, themed 'Making a Difference,' awarded seven people in the fields of technology, entrepreneurship, media and nonprofit in California November 17.

Sheetal Ohri, an entrepreneur and the founder of SVA, which focuses on the Bay Area community, told *India Abroad*, "We had great nominees this year. The nominations came mostly from companies rather than individuals in the technology category, which was exciting."

Alok Bhatia, founder, Canvas Infotech, an information technology consulting company in the Bay Area, received the Entrepreneur award.

He told *India Abroad* that the real challenge after being approached for nomination was the online voting that preceded the judges' choice: "I know there are thousands more successful than me. It just that I took the time to get nominated. My award was just a tiny aspect of it, but seeing all the successful people over there... seeing the energy over there was amazing. This I think helps connect with like-minded people. You get a kick; you get more motivated to think big and

continue to do well in entrepreneurship."

On the sidelines of the event he discussed placements at information technology companies; his company has placed over 1,200 consultants working at various client locations like Wells Fargo, Ebay, GAP and Bank of America.

"In recent years a lot of request for evidence is coming from USCIS; it is really poking holes at the applications and asking very relevant questions," he told *India Abroad*. "They do random site visits to confirm that we did a valid H1-B. The bar to get H1-B has been raised a lot... It's a good thing because there are some shady companies organizing H1-Bs for a friend or relative without a valid job offer."

Bhatia also pointed to the problems international students graduating in America face: "Because many can't get H1-B, they continue to be a student. It's inconvenient because you are working full time and attending weekend classes, evening classes and are getting degrees just to show that you can stay in this country. They already have the education they need to get the job, so it's really sad. About 30 percent of students who graduate from college are unable to get H1-B because of the lottery system."

Jaspreet Oberoi of Chaats & Currys, Sunnyvale, California, also won in the Entrepreneur category. "I have always followed my passion. Receiving this award made me feel so proud that there are people who appreciate my work and talent," she said.

She opened Chaats & Currys in 2011 after working for years with women's retail stores and she said, "It has helped me fulfill my passion for cooking and at the same time run my own company."

She caters to large companies like Apple and Cisco, and said the secret behind her success lay in being consistent and not compromising on taste and quality.

"I think there are a lot of other fields besides technology where Indian women can excel and follow their dreams. I want to tell all women to follow your passions and don't let anyone say you cannot do it or it's too hard or expensive," Oberoi said.

Geeta Kadambi of Riddhi IP LLC, won the Technology award. After working as a patent examiner at the United States Patent and Trademark Office and as a senior technologist at NASA Ames, she founded Riddhi IP in 2010 to do patent drafting, prosecution, and intellectual property strategy.

She told *India Abroad*, "We write patents

for new drug molecules and also medical software-related patents, but the focus is on biopharmaceuticals, biochemistry, medical devices and drugs."

Kadambi hopes to help applicants cut down on time needed to get a patent. Claiming that though the minimum patent award time was three-and-a-half months, people often had to wait for years, she said, "I have got 30 patents in three years."

She also hoped that

the award would get her message across to other entrepreneurs: "You don't have to be stuck to one thing... Go cross functional because no science is a pure science any more. Everything is integrated, be it electronics, be it medical devices, be it pharmaceuticals."

Ankit Shah of InterSources Inc, a consulting company specializing in software application development, big data, business intelligence, also won in the Technology category.

InterSources has offices in the US, Australia, India and is expanding its footprint in Europe with clients like Apple.

"Every award is the mirror image of all the hard work and sacrifices that we put into it," he told *India Abroad*.

Shah Peerally, founder, Shah Peerally Productions Inc, who practices immigration law and debt settlement in California, won the Media & Entertainment award.

"It is an important achievement for our newly production company and is a victory for all those suffering on the H4 visa."

Ritu Nischal of Desi 1170 am, a local radio station, was also awarded in the Media and Entertainment category.

Narika was awarded in the Non-Profit category.

## TCS nips at Cognizant's heels

In the past few quarters, Tata Consultancy Services, India's largest software services exporter, has closed the gap with North American leader Cognizant on growth in revenue and profit, said a report by brokerage firm JPMorgan.

"The revenue/gross profit/Ebit (earnings before interest and taxes) year-on-year growth differential between Cognizant and TCS has narrowed reaching perhaps the lowest level in a decade. Except for the US, where Cognizant has now emerged as the largest offshore IT services player, TCS has pulled ahead in Europe and rest of the world," the report said.

## Rupee fall pushes Tata group out of \$100 billion club

Tata group's combined turnover has slipped below the \$100 billion mark due to a fall in rupee, despite an over 10 percent growth in total revenue when measured in Indian

## the week that was

currency. The Tatas have, however, emerged as India's first business house to record an annual turnover of more than Rs 5 trillion (\$801 billion).

## iGATE firms up new strategy under new CEO Vemuri

iGATE is moving towards a decentralized leadership model with more freedom to its vertical heads to focus on markets like North America and Western Europe under its new president and chief executive officer Ashok Vemuri.

Vemuri, who came to iGATE from Infosys, said the company had entered into a credit agreement for a secured term loan facility, which would help it save about \$105 million worth of interest over a period of five years.

## Mallya's group to pump \$2 million in loss-making US brewery

Vijay Mallya's United Breweries Group will infuse \$2 million in the California-based Mendocino Brewing Company. UB has also agreed to 'favorably consider additional investment to underpin growth' in the loss-making firm.

## Investors most bullish on India

With relaxation in foreign direct investment norms to boost investor sentiments, India has emerged as the most attractive investment destination surpassing China and the United States, says a report by Ernst and Young.

It has put Brazil and China in second and third positions, respectively. While Canada has cornered fourth spot, the US is placed in the fifth position.