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## Dr Sudhir M Parikh receives Padma Shri

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NEW DELHI: President Mrs Pratibha Patil on Wednesday conferred Padma Shri Award to Gujarati-origin US based NRI Dr Sudhir. M.Parikh in an impressive function in Rashtrapati Bhawan. Dr. Parikh has already been honoured with "The Ellis Island Medal of Honor", the "Pravasi Bharatiya Samman" for his outstanding contributions in society and has become the only Indian American to receive all three most prestigious awards.

He is the recipient of the 2006 Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, bestowed on non-resident Indians (NRIs) by the government of India for their outstanding contributions in the field of social service and service to the motherland .

He was awarded the "Ellis Island Medals of Honor," the highest civilian honor for U.S. immigrants, for his lifetime of community service in the year 2005. US Congress recognised his outstanding services by mentioning his achievements in the Congressional Record.

He was awarded the " National Excellence Award" by then Prime Minister of India Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao in recognition for his philanthropic activities during 6th annual meeting of the Indian American Friendship Council (IAFC) in Washington, D.C in the year 2002. Dr Parikh was appointed member of the National Leadership Advisory Committee of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans in 1999 by the Chairman of the India Caucus, US Congressman Gary Ackerman (D) of New York in recognition of his efforts on Capitol Hill.

As a leading advocate for India with the U.S. Congress and government for the last two decades, Dr Parikh has been responsible for bringing a number of American political leaders to serve the cause of US-India relations.

He was, for instance, personally responsible for Congressman Elliot Engel (D-N.Y.), Rush Holt (D-N.J.) and Anthony Weiner (D-N.Y.) joining the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans. In recognition of his efforts during the 1990s, he was invited to join the delegation that accompanied President William Jefferson Clinton during his historic visit to India in March 2000.

As a (founding) member of the Indian American Republican Council (IARC) and a number of other organizations lobbying Congress, Dr Parikh has worked tirelessly for the fruition of the US-India nuclear deal. Dr. Parikh used his personal relationship with a number of American politicians – including New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine and state's former governor state's former governor Christine Todd Whitman, Senator Charles Schumer of New Jersey, Senator Bob Menendez of New Jersey and Congressmen Benjamin Gilman.

Dr Parikh is a patron of several philanthropic organizations, including the American India Foundation, and has contributed generously to select causes in India and the United States, including to the rehabilitation of the Gujarat earthquake and Tamil Nadu tsunami victims. He accompanied President Clinton when he visited Gujarat to assess the impact of the earthquake in 2001.

He's closely involved with the Share and Care Foundation, a nonprofit helping the poorest of the poor in India. From 1995 through 2005, Dr. Parikh funded a scholarship program for undergraduate students in the Indian-American community through the Share and Care Foundation. He has been a dedicated patron of Ekal Vidyalaya in the tribal areas of India.

As a physician, he is particularly gratified by his effort to raise substantial amount of funds for the Gujarat Cancer Society and the Nargis Dutt Foundation. Thanks to his commitment to advancing Indian culture and values in general and to the temple in particular, Dr Parikh has been named the "Grand Benefactor" of the Vraj Shrinalhajee Temple in Pennsylvania.

Dr Parikh is the Chairman and Publisher of Parikh Worldwide Media Inc., the largest Indian-American publishing group in the United States. The group publishes four periodicals – "News India Times," a national weekly newspaper; "Desi Talk in New York," a weekly newspaper serving the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut region; and "Desi Talk in Chicago," a weekly newspaper serving the Greater Chicago area and the Midwestern states; and "The Indian American," a national bimonthly feature magazine. The combined circulation and readership of these publications make the media group the most influential in the ethnic Indian market.

After receiving the award, Dr Parikh expressed honor and gratitude to the government of India and said that it was now his responsibility to live up to the honor. "I recognize the responsibility this award brings with it and I take this opportunity to re-dedicate myself to the tasks that I had set out to achieve like enhancing Indo-US relations and contributing to improving the quality of life to people on either side of the Atlantic."

Dr Parikh, who is a noted physician and an acclaimed authority in the field of allergy, asthma and immunology, is also the chairman and publisher of New York-based Parikh Worldwide Media, Inc., which publishes three periodicals – "News India Times," "Desi Talk" and "The Indian American."

Apart from medical practice and publishing, Dr Parikh is actively involved in a number of charitable causes in the US and in India. He was recently in New Delhi to attend the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, where he was invited to speak about philanthropy as part of the PBD lecture series.

A particular focus of Dr Parikh's community service has been to promote second generation of Indian Americans in the American political process with the view to ensuring strong US-India relations for generations to come.

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