

BIR CONVENTION: Asia ascendant

Ranjit Baxi, of Indian descent, has been elected BIR president, while Taiwan-born David Chiao is named Non-Ferrous Division president.

Born in Tanzania to Indian parents and having lived in the United Kingdom for more than 30 years, Ranjit Baxi of [J&H Sales International](#), London, can be considered a citizen of the world. As of May 19, 2015, he assumed the volunteer leadership post of Brussels-based global recycling organization the [Bureau of International Recycling \(BIR\)](#).

One of the BIR's two largest divisions, the Non-Ferrous Division, also named a new leader in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, removing the "interim" label from prior division interim President David Chiao of Uni-All Group Ltd., Atlanta.

Baxi will serve a two-year term as BIR president with the possibility of another two-year term to follow.

In 2011, Baxi was appointed BIR's treasurer, and from 2007 to 2013 he was president of its Paper Division. He remains an honorary president of the Paper Division.

Baxi, a frequent speaker at recycling conferences, received a Queen's Award for Enterprise (International Trade) in the U.K. in 2001 and authored the 2014 book "Recycling Our Future: A Global Strategy," available through [Whittles Publishing](#).

In his acceptance speech, Baxi thanked his predecessor Björn Grufman for his efforts over the past four years and expressed appreciation for being named president. "BIR has profiled itself as the sole truly international recycling federation. I am honored to be serving its 800-plus member companies and national recycling federations in the coming years," he stated.

Chiao was born in Taiwan and came to the United States as a student in 1977. He started trading in scrap metals a few years later in 1983 and became a member of BIR in 1988. Throughout much of his career Chiao has specialized in connecting nonferrous scrap recyclers in the United States with consumers in China, including working as a joint venture partner with a Chinese firm.

Also elected to the Non-Ferrous Division board were Dhawal Shah of India's [Metco Marketing Pvt. Ltd.](#); Andy Wahl of TAV Holdings Inc., based in Atlanta; and Paul Coyte of [Hayes Metals](#) in New Zealand.

The Middle East region of Asia received appropriate attention in host city Dubai in the form of keynote speaker Rami Khouri, an author and columnist who also addressed delegates to the 2009 BIR Convention in Dubai.

Khouri said that although positive changes tied to the 2011 "Arab spring" uprisings may have been restricted to only Tunisia, the conditions are still in place for political progress.

"People want to reconfigure their governments in a peaceful way," said Khouri. He said the open communication brought about by the Internet and social media has created "a genuine public sphere," where Middle East citizens can push for reform.

The Tunisian constitution, said Khouri, was a document based on the “consent of the governed,” and he expressed hope that no matter how difficult the path may be in many Middle East nations, that goal is still obtainable in many of them.

The 2015 BIR World Recycling Convention was May 17-20 at the InterContinental Festival City in Dubai.