

Grab co-founders, clean water pioneer and museum curator honored

Nikkei recognizes outstanding contributions to quality of life in Asia



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TOKYO -- The co-founders of Southeast Asia's largest ride-hailing company, a water purification pioneer and a folk music museum curator have been chosen for this year's Nikkei Asia Prizes.

The awards honor individuals and groups that have contributed to Asia's prosperity and quality of life. The award ceremony is expected to be held in Tokyo by the end of the year.

The recipients of the 25th Nikkei Asia Prizes are:

Anthony Tan and Tan Hooi Ling, Malaysia, chief executive officer and co-founder of Grab -- winners for economic and business innovation



Anthony Tan, right, and Tan Hooi Ling co-founded one of Asia's super apps Grab.

The two, aged 38 and 36, met while they were studying at Harvard Business School. After graduation, they founded Grab, which started as a ride-hailing app operator but whose business has rapidly expanded to food and grocery delivery services and cashless payment solutions. The app has had more than 180 million downloads, becoming instrumental to everyday life in Southeast Asia.

Thalappil Pradeep, India, professor at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras -- winner for science and technology



Thalappil Pradeep developed a water filter that made it possible to deliver safe drinking water to people cheaply.

The 56-year-old professor is a pioneer of nanotechnology-based water purification. He developed the world's first filters for drinking water that incorporate the deionizing technology he established. The filters help supply clean water for 2 paisa (0.03 cents) per liter in India.

Ram Prasad Kadel, Nepal, curator of the Music Museum of Nepal -- winner for culture and community



Ram Prasad Kadel set up a private museum in Kathmandu dedicated to Nepali folk music, featuring his collection of musical instruments.

The 54-year-old has dedicated his life to preserving the heritage of Nepal's folk music and traditional performing arts. He opened a private museum in Kathmandu that features his collection of musical instruments. He has also made contributions to researching, recording and archiving as well as promoting the country's folk music.