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Obama Administration appoints more Indian Americans to key posts

U.S. President Barack Obama has formed a three-man team, including two Indian-Americans, to help break Washington's "bad habits" of wasteful spending and move recession-hit America from recovery to prosperity. Announcing the appointment of Aneesh Chopra, Virginia's secretary of technology, to serve as the chief technology officer, Mr. Obama said: "Aneesh will promote technological innovation to help achieve our most urgent priorities - from creating jobs and reducing health care costs to keeping our nation secure."

Aneesh Chopra who is cited as "one of technology's leading lights" initially made his name as Fourth Secretary of Technology in expanding Virginia's high-speed Internet.

Mr. Chopra presently leads Virginia's strategy to effectively leverage technology in government reform, to promote the state's innovation agenda, and to foster technology-related economic development. Previously, he worked as Managing Director with the Advisory Board Company, leading the firm's Financial Leadership Council and the Working Council for Health Plan Executives.

Mr. Chopra and Jeffrey Zients, a CEO, management consultant and entrepreneur, who was named as the chief performance officer, will work with another Indian American, Vivek Kundra (GOPIO News, March 25, 2009), to help give "Americans a government that is effective, efficient and transparent".

Sonal shah to head Obama's office of social innovation

Sonal Shah, a member of the Obama Transition Team, who formerly led Google Global Development Initiatives, has been appointed head of the new Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation in the White House. The Innovation office has until now been in what entrepreneurs call "stealth mode," with few details forthcoming about what the office is charged to accomplish beyond broadly promoting innovative approaches to social issues.

Shah was a member of the brain trust that advised the incoming Obama administration on "innovation and civil society" during the transition period.

Shah graduated in 1990 from the University of Chicago with a B.A. in economics and received a master's in economics from Duke University. She worked in the Clinton administration's Treasury Department and in the National Security Council for seven years, covering economic issues as director of African nations, responsible for all of sub-Saharan Africa.

In 2001, Shah and siblings Roopal and Anand founded Indicorps, which offers one-year fellowships to young expatriate Indians to return to India and work on development projects. From 2001-03, she was director of operations and programs at the Center for Global Development and from 2003-04 she joined the Center for American Progress as associate director, advising government executives on topics. Before joining Google Global Development Initiatives, Shah worked for Goldman Sachs, focusing on their environmental strategy and implementation since 2004.

Dr. Rajiv Shah nominated as under secretary in the dept. of agriculture

President Barack Obama has named Indian American scientist Dr. Rajiv J. Shah who is managing a program at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation as under secretary for research, education and economics in the Department of Agriculture. Shah is currently the director of agricultural development in the global development program for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, where he manages the foundation's agricultural development program with the goal of helping the world's poor lead healthy and productive lives.

His work includes grant-making portfolios in science and technology, farmer productivity, market access, and policy and statistics. Shah joined the foundation in 2001 and previously served as its director of strategic opportunities and deputy director of policy and finance for global health.

In these roles, he helped develop and launch the foundation's global development program and the international finance facility for immunization - an effort that raised more than \$5 billion for child immunization and hopes to save more than five million lives around the world.

Prior to joining the foundation, Shah was the health care policy advisor on the Al Gore 2000 presidential campaign and a member of Pennsylvania Governor Edward Rendell's transition committee on health.

Shah earned his MD from the University of Pennsylvania Medical School and Master of Science in health economics from the Wharton School of Business. He is a graduate of the University of Michigan and the London School of Economics (LSE) and has published articles on health policy and global development.

In 2007, he was named a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum. (News Source: http://www.gopio.net/news_latest.htm)

Indo-American Society Celebrates Golden Jubilee at U.S. Consulate



The Indo-American Society celebrated its Golden Jubilee on Friday, April 24 on the U.S. Consulate lawns. The celebration, exactly 50 years to the day following the organization's inception, was an opportunity to publicly commemorate the importance of the organization and its dedicated members. For 50 years, the IAS has been serving as a key forum for intellectual and cultural exchange and for the promotion of friendship between the peoples of India and America. Highlights of the evening included the release of a Special Cover by Chief Postmaster General, the bestowal of a special plaque to all past presidents of the organization, and the finals of the Young Ambassadors Competition. Dev Anand, a stalwart member of the organization, graced the occasion and U.S. Consul General Paul Folmsbee served as Chief Guest. (News Source: <http://mumbai.usconsulate.gov/>)

Protection of Overseas Indians

During 2006 and 2007, 6.76 lakhs and 8.09 lakhs Indian workers were granted emigration clearance for the purpose of employment overseas. This information was given by the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs Shri Vayalar Ravi in the Rajya Sabha today.

He further added that overseas employment of Indian citizens is governed by the Emigration Act, 1983. The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has entered into Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the major countries of destination such as the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Jordan and Malaysia for protection and welfare of Indian workers. Bilateral Social Security Agreements have been signed with Belgium, France and Germany and are also being pursued with other countries of destination to protect the interest of Indian professionals. (<http://pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?Relid=48077&kwid=>)

