

## Indian-American To Serve On NY Tourism Board

New York: (IANS) Indian-American businessman and political activist Andy Shenoy has been appointed to the Tourism Advisory Board of New York's Empire State Development Corporation and says "the world, especially India" loves the city.

Shenoy, who was appointed by New York Governor David Patterson, said: "It is indeed an honor to serve on the advisory board at such a critical time."

"New York State is one of the top travel destinations for tourists from around the world. We must do all we can to enhance the image of our state. The world, especially India loves New York," he said and added he was "excited to serve the people of New York in his new position".

"We must continue to strengthen our ties with India and the South Asian community. This is a relationship that provides a mutual benefit for everybody," he said of his appointment.

## "Obama, Clinton Differ In Courting India"

Washington: (IANS) Suggesting a foreign policy rift between President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, a Forbes columnist says her trip to India "is Clinton's way of literally and figuratively distancing herself from Obama".

"She left the US amid reports of intense infighting with a White House intent on marginalizing her role," said Gordon G. Chang, a columnist of the US business magazine.

"Real policymaking power, some say, is now exercised by a small West Wing group centered on Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel.

"While she has been publicly denying the rumours, the Secretary of State has been on the attack, tarring President Obama through intermediaries," wrote Chang, the author of "The

Coming Collapse of China", in his column titled "Clinton Chooses India".

"One of her State Department aides has argued in off-the-record conversations that Obama has been making a series of foreign policy blunders, among them letting the Chinese do whatever they want and giving them more than they ask for," he suggested.

"The trip to India and Thailand, in one sense, is Clinton's way of literally and figuratively distancing herself from Obama, her way of letting us know she has better policies for dealing with

Beijing," Chang suggested.

In search of a better China policy, "the White House saw the need to hedge against China, it looked to

Russia," he says suggesting that's what the president's trip to Moscow this month was all about.

"Clinton's concept of siding with another large democracy seems much more attractive - and sustainable. Most important, the US and India share values," Chang said.

"Moreover, Washington and New Delhi have common geopolitical interests in that both are threatened - albeit in different ways - by an assertive Beijing. There are, however, areas of disagreement between the US and India.

"Finally, there is India's twin, the troubled nation of Pakistan," Chang said.

"The US cannot afford to make Islamabad an adversary just to please New Delhi, but the US needs to rebalance its unsuccessful Pakistani policies in any event and that rebalancing will inevitably please India.

"In short, there is no issue that prevents Americans and Indians from joining together in a durable partnership," the author concluded.



## Obama Strikes A Personal Note To Indian-American

Chicago: (IANS) Even as President Barack Obama deals with the opposition to his proposed health care bill, he found time to write to a Chicago-based Indian American about his vision of health care reform. Striking a personal note, the president wrote about how he watched his mother struggle with insurance forms during the last days of her life.

"Since I took office, we have done more to advance the cause of health care reform than we have in the previous decade," the president wrote to Sunita Chopra.

"The rising cost of health care is the most pressing financial challenge for families and for our nation, and controlling this cost is essential to bringing down the federal deficits we inherited," Obama added.

"There are tough choices to be made, and I will bring businesses and workers, health care providers and patients, and Democrats and Republicans together to create a system that delivers better care and puts the nation on a much sounder long-term fiscal path," the letter states.

President Obama struck a personal note in the letter. "I share the sense of urgency that Americans like you have voiced. I watched as my ailing mother struggled with stacks of insurance forms in the last moments of her life. This is not who we are as a nation: together, we will fix it (the health care system)."

Chopra was one of the many Indian Americans in Chicago who volunteered in Obama's presidential campaign. While expressing her support for Obama's efforts at health care reform, she said she had voiced her concern about the high cost of prescription drugs, specially for those with long-

term health conditions.

She said she spoke from personal experience. Her mother, who fled to India from Pakistan as a refugee during the riots following India's independence and is now an American citizen, is disabled with severe osteoporosis.

According to a recent article in the New York Times, the president receives over 10,000 letters, e-mails and faxes every day. The task of sifting these letters goes to Mike Kelleher, director of the White House Office of Correspondence.

Kelleher chooses 10 letters which are slipped into a purple folder and put in the daily briefing book that is delivered to President Obama at his White House residence.

"We pick messages that are compelling, things people say that, when you read it, you get a chill," Kelleher told the

Times. "I send him letters that are uncomfortable messages."

The ritual offers President Obama a way to move beyond the 'White House bubble', and occasionally leads to moments when his composure cracks, his advisers told the paper.

The White House chief of staff, Rahm Emanuel, said President Obama "believes it's easy in Washington to forget there are real people with real challenges being affected by the debate".

Emanuel added that he had seen the president turn to policy advisers in meetings and say "no, no, no. I want to read you a letter that I got. I want you to understand."



## I Am In Race To Become SC Governor: Nikki Haley

Toronto: (IANS) Yet another Indian American, this time a woman born to Sikh parents from Amritsar, is in the race to become governor of a US state.

Nikki Randhawa Haley, 37, who is in the fray for the post of governor of South Carolina in the US, says she is in the race to win. If she gets elected, Nikki will be the first Indian American woman to become governor in the US, and the second Indian after Bobby Jindal of Louisiana state.

A member of the South Carolina state assembly since 2004, Nikki is one of the three candidates to seek nomination from her Republican party for the 2010 elections.

"I don't do anything halfway — I'm in this race to win," Haley told IANS in an interview. "I am confident that come November 2010, the people of South Carolina will send me to the Governor's Mansion."

And she was quick to add: "When they (voters) do, I will immediately get to work to give them progress that makes them proud."

Born to Sikh parents from Amritsar, Nikki said she is now in the midst of raising money for her campaign to succeed.

"As we travel across the state meeting with folks and spreading the message of bringing good government back to South Carolina, folks have been incredibly responsive.

"This is going to be an expensive race, and we need all the support we can get, but I have every confidence we will raise every dollar we need to win," she said.

Her message is resonating with the people of her state as she campaigns on a three-point agenda:

reining in out-of-control spending, making government more accountable and tackling high unemployment rate by taking care of South Carolina businesses.

Though she joined the race for nomination much after the other two aspirants, Nikki has already raised over \$200,000.

"In a little less than six weeks we were able to raise over \$211,000 — a solid showing in about half a financial quarter," said the mother of two children.

Asked whether her Indian background will matter in the race, she said: "What matters most in South Carolina — and I imagine elsewhere in the country — is not the personalities of the candidates but the message they carry.

"Our message of bringing good government back to the people of this state, creating jobs by reforming our

tax code so it's flatter and fairer, and reminding government of the value of a dollar resonates with all the people of this state."

Reminded of her maiden campaign in 2004 when her opponents had raised the issue of her ethnic background, she said:

"I imagine my opponents will throw everything they can and more at me over the course of the campaign.

"That said, those opponents will not be the focus of our campaign — we will keep our focus on reforming the backward way South Carolina's government operates and bringing good government back to the people."

Nikki added: "I am very proud of my background and how I was raised. Just as in 2004 I will hold my head high and focus on what I can do for the people of this state."

