

Attorney General Chandra happy to help fill Ohio AG position till special elections

By Ela Dutt

Subodh Chandra, former Director of Law for the City of Cleveland as well as the 2006



Subodh Chandra

Democratic candidate for the position of Attorney General of Ohio, has told the Governor of the State he can fill the AG position until special elections but no longer.

The position fell vacant when AG Marc Dann, Chandra's adversary in 2006, resigned on May 16, amid impeachment proceedings initiated by his own party. Since then speculation has been rife on who is in the Governor's short list and Chandra's name was mentioned a few times in the media.

"I have let Governor Strickland know that I would be willing to help were he to need me to

assist in restoring the reputation of the Attorney General's office through the November 2008 special election," Chandra told *News India-Times*. "For a variety of reasons, however—not the least of which are my support for another strong candidate and the needs of my triplet four-year-old sons—I am not available to pursue the special election this year," he added.

Chandra has been a strong supporter of Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama, and is a delegate to the August Democratic Convention.

On May 16, *The Enquirer of Cincinnati*, ran a recent blog that called on Governor Ted Strickland to consider Chandra to fill Dann's seat. *The Enquirer* had endorsed Chandra in 2006 in the AG race.

"Chandra ought to be at the top of Strickland's list. He's smart, experienced in managing a large legal operation, a former assistant federal prosecutor and possessed of a reputation as a highly ethical lawyer. In short, he's pretty much everything Dann was not," said blogger David Wells.

And the left wing of the Democratic Party, the Progressive Democrats of America's Ohio Chapter, unequivocally endorses Chandra hailing his record of fighting corruption when he headed the Law office of the City of Cleveland.

"We also strongly believe that his (Marc Dann's) replacement not be a person associated with or working for the Attorney General's office at present. Therefore, we recommend that attorney Subodh Chandra be selected as Ohio's Attorney General by the Democratic Party leadership throughout the State," the PDA demands, adding, "Not only did Subodh Chandra run a solid, upright campaign against Marc Dann for the AG's office in the 2006 Democratic Primary, he has the experience, the leadership, and the capabilities to serve with the integrity that we deserve and expect in our public officials. He will work for all of the citizens of Ohio with honor, dignity, and — most importantly — the utmost regard for the rule of law."

A graduate of Yale Law School and Stanford University, Chandra is currently in private practice in Cleveland. As that city's Director of Law he led the work of an 82-lawyer department with both criminal and civil divisions. He also served as acting mayor in the mayor's absence. He is credited with fighting corruption in the city's law department. He has served as federal prosecutor and prior to that in private law firms. He was also special presidential counsel at the American Bar Association. He is married to Meena Morey Chandra, a civil-rights attorney.

Appointment Thotakura appointed to Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau

By Ela Dutt

Prasad Thotakura, an IT management consultant and community activist in Texas, says he hopes to lend a multicultural flavor and bring the weight of his community to the National Advisory Board of the Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau (DCVB), to which he was appointed on

Prasad Thotakura

May 20. He has a three-year term by the end of which the DCVB will hopefully boast attached hotel facilities lacking so far.

"It is a very big and great convention center but there is no attached hotel so it is not the first choice of people looking to hold a convention," Thotakura, who was born in Gannavaram, Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh, told *News India-Times*. "Now with the decision to build an attached hotel we are expecting business will increase exponentially." On May 14, Dallas City Council endorsed the purchase of land adjacent to the Convention Center to build a \$500 million hotel.

"My vision for the bureau is to bring some new ideas and make sure Dallas is the target place for visitors and conventions to come and enjoy this beautiful city," he said.

"Because of my background and relationship with diverse people and different organizations, and as past president of India Association of North Texas which represents 100,000 Indian Americans in Dallas Fort-worth region, I can bring to the table cultural sensitivity of other Asian ethnic communities," he said. "For instance, when we have our conventions, we would like ethnic food rather than other food. So I need to convince the Bureau to be open to such options."

Thotakura came to the U.S. in 1986. He has an MBA from Sagaur University in Madhya Pradesh, and another MBA from St. Peter's Business School, Jersey City. He has been living in Dallas for 15 years and is married to Swarupa, a computer programmer. Currently on the Advisory Board of the American Cancer Society, the Texas International Theatrical Art Society, and Dallas Police Chief's Racial Profiling Board, he is also President of the India Association of North Texas, Secretary of the Telugu Association of North America and General Secretary of the Indian American Friendship Council.

Keynote speaker

Ohio State Rep. Jay Goyal keynote speaker at Memorial Day ceremony

By Ela Dutt

Ohio State Rep. Jay Goyal, a Democrat representing District 73, was the featured speaker at the local Memorial Day ceremony held at his district's Mansfield Memorial Park.

Billed as the annual 'Avenue of Flags' ceremony, the 257 flags fluttering in the breeze on May 26, signified the lives lost in wars. Goyal, who has pushed for at least \$2 million in project funding for his district, is a strong advocate of economic development in the region.

"Today, we're here to honor our great flag, our great country and our noble veterans," Goyal said at the ceremony as reported in the *Mansfield News Journal* of May 26. "The U.S. flag represents the freedoms and rights guaranteed in the United States Constitution and its Bill of Rights, and most of all, it is a symbol of individual and personal liberty as set forth in the Declaration of Independence."

He recounted the history of Memorial Day, which was formerly known as Decoration Day.

"First enacted to honor Union soldiers of the American Civil War, it was expanded after WWI to include casualties of any war or military action," Goyal said. Ohio has for the first time created a Department of Veteran Services, which the young lawmaker said, would serve servicemen and women well.

"I am proud to be an American, proud to wear the flag and proud of everything it stands for," he added. According to the news report, "some wiped tears from their eyes as they listened," to Goyal.

In the Ohio legislature, Goyal has championed his district's cause, and is currently overseeing the passage of some \$2 million in funding for area projects in the state's billion dollar Capital Budget.

"I have been lobbying for certain community projects in my district to get funding. I was successful in getting \$2 million for 5 projects," Goyal told *News India-Times*. He said he expects the bill to be passed by the end of May.

Every two years, the State of Ohio does a Capital Budget and this year it contains some \$100 million to \$120 million for community projects for the entire state.

One of the projects Goyal holds dear is a new facility for the Ohio Genealogical Society.

"It is going to be one of, if not the best genealogical society in the country," he said.

The bill as it is now written includes the following projects for the Mansfield/Richland County area:

- The Renaissance Theatre- \$900,000
- The Ohio Genealogical Society - \$350,000
- Rehabilitation Services of North Central Ohio - \$300,000
- Kehoe Center at North Central State College - \$150,000
- Fallerius Technology Center at North Central State College - \$150,000

"These projects will be a significant financial investment boost for this area, and represent a strong endorsement of the good works these organizations are doing," he said. "These funds will assist in promoting workforce development, economic expansion and cultural tourism in our region."

Goyal said he would fight to stop any amendments to cut the amounts for these projects.

Lions award

5 Diamond MJ Fellow pin for Dr. Austin Prabhu



The Lions Club awarded Dr. Austin Prabhu, Sector Coordinator, right, the '5 diamond progressive Melvin Jones Fellow' pin at the 88th Annual Multiple District - I Convention held on May 21, at Westin Chicago Northwest Hotel, in Itasca, IL. Lions International Vice President Albert E. Brandel, who awarded the pin, thanked Dr. Austin "for his dedication and hard work in promoting Campaign Sight First II in Illinois, according to a press release. More than 600 Lion leaders from all 12 sub-districts of Illinois were at the four-day event which included a golf outing, a plenary session, seminars, and a state banquet and Illinois Foundation breakfast. Seen in the photo is Dr. Prabhu receiving 5 Diamond Melvin Jones Fellow pin from International Vice President Albert E. Brandel from New York, right. (Photo, as it appears on lakasampath.com)

'2008 Hermes Creative Awards' VSC Consulting and EthnikPR are winners

San Francisco based VSC Consulting and EthnikPR, companies headed by Vijay Singh Chattha, 31, announced recently they had received seven Platinum and Gold Hermes Creative Awards for public relations campaigns.

Chattha's marketing group focuses on ethnic marketing and digital media startups, a press release said. VSC Consulting focuses on startups and major technology brands in digital media, wireless, gaming and web 2.0 industries, while EthnikPR focuses on clients in the South Asian American (SAA) market.

EthnikPR won the Hermes Gold Award for its work with BPO a web-comic strip 'doubtoursing' authored by Sandeep Sood. The company claims it targeted 'technology influencers world-

wide,' got a feature on the blog TechCrunch, subsequently landing Sood a professional animation deal after *Los Angeles Times* featured him.

"EthnikPR's outreach and subsequent results not only gave me exposure; it gave me a new credibility with those I do business with as well," Sood is quoted saying in the release.

Chattha's two companies' awards included four Platinum wins and three Gold honors for work in video games, advertising technology, wireless, and web 2.0 services.

"These acknowledgements are evidence of the power and influence of a different kind of PR; a unique brand of communication that forges the generic approaches and wins consumers and media through creativity and honesty," Chattha said.

The Association of Marketing & Communication Professionals (AMCP) awards the Hermes Awards on an annual basis based on submission from around the world.

(Compiled from a press release by Ela Dutt)