

# Corzine's mantra for NJ: Invest, grow, prosper

## FROM THE STATE

*This is the first of a series on interviews with Governors on India and Indian American related issues*

The Governor of New Jersey, **JON CORZINE** received tremendous support from the Indian American community during his campaign. True to his promise to include more Indians in the top echelons of the government, last week, he named Kris Kolluri as Commissioner of Transportation. He has also retained Seema Singh as Ratepayer Advocate.

In his inaugural speech last month, Corzine promised to make earning the public's trust his top priority and to get the state's fiscal house in order while keeping his property tax rebate pledge. He spoke about balancing the books and re-establishing financial integrity.

Corzine was elected to the US Senate in November 2000. Later, in a major achievement for him the Senate also adopted Corzine's resolution declaring the need for new safeguards at the nation's vulnerable chemical plants. He also secured federal funding toward the construction of a second railroad tunnel underneath the Hudson River, long sought by New Jersey's congressional delegation, and won federal support for a wide variety of community and economic development projects throughout the state of New Jersey. He built his campaign for Governor around his comprehensive ethics proposal, revamping the state's property tax system, building a stronger economy, and improving education and healthcare. Excerpts of an interview with **SUJEET RAJAN**:

**■ Governor of New York, George Pataki, has plans to visit India to boost trade ties with India and New York. Do you plan to initiate ties with India for the state of New Jersey?**

The critical importance of foreign trade will only increase as we move forward—which is why we're going to appoint a Governor's Foreign Trade Representative, to attract global investments to New Jersey and build international trade relationships, while linking state resources—including port access, business financing, and infrastructure investment—to businesses operating here and abroad.

International trade and economic devel-



opment are a key part of "invest, grow, and prosper" theme. I would like to promote international investment and trade to create job opportunities for New Jerseyans. One of the areas of my focus is life sciences and stem cell research. As you know, India is focusing heavily on biotechnology and nanotechnology, both areas of great importance to New Jersey.

**■ How can India contribute to the growth of New Jersey?**

Indian industrialists can be a key part of the strategic investment areas. Here at home, Indians can certainly contribute with their ideas and suggestions on growing our economy through economic development, ideas on how to improve efficiencies in the delivery of goods, jobs, healthcare, human services, etc.

**■ Do you plan to visit India in the near future?**

Right now I am trying to spend as much time in New Jersey, but I look forward to visiting India in the future.

**■ What is your impression of the Indian American community?**

Indians in New Jersey are key contributors to our communities, as Senator I enjoyed a close relationship to the Indian community and will continue to do so as Governor.

I am indebted and extremely grateful to the Indian community for their tireless support and I value their role in our state and our communities. I hope to continue working with leaders such as Assemblyman (Upendra) Chivukula

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and others in the Indian community.

**■ Are you going to appoint more Indian Americans in the New Jersey state government?**

For me, diversity is not just a goal, it's a promise. I am committed to assembling a government that truly reflects the great diversity of our state. Indians, Hispanics, African-Americans, Asian Americans and people of all backgrounds will be part of my new administration.

**■ The US has been trying to attract skilled professionals in the last few years, and Indians have been the largest in that quota. What new industries do you intend to develop in the state to attract this group?**

In New Jersey we are investing in a more fruitful partnership with the Indian community and I am exploring ways to build and grow our economy via the hi-tech industries including bio-tech and nanotech industries.

**■ New Jersey was one of the first states to ban outsourcing of state contracts. What is your position on outsourcing?**

Current law has restrictions in outsourcing of state contracts, especially, only permitting legal residents of the US to perform such state contracts.

**■ One of your last acts as a Senator was to reintroduce a bill to eliminate racial profiling by law enforcement (along with Senators Russell Feingold (D-WI) and Barack Obama (D-IL) that would for the first time prohibit the use of racial profiling by federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and agents. Congress earlier lost an opportunity to ban this practice.**

I strongly support Senator Feingold's Bill which was reintroduced in the Senate in December of 2005. I remain committed to fighting the discrimination implications of racial profiling. I continue to support legislation against racial profiling and I adhere to equality for all.

**■ In your tenure as a Senator, how has the profile of India changed at Capitol Hill?**

The profile of India has changed dramatically on Capitol Hill and on Wall Street. India has become a major US business partner. As US trade with India has increased, diplomatic relations with the country have become increasingly important.

**■ What is the difference between you as the CEO of Goldman Sachs and as the Governor of New Jersey?**

I am thrilled to have this opportunity to serve the needs and the interests of the people of New Jersey. As CEO at Goldman Sachs I learned the importance of forging partnerships, making tough decisions and planning for the future. I certainly can use my skills as a CEO as I make decisions about our budget and the issues that are important to New Jerseyans.

Our state can no longer afford to run on deficit and credit. In private industry the state would have been out of business. As a former CEO, I have many ideas about how to grow New Jersey's economy. I want to move the state from a paradigm of "Tax, Borrow and Spend" to "Invest, Grow and Prosper."

## Exploring India's history to know its future

**SAM RAO**

Milpitas, California

**RATHENDRA** Pandey of India Research Foundation (IRF) makes this clear at the start: "We are not another so-called cultural organization". Instead, the newly formed IRF in the SF Bay Area aims to bring together "like-minded individuals" to research and communicate the "antiquity, diversity and potentials" of the Indian people.

The foundation seeks to examine the challenges faced by Indians, their achievements in the face of those challenges as well as their unfulfilled promise and potential.

As part of that effort, the IRF organized a discussion on January 27 here, including a question and answer session, where an analysis on the historical events and decisions that had shaped the current mindset in the Indian subcontinent was presented. The analysis, 'The South Asia File', has been done by SF Bay area resident Dr Kaushal Vepa.

This was the first of a series of lectures on issues affecting India that the IRF is planning to hold. The discussion centered around issues like the importance attached to the English language in India, the division and further exaggeration of India's diversity as well as



Speaker Dr Kaushal Vepa talks on 'The South Asia File' at an India Research Foundation session

the downplaying of the inherent cultural uniqueness of the people inhabiting the subcontinent, plus the solidification of the caste structure with a view to consolidate colonial powers.

"We found there was a need for a forum in SF Bay Area where stimulating discussions like these could be organized," said Rathendra Pandey, adding that the response to the first lecture had been heartening.

One of those who attended the discussion, P. Acharya, also appreciated the effort, saying: "The arrangement was well-done, especially as there was ample time to interact with the speaker and get views from the audience."

The Treasurer of the IRF, Arun Sharma, spoke about the events planned by the foundation and urged everyone to pitch in as they could.

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