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NEW YEAR SPECIAL

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(Photo: Xitij Joshi)

## SHALABH KUMAR

THE SOUTH ASIAN TIMES  
PERSON OF THE YEAR 2016

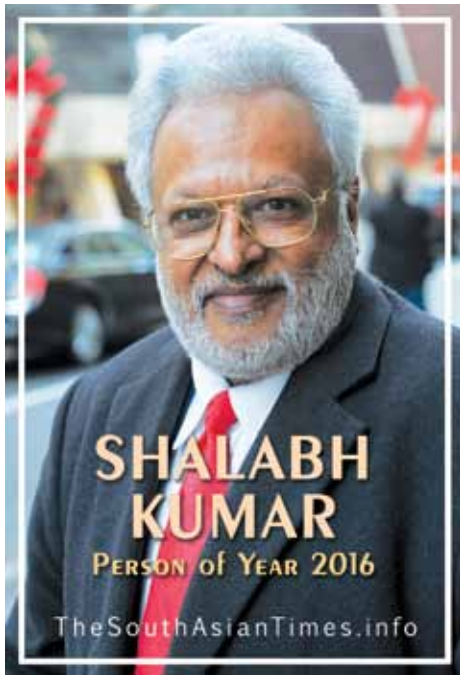


*Delving into politics, the Chicago based Chairman of the AVG group of companies has displayed political prescience and dexterity by picking winners: Narendra Modi in India and Donald Trump in the recent US presidential election. A member of Trump's transition team, Shalabh 'Shalli' Kumar is poised to play a key role in the expansion of trade between US and India.*

S H A L A B H K U M A R

# Bridge between US & India

*I first heard of Shalabh Kumar in 2011 when the Chicago businessman's son's mega wedding in New Zealand to a beauty queen – baraat coming in helicopters and all that -- hit global headlines. Then in 2013, controversially, he took a Congressional delegation to India to meet Narendra Modi, when the Gujarat Chief Minister was not even allowed to enter USA. That contributed to Modi getting propelled into leading BJP in the 2014 election and becoming Prime Minister. Last year, Shalabh 'Shalli' Kumar surprised again by cutting a million dollar check for Donald Trump's campaign, and getting him to grace an event organized by Kumar's Republican Hindu Coalition in New Jersey. Now on the Trump's transition and finance team, Kumar is expected to play a key role in enhancing trade and other ties between India and America. Recently, on a visit to New York, Kumar was told that we selected him as our Person of the Year 2016. Ensnared in a hotel in Upper West Side, he gave a relaxed interview to The South Asian Times, dwelled into his political journey and his plans following Trump's stunning win. Extracts from the interview:*



By Parveen Chopra

*The South Asian Times: How did you get into American politics?*

**Shalabh Kumar:** Policy and politics is in my blood. (Inspired by his mother, a stickler for probity, he had led anti-corruption campaigns during his student years in India)

After I migrated to the US, the first presidential election came in 1972 and we naturally associate ourselves as minorities with the Democratic party. So, I found myself in 1972 in the cold winter of Chicago carrying a huge sign for George McGovern in a crowd. Then in '76 I supported Jimmy Carter, who sounded like an honest farmer, a simple guy compared to what had gone on with the Watergate scandal.

In '79 I ended up attending a dinner hosted by Illinois manufacturers association where Ronald Reagan was making a pitch for his presidential run. Looking at my persistent raised hand he said, 'will get back to you later'. Me and my wife were ready to leave when a bunch of secret service type of guys escorted me to Governor Reagan's table, where he was sitting with Jack Kemp and some Congressmen.

Candidate Reagan says, "I know you have some questions but I would like to ask you why your people here, Indian Americans, are Democrats?" Thinking nano fast, I said, "Reason No. 1, we love (John F.) Kennedy." He was the most popular face when I was growing up, more popular than Dev Anand or Dilip Kumar. Kennedy was inspirational and we are able to go to the moon because of him. And he was a Democrat. "Anything else?" Reagan asked. I replied, "We are minority so we have to be Democrats." I also told him that I was an electronics engineer, had a small business. "How many hours a week do you work?" "100 hours a week." "Oh really," Reagan reposted, "How would you like to have the government take away 60% of what you make." I said really 60%, no. "See you are a republican, you are not a Democrat," he concluded.

Then Reagan asked me about the controversy that in New York City, because of welfare schemes if you stayed home, you will make more money than going to college and becoming an engineer. I agreed that it was unfair. Then Regan turned to Don Cotten, his Midwest Campaign Manager at the time, and proclaimed, "You got your first Indian American Republican, organize them."

So we organized Indian American Illinois Republican Wing and got actively involved in the Reagan campaign. Jack Kemp was a phenomenal economist, besides being a football player.

They started giving us reading material – like books to differentiate between Keynesian Theory of economics versus Milton Friedman's supply-side economics. I also met Arthur Laffer, the principal economist behind Reaganomics. He is the author of the famous Laffer curve he had drawn on a napkin. Having gone through many recessions, this theory impressed me. Going with supply side economics rather than Keynesian, where the government manipulates the demand, if you don't manipulate the demand, and you only control the supply of money, then you won't have a recession. Indeed no recession followed thanks to Reaganomics. Supply-side works!

Growth, and more growth – it was a beautiful period in American economy. So, Reagan asked me to join his small business advisory council, a small, informal group. I served on that in the mid-80's. Then I sort of got out of politics and concentrated on more inventions and more business and corporate acquisitions and so forth until 2010.

*So how did you return to politics in 2010?*

**SK:** In 2010, I got a call from Nikki Haley's father. I had not known about her. All along I had remained in contact with Speaker Newt Gingrich - Indian American community loved him in the 1980's. So Nikki Haley's father asked me to help her, a candidate for governor in South Carolina, a Republican and Conservative. After a long conversation with her, I decided to support her. Kumar family gave her a lot of money and also we swung for her and she won. In 2010 itself most of my American colleagues found Nikki Haley to be a very bright girl with great future potential as a conservative leader.

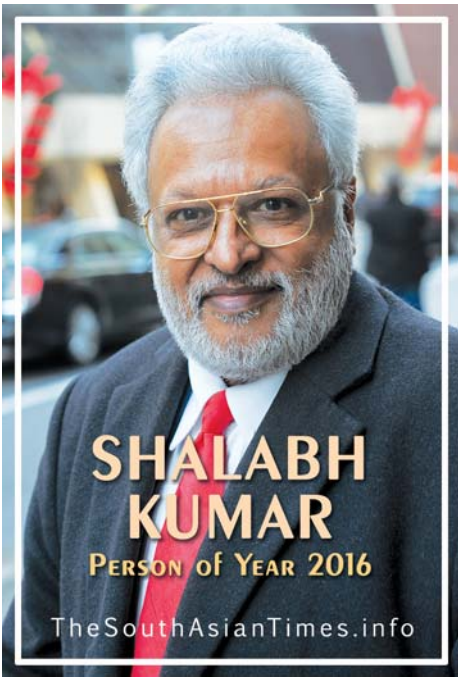
*Prior to that you never supported a candidate through funds, etc. No million dollar donations as you made for Trump?*

**SK:** In Reagan time it was different. My talents were used to give speeches to American audiences. Jack Kemp and Reagan both were interested in reaching out to this growing Indian American community, also to show that the party is inclusive. So, I was the face of that effort. Nikki Haley won in 2010 and on the personal side, we have the wedding of the decade.

*Big Fat Indian Wedding. In New Zealand because the bride, a Miss India and Miss Earth, was living there. Was it arranged marriage or love marriage?*



(Photo: Xitij Joshi)



**SK:** Watch for a movie on that. I traveled 40,000 miles in one week when Vikram, my son, and Pooja (Chitgopekar) saw each other for the first time. I had started to develop relationships with Indian leadership at that time. The then BJP president Nitin Gadkari sent current law minister Sadanand Gowda to attend Vikram's wedding.

**Ok, we know you got fascinated by Narendra Modi. But first, how did you choose to back Donald Trump - he was so controversial even the Republican leaders did not come on board with him.**

**SK:** He was controversial only in the sense that he wanted to shake up Washington. That it was about time somebody other than a traditional politician fought the establishment, shook up Washington. Speaker Paul Ryan, a good friend of mine, made this statement on Nov 9th, "Hats off to President elect Donald Trump who has turned politics on its head. There was a voice of pain all across the United States that we, even in the Republican party, failed to hear and he had the genius to pay atten-



tion and that's why he is so successful."

**70% of Indian Americans are Democrats and must have voted for Hillary Clinton.**

**SK:** Not now, in the past they were Democrats. Zee News conducted a scientific poll after the election which showed that 64.9% of Hindu Americans voted for trump.

**Oh, OK. So this is one criticism of you in the Indian press, why are you speaking for Hindu Americans only, why not speak for all Indian Americans?**

**SK:** This particular question dumbfounds me and American politicians. Does anyone ask why there is a Republican Jewish Coalition, a Republican Christian Coalition, a

Republican Muslim Coalition? So why not a Republican Hindu Coalition (RHC). By the way, Newt Gingrich is co-chair of RHC even though he is a Christian. Hinduism is not even a religion, it's a way of life and there are not only Hindu Americans from India, there are so many Hindu Americans from other parts of the world who do not identify themselves as Indians, Caribbean's, etc. To me, all Vedic religions have Hindu way of life. Also, I always talk about Hindu Americans and also Indian Americans.

**RHC is organizing some events in Washington for the Trump inauguration, right?**

**SK:** Well, we are organizing lots of events, one particular event is to introduce senior

leaders of the Hindu American community, particularly the business community, both from US and India, to President Trump on January 19 at a very exclusive candle-light dinner.

**Which VIPs you have invited from India?**

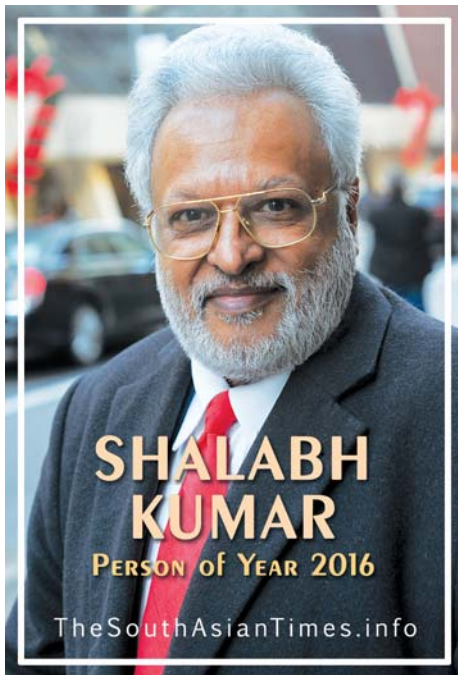
**SK:** We are not going to name them right now. Swami Ramdev and Sri Sri Ravi Shankar are quite eager to attend.

**Anybody from the Indian government?**

**SK:** If it was not for American protocol, Prime Minister Modi would love to come. But no heads of state at the inauguration.



Republican nominee for President, Donald Trump lighting the traditional diya at New Jersey event organized by Shalabh Kumar's Republican Hindu Coalition. Trump said he loved India and Hindus. Kumar is accompanied by his son Vikram and daughter Manasvi.



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**Any date being worked out for when PM Modi will meet President Trump?**

**SK:** That's a little too early to say. But most likely there would be a visit, either Trump to India or Modi to the US in the first year.

**Modi developed a good personal chemistry with President Obama...**

**SK:** See that chemistry is more of an optical illusion. PM Modi knows very well as does Obama, that the policies getting pursued by President Obama were not so friendly for India. For example, Obama's decision, which got blocked with the help of RHC in US Congress, was a gift of 8 nuclear capable F-16's to Pakistan. So policy is different from optical impressions. Obama was also pushing for an

immigration bill S744 that would have hurt many Indian American companies, US companies and India's economy to the tune of \$30 billion in foreign exchange per year. With Trump, you will have a true friendship and true policy, right policy, great for US and great for India. Trade between US and India will grow from \$100 billion a year to at least \$300 billion a year by the end of the first Trump term. That will create huge number of jobs -- at least a million new jobs in the United States and also a vastly bigger number, 9 million, new jobs in India.

**Indian Americans are concerned that the H1B visa under Trump will get truncated.**

**SK:** All H1B visa holders and L1 visa holders need not be concerned about any change in the current policy on immigration, if anything it will be a positive change. There are 1.5 million Indians in the US who are on H1 visa, whose green card has been approved but they have to wait as long as 50 years to get a green card. And that is going to change, that will be music to their ears pretty soon.

**Because, you are saying that the people who are legally here, they will get precedence in path to citizenship.**

**SK:** Not only that. Trump is a businessman. I work closely with the senior people in Trump administration who have taken a deep interest in Hindu American community and Indian American community and India starting from Steve Bannon, Reince Priebus. Steven Mnuchin, treasury secretary nominee, who was designated by the Trump team to be the interface between the inner



Shalabh Kumar had accidentally run into the phenomenon of Narendra Modi and his soaring popularity and had a first meeting with the future prime minister of India in 2012.

circle of the Trump team and the Hindu American community. During the campaign, myself and Mnuchin communicated at least 50 times.

**Right now you are on the transition and finance team. What do you look for in the Trump administration, what role?**

**SK:** I am looking forward to have qualified Hindu American and Indian Americans in the Trump administration, qualified people, and we have tons of them. I will admit that our expertise is not that great in matching the needs to the profiles, even though the head of transition, Vice President elect Mike Pence, has given me a special contact to get the people matched to the positions. But you know, a lot of our people want only part-time position, not full-time position and a lot positions are full time positions.

**So you will be a kind of godfather, a political godfather, you will not take a position yourself.**

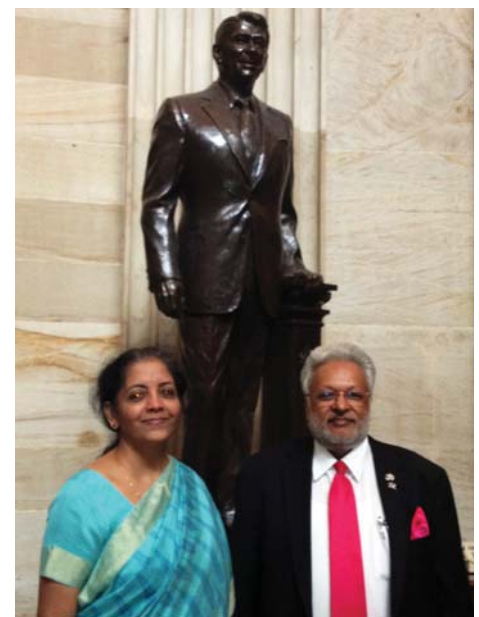
**SK:** That remains to be seen. I have been a private citizen all my life, but I would be willing to serve my country in any way President Trump sees fit, as long as I am making a significant contribution to make America great again.

**And which is the way you want to?**

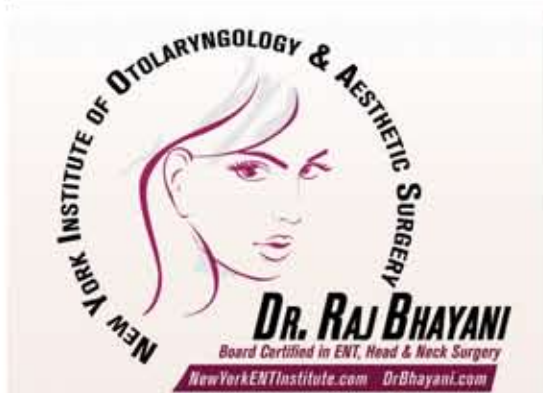
**SK:** My first objective is to grow the econo-

my, create jobs in the US. I am a businessman, a manufacturing guy, so that is my first priority. Second is to cut the spending, be a smart spender, which, fortunately, President Trump already is. He said in a Tweet, cancel that \$4 billion order for Air Force One.

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With Indian minister Nirmala Sitharaman in front of a statue of President Ronald Reagan, who converted him to become a Republican and launched him in politics.



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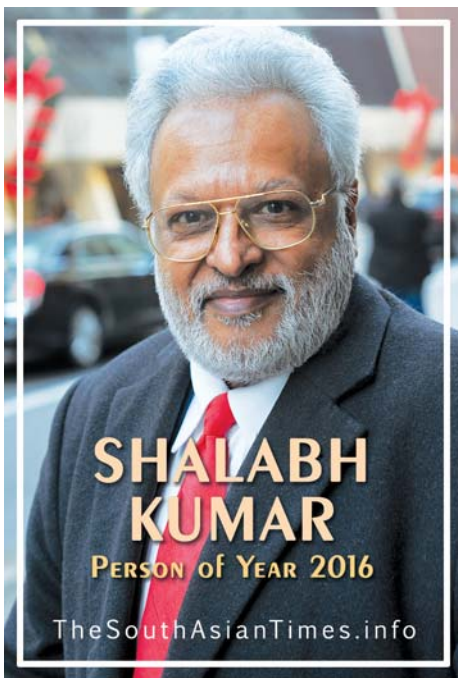
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**And the close relationship between America and India, where do you see yourself fitting in?**

**SK:** Well, whatever I am asked by President Trump, I will be happy to do that. I am in a rather unique situation where most of the senior cabinet, 80% of Modi's and 80% of the incoming Trump team, are friends with me so I find myself in a unique position to be a good bridge between the two, maybe a go-to guy.

**So, do you see yourself as more of America's ambassador to India?**

**SK:** My first priority as I am a US citizen is to serve the interest of America and of Trump, to make America great again and fortunately in that process we could also make India great again, take it to the times of Samudragupta when India was the biggest economy in the world.

**Sone ki chidiya! You also supported two candidates for US Congress. Indian American candidates.**

**SK:** We fielded two candidates, one was Manju Goel in District 8 in Illinois, in the 2014 election, and in California, Vanila Singh. This year I did not get involved in any.

**But you will only support Republican candidates.**

**SK:** Obviously, obviously. If there are any people from the Democrat side like Raja Krishnamoorthi, I've offered him many times, that only if I could convert him to Republican or an Independent I will support him. He's won in Illinois, but Raja, watch out! I wasn't paying attention this time, I was busy in presidential election, so watch out and watch your votes.

**So is it NIAPPI (National Indian American Public Policy Institute) that you are promoting, trying to develop Indian American candidates?**

**SK:** No, NIAPPI is only a public policy institute. It cannot engage in any political work. But the Republican Hindu Coalition can engage in political activity.

**Technically RHC was formed only a year or so ago.**

**SK:** Yes, and I will tell you how RHC came into existence. I attended the Republican Jewish Coalition annual meeting in Las Vegas in April 2015. What I learned from there was momentous, it was phenomenal: 500 businessmen, Jewish American businessmen, having so much power, so much control over policy matters affecting conservative causes, as well as Jewish Americans and Israel. I said oh my God, we have the Hindu American community which is almost the same size, they are 5.5 million, we are 4.2 million. We have a higher per capita income than the Jewish American people. 67% have a Bachelor's degree, and one of the 10 is an entrepreneur. We pay 50 billion dollars a year in taxes and we have very little voice on the policy tables of United States.

So an idea was born, which was immediately recognized and encouraged by Speaker Newt Gingrich, to have an equivalent organization to RJC. So this was how Republican Hindu Coalition came into being. And by the way, RJC helped us in every which way. They helped to connect us with the right people, their 25 years of political capital developed in the Senate and the House and everywhere, they've leveraged that to launch the Republican Hindu Coalition. RHC

is to provide a single unified platform for where we have a respected Hindu voice in the formulation and administration of policies that affect Hindu Americans as well as India and Hindus everywhere in the world.

**So far you have supported Candidate, Trump. What will RHC do from now on?**

**SK:** As it is legally permitted, and there are restrictions. However RHC members will be supporting conservative candidates who respect, who admire, who are with the Hindu American community and who have

pro-Hindu, pro-India policies, Republicans only.

**You founded it, you are the face of it, but who are other people active in RHC?**

**SK:** There are quite a few people, there is Zee TV's CEO, Sameer Targe; there is an investment guru and investment banker, we call him K.P., Krishna Prasad; we have Brij Sharma, CEO of Power Volt, and of course my son Vikram Aditya and daughter Manasvi and my daughter-in-law Pooja.



Kumar campaigned for Speaker Newt Gingrich's presidential run in 2012. His relationship with Gingrich goes back to the Reagan years, and he is co-chair of Republican Hindu Coalition.



With Congressman Pete Sessions and Daler Mehndi at NIAPPI float at FIA's India Day Parade in 2014 in New York. In the words of Ramesh Patel, FIA Chairman, "Shalabh Kumar ki rug rug mein Bharat ka khoon behta hai."

We Wish everybody Happy New Year



*Congratulations to*

**Mr Shalabh Kumar**

The South Asian Times Person of the Year 2016



Bipin Patel, former FIA President, and family

**Bipin Patel** President & CEO

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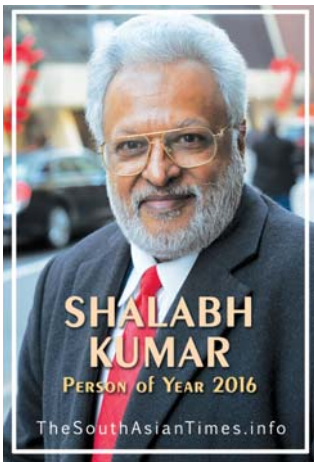
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## SHALABH KUMAR

## Official Biography

Shalabh 'Shalli' Kumar is an industrialist and a philanthropist based out of Chicago. He is also a conservative commentator, community activist and a political donor.

Kumar was born in Ambala in India. He spent his early years in Nahan with his maternal grandparents before moving back with his parents - his father was in government service so the family had to move a few times before settling in Chandigarh. His mother, Satyavati, was a freedom fighter during India's independence struggle in the 1940's. A staunch Arya Samaji and Gandhian, she was dead set against corruption, even among her own family members. Kumar too became an activist and a leader against corruption during his student years. He graduated from Panjab University in 1965 and earned a BS in electronics engineering in 1969 from Punjab Engineering College, Chandigarh. Moving to America, Kumar earned his master's from the Illinois Institute of Technology. There he got recognition for organizing the first exhibition of rare photographs of Indian freedom fighters such as Subhash Chandra Bose, Bhagat Singh and Chandrashekhar Azad.

Kumar's son, Vikram Aditya, married England born 2007 Miss India Pooja Chitgopekar. Her wedding that was featured as Big Fat Indian Wedding on NDTV India, took place in January of 2011 in New Zealand where she was living with her Indian immigrant parents. Hailed as the biggest wedding in New Zealand history, it featured 9 helicopters forming a grooms party also called a "baraat", and a musical extravaganza lasting three days featuring King of Pop, Daler Mehndi, RDB of Canada and UK, and Signature from UK of Britain has Talent fame.

Kumar is the Chairman and CEO of AVG Group of companies with headquarters in Chicago and operations all over the world. He has also served as president or CEO of Circuit International Incorporated, Microfast Controls Corporation, Electronic Support Systems, PEC Reliance, Lika Tandy Corporation, Mc Technologies, and Hi-Tech Systems Corporation. Kumar has also been employed with Nanofast Incorporated and National Controls Corporation before venturing on his own.

AVG was founded in 1975 and is into automation controls, semiconductors, telecommunications, thick-film hybrids, electronic component manufacturing and distribution.

Kumar is a community and political activist. He migrated to the US in 1969 and was a supporter of the Democratic party until he met President Reagan and Jack Kemp in 1979 and since then has become a staunch Republican. Working along with Don Totten, Reagan's mid-west campaign manager in 1980, he converted a significant number of Indian American community members and formed the first Indian American Republican organization in the country in 1983. He also served on a Reagan small



An ardent admirer of revolutionaries' role in India's freedom struggle, Shalabh Kumar organized an exhibition of their rare photographs during his time at Illinois Institute of Technology.



Ever the innovator and flamboyant man, Shalabh Kumar had the baraat for his son Vikram's wedding to Miss India Pooja Chitgopekar in 2011 in New Zealand arrive in 9 helicopters flying in a formation.

business advisory council during the early eighties.

Right after Osama bin Laden was found hiding in Pakistan, during 2011 and 2012, Kumar became an active citizen lobbyist on Capitol Hill to support Texas Congressman Ted Poe's bill to cut off foreign aid to Pakistan and the Bill passed in August of 2012. Subsequently, he founded the National Indian American Public Policy Institute (NIAPPI), a think tank focusing on issues relevant to Indian Americans. NIAPPI and Kumar had the foresight to take a high level Congressional and Business delegation in March 2013 consisting of Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Chairwoman of House Republican Conference, Congressman Aaron Schock and Congresswoman Cynthia Lummis, to visit the then Chief Minister of Gujarat in India, Mr. Narendra Modi and invite him to the US. Mr. Modi won in a landslide in 2014 and became the Prime Minister of India. He was in diplomatic isolation by the US Administration back in 2013. Indian TV media at that time characterized this visit as a boost to propel Modi as the front runner for the post of PM of India.

Working with Congressman Pete Sessions, Chairman of the Rules Committee of the US Congress, Kumar has sought to recruit Indian-Americans Republicans to run for Congress. Sessions/Kumar project resulted in two Indian Americans running as Republican candidates in 2014.

Kumar chairs the Indian American Advisory Council of the House Republican Conference. He has organized meetings between

American and Indian politicians, and has particularly close ties with Narendra

Modi, the Prime Minister of India. He has described Modi as one of his idols with great future for India and US-India relationship. Hindustan Times described Kumar as the Punjabi Tycoon, the biggest supporter of Modi in US. And of course after the 2016 Presidential campaign and a six month close and personal relationship with President-Elect Donald Trump, his ultimate role model and idol is Donald, the Businessman.

During 2014 Kumar and

Ramesh Patel, Chairman of FIA, were quite active in preventing S 744 bill passed by US Senate to be taken up by the House. The S 744 Bill was perceived to affect the economy of both India and US by putting uncalled for restrictions on Indian IT professionals working on temporary work visas in the US. S 744 was opposed by US Chamber of Commerce.

Kumar and Newt Gingrich, former Speaker of the House, have closely worked together in the early eighties and from 2011 onwards, Kumar ran the Gingrich Presidential Campaign in Scott County Iowa in 2012.

Inspired by Republican Jewish Committee, currently Mr. Kumar is engaged in the formation of Republican Hindu Coalition (RHC) with Speaker Gingrich as Honorary Chairman and with the blessing and support of the leadership and membership of US Congress as well as RNC. Congressman Ed Royce, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Congressman Pete Sessions, Chairman of Rules Committee, and Congressman George Holding, Co-Chair of India Caucus are leading the effort.

Shalabh Kumar, known as Shalli Kumar is US, has become a household name among Hindu Americans, Indian Americans and Indians back home. He innovated and executed an incredible campaign for Donald Trump

*Continued on page 16*

## How Shalabh Kumar discovered Modi - accidentally

Till about year 2011, Shalabh Kumar had never heard of Narendra Modi.

Around this time, he was trying to get Indian Americans to sign a petition urging the US to cut all aid to Pakistan in the aftermath of the killing of Osama bin Laden. But the response was tepid.

"Then at a meeting, a friend suggested 'throw in Modi's name'," Kumar says.

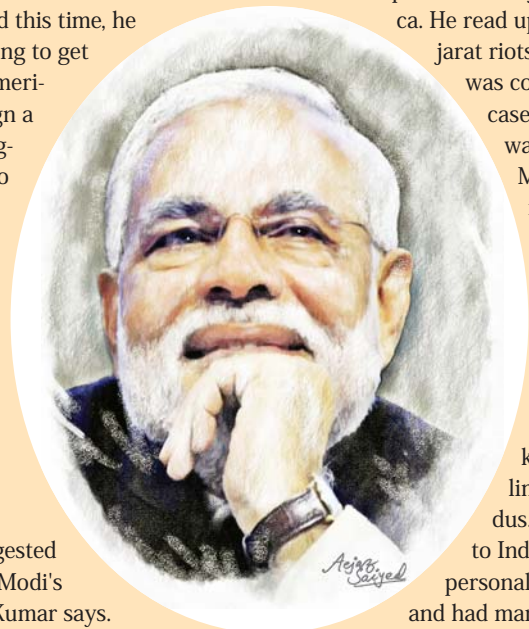
He didn't know Modi. But he was curious to see how far that would go. It worked, to his continuing surprise. "People queued up to sign the same petition now," Kumar recalls. Curious he wanted to know more

about the Gujarat Chief Minister who was being hero-worshipped in faraway America.

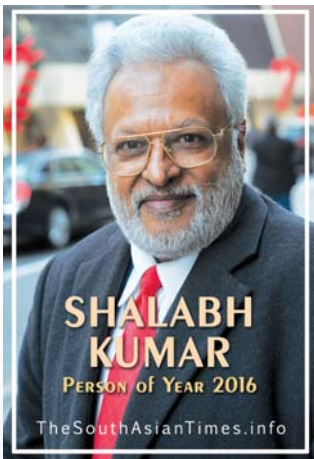
He read up the Gujarat riots cases and was convinced the case against Modi was political.

Modi was now a mission for him: to rehabilitate him with the US, which denied him a visa in 2005 for failing to stop riots in Gujarat that killed 790 Muslims and 254 Hindus. He flew down to India in 2012 to personally meet Modi and had many conversations with him. Taking a US

Congressional delegation to India to meet Modi brought Kumar publicity. Modi rose to become the Prime Minister and the rest is history.







# Maa ho to aisi!

**H**is mother, Satyavati, was a great, positive influence in his life. During the first 9 years of his life, he was an ok student in school, living with his maternal grandfather. Then he moved back along with his parents around sixth grade. In the first six months he wanted to run away to his other family because his mother was too tough on him. Her discipline was too much, but he had to put up with it and pay attention to his studies.

Young Kumar was the rebel in the family, always fighting with his mother. Her discipline meant get up at 5 am, get ready and pray. He would constantly argue with her over who freed India. His mother was a follower of Gandhi and was a freedom fighter herself. In her youth, she spent time in jail. He, on the other hand, was fascinated with Bhagat Singh. He fought and insisted that Mahatma Gandhi was not the one who got India freedom,



Shalabh Kumar (right) in a family photograph in front of an institute he started in his mother Satyavati's name.

going as far as to say that he was a coward and the reason he stood

for non-violence is that he was afraid of taking the bullet. His view

did not change until the movie 'Gandhi' came out where he saw

that it takes more guts to be non-violent than to be violent. He wrote to his mother upon seeing the movie and she was happy that he had finally changed.

With time, her discipline started to show off on him as in 8th grade, he was ranked 1st in the whole Panjab university. He continued to rank well in 10th and 11th grade. He even ranked second in pre-engineering in the university. As a family tradition, his mother forced him to take the Prabhakar exam, which is equivalent of Bachelors in Hindi and Sanskrit. He really did not want to do it, but still ranked First in the university. Throughout his childhood his mother would teach him things in a scientific, rational way. She even encouraged him to enter a declamation contest. Endowed with a deep, strong voice, he ended up becoming state champion. He also excelled as an actor in school dramas and statewide contests.

Wondered why Shalabh Kumar carries no surname? Because followers of Arya Samaj – a purist Veda-centered form of Hinduism – do not believe in caste system.

## Shalabh Kumar Official Biography

Continued from page 14

featuring the now famous "Ab Ki Bar Trump Sarkar" ad commercial. He put Hindus on the map. He got Trump to address 9,000 Hindu Americans just three weeks prior to the presidential election and say: "We love Hindus and we love India". Trump speaking Hindi went viral, 1.2 billion people worldwide saw the ad, 90% of 4.2 million Hindu Americans saw it, 60 million non-Hindu American voters saw the ad, tens of millions of you-tube, FB, Twitter and Whatsapp impressions, got declared as the best among 20,000 odd political ads of 2016, and trended as the 9th most important news stories in the entire world. He engaged the entire Trump family into the Trump Hindu Outreach, even got Eric trump to wear traditional Hindu garb and do a full aarti in a Hindu temple. He addressed at least 100 small Hindu voter gatherings across the battleground states in America, and appeared on countless TV and audio interviews including mainstream media like FOX, CNBC, BBC, CNN, NDTV, Zee News. Result: OVER ONE MILLION NET VOTE GAIN AMONG HINDU VOTERS TO VOTE FOR TRUMP AND THE REPUBLICAN PARTY. Shalabh Kumar turned the traditional Hindu American Democrat politics on its head. He states: "I cannot imagine a single Hindu American voter to vote for Democrats once the curtain of darkness is removed and they learn the real truth about their policies and Republican policies."

You can go to [www.rhc-usa.org](http://www.rhc-usa.org) to learn more about the campaign and relevant policies.

## Second Miss India joins the family

**S**halabh Kumar is proud to point out the two Miss India in his family. His son, Vikram Aditya Kumar is of course married to Pooja Chitgopekar, Miss India and Miss Earth (Air). They were married in a lavish wedding in New Zealand in 2011.

Now Shalabh Kumar's adopted daughter, Manasvi is Femina Miss India 2010, a Supermodel and a Bollywood Actress. Under Shalabh Kumar's influence, she is also politically active, and often accompanies him at meetings and events. She was very visible during Shalabh Kumar's Republican Hindu Coalition's outreach to Hindus for Trump's candidacy.

In a recent media interview in India, Manasvi described his relationship with Shalabh Kumar thus: "I address him as Pops. He is one of the smartest and most inspirational persons I've ever met. He is more than my biological father. He is a visionary with great foresight. It is his passion to empower Hindu Americans that captivated me. His love for US and India is infectious.

About her future plans, Manasvi said, "Last four months have changed my life. I will continue the Republican Hindu Coalition work. I have a scheduled meeting to visit with Donald Trump in a few weeks.

And then there is the US President's inauguration on January 20. Pops would probably want to have an RHC inauguration ball with even more extravagant Bollywood show. I do want to continue my career in Bollywood, but in a more serious role. Pops may start a big Bollywood or Hollywood production house. President of the United States wants to connect me to Hollywood.

We shall see!"



Shalabh Kumar's son, Vikram Aditya and his wife, Pooja, Miss India 2007

Daughter Manasvi: Beauty with brains, Miss India 2010



*Congratulations to*  
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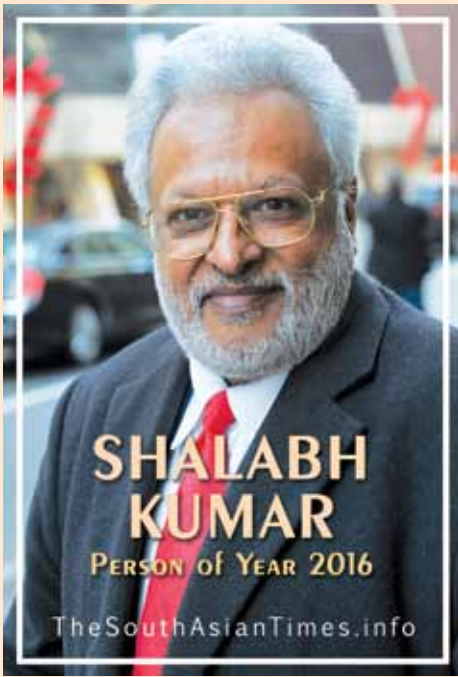


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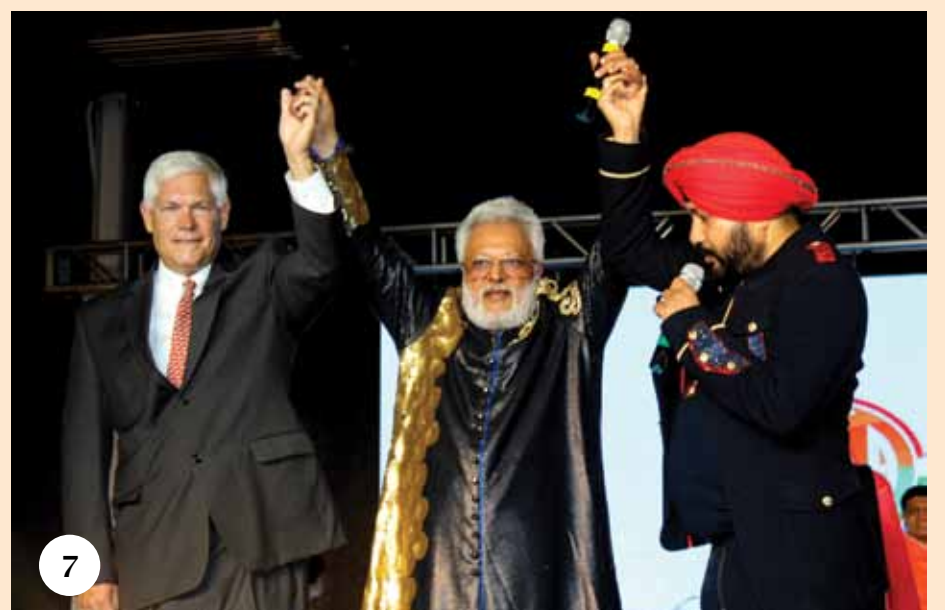
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1. Daler Mehndi performed at Shalabh Kumar's son Vikram Aditya's marriage to Miss Earth Pooja Chitgopekar in 2011. 2. Shalabh Kumar felicitated Eric Trump's visit to a Hindu temple in Orlando, FL in November. 3. Kumar and his daughter Manasvi, former Miss India, super model and Bollywood actor, with Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. 4. Shalabh Kumar along with RHC co-founder Speaker Newt Gingrich were single handedly responsible for PM Modi to be invited to address Joint Session of Congress. Seen here with daughter Manasvi as part of the Paul Ryan Welcome Committee for Modi. 5. Striking a Bollywood pose. 6. Kumar accompanied US Congressman from Illinois Peter Roskam and his wife to India, where Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of State - Commerce & Industry, gifted the couple copies of the Gita. 7. It is well known that Kumar loves music and dance, specially high energy Bhangra that fits his personality.

# Flamboyant Moves





*Congratulations to*

# SHALABH KUMAR

The South Asian Times  
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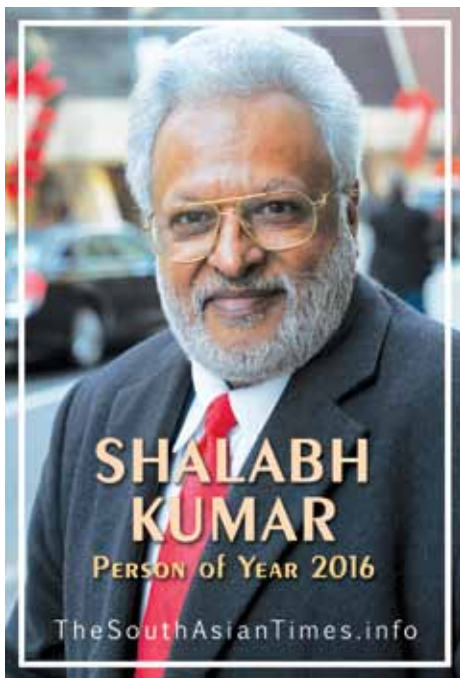
*May you have a heart of courage,  
a mind of will and may you get whatever you desire  
always at your will.*

# HAPPY NEW YEAR



## Sushil Goyal & Neelima Goyal

Liberty Gems Inc., 925 Sterling Inc., 62 W 47th Street, New York, NY 10036  
Tel: 212 391 5649; email: [sgoyal@libertygems.com](mailto:sgoyal@libertygems.com)



There were many turning points which ultimately led Shalabh Kumar to grow his AVG group of companies to an installed base of \$2 billion in Fortune 500 companies and global operations. The first was the advanced electronic circuit design he created as a student at Punjab Engineering College, Chandigarh, which later in America landed him his first job at a small hi-tech company named Nanofast.

Second, in 1970 in Chicago having earned his master's from the Illinois Institute of Technology, when depression had made jobs scarce, he almost took up a draughtsman's job, except that as Shalabh Kumar recounted the episode to The South Asian Times, his roommate (and later Brother-in-law, not co-related) named Manohar Lal Sharma physically barred him from leaving the apartment on the day he was to report for work. Third, after Nanofast he joined National Controls Corporation, where the owners decided to reward him for his inventions every other month and his hard work to make him a partner. Two years later when they retired they sold the company to him

and AVG was founded in 1975 and over the years acquired many other companies.

The inventor, who holds more than 10 US patents and many pending (he loves circuit and product design even today), Shalabh Kumar turned a successful entrepreneur armed with innovation, foresight and an ability to take calculated risks. And AVG grew into the current behemoth it is. According to Bloomberg, AVG Advanced Technologies, through its subsidiaries, designs and manufactures electronic products. It offers printed circuit boards, environmental controls, relays and industrial controls, fluid meters and counting devices, and telephone equipment. The company also provides semiconductors, thick film hybrids, laser trimmed resistor networks, SMT, and through hole circuit assemblies.

In India, AVG has its headquarters in Bangalore, and has introduced Utopic Automation Product line with its "Made for India" American manufactured Tough Series to operate at high temperatures and humidity.

Shalabh Kumar is proud of some of his inventions. At National Controls, he had designed the now world famous French Fry Computer for McDonalds and was also credited for the first use of the very first microprocessor, Intel 4004, in an Automation control device. In 1975, he invented the first microprocessor based replacement for a rotary cam limit switch used in the metal forming presses of General Motors. He named it Programmable Limit Switch (PLS), which created a brand new industry.

AVG's products are constantly featured on the front covers of major US magazines such as Control Engineering, Control Design, Automation World, NED and IEN and even won the most coveted "Engineers' Choice Award", the "Oscar" of Automation, for the Best HMI (Human Machine Interfaces) of 2008. Kumar has been recognized as one of the top electronic hardware designers in the

world specializing in high speed operations.

Lately Shalabh Kumar has withdrawn from AVG because of his political work and his new mission to become a catalyst to grow trade between the US and India. The reins of the company are now in the hands of his son, Vikram Aditya Kumar, who has studied electrical engineering at his father's favorite university, the Illinois Institute of

Technology. He is now President and Vice Chairman of the AVG conglomerate.

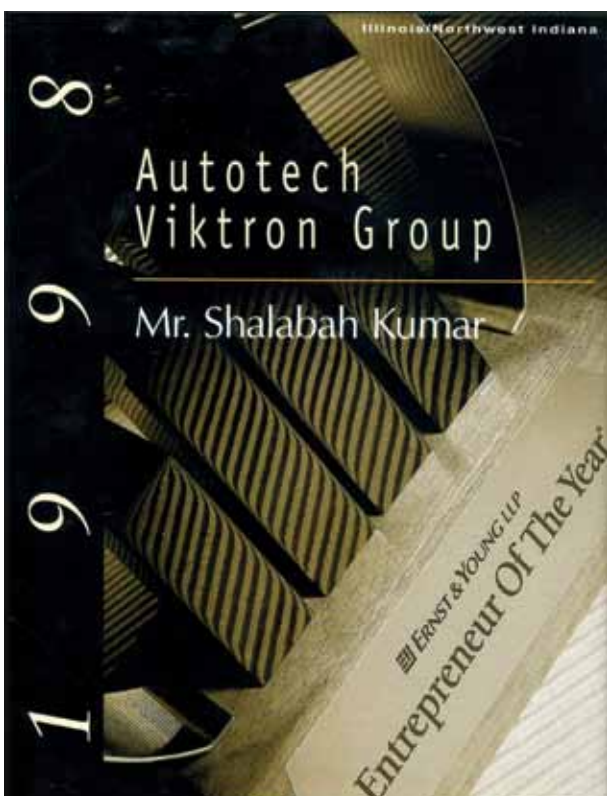
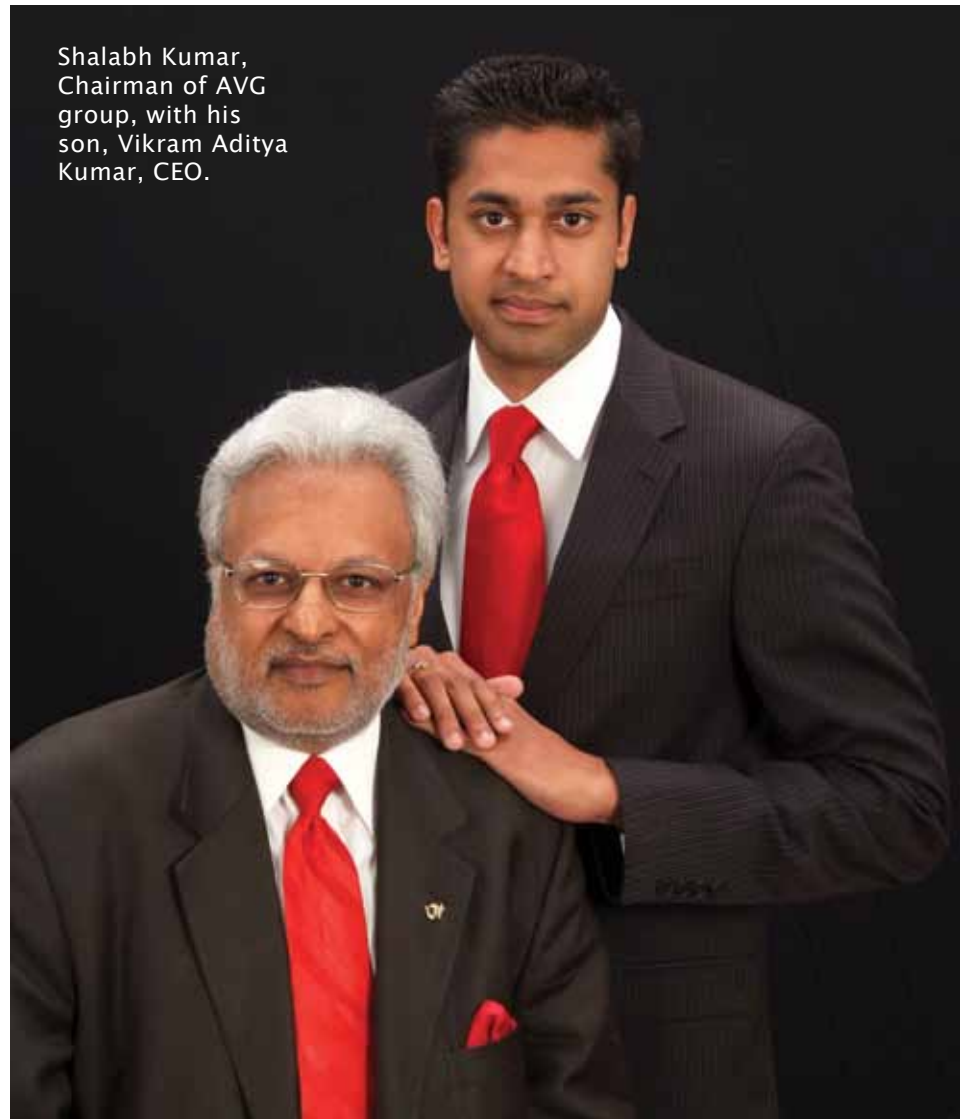
Shalabh Kumar is also proud that AVG's manufacturing is 95% in the US. He is fond of saying, "The world is flat. We must have the ability in the US to manufacture products here and sell it to India or China." Something President-Elect Donald Trump will wholeheartedly approve of.

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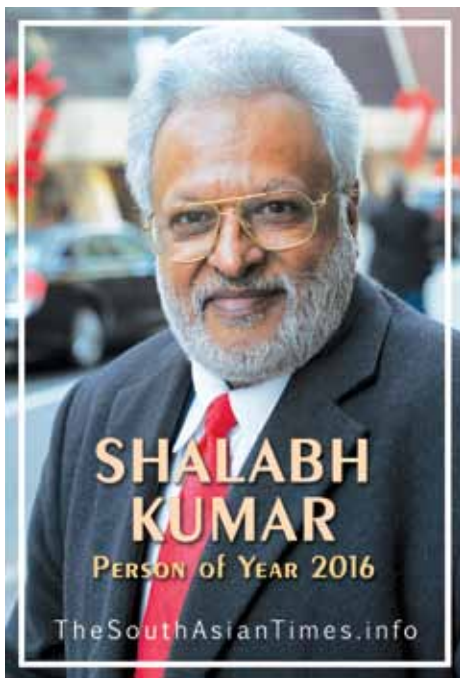
Shalabh Kumar, Chairman of AVG group, with his son, Vikram Aditya Kumar, CEO.



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(from left) In 1998 Shalabh Kumar made it to Ernst & Young's Entrepreneur of the Year. One of the many US patents Shalabh Kumar has secured. In Bangalore, AVG's India HQ, Kumar has built this palatial bungalow, and christened it Rana-Reagan Palace, inspired by Jaipur's Rambagh Palace, for his guests. One of Shalabh Kumar's numerous innovations and inventions.



### Hon. Pete Sessions

US Congress committee chairman

The gentleman Shalabh Kumar, who is being honored here tonight is a real hero on behalf of not just our country but also of the continued relationship with our dear friends in India. Your Honoree tonight whom I have worked with for years as he has worked relentlessly to make sure that others enjoy what he has, that is freedom and economic opportunity. So thank you for allowing me to be here tonight to put a stamp of approval on a man who spends his life working for others, to further the relationship between India and the United States of America.

At AIF event to honor Shalabh Kumar.

### America India Foundation

Shalabh Kumar is impossible to clone, a Man who does not count his years, but makes his years count... Shalabh is uniquely endowed to foresee transformational events and executes his vision with indefatigable energy and lots of flare.

At AIF event to honor Shalabh Kumar.

### Newt Gingrich

Former Speaker

### Senator Mitch McConnell

Senate Majority Leader

Shalabh, appreciate what you are doing by pulling everyone together. There is a natural alliance between the Hindu community, America and the Republican Party. After all so many Hindus are active in business and professions. If you are looking for a good definition of the difference between the 2 parties - the Democratic party is a party of the government and Republican party is the party of the private sector. We watch with great interest as India is putting aside its socialist roots. Nehru was a great person but his tendency to lean towards the Soviet Union, lingered with India for a long time.

The election of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was a useful starting point for developing a Republican Hindu Coalition (RHC). PM Modi's efforts to modernize the bureaucracy, emphasize economic growth and strengthen free enterprise are efforts we can applaud and learn from. America should have a clear commitment to increasing trade with Bharat (India). The world's two largest democracies should be natural allies. RHC can play a unique and historic role working with both the current Republican Congress and the next Republican president to strengthen ties with India. With the rise in Hindu Americans' numbers and influence, there is a great opportunity to elect more of these citizens to public office. Finally, in confronting the violence of Islamic supremacists around the world, there is a potential for cooperation among Hindus, Jews and Christians in challenging the extremist ideology. For all of these reasons, I applaud and support your efforts to develop RHC and am honored to serve as the Honorary Chairman.

### Ramesh Patel

Federation of India Associations (FIA) Chairman

In my 45 years of community service, I have yet to find any other individual who devotes so much time and energy to promoting closer US-ties causes as much as he does. Shalabh Kumar promoted Narendra Modi in the American public and in the American Congress at a time when most Congressmen were against him because of the strong anti-Modi lobby in the US.

I have first hand seen Shalabh's reach with the Republican leadership of US Congress. One of the most powerful House committee chairman, Pete Sessions, spent the entire weekend attending India Day Parade 2014 celebrations in New York along with Daler Mehndi. Shalabh has provided us access to nearly 10 chairmen of US congress to promote Bharat causes.

In a letter to PM Modi in 2014.

The new prime minister is trying to move in a different direction and realizes the wisdom of a vibrant private sector. Believe the Republican Party your natural home and we welcome you.

The Republican Party is the natural home of people who are in favor of growth and opportunity. The Democrats are the party of big government and debts and taxes and overregulation," McConnell told the crowd. "So people who are drawn to the private sector will find a home with the Republican Party."

Shalabh, thank you so much for what you are doing to bring all of you (Indian Americans) to the Republican Party. Believe me it is your natural home and we welcome you, thank you so much.

# Praise from politicians & community

At AIF Washington DC gala honoring Shalabh Kumar, (from left) AIF Gala Chair Vimal Bahuguna, Congressman Pete Sessions, Shalabh's daughter Anika, and Indian envoy in US, Taranjit Singh Sandhu.



Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell complimenting Shalabh Kumar for launching Republican Hindu Coalition.



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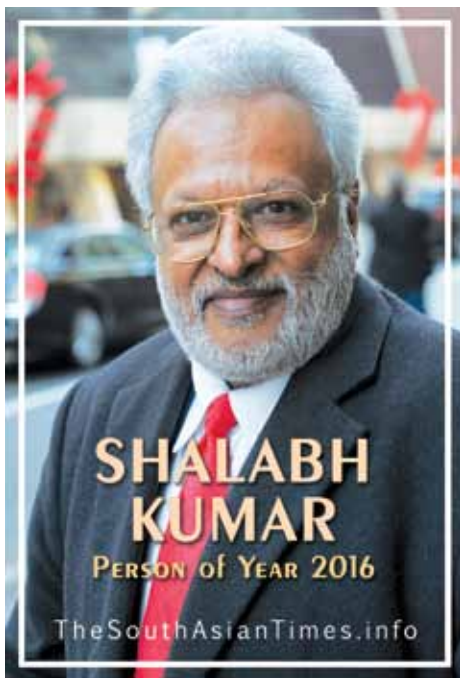
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# Commendation by community leaders

*The South Asian Times solicited comments on its choice of Mr Shalabh Kumar as its Person of the Year 2016 and his achievements and contributions.*

We need to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure and stop bleeding jobs. To the winner go the spoils and Shalabh picked a winner!

## Deepak Jain

*Founder chairman, NRI Federation*

Shalabh Kumar made outstanding contribution to the Trump campaign when no other Indian associations were supporting him. He became the first and only person to invite the presidential nominee to address the Indian community weeks before the election. We believe he'd act as a bridge between the Indian government and Trump administration.



## Ravi Batra

*Eminent attorney*

I congratulate Shalabh "Shalli" Kumar for his political foresight and intestinal fortitude in picking Donald Trump as his presidential candidate. That he did so with visible high decibel support serves well in politics. That Shalabh created the Republican Hindu Coalition, and became a 1-party dedicated evangelical group is commendable, but less than his support for our next President because the RHC wants to be anti-Muslim, a religious wrong, and anti-Pakistan, a political wrong after Pakistan's loyal-to-America stance for most of her existence. Moreover, we don't import any prejudices from the birth nation to America, as it violates E Pluribus Unum.

Shalabh's having POTUS45 light a Diya and getting the Trump campaign to come up with a Hindi slogan-ad and Trump to say it: 'Ab Ki Baar, Trump Sarkar', was a political milestone. His singular achievement - and I'm beyond proud of him - for he got acceptance for the community.

While Hillary Clinton imploded in slow motion, Huma Abedin's role and possession of 650K emails and Hillary's maid printing confidential emails in the secure tent were the last straw for this Democrat - and compelled my vote for Shalabh's candidate.

I've publicly lamented the near-death of the American Dream for nearly 10 years and predicted that by 2020 we will be at 1920's Great Gatsby era; we are almost there, and the angry American voters elected Trump to disrupt politics as usual - as in Hillary's admission that her public stance was opposite her private policy position.



## Anand Ahuja, Esq

*Co-founder, Indian Americans for Trump 2016*

The man to mobilize Hindu American community for Donald Trump's presidential election, Mr. Shalabh Kumar exhibits incredible boldness in his professional and political life. A visionary par excellence, he is credited with often organizing meetings between American and Indian politicians. In a sense, he is a true ambassador of these two democracies. In a rally organized by Shalabh Kumar for Mr. Trump in New Jersey, the now President-Elect did not hesitate to acknowledge his admiration for Indians.

During the Trump Presidency, India is expected to be not only a geopolitical ally but a strategic trading partner with the US for which Mr. Kumar may play a vital role. During his campaign, Mr. Trump remained critical of countries like China, Mexico etc., for their unfair trade practices but appreciated India. While Mr. Trump referred to Pakistan as a trouble country, he emphasized the need for India's assistance in this regard. In the area of immigration reform, though Mr. Trump is critical of illegal immigration, he has expressed his inclination for STEM visa of which India is one of the major beneficiaries.



## Dr. Uma Mysorekar

*President, Hindu Temple Society of North America*

Congratulations to Shalabh Kumar on being declared as this paper's Person of the Year 2016. He is a successful businessman, philanthropist and has contributed significantly to improving US-India relations.



## Dr Bharat Barai

*Led the entity that staged PM Modi reception at MSG*

It was a remarkable and unexpected victory of Donald Trump in 2016 presidential election. He won by a razor thin margin of few thousand votes in crucial states of Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan. There is no question in my mind that a swing in Hindu votes in those states contributed to this victory margin. Traditionally, a majority of Hindus in USA have voted Democratic but in this election, majority Hindus voted for Donald Trump for a variety of reasons, including campaigning by some Hindu activists.

To his credit, Shalabh Kumar openly supported Trump as a Hindu and campaigned accordingly, when it has not been fashionable to do that. For the first time in history of US presidential election, Hindus were recognized, which included visits to Hindu temples and Diwali celebrations by Trump family members.

I am sure Shalabh Kumar, along with other Hindu activists, deserves credit for swinging the Hindu votes for Trump in the crucial states.



## Aron Govil

*CMD, Ducon Group*

Congratulations to Mr Shalabh Kumar as "The South Asian Times - Person of the Year 2016. Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election shocked the entire world and his presidency has the potential to reshape it. In his victory speech, Mr. Trump indicated that he will put America's interest first and he will deal fairly with everyone and all nations. I congratulate Mr. Trump on his victory and for sending the biggest shockwave in US politics in over 70 years.

I am excited about the emerging opportunities during the Trump administration. There are over 3.5 million Indian Americans who are a valuable asset for India to forge a closer tie between the two countries

during the Trump administration. We need to increase the current trade level between the two countries from \$100 billion to a higher level and also work towards increasing the inflow of investments from USA into India. It's a unique opportunity to strengthen our relationships and collaborations in IT security, defense, terrorism, health and infrastructure. The Modi government had reached out to Mr. Trump during the campaign and thus is in a good position to proactively shape his policies towards India.



## Dr Raj Bhayani

*ENT specialist, political activist*

Heartiest Congratulations to Shalabh Kumar being chosen "The South Asian Times - Person of the Year 2016.

He is a dynamic community leader, and by founding Republican Hindu Coalition, he has brought more than two million Hindus in America on a common platform. His closeness with President Trump will serve tremendously in the interest of the Indian American Diaspora. The voice and needs of Indian-American communities will be well sent to White House through his noticeable presence. I wish him good luck & greater success in his endeavors.



## Jagadeesan Poola

*Businessman, philanthropist*

It is amazing to see the victory of President Trump and the visionary support provided by Shalabh Kumar on behalf of Indian-American communities in the Presidential election. My warm congratulations to Shalabh Kumar for his nomination as prestigious honor as the Person of the Year 2016 of a leading newspaper, The South Asian Times.

We all can hope he will represent Indian American Diaspora at the US Capitol & the White House. Best wishes to President Trump & Shalabh Kumar.