

India Abroad: Key government posts for Anju Virmani, Aditya Jha

In another high-profile appointment for South Asians in Canada, the government named Aditya Jha November 2 to the board of directors of the First Nations Financial Management Board.

6 CanadaNews

India Abroad November 30, 2007

Key government posts for Anju Virmani, Aditya Jha

AJIT JAIN

in Toronto

Anju Virmani is among the seven new appointees announced by Prime Minister Stephen Harper to the 15- member Advisory Council on National Security. Former Royal Canadian Mounted Police commissioner Norman Inkster has been named chair of the ACNS.

"I am very honored and pleased to be appointed to this important committee," Virmani, currently chief information officer for Cargojet, a Toronto-based air cargo service, told India Abroad. "The goal of the Council is to advise the prime minister's security adviser on issues relating to national security and as a South Asian I don't bring anything more or less than any other Canadian. I look at it as a Canadian appointment but obviously my appointment does elevate the visibility of Indo-Canadians in Ottawa."

She called it "a good start."

Virmani said her "contribution to the Advisory Council would be as a Canadian -because the Council deals with the

safety of Canadians at home and abroad as well as contributing to the international security. So, I will be able to make the contribution in terms of my experience with the transportation security."

At Cargojet, she ensures safety of the cargo and the carriers.

Canada is not immune to the global scourge of terrorism, as evinced by last year's arrest of a number of young men allegedly conspiring to commit acts of terrorism. Does that imply an additional burden on the Advisory Council members? Virmani doesn't think so.

"[Fighting] terrorism has become an agenda of every country now," she said. "So even though Canada is with its allies [infighting terrorism], terrorism is really something that as a nation we need to address and be prepared for.

"So, yes we will be dealing with issues relating to security," she continued, "from not only terrorism but natural disaster and emergency planning perspectives and being prepared to handle any kind of disaster."

The Advisory Council provides 'confidential expert advice to the chair of the Cabinet Committee on Security, Public Health and Emergencies on issues relating to national security, and strategies, mechanisms and activities required to develop, implement, evaluate and improve a fully integrated security system.'

In another high-profile appointment for South Asians in Canada, the government named Aditya Jha November 2 to the board of directors of the First Nations Financial Management Board.

'The First Nations Financial Management Board will support First Nation [aboriginal] communities in their efforts to take control of their financial future by facilitating their participation in the Canadian economy and fostering business-friendly environments,' said Chuck Strahl, minister of Indian affairs and northern development. 'On behalf of our government, I wish to congratulate Mr Jha on his board appointment,' he added.

Jha is a software specialist at the Toronto-based software company Osselus. His private foundation sponsors native people for mentorship each year.

He told India Abroad his appointment "will extend my role for nurturing entrepreneurship and for wealth creation in the First Nations community, which I have been doing for the last four years through my foundation."

'Mr Jha's background provides added experience to promote economic development in aboriginal communities,' said Harold Calla, chairperson, FMB.

The FMB is one of the four institutions created through the First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act, which came into force April 1 last year. Led by First Nations, the Act established an institutional framework to provide First Nation governments with the practical tools available to other levels of government for modern fiscal and statistical management.