

Man with multiple fortes



VIJAY KUMAR SAZAWAL

By ANCHAL KAKROO

Having expertise in nuclear fuel cycle technologies is just one of the fortes of Dr. Vijay Kumar Sazawal who presently is working as Director of Government Programs at USEC Incorporated. The USEC of America is the world's leading supplier of enriched uranium fuel for commercial nuclear power plants. Sazawal's role in the company is to provide programme oversight and coordination of various projects funded by the Federal Government and hence he often interacts with Indian Government and US Congress officials over nuclear commerce. Apart from that he also played a vital role as Subject Matter Expert (SME) in the India-US civil nuclear deal.

Born in Kashmir, Sazawal started his academic career at Banaras Hindu University where he did his graduation and then went on to Bhopal University where he finished his Masters course. Still wanting to learn more, in 1976 he went to Michigan Technological University in the US for his Ph.D. in Structural Mechanics. He then joined the Westinghouse Electric Corporation and worked in its Advanced Reactors Division. In the company he held the responsibilities of looking after fast reactors, advanced terrestrial and space reactors and nuclear defence programmes in the US.

Sazawal is not a man, known for his profession alone. He specializes in local govern-

nance and intra-community issues affecting political dynamics within the Kashmir Valley and is one of the founding members of the Indo-American Kashmir Forum (IAKF). The IAKF represents the voice of the Kashmiri Pandit community residing in the United States and Sazawal is presently its International Coordinator. "I got involved with the plight of Kashmiri Pandits after they were forced to flee Kashmir in 1990, and neither the State Government in Jammu and Kashmir nor the Central Government in New Delhi seemed to care", says Sazawal. For the past 19 years, he has been advocating the cause of Kashmiri Pandits and has been trying to ensure their return to the Valley.

Sazawal considers Dr. Edward Teller as his source of inspiration and says, "Dr. Teller was a larger-than-life figure who never forgot his Jewish roots. Even when employed in the most sensitive areas of nuclear technology, Teller became a strong advocate for Jews and Jewish freedom under Soviet rule." Sazawal has always believed in the principle of hard work and feels that, "making people improve from an average performance to a better performance takes only 10 percent of effort, but making them improve from better to best performance requires the remaining 90 percent hard work and dedication."

He has worked extensively with the Indian Government and bureaucrats. He says, "It has been a good experience. I have met many important personalities like the Prime Minister, the Defence Minister, the National Security Advisor and many top Secretaries in various Indian ministries. So while these interactions have been good, the progress has been disappointing so far. The dialogue will continue as bureaucrats come and go."

Sazawal has taken his work to the next level and is not only representing his community in front of decision makers but also has started encouraging the younger generation to get involved with their community. A source of inspiration to many Kashmiri kids, he feels that "there is an incredible convergence in my professional and personal interests happening towards the final stages of my career and life and it is very satisfying." ■

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