

NRI firm wins US prez poll tie-up

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: An Indian immigrant who parlayed 4,800 Yellow Page directories into a info-tech fortune has won a polling partnership with CNN for the 2008 Presidential elections.

Opinion Research Corporation, a research and consulting firm that was recently acquired by Vin Gupta's InfoUSA, bagged the prestigious deal under which the CNN Poll will become the CNN/Opinion Research Corporation Poll.

The terms of the agreement were not disclosed.

But the tie-up is already under fire from Republican and Conservative circles because of Gupta's close ties with

the Clintons, and the possibility that First Lady Hillary Clinton could be a front-runner in the 2008 poll.

"Based on the history of the people who recently acquired Opinion Research Corp, we believe that the true purpose of the CNN/Opinion Research partnership

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is to rig the poll results to benefit Hillary Clinton in her 2008 presidential campaign," the website freerepublic.com observed after ORC announced the tie-up.

"Gupta is a major Clinton/DNC donor and fundraiser, and Lincoln Bedroom guest. He has recently spent large sums to establish these Clinton-worship cen-

ters in India," the posting said, while another blogger tagged the story under the headline "CNN hires Clinton operative as 2008 Presidential polling unit". Gupta's closeness to the Clinton's is not in dispute.

Hailing from Nayala village in Rampur-Maniheran in Uttar Pradesh, the Indian immigrant has established the "Bill Clinton Science and Technology Center" and the "Hillary Rodham Clinton Mass Communication Center" at an Intermediate College in his home district.

Bill Clinton has visited the college and the Clintons are frequent guests at his home in the US.

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Vin Gupta: The 'king' of American data

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Washington: Vin Gupta, the influential NRI who has won a polling partnership with CNN for the 2008 Presidential elections has a close relationship with the Clintons.

According to political activists, Gupta has dismantled his personal website that was festooned with photographs of him and his family with the Clintons. During the Clinton White House days, Gupta was listed as one of the "Lincoln bedroom guests" in the political funding fiasco in which key contributors got to sleepover in the White House.

Gupta's fortune is built on turning information into content long before the idea became commonplace. In 1971, Gupta was a 25-year-old marketing research analyst working with Commodore Corporation, a manufacturer of mobile homes in Omaha, Nebraska. One day he was tasked with compiling a list of all the mobile home dealers in the US. He began by ordering all available telephone directories, but had not bargained for the 4800



HIGH CONNECTIONS: Gupta and his family with Hillary Clinton

Yellow Page books that filled up the company's reception area. Move it out or move out, his boss told him.

Gupta carted directories to his own garage and set about compiling the list in his spare time. When finished, he offered the list exclusively to Commodore for \$9,000, or for free if they allowed him to sell it to others.

Commodore took the sec-

ond option and Gupta was on his way to success, particularly after realising that Yellow Pages, mined properly, was a cornucopia of data.

Today, InfoUSA has a data base of some 120 million American households. In a recent CBS 60 Minutes interview, Gupta boasted of offering the goods on every thing from left handed golfers to fly fishermen in the US.