

CVS's first Union President Sunil Chopra becomes mayor of a London borough

PANKAJ VOHRA New Delhi | 12 Jul 2014 The Sunday Guardian

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NRI Councillor Sunil Chopra taking up the office of Mayor of the London Borough of Southwark.

Delhi born and UK based NRI Sunil Chopra has been elected as the Mayor of London Borough of Southwark. He is the first person of Indian origin to hold the prestigious office. A former president of the Delhi unit of the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) Chopra, who became a British citizen in 1993 has been supporting the Labour Party for the past 33 years.

Chopra was the first president of the Delhi University's College of Vocational Studies Union in the mid 1970s. He was also the convener of the Central Students Committee (South Campus) and contested the DUSU election unsuccessfully against **Vijay Goel** (former minister in the Atal Behari Vajpayee government and now an MP) in 1977. He had his grooming in politics under late **Deepak Malhotra**, who was the general secretary of the NSUI and later principal of Dyal Singh College. Malhotra passed away last year and Chopra was in the capital to pay his last respects to his political mentor.

Senior Congress leader **Ambika Soni**, who also played a major role in initiating Chopra into politics said that she always knew that he had the spark that would make him amongst the people who count: "From the first time when I met him nearly 40 years ago as a young student leader till now, Sunil has always been in touch. I have seen him in London as well where he enjoys tremendous goodwill for his hard work. I wish him all the best as always." She had also appointed him as the vice president of the Delhi Youth Congress.

Senior Congress leader **Harcharan Singh Josh**, his neighbour at Shora Kothi near Ghanta Ghar, Sabzi Mandi who saw Chopra grow up said that he always had the potential of doing great

things. "He has been in touch with me and we share a very special bond even now."

His passion is to help young and unemployed people, senior citizens and forge close ties amongst citizens from various backgrounds. "I also like to promote different cultures and celebrate diversity in my borough. My global passion is to provide education and clean drinking water in developing countries. I get very disturbed when I see children being forced into begging, sex trade and I am strictly against child labour and child exploitation."

Chopra has one wish, that of being a member of the House of Commons. "It depends on my party if they give me the ticket, I will make a bid for it. My chosen charity for 2014-2015 is UK Homes 4 Heroes, and Robes project." The Robes project provides temporary accommodation to the homeless.

He is happily married and has three sons, all born and brought up in London. His eldest son is a qualified solicitor, the second looks after the retail business and the third is a dentist. He continues to be religious and had come to India last month to seek the blessings of Sai Baba at Shirdi.

Right from the distinguished media person who has filed this story, Pankaj Vohra, himself a popular and respected student leader both in DPS Mathura Road The Mother School and at DU < BA Pol Sc Hons 1975 MA 1977 > to Sunil to Vijay Goel MP Cab Min 1999-2004 < M Com 1977 LLB 1981 > to the late Deepak Malhotra < BA Pol Sc 1969 MA 1974 M Phil 1978 > to one-time Cab Min Ambika Soni BA His Hons 1961 to Harcharan Singh Josh President DUSU 1967 - 1968 and former Vice Chairman National Minorities Commission NCM, all are alumni .