

## Business

### Gov. Wolf visits Sharon Hill's Jyoti on 'Jobs That Pay' tour



The processing of beans was just one of the many steps Gov. Tom Wolf witnessed at Jyoti, a Sharon Hill-based Indian food manufacturer for businesses all over the country.

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Sharon Hill, PA: It was biting cold in the region Monday morning, so Gov. Tom Wolf warmed up to the spices and flavors of Indian food with a stop in Sharon Hill for his Jobs That Pay tour.

The owners of Jyoti Natural Foods in Sharon Hill welcomed the governor in the most recent of his Delaware County stops to meet with businesses that contribute to the economic growth of the commonwealth.

Founded and owned by Joyti and Vijai Gupta, their business in producing Indian food for local businesses and those abroad has grown since its founding in 1979.

“They’re struggling with, if anything, the challenges of growth because this food is taking off and they are doing a very good job, and I can say that personally,” said Wolf, himself a lover of Indian food and Jyoti products. “This is what Pennsylvania is about: innovation, taking a germ of an idea in 1979, when there was very little demand for this, to now when the demand is exploding to the point where they have to actually say no to some of their customers.”

Jyoti started in Houston, Texas but moved up to Sharon Hill in the early 1980's after Vijai, a chemical engineer, was assigned to Pennsylvania for work. He promised Jyoti a factory for their new business after he invented a new way to clean beans.

After being on Chester Pike for 10 years, the Guptas moved their business to its current location in a 50,000 sq. ft. building in the borough's Folcroft East Business Park with a still-growing workforce of 45 employees, 10 of whom were hired within the last year. The Guptas have also opened Jyoti Bistro in the Mt. Airy neighborhood of Philadelphia.

"This is a really great success story," Wolf continued. "It's a great story about what we can do here in Pennsylvania... It's really important that these two folks took some real gambles and that's the heart of entrepreneurship."

The Guptas led Wolf on a tour of their food operations, including the use of Vijai's patented bean-cleaning equipment and the making of fresh naan. "It was interesting for me to see how it's made and how it's processed," said Wolf. "I've gotta say, I still haven't learned the secrets. Although we had a demonstration on how to take foreign objects out of beans, I'm not sure how they do such a nice job with their basmati rice. Jyoti's Basmati Rice is the best according to Wolf. Not insisting on a free meal, the governor paid for a plate of butter chicken, basmati rice, saag paneer and fresh naan before his departure.

The Guptas, including their son Anuj, and their employees welcomed the governor, yet still had some reservations about President-Elect Donald Trump's immigration policies will affect Jyoti Natural Foods, where most of the employees are immigrants. According to their website, employees of Jyoti have gone on to buy their own houses and cars while working for the company.

"We've created jobs here, we've created economic development here. This is the smart thing for Pennsylvania to do and I think that's the message we've got to reinforce," said Wolf in response. "This is about making lives better for everybody, everywhere in Pennsylvania. That's what openness is really about."

Vijai Gupta said he doesn't plan on moving his operations out of Pennsylvania, harping on its beauty as a selling point.