



Heartiest wishes for Ramanavmi, we hope you all had wonderful celebrations to mark the event. Similarly we hope you enjoyed Hanuman Jayanti as well.

Our website has moved. You can now find us at www.hinduforum.org.uk so save the new URL and keep in touch with all the news.

February saw the first event for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. It was an event hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury and was held at Lambeth Palace. The Archbishop's office asked one person from each Faith community to be a co-ordinator and put together a list of guests from that community and to take charge of a 'treasure' or an article of faith to bring for the Queen to see.

For the Hindu Community, secretary general Bharti Tailor was the person asked by Lambeth Palace to co-ordinate the Hindu invitation list. The list of Hindu guests forwarded to Lambeth Palace comprised of the following: Arjan Vekaria JP (HFB), Dr V P N Rao (HCUK), Dr Girdhari Bhan (VHP), Dr Raj Sharma (NCHT), Mr Nitin Palan (BAPs), Mr Pranav Bhanot (NHSF), Mr Arup Ganguly (A Year of Service), Sutapa das Brahmachari (ISKCON), Sudarshan Bhatia (Hindu Forum of Europe), Shaunaka Rishi Das (Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies), and Ms Bharti Tailor (ECRL). 11 of the 12 attended on the day.



Here is President of HFB Arjan Vekaria JP, being presented to Her Majesty.

A group of four people presented the chosen article of faith the **OM** to the Queen. The **OM** was made of fresh flowers, and Bharti Tailor as lead was asked to give a 30 second explanation about the object before handing over to others and to give opportunity for her Majesty to ask questions.

Being made of fresh flowers the **OM** was set up by Bharti first thing in the morning. The flowers were knotted in the traditional style of Indian garlands by Bellapetals of Harrow, who worked until late the night before to assure the flowers stayed fresh and at their best.



The four presenters showing the flower **OM** to the Queen and the Archbishop. Bharti is shown giving the initial explanation. She then handed over to her colleagues, Dr Rao, Dr Sharma and Dr Bhan.



Dow Chemicals sponsorship of the Olympics.

Dow Chemical own Union Carbide the company responsible for the Bhopal disaster. We have been getting increasing number of complaints about this issue and so will no longer be forwarding Press releases and other emails from the London Olympic Committee Organising Group which has the Dow logo and name on them. A Campaign Steering group has been set up:

- Arjan Vekaria -Hindu Forum of Britain
- Dhruv Pate -Faith Reference Group of London Olympic Committee Organising Group
- Dr Shuja Shafi - Muslim Council of Britain and Faith Reference Group of London Olympic Committee Organising Group
- Navin Shah - Assembly Member, Greater London Authority
- Rajinder Chopra JP, Interested Individual
- Rickie Sehgal - Hindu Forum of Britain
- Rini Kakati - Assamese Community
- Bharti Tailor - Faith Reference Group of London Olympic Committee Organising group and member of the European Council of Religious Leaders

The aim of the group is to campaign has three main aims:

1. LOCOG the London Olympic Committee Organising group - Make a public apology to the People of Bhopal for being insensitive to their pain and feelings and taking such a toxic company as sponsors for an event that should bring unity, harmony and peace. The Olympic Games are meant to be a symbol of goodwill, equality and humanity.
2. That the Dow Chemical Company should not benefit from the Olympics, or the Legacy of the Olympics, and should not be awarded any further contracts or given the right to use the London Olympic Stadium image in its promotions.
3. Dow Chemicals should not be associated in any way shape or form with the Paralympics, this is a slap in the face for the people who were left disabled by the operation of the company in Bhopal, and their progeny who are being born with disabilities today. Let them make reparation to the people of Bhopal before they are seen at our Olympics. Dow cannot be allowed to 'clean' their conscience and image by sponsoring this event.

We are looking for organisations to sign up and people to help run the campaign. Please contact info@hfb.org.uk to sign up and volunteer.

Grants

The Near Neighbours programme is working in some areas of England to bring people of different faiths together to change their neighborhoods. Part of this is a small grants fund. Near Neighbours has already funded over a hundred small projects and activities. It is open to any community group, faith organisation or group of individuals who have a good idea which they think meets the criteria, to apply. The attached leaflet has more information and there is a website with all the information: www.near-neighbours.org. An example of projects Near neighbours has funded can also be found here: <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/funded-projects>

Jobs, Jobs, Jobs

Follow the link for jobs with the Historic Royal Palaces <http://www.hrp.org.uk/recruitment>
Olympic Jobs are here <http://www.london2012.com/get-involved/jobs/index.php/main>

Volunteering Opportunities

We are looking for volunteers to help with the newsletter, please contact info@hfb.org.uk if you are able to offer a few hours a week to help with the newsletter.

We are looking for volunteers to update the website, please contact info@hfb.or.uk if your are able to help with uploading information on a regular bases and supporting and suggesting changes to the website.

Sewa Day: "It's OK to Do Faith" Says the Government at AYOS Launch - By Arup Ganguly



In February, I attended the launch of the UK Government led "A Year of Service" (AYOS). In celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, each of the major faith groups in the UK has been invited to hold one community service themed event per month during the course of the year.

Joginder Sanger (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan) and Arup Ganguly (Sewa Day) with chief guest, Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities & Local Govt. Sewa Day, falling on 7 October 2012, will be the Hindu community's contribution to the year of celebration.

The launch event was held at Baha'i Centre in London and was attended by community leaders from the nine major faiths of the UK. Mr. Joginder Sanger (Chair, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan UK) and I (Sewa Day) were on hand as

representatives for the UK Hindu community. The Rt. Hon Eric Pickles MP, Sec. of State for Communities & Local Government was present as chief guest. Guests then took part in wrapping gifts and decorating cup cakes for homeless people (unfortunately we weren't allowed to taste any ourselves)

Royal Visit to Harrow



Her Majesty the Queen visits Harrow in late March. The visit was focussed on Krishan Avanti School, the first Hindu State School, and one of the Hindu Forum volunteers Varsha Dodhia was there representing the Jain Community. Varshaji volunteers on the Health project Organ Donation. She is featured in white standing 4th from the right.

Vijaya Kotur a member of Kannada Balaga has been made the Chair of the North East Regions Faith Network (NERFN).



Faith Network (NERFN)

NERFN is a newly formed independent voluntary organisation.

NERFN wants to promote religious harmony in the North East by working with faith groups, statutory bodies and other organisations to promote education, social and economic well-being, community development, cohesion and good relations involving people of different faiths. NERFN hopes to achieve these objectives by:

- (i) Facilitating the collective interfaith voice of its members to regional and national bodies;
- (ii) providing a means for interfaith groups to speak and act together on social and community issues;
- (iii) developing projects, programmes and events that promote interfaith education, engagement and outreach within the region;
- (iv) promoting interfaith development work with specific areas of interest including (but not limited to) young people's and women's groups;
- (v) facilitating the engagement of public, private and third sector organisations with interfaith groups, and vice versa;
- (vi) being a source of information and support regarding funding and resources for interfaith action.

Vijaya said "Working with all faiths together with other organisations in partnership can make a big difference to our communities. Compassion and understanding our fellow neighbours can resolve most issues. Vijaya also said She has a good team of volunteers as trustees and management committee and the support of other voluntary bodies in the northeast to make this organisation a success. We wish her well in her endeavours.

World Kidney Day - 8th March (By Bharti Tailor, Secretary General)



I was invited to two events for this, one was to the launch of the NHS Blood and Transplant Service, to the launch of the leaflet we had help to revise. Originally the Hindu and Jain were to share one leaflet, however they have now promised to produce a separate leaflet for Jains, but as it was not ready Varshaji and I are holding the Hindu leaflet together.



At the other was event, the National Kidney Federation launched it BME Manifesto to increase transplantation. Again this was exciting because we had contributed to it. The summit which led to the Manifesto had been attended



The seminar which led to the manifesto has been attended by Dr Thakar, Dr Saglani and myself, and one of the organisers was Kirit Modi, who is also a Vice Chairman of the National Kidney Federation.

Varshaa Dodhia, Meena Hirani and Kiritbhai together with Dr Diviash Thakar of Hindu Health Care Soc, Dr Sejal Saglani of BAPS and myself, currently form the task group for the project. If you are interested in volunteering for this field of work, you should contact Hindu Forum of Britain's office on info@hfb.org.uk

Hindu Forum Of Europe elects a new committee



Bharti Tailor of Hindu Forum of Britain was elected president of Hindu Forum of Europe. Mahaprabhudas of the Hindu Forum of Belgium was elected Secretary, Bikram Lalbahadoresing of the Hindu Council of Holland was appointed Vice President Brij-Mohan Gupta of the national Council of Hindu temples was elected as the 2nd vice President. The following people were made honorary members of the Hindu Forum of Europe. Mr Sudarshan Bhattia and Prof. Nathu Ram Puri. Also present at the two day event were delegations from France, Portugal, Hungary and Italy. In the picture you can see Mr Sudarshan Bhattia, the retiring president being honoured, in the foreground to the left Prof. Puri looks on.