



# HINDU FORUM of BRITAIN 2021

Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons

  
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YEARS

Issue 20





# HINDU FORUM

## Pollution & Environmental Balance

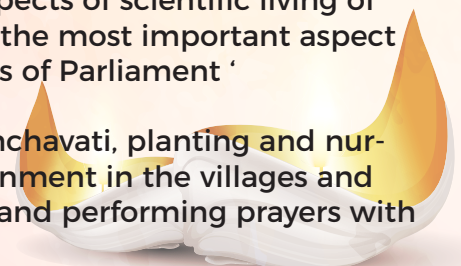
From ancient times we have been taught a very important ethos of 'Every element of the Universe is Sacred' as 'we are a part of the universe with responsibility to protect everything within it.

Rig-Veda states that the process of creation has been initiated, when fundamental particles were bound in an atom. In this way the fundamental energy (Purusha) bind inside the atoms, which binds the atoms and accordingly creation came into the existence. For the function of the creation, seven sticks (planets) and 21 fuel (twelve months, six seasons, and three weather patterns-hot, cold and rainy, have been prepared).

Ancient sages regarded the natural components as the deities and to invoke them is having a deep sense of obligations towards the natural benefactors. They have invoked mountains, rivers, forests and plants. This invocation is to create environmental awareness and sensible utilization of natural resources

The cover this year include a Banyan tree in the centre and nine aspects of scientific living of today with nine symbols incorporating ancient wisdom around it , the most important aspect of our dharma together with the permanent feature of 'The Houses of Parliament '

From the Ramayan time in Treta Yug , we know the concept of Panchavati, planting and nurturing a group of five trees being the most beneficial to the environment in the villages and cities. We are taught the importance of chanting mantra like OM and performing prayers with various Yantra in Yagna.







**The Banyan Tree:** vat-vriksha (Vad tree) is the centre of Dharmic living, and therefore placed in the centre of the page. The Banyan tree is a mini cosmos, it supports multitude of flora, fauna, insects, birds and animals and is a good source of oxygen. Under the Banyan tree, many learned Rishis Rishikas and Sages imparted scientific knowledge on all subjects to their students, imparted spiritual ways to the community and also provided a safe place for community gatherings. In the Bhagavad Geeta, Bhagvan Shree Krishna revealed a true significance of a Banyan tree in first four Sholka of chapter 15.



**Future:** Akash Ganga-Coded symbol of Milky Way, our Galaxy found in Rock-art across Bharat and many civilisations.



**Ecology:** Pipal tree-leaf. Pipal tree, a tree of the Gods, is widely appreciated for its spiritual and healing value. Various herbal medicines are made from leaves, bark and roots.



**Climate:** The Sun, being the central Star of our Solar system, giver of life on planet Earth.




**Harmony:** Ashok tree-leaf: It is considered one of the most sacred tree in Ramayana as it has special power to reduce stress with calming energy. Mother Sita lived under the Ashoka tree during her captivity in Shree Lanka .



**Technology:** Shree Yantra: Yantra has a special value in bringing wellness and good fortune, all Yantra have unique way to be drawn with distinct geometrical patterns and prayers associated with them.



**Science: AUM/OM:**  HFB symbol: Three primordial sounds of the universe, A-U-M, representing, Earth, Ether and Universal expanse, related to the vibration and frequency of Sound, Speech & Action. Om symbolizes all creation and three stages - of birth, life and death.



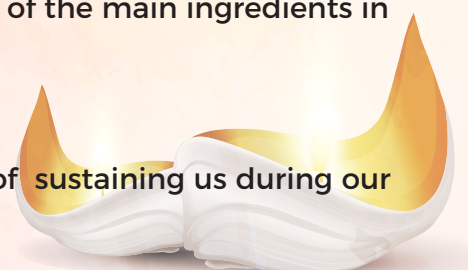
**Nature:** Tulsi plant leaf: The most sacred plant for Hindus, with great spiritual significance and healing powers. Every Hindu household aspires to have a Tulsi plant. It is scientifically proven that it gives oxygen for 20 hours a day, Ozone for 4 hours and absorbs harmful gases like carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and sulphur dioxide from the air.



**Environment:** Amala fruit: Amala tree is considered as super tree with its fruit being Super-food with considerable medicinal benefits. It is proven to be antioxidant and full of vitamin C with many more good health properties. It is one of the main ingredients in many Ayurvedic and herbal medicines and hair oils.



**Planet:** Mother earth: Our Existence, our life giver, our source of sustaining us during our life, The True Mother.







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DIWALI PRAYERS:

आपदाम्-अपहर्तारम् दातारं सर्व संपदां  
लोकाभिरामं श्रीरामम् भूयो भूयो नमाम्यहम् ॥

Prostrations again and again to Lord Rama who is the beloved  
of the entire universe. He dispels dangers and obstacles and  
endows good fortune on all His devotees.

आर्तानामार्तिहन्तारम् भीतानां भीतिनाशनं  
द्विषतां कालदण्डं तं रामचन्द्रं नमाम्यहम् ॥

I prostrate before Sri Ramachandra, the Supreme Lord,  
who is the benign healer of the distressed;  
the remover of all fears and dispeller of justice.

INVOCATION:

ॐ असतो मा सद्गमय ।

तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ।

मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ।

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

O Supreme Lord, lead me from untruth to truth,  
lead me from darkness to light,  
Lead me from death to immortality.  
Let there be peace, peace and peace.

HFB MANTRA:

सं गच्छध्वं सं वदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम्  
देवा भागं यथा पूर्वं संजानाना उपासते  
समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानी समानं मनः सह चित्तमेषाम्  
समानं मन्त्रमभि मन्त्रये वः समानेन वोहविषा जुहोमि  
समानी व आकूतिः समाना हृदयानि वः  
समानमस्तु वो मनो यथा वः सुसहासति ॥

Let us walk together; let us sing together  
In togetherness can we understand each other's minds.  
Thus, did the ancient seers share together to reach their divine ends.  
May our intentions come together.  
May our hearts become inseparable.  
May our minds become as one to truly; know one another.

May we all unite in togetherness.







# Hindu Forum of BRITAIN 2021

Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons







# HINDU FORUM of BRITAIN 2021

Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons



## Message from the President of the Hindu Forum of Britain

Namaste

The team HFB wish all our brothers and sisters Happy Deepavali 2021 and prosperous coming year. The HFB is the leading Hindu umbrella organisation in the UK and has been actively engaged in the public and private sphere advocating the needs and aspirations of British Hindus.

We are celebrating Diwali 2021 online as we did last year in 2020 due to the CV19. The team HFB volunteers worked exceptionally hard in participating many stands of volunteering and raising funds for the NHS for much needed PPE, hot meals for staff, vaccination drive are few highlights. We are also commended by The Office of National Statistic who carried out the 'Census', one in 10 year survey which took place early this year for our support in raising awareness by hosting many webinars for our communities.

This year we are celebrating Diwali in the midst of the CoP26 UN Summit on Environment and heartening to see efforts by most countries on the earth in finding solution to Net Zero by 2050. This reminds me an age old tradition of our Hindu Dharma, Sanatan Vedic traditions of considering everything in the Universe as one unit.

Let us start practicing ancient ways of town planning, Common land management, plant those trees considered best for the environment what we call Panchvati. Let us have Sacred plant of Tulsi ji in every household which will bring not only calming effects but also more Oxygen into air.

Remember what one of the greatest Teacher, Shree Chanakya taught us from the university of Taxila over 2300 years ago: Create Abhayaran meaning dharmic National Parks where animal kingdom roams around freely, all flora and fauna are protected, forest trees grow and give life to the whole of the Jungle kingdom.

Earlier in the year, we started a process to create 'Hindu Environmental Task force', HETF, a true partnership with our member organisations, AOL, Bhramkumaris, ISCKON and HCA with the administrative support from the LEAP. On the day of Diwali we are also launching Eco Diwali Utsav Guidance.

This week is also crucial for humanity as we participate in various program associated with the CoP 26 and spread goodwill to all who walk with us, meet us, mingle with us on our path to environmentally friendly and sustainable living.

Happy Deepavali

Mrs Trupti Patel FCIHT, MSc. H &T, BEng CE,

Visharad Bharatnatyam & Yoga Teacher  
President and Company Director of the Hindu Forum of Britain &  
Trustee of the Hindu Forum of Britain Charity







# Hindu Forum of BRITAIN 2021

Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons







THE PRIME MINISTER



10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

This Diwali, I want to wish everyone at the Hindu Forum of Britain and indeed people across the country the very best for your celebrations.

I know that last year was not the Diwali people might have hoped for – with events cancelled, and COVID-19 restrictions in place. So first, I want to say thank you to Britain's Hindus, Sikhs and Jains for all the sacrifices you have made, and for the part you played in helping those in need throughout the pandemic.

Every day, in every sphere of life, British Hindus, Sikhs and Jains are helping to make this one of the best countries in the world to live and work. From the fantastic politicians I have sitting around my Cabinet table, to our amazing NHS staff, captains of industry, leading lights in academia, and those serving in our police and armed forces. It is a formidable contribution, and one I never take for granted.

So this year, as you celebrate the Festival of Lights, and the triumph of good over evil, light over darkness, and knowledge over ignorance, I simply want to say – Shubh Diwali. I wish you joy and happiness, and every success for the year ahead.







# Hindu Forum of BRITAIN 2021

Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons







**THE RT. HON. PRITI PATEL MP**  
WITHAM



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

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E-mail: [withammp@parliament.uk](mailto:withammp@parliament.uk)  
Website: [www.pritipatelmp.com](http://www.pritipatelmp.com)

## Diwali 2021 Message

I would like to wish the Hindu Forum of Britain and the Indian community both here in the UK, and around the world, a very happy Diwali.

Every year, Diwali marks an auspicious time when families and friends come together to celebrate, and the spiritual significance of these celebrations of hope over despair, light over darkness and good over evil is something that has been embraced across the country.

I know that the Diwali celebrations last year were very different and much smaller in scale than usual due to the coronavirus pandemic, but thanks to the continued success of the vaccine roll-out, this year we will once again be able to pray, feast and celebrate together with family, friends and loved ones.

Homes, Mandirs and Gurdwaras will be once more be filled with happiness and joy as we recall the inspirational story of Rama and Sita, the strength of their unity and friendship and the defeat of Ravana. We also take time to honour Lakshmi, celebrate the goddess Kali, and commemorate Lord Krishna's victory.

Diwali represents a time where we reach out to those less fortunate, alone and isolated, and over the past eighteen months it has been heartening to see our communities make every effort possible to keep in contact with and to support those in need.

It is also a period for us to reflect on and celebrate the fantastic contributions that the Indian Diaspora continues to make to life here in Britain, and the historic ties between the UK and India. British Indians continue to play a leading role in communities across the country, and their contributions grow from strength to strength each year.

I wish everyone celebrating the Festival of Lights a happy and peaceful Diwali, and convey my best wishes to all for the future.

Yours sincerely,

**Rt Hon Priti Patel**  
Secretary of State for the Home Department & Member of Parliament for Witham

*Putting the Witham Constituency, Essex and Britain first.*







# Hindu Forum of BRITAIN 2021

Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons







# HINDU FORUM of BRITAIN 2021

Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons



The Right Honourable  
**Rishi Sunak MP**  
Chancellor of the Exchequer



This Diwali, I want to wish everyone at the Hindu Forum of Britain and indeed people across the country the very best for your celebrations.

I know that last year was not the Diwali people might have hoped for with events cancelled and COVID-19 restrictions in place, so first, I want to say thank you to the Britain's Hindus, Sikhs and Jains for all the Sacrifices you have made, and for the part you played in helping those who need through the pandemic.

Every day, in every sphere of life, British Hindus, Sikhs and Jains are helping to make this one of the best countries in the world to live and work. From the fantastic politicians I work with, to our amazing NHS staff, captains of industry, leading lights of academia and those serving in our police and armed forces, it is a formidable contribution, and one that should never be taken for granted.

So this year, as you celebrate the Festival of Lights, and the triumph of good over evil, light our darkness and knowledge over ignorance, I simply want to say Shubh Diwali.







# HINDU FORUM of BRITAIN 2021

Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons







# HINDU FORUM of BRITAIN 2021

Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons



## **Bob Blackman MP**

Member of Parliament for Harrow East  
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
Tel: 020 7219 7082

As chairman of the APPG for British Hindus I wish you all a very happy, prosperous, peaceful and most importantly healthy Diwali. I hope that this year Diwali passes off peacefully for you all and the Hindu New year brings everything that you could wish for in your lives and your families lives in these dark and uncertain times.

It has been my privilege, for a number of years, to host the Diwali reception in the House of Commons. Sadly, due to Covid-19 restrictions, we cannot meet physically this year, but we come together spiritually and virtually to celebrate the triumph of light over darkness. How appropriate during this pandemic. Let us all pray to Lakshmi & Vishnu for happier times ahead.

Shubh Deepavalli



## **Constituency Office:**

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# Hindu Forum of BRITAIN 2021

Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons







**THE RT. HON. THE LORD DHOLAKIA PC. OBE. DL.**



**HOUSE of LORDS  
LONDON SW1A 0PW**

**Tel 020 7219 1608 (secretary) 020 7219 5203 (direct) 020 7219 3423 (fax)**



Parliament is at the centre of our democracy. It is also the envy of the civilised world. Our diverse communities make a substantial contribution to the cultural life in Britain.

It is with pride that we welcome celebrations of our important events in Parliament however it is very sad that due to CV19 we are again having to celebrate ONLINE .

Take Diwali and the Hindu New Year. It is an important festival that brings great joy to Hindu families and their friends across the world . Here in the UK the Hindu Community with great pride has been celebrating this joyous and auspicious festival in the Parliament for past 19 years .

As a Patron of the Hindu Forum of Britain I send my personnel greetings to all my colleges in both Houses of parliament with a wish for a peaceful , healthy and successful year ahead for everyone .

**E-mail: [dholakian@parliament.uk](mailto:dholakian@parliament.uk)**







# Hindu Forum of BRITAIN 2021

Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons







LORD GADHIA



Hindu Forum of Britain

November 2020

## DIWALI WISHES

Celebrating Diwali in the middle of a pandemic is an experience which none of us will forget. The social separation from our family and friends reminds us of Lord Rama's 14-year exile from Ayodhya. In the same way that he vanquished Ravana, we too will defeat coronavirus.

Our response to Covid is a live test of an important insight: *a crisis doesn't create character, it reveals it*. British Hindus have revealed their true character through the exemplary way in which they have risen to the challenges faced by society. I am proud that our temples and community organisations have taken a lead in supporting the elderly and vulnerable and in helping frontline NHS workers. I applaud all our volunteers who have participated in this wonderful *sewa*, which represents a living example of Hindu values in action. It is also a powerful illustration that we are part of something far greater and more important than ourselves. *How* we help each other now, will determine *what* type of world we emerge into after this crisis.

We have also demonstrated our remarkable capacity as human beings to adapt. Indeed, the secret of great civilisations is that they embrace change – retaining their essential values and authenticity – yet modernise to reflect new circumstances. So when I see Hindu festivals and ceremonies moving online, I don't despair but celebrate our fortitude and ingenuity, which makes our culture one of the oldest continuous civilisations.

The lighting of lamps in our homes this Diwali will therefore feel especially poignant. As well as symbolising the victory of good over evil, it will represent our collective hopes for the future. With those positive sentiments, I wish all British Hindus, Jains and Sikhs a healthy, peaceful and prosperous year ahead.

Warmest best wishes,

*Jitesh Gadhia*





**HINDU FORUM  
of BRITAIN 2021**

Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons



**Wish You a Very**



# **Happy & Prosperous Diwali Brahmrishi Mission UK**

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**jaiviratsk@gmail.com**

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**In guidance of:**

**Swami Vishava Bharti didi  
Swami Surya Prabha didi**







Swami Surya Prabha didi.

Dear souls,  
This Diwali we pray to Mother Goddess for well  
being of all the creatures of world,

May God bless everyone with the wisdom so we  
can use his resources and energy in a way it can  
make us prosperous and the same time we can  
preserve Nature.

O Mahaluxmi bless us with wealth of knowledge  
and Love so we can light our life with warmth of  
Love and Happiness.

OM SHANTI  
Jai virat!

*Happy Diwali*







# HINDU FORUM of BRITAIN 2021

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## Visakha Dasi

Temple President of Bhaktivedanta Manor

*May this festival of lights illuminate each one of us with positivity, hope, happiness, and rejuvenated spiritual aspirations. As we light 'diyas' at our homes, let us allow their light to dispel the darkness of negativity, fear, frustration and materialism that resides within us. Let us allow the light of the lamps to illuminate our faith in Sri Sri Sita Rama, the glorious Supreme Personality. Rest in the knowledge that we are spiritual beings. Let the radiance of the Supreme Personality light up our life and the lives of those around us.*

*'Deep-avali' means rows and rows of light. The goal of our culture is to control our lower passions – to overcome our dark material propensities toward lust, greed, anger and envy – and to come to the light of goodness, characterized by knowledge, satisfaction, sense control, and peace. Let good qualities and excellent behavior reign supreme and take precedence in every thought we have and act we do.*

*As Sri Ramachandra was victorious over evil, so let us also be. By the grace of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and by our sincere and properly guided endeavors, let us advance steadily in disentangling ourselves from material ambition and becoming spiritually ambitious. Let us acquire a taste for genuine spiritual life.*

*The lights of Diwali stand for divine knowledge, knowledge from great saintly personalities and authentic scriptures. As we light our diyas, let us also become enlightened and always seek transcendental understanding. It is this understanding – transcendental understanding – that will solace, shelter, and eventually carry us to our Lords, Sri Sri Sita Rama, Lakshmana and Hanuman.*







# Diwali 2018







## Sister Jayanti, Addl. Administrative Head of Brahma Kumaris Diwali Message 2021



### Om shanti and Happy Diwali. Greetings for the Festival of Lights

Diwali is a very special occasion - time to think about a new beginning. The world has gone through many, many challenges in the last 18 months to 2 years and it has been a difficult time for everyone. The shadow of Covid has covered the entire globe but today we want to celebrate the coming of the light.

Light is the symbol to remove the darkness of ignorance from the world and also to remove any dark patches that might remain within our hearts or our minds. When the soul is lit with the truth of knowledge, then that truth shines. It takes away all our fears, it takes away all our sorrows and, of course, the source of all of this is the Supreme Light; God is remembered as 'Deep Raj' 'The King of all lights' and so he reignites the lights of our souls, so that we can shine and turn darkness into light.

Each one of us has this possibility and also the ability. All we need to do is to become aware of the original, spiritual, eternal identity of the self and to know who we are - not just now but what we were like at the very start of our journey and also the destination we have to arrive at. At the start of our journey every soul was pure and peaceful and filled with love, truth and purity and so our destination is the same. I have to return to that original state of being and, of course, it's not only one light that can bring light back into the world. The Supreme Light ignites our lights and each one of us then is able to light the lights of many, many others.

In India, when they celebrate Diwali, every member of the family definitely must light at least one lamp and may be many more. But, when the light of each soul is lit, then we ignite the lights of friends and family members and bring light into the world again.

At the time of this auspicious festival, world leaders and NGOs will gather in Glasgow to consider the climate crisis - the future of humanity is at stake. For more details, please go to [eco.brahmakumaris.org](http://eco.brahmakumaris.org)

Since 2009 the Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative has been participating in the COP conferences, raising awareness that lasting solutions to the climate crisis lie in tapping into our inner core values and restoring our respectful relationship with the Earth. Our activities at COP 26 will focus on renewable energy, yogic agriculture, food care systems, climate anxiety and meditations for the Earth. Together we can turn the tide towards a world where there is abundance, and resources are shared equitably. This is true Diwali

[www.globalcooperationhouse.org](http://www.globalcooperationhouse.org)



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HFB ● Events

CELEBRATING 20 HFB ISSUES







## **Abhinandana Kodanda**

is one of the finest exponents of Kuchipudi dance , a sacred dramatic dance form from South India. She is artistic director of 'Abhinandana Dance Academy' a Preston based Indian dance Institute through which she imparts cultural education through kuchipudi dance to the young people of UK

Today's performer - Ms. Amy Kumar is a senior associate of Abhinandana Dance academy.

She is an international artiste, reputed teacher, performer and choreographer of Kuchipudi Dance Style. Amy kumar is known for her distinct style of choreographies .She is today presenting Shanti mantra , a prayer for peace across the five elements of the nature and within us.

'Shanti Mantra' is a Hindu prayer to the supreme lord to give our soul and the world eternal peace.  
May there be peace in Sky,  
May peace prevail on earth,  
May there be peace in the waters,  
May there be peace in all the gods of the universe  
Om Shanti Shanti Shanti.







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# HFB Diwali 2015







Diwali celebrations in 2021 will be celebrated by our Hindu communities in many different ways across Wales and the UK. But in whatever way our communities can celebrate the event this year, the important message of Diwali to embrace the love and support for our families, friends and neighbours remains unchanged. This message has helped us to get through the challenges we have had to face throughout this year.

The pandemic has emphasised the significant contribution of our Indian communities working as key workers in the NHS and the care sector across our nation. The Hindu faith leaders in Wales have provided the Welsh Government with their wise counsel to help shape the safeguarding guidance that has been produced through the pandemic to support our communities.

I meet with representatives from the Hindu Council of Wales during the year through the coming together of the Faith Communities Forum, which I Chair. Their support, constructive advice and guidance both individually and collectively throughout this pandemic is greatly valued by the Welsh Government.

The Hindu Forum of Britain and the Hindu Council of Wales are just two examples of the wider contribution that British Hindus make to our communities and society and I wish you all a very peaceful and happy Diwali.







# Hindu Forum of BRITAIN 2021

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**DR RAMESH PATTNI DPhil (Oxford)**  
**VP LONDON & SOUTH EAST Hindu Forum Britain**

Since the last Diwali, it looks like the whole world has gone into a spin with the rise of the COVID-19 virus that has engulfed everyone into experiencing a new norm. An unprecedented situation that has developed since its outbreak at the end of last year to now, when we are all under one form of restriction or another under lockdown.

All of sudden Hindu Forum Britain was even more at the forefront, this time for the war against the virus. And HFB was ready with all the resources it had developed over the last 20 years to put behind this fight. Together with the other members of the team, I took part in understanding our predicament as it unfolded in our meetings with the Ministers, Government officials and departments that wanted to learn about our community and how it was coping with the restrictions, what it needed to support and the guidance, a huge amount of complex information, that it needs disseminate. This has become a regular interaction with multiple facets of all levels of Government.

There were many projects that started off in response to the virus and consequences of lockdown. Firstly, the Hindu Emergency Action Response Team (HEART) that I had suggested by me last year to the team came quickly into operation with many of the national level Hindu organisations coming together in the prevailing situation. The flow of information quickly gathered pace and the guidance from the Government was cascaded down to the community through this group.

Secondly, I helped in formulating the SEWA HELPHUB. This was an initiative of Sewa International and they were keen to understand how this can be set up and how the call handlers can be trained. I held a training session for a group and this material is still being used to train other volunteers. It provided a platform for community members getting in touch for all kinds of issues. In particular, with my background in psychology and counselling, I was able to create training for mental first aid support for whoever might need it through the Helpline.

Thirdly, I was called upon to help in advising on the creation of the British Hindu Report for informing the APPG for British Hindus about the current state of the community in the UK. The Report has already been initiated with a comprehensive survey that will collect valuable information, opinions and attitudes of Hindus on the most significant facets of life in the UK including education, politics, economics, and social and mental wellbeing. This will establish a baseline for the community's views on these matters and future reports will point to trends in these. This is a very important part of the work for the community as it will not only provide evidence-based data on the community but will also guide national and local government policy making that will take into account the needs of the community.

Fourthly, I was asked to advise on the matter of Hindu religious education (RE) in schools and the barriers and the bridges that are currently there. There was a survey that was created to collect comprehensive data on this important matter of teaching of Hinduism in schools and it promises interesting insights. It will also be an evidence-based guide for the community and the Government to inform and act on.

This are some of the significant areas of work I have been involved in and I anticipate that as the 'new norm' continues, our community will need to pull up its resources to make these transitions as they arise. The HFB has and will continue to take a leading role in this work in the service of the community and the wider society.







हिंदू स्वयंसेवक संघ यूके

**Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (UK)**

**Hindu Sevika Samiti**

हिंदू सेविका समिती



On behalf of **Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu Sevika Samiti (HSS(UK))**, I would like to extend our heartiest congratulations to Hindu Forum of Britain (HFB) in celebrating this 19th Diwali Celebration in Parliament. While this year we are unable to meet in person, I would like to commend the HFB team in bringing the celebration and the spirit of Diwali to a virtual format.

HSS (UK) and HFB have a long standing relationship bringing together, supporting and promoting the work of the Hindu community in the UK. It will soon be coming up to a year since mankind across the world started facing an unprecedented challenge. During these times, the core work of HSS (UK) has become necessary more than ever, and working closely with HFB, we have been active in providing a response to assist communities during this crisis.

Three core Hindu values have demonstrated incredible strength and necessity during these challenging times; Sangathan (Community Spirit and Universal Connectedness), Sewa (Selfless Action, Sacrifice and Resolve), Parivaar Bhav (the Caring of each other as One Family). As HSS (UK), we have been cultivating these values in our members (swayamsevak and sevikas) for more than 50 years because we believe these are noble ideals that transcend personal goals. During this ongoing crisis, HSS (UK) has inspired more than 27 organisations and projects whose tremendous work, selfless effort of volunteers and utmost kindness has helped to ensure that the most vulnerable in our communities are connected with and cared for. Further detail of these initiatives can be found at [www.hssuk.org/covidresponse](http://www.hssuk.org/covidresponse). Looking ahead, as we continue to navigate through these challenging times, the value of universal togetherness will prevail. The feeling that each one of us is part and parcel of one whole, connected in every way irrespective of belief or faith, and united with a shared sense of responsibility for others.

Diwali is a special time in our Hindu calendar, a time for joyous celebration, reflection and resolution, as well as community spirit. Under more normal circumstances, Diwali would have been celebrated with great colour, indulgence and the joy of bringing the family and community physically together. However, this year the celebrations will need to take a more virtual, but also virtuous form, continuing to serve the communities around us and help those in greatest need. Diwali will be a message of Caring and Sharing, building greater bonds between us all as one extended family, looking after each other and the environment around us, and upholding a central message of Vasudaiva Kutumbakam (the whole world is one family).

On behalf of HSS (UK) we wish you a Shubh Diwali and Nutan Varsh Abhinandan.

Dhiraj D Shah  
President, HSS (UK)







# Hindu Forum of BRITAIN 2021

Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons







## ***Shree Swaminarayan Mandir Kingsbury***

### **Introduction**

Shree Swaminarayan Mandir Kingsbury played a significant role during the Covid pandemic in being the first temple in Europe to become a vaccination centre. A large number of volunteers from the Mandir and the surrounding community supported throughout the pandemic in delivering food parcels to local hospitals and care centres along with the vaccination centre.

We are very proud of what the local community have been able to deliver when we work together and build a strong relationship with one another showing great resilience and character. We are also very grateful as is the entire country for our front line key workers of which the Mandir itself has many Doctors, Nurses and Teachers whom supported in the pandemic.

We have been working closely with Nehaben Patel Sarjan Nartan Academy to Choreograph and video the dance which is a celebration of Diwali for which many in the Hindu community, it will be the first time they are able to celebrate it properly within the last two years. We pray to Lord Swaminarayanbapa Swamibapa to bestow His Divine blessings and light upon everyone during this festive period, which has been one of a challenge for the last couple of years. Our Guru Shree Purushottam Priyadasji Swamiji Maharaj led a life with a moto of ' Society before Oneself'. He lived and led by example in always putting society and the community before anything else. The pandemic is a great example of what the community can achieve when we come together and put society first and give back to the community.

On behalf of Maninagar Shree Swaminarayan Gadi Sanstha - Shree Swaminarayan Mandir Kingsbury & Acharya Shree Jitendriyapriyadasji Swamiji Maharaj, wishing everyone a Happy Diwali and Prosperous New Year.

**Jay Shree Swaminarayan**







Wishing you a prosperous  
and safe Diwali.



*Happy Diwali*



Neha Patel – Artistic Director  
Sarjan Nartan Academy, UK LTD





॥ श्री स्वामिनारायणो विजयतेनमः ॥

## Shree Swaminarayan Temple - Cardiff

Registered Charity

શ્રી સ્વામિનારાયણ મંદિર કાર્ડિફ  
(ભુજ નરનારાયણ દેવ મંદિર નીચેનું)

Shree Swaminarayan Temple Cardiff undertakes various activities on a weekly basis in order to create an environment where individuals can learn, participate and engage with the faith.

### ❖ Religious congregations

- On a daily basis, there are sermons delivered at the Temple, starting with devotional singing, followed by Scripture reading, Aarti (fire ritual) and prasad (sanctified food). The main weekly sermon is delivered on Saturday evening.

### ❖ Classes, Youth learning & activities

- We are providing free Gujarati classes through which kids can learn to read, write and speak in Gujarati.
- There are also classes where kids can learn about the faith and moral lessons. They also learn devotional songs and also prepare a talks which improve the presentation power and confidence.
- Yoga classes are conducted by a qualified instructor to help physically, mentally and spiritually.
- Litter picking is periodically carried out in the temple vicinity to promote cleanliness and give the opportunity for members to provide selfless service.

### ❖ Festival Celebration

- We celebrate and enjoy all the festivals with respect of our culture and tradition. These include Diwali, Janmastmi, Ramnavmi, Ganesh Choth, Hanuman Jayanti, Holi, Uttarayan (Kite Flying) etc.

### ❖ Hall hire

- At the Temple you can also hire our community hall for your family functions such as marriage, baby shower, birthday, katha, engagement or any other get together parties.
- Temple also provides catering facilities for all occasions.

During Covid the temple had to adapt their core offerings in an online format in order for devotees to get the ongoing guidance required particularly during this difficult period. Some of the activities carried out are as follows:

- ❖ Online classes
- ❖ Colouring packs for children
- ❖ Cooking recipes
- ❖ Supporting locals with medicine pick ups
- ❖ Working with 'food for life Wales' providing free meals to those in need

If you would like to join or support any of the activities then please drop us a line on [info@swaminarayanwales.org.uk](mailto:info@swaminarayanwales.org.uk)







**Mr Velji Vekaria**  
**Message from the Chair of HFB Diwali Committee**

The Hindu Forum of Britain (HFB) is celebrating 20th Anniversary of Diwali event. Due to Covid 19, we have not been able to hold the celebration at the House of Common (HoC) for the year 2021 and 2020. Otherwise, we have celebrated good 18 years of the celebration at the HOC.

Before I say any further, I would like to pay my respect to 2 of the few others founding members of the HFB, namely Late Arjanbhai Vekaria and Late Haribhai Halai. Both of them were not only pioneer but also great supporter of the HFB.

The celebration is held annually a week before the actual Diwali falls and on Wednesday which enable us to have maximum attendance not only from dignitaries such the PM, Cabinet Ministers, Members of the House of Lords, High Commissioners but also various leaders and members of the Hindu Organisations including businessman's.

My thanks to Bob Blackman MP and the Chair of the British Hindus APPG who has been Awarded Bharat Ratna by the President of India and Lord Navnit Dholakia OBE who is also a Patron of the HFB being the Co-Host for some time.

How can I forget to name few the Temples who have been putting enormous efforts preparing various varieties of Prashad (offering to God) which is displayed at the event at HoC in form of Annakut. The Prashad is then distributed after the event. They are:-

**Hare Krishna Temple – Watford**  
**Shree Jalaram Temple – Greenford**  
**Shree Swaminarayan Temple – Kenton, Harrow**  
**Shree Swaminarayan Temple – Willesden**

**Shree Swaminarayan Temple – Kingsbury**  
**Yogi Devine Society, Woodcock Rd, Harrow**  
**Shree Sanatan Hindu Temple – Wembley**  
**BAPS – Neasden**

Due to current situation, Yog Foundation and Shree Swaminarayan Temple – Cardiff kindly supported by providing their Annakut virtually for 2020 and 2021 respectively.

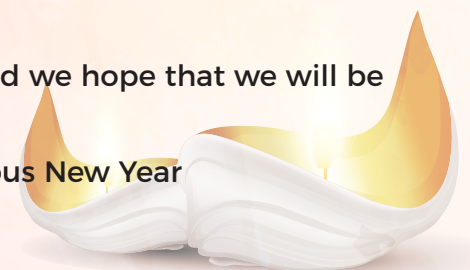
My thanks also go to various Sponsors of this event including all the supporters from business community for their advertisement in our annual Magazine. I must state that ever since the formation of HFB Late Arjanbhai Vekaria and Shashibhai Vekaria including the management and the Staff of Vascroft Contractors Ltd have been great supporters not only by providing an office with full facilities for the HFB but supporting financially as well. Likewise, Rickie Segal, the directors of Transputec, President of HFB Truptiben Patel, Vice Presidents Ramesh Patni OBE, Harshaben Yaswant, Puneet Dwivedi and all the members of the HFB Managing Committee have been working very hard throughout the year.

Leaders of various Hindu communities, security personal at HoC including staff have been supporting towards the success of the Diwali event. Likewise, Members of Hindu Swayam Sewak Sangh UK (HSS) Shir Dhirajbhai Shah, Harshbhai Haria, Vishalbhai Shah and Riteshbhai Thaker have put much of their time and effort streaming virtual event past last year and this year as well. Reena Ranger OBE and Shiv Khetani has been of great help as well. Thanks to Bimal Patel for compiling the e-brochure for HFB.

It has been a long journey celebrating the Diwali Event virtually and we hope that we will be back to HoC next year!

On behalf of all at HFB, I wish you all Happy Diwali and A Prosperous New Year

Velji Vekaria







# HINDU FORUM of BRITAIN 2021

Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons



**Harsha Shukla MBE**  
Vice president north for HFB  
President of Hindu Council of North



## Shubh Deepawali

Namaste

We have been slowly coming out of the pandemic, thanks to the government's quick start of vaccine roll out followed by the booster program. We all are still communicating through digital platform.

Thanks to advance digital platform I have been attending on behalf of HFB census, place of worship scheme, and many more to be a link between our members and government.

Let's pray that we will come out of this pandemic and be able to lead normal life.

Harsha Shukla MBE  
NAMASKAR







## Deesha Chadha

Over the past year the Faiths Forum for London has been working hard to support the Government with the vaccine rollout. We were granted funding to engage with hard-to-reach communities and to support vaccine up take.

As such we co-hosted a number of pop-up clinics and put together resources about misinformation, and actively supported the covid champions initiative set up by central Government.

I have also been working closely with 'Good Thinking' – an organisation that is developing digitised resources to support mental health and wellbeing among individuals on resources specifically designed for use by the Hindu community.

I have been appointed a member of the Lord Bishop of London's health inequalities working group which is in place to consider a number of important health factors that could continue to affect marginalised Londoners post-pandemic.



**DJJS UK** is a non-profit organisation based in Hayes, London, helping individuals towards their spiritual progression by teaching the ancient technique of 'Brahm Gyan' based meditation. Throughout the pandemic, the organisation has been actively delivering wellbeing services to the public through weekly yoga sessions, spiritual discourses and virtual workshops. Over the past 12 months, the charity has held 54 weekly discourses; 53 Yoga sessions; 71 Ladies yoga/workshops and 40 sessions particularly aimed at children, all virtual.

The yoga classes have been an asset to many individuals, ensuring they keep fit and healthy whilst staying at home and have also gained the benefits of attending weekly inspiring congregations. Most importantly, the sessions for the youth have had a positive impact on them both mentally and physically.

Best regards  
Sw. Kabir  
FRIENDLY







## ***HFB and The London Faith & Belief Forum***

(F&BF Barking and Dagenham)

In December 2020, I was given an opportunity to participate with the The Faith & Belief Forum by Hindu Forum of Britain. This was an online event due to lockdown and they have worked for over twenty years to build good relations between people of all faith and beliefs, and to create a society where difference is celebrated.

The project was named as Communities of Hope as they have been working with local communities, young people and schools to deliver an interfaith dialogue project in Barking and Dagenham. This project had over seventy participants who were passionate about building bridges across communities and wanted to share their vision of hope for closer, better-connected and cohesive communities. For me it was a good learning experience to engage with people of other faith as life becomes richer by learning about other communities. Also, they brought in speakers like Councillor, Margaret Hodge who spoke about Race of Humanity and advised us all that there was only one language, language of LOVE. This project enabled me to identify similarities between each faith and belief. On another occasion, there was a person named Alison from BD Collective who shared opportunities available through her network advising that her organisation is all about collaboration, connecting people, projects and places.

Initially I was given the training for Community Connector for steering group and after three meetings, was requested to ask about 12-people from Hindu Forum of Britain to join in. This was when Mr Pravinbhai N Amin, Ashishbhai Popat and Sumantrai Dhirubhai Desai from HFB volunteered to join me on Zoom dialogue meetings with other faith groups. The HFB group were separated in different meeting rooms on Zoom with other organisations. Topic for discussion included our culture beliefs (how it had helped our community during pandemic), the Climate change issues, social issues that concern our community (anti-social behaviour), sports workshops that could bring youth groups together and many other issues.

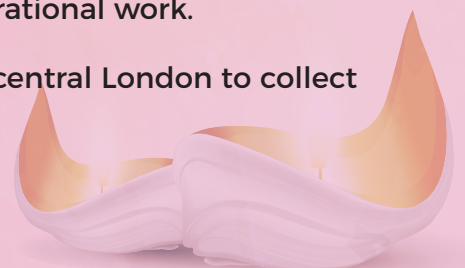
HFB was the only Hindu group joining them this year and there is only one Hindu temple in Ilford. There was representation from one Sikh group too. As a thank you for our contribution to the project, Faith and Belief Forum offered up to £15 per person to cover the cost of a takeaway expense. This project involved a lot of meetings and lasted for four months.

At the end of March, they hosted an online virtual event to celebrate the End of project "Communities of Hope" where all the seventy participants invited their communities and networks to join in.

In July 2021, I was informed that the charity which hosts the London Faith and Belief Community Awards that Hindu Forum of Britain was nominated for an award, recognised project award. This award celebrates the vital work of London's faith and belief communities by bringing together local heroes and shining a light on their inspirational work.

On 29th November 2021, I shall attend the ceremony in person in central London to collect this Award.

environmentally  
**Tara Patel**  
Chair of Membership







# HINDU ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE



*Distance is no obstacle - Join us as we  
come together to form the  
Hindu Environmental Task Force (HETF)!*



BRAHMA KUMARIS



ISKCON®



HINDU  
CLIMATE  
ACTION



LEAP



THE ART OF LIVING



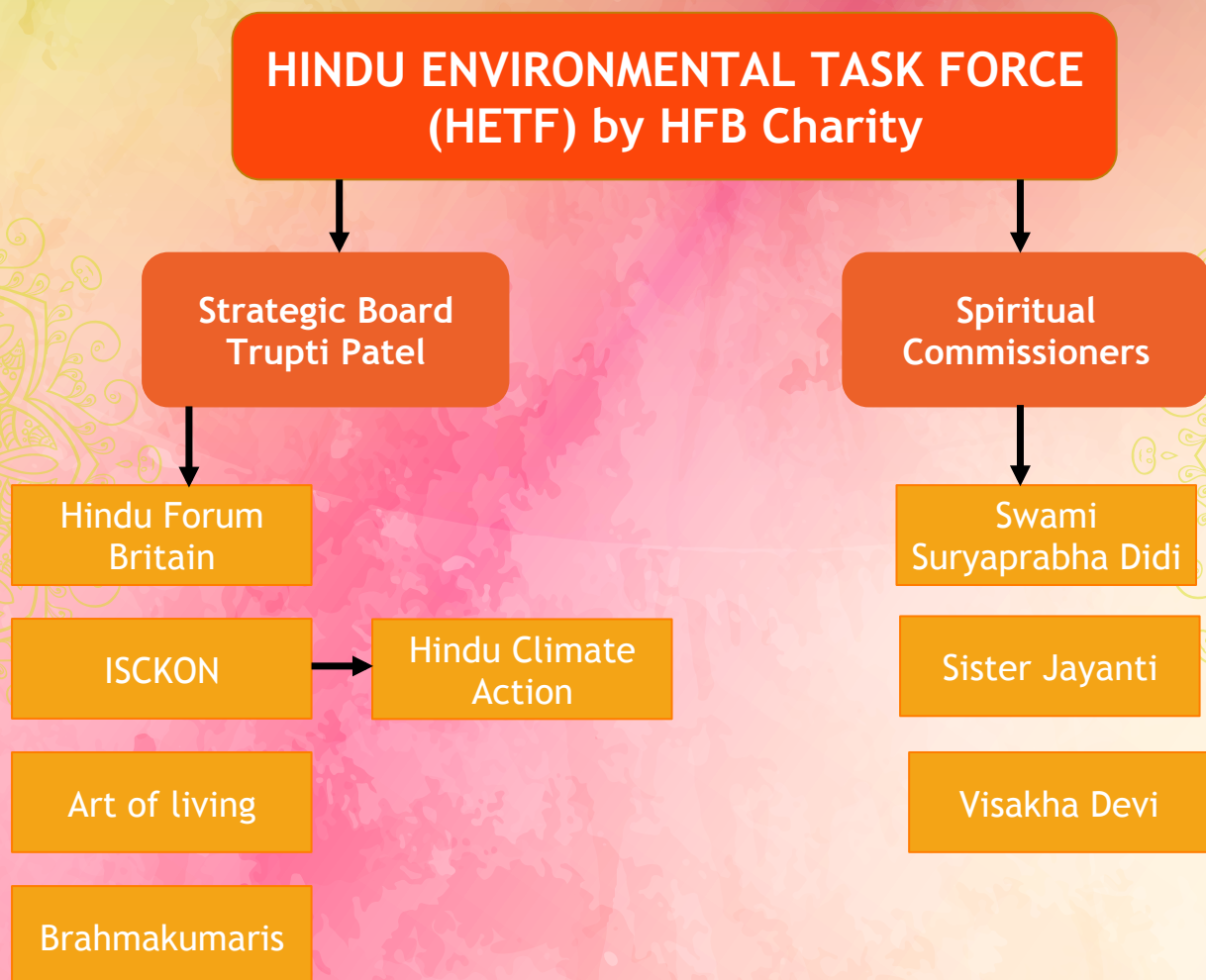
## Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons



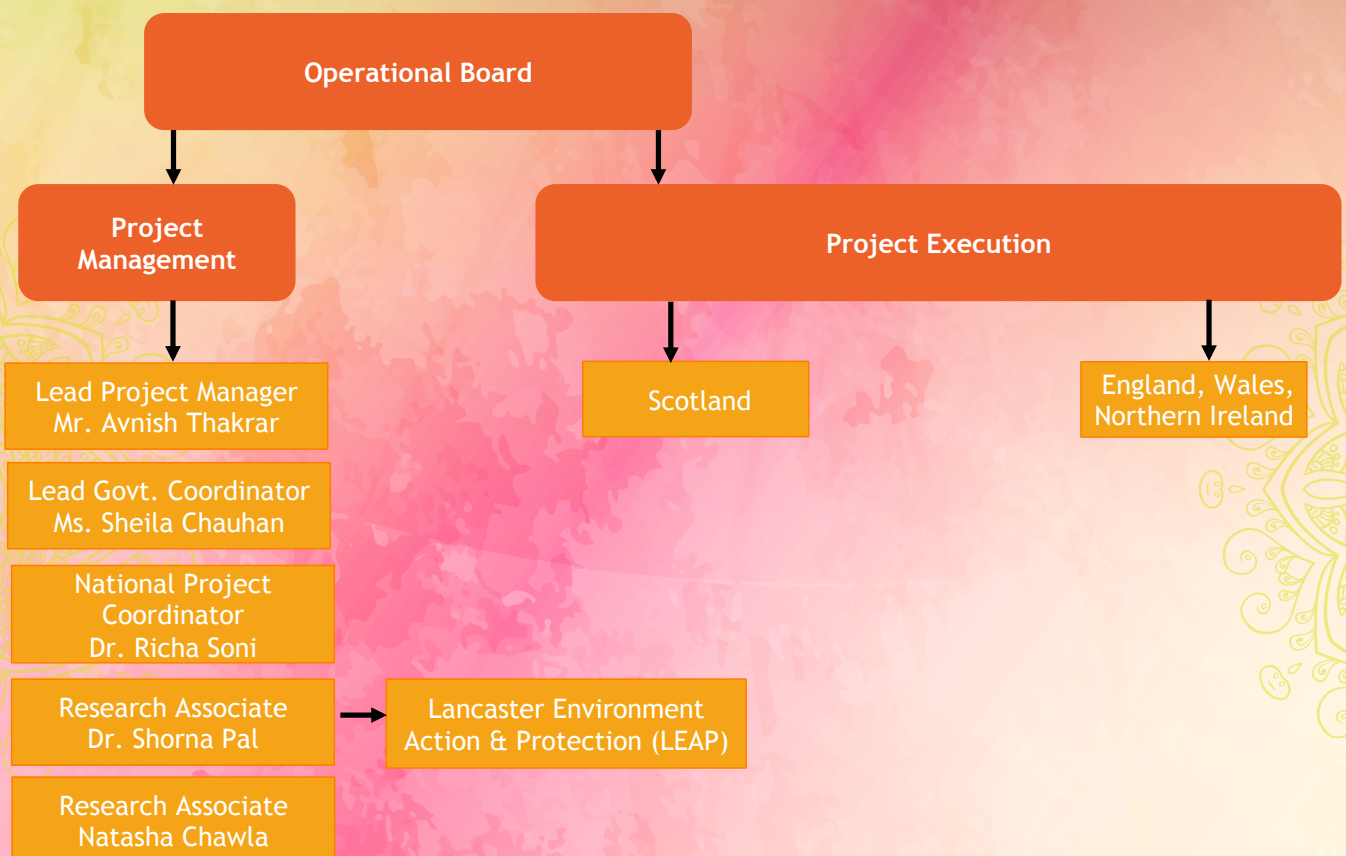




## The Hindu Environmental Task Force (HETF) *Organisational Structure*











# Hindu Forum of BRITAIN 2021

Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons



Operational Management



Brahma Kumaris

Art of living

ISCKON

Hindu Council  
North

SKLP

Shri Prajapati  
Samaj/HCB

Hindu Council  
Brent

Hindu Council  
Birmingham

Independent  
Mandirs

Leicester  
Members

Sewa UK

Scottish Temples







### Hindu Forum Britain

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#### Press Release: Launch of the Hindu Environmental Task Force (HETF) on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Further to the Hindu Forum of Britain's training on the Environmental Assessment & Management (EAM) Toolkit for Temples and Samaj buildings delivered by LEAP on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021, the next key event in the timeline to COP26 and beyond has been the official Launch of the Hindu Environmental Task Force (HETF) on 18<sup>th</sup> September, right at the start of September's Big Green Week. The launch was initiated with the blessings of Swami Surya Prabha Didi from the Brahmarishi Ashram, London, who had blessed the earlier EAM training, and whose opening prayers and spiritual thoughts asked attendees to reflect on the ancient Vedic wisdom of Sanatana Dharma (or Hinduism as known today) not just as a religion but a way of understanding and respecting the universe and every creation within it, as our philosophy is that of one-ness. She spoke of sustainability as the essential balance between the generation, operation and destruction of life forces, which must always be upheld through all our actions.

In highlighting the need for HETF, Smt Trupti Patel, President, Hindu Forum of Britain and Trustee of Faith for the Climate observed that, the need to improve our cities and neighbourhoods not just through improving the aesthetics but also by creating a truly sustainable environment. Human factors play a vital role in enhancing our environment and everything we do should be linked to sustainability and using our environment wisely, in order, to preserve it for future generations.

The keynote at the HETF Launch was delivered by Sri Bob Blackman, MP, Padma Shri and Chair of APPG on British Hindus. Sri Blackman portrayed the bigger picture of the climate crisis, of deserts advancing all over the world, mass deforestation in the equatorial belt, and food and water is becoming scarcer, leading to many parts of the world becoming uninhabitable, and future migration, stressing on how it was imperative that the world work together to take strong steps to counter this. Sri Blackman underlined also, the importance of individual small action such as properly insulating one's home. Sri Blackman referred to the six thousand year old Hindu scriptures stating the knowledge they propound - in consuming only enough to sustain life and not more - to leave the planet in the same state as we found it. He stated further as individuals we should review what we do and think of how to protect the environment better such as walking instead of taking the car where possible. Sri Blackman went on to suggest that all participants at the HETF Launch undertake personal responsibility such as a personal audit to see if they could make their lifestyle more environmentally friendly in some way, rather than just asking of others to do so, which would lead to an unbearable planet for our children.

Esteemed heads of collaborating and HFB member organisations contributed their thoughts and experiences at the Launch, sharing numerous perspectives on environmental protection and the highlights of environmental initiatives taken forward by their organisations. The sharing of so many







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environmental best practices, activities and projects by the Hindu Forum of Britain's members brought together under the Hindu Environmental Task Force was highlighted by Dr Harriet Crabtree, Executive Director at Inter Faith Network for the UK. This was expanded on by Dr. Maureen Sier, Director, Interfaith Scotland, who underscored the importance of multifaith working together towards COP26. Shri Dhiraj Shah, Head of the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) noted the importance of involving grassroots environmental action, welcomed the HETF initiative and said that he was looking forward to grassroots organisations taking part in action to counter climate change. Sri Velji Vekaria, President of the Shree Kutch Leva Patel Community (SKLPC) outlined measures that the SKLPC temples had taken to uphold protection of the planet. He said that while the role of the government was salient, as a member of the community, as people running the organisation and the community as a whole needed to work together with and as part of the government, to bring about positive change to the environment, particularly where the effect of climate change and the damage caused was so visible. Sri Vekaria cited the example of clearer air and cleaner rivers as a result of people staying indoors during the pandemic, demonstrating how lifestyle changes now could quickly bring about positive change for future generations.

Sister Maureen, Programme Coordinator for Brahmakumaris in London explained that the Brahmakumaris had become very active in climate change conferences since 2015 and many environmental practices were being adopted by their centres in the UK and within their wider network across 25 countries worldwide. Smt Sheila Chauhan, a prominent member of the Green Team or Eco-Bhakti Sangh of ISKCON, shared the concept of Eco-Bhakti and the sustainable excellence that ISKCON devotees are instilling in their practices in temples, their buildings and schools all over the UK, such as their eco-farm in Scotland which promotes biodiversity and where organic vegetables are grown, as well as in further expansion of micro-dairy farms all across the UK. Dr Sujata Sriram and Sri Shailen Mittal, introduced the Art of Living (AOL) as an organisation spanning 6 countries operating through a dedicated network of thousands of volunteers operating through 1000 centres worldwide.

Dr Arayan Srestha is on the Board of Directors for Aberdeen Hindu Temple, and earlier was the Climate Change Fund Project Manager at Aberdeen Multicultural Centre, and an invited speaker at the 2nd Global Conference on Climate Change. He made the valid point that it is important to see how the community perceives climate change. Dr Srihari Vallabhajousula, volunteer Priest at the Hindu Temple of Scotland, Vedic scholar and Board Member at Interfaith Scotland congratulated the Hindu Environmental Task Force on its inception. Srihari ji quoted from the Atharvaveda, highlighting the relationship between the Earth and us, referring to Earth as the Mother and us as her child, and speaking of the reason for the HETF coming together to pledge action to look after the Earth. Srihari ji said that Interfaith Scotland was at the forefront of this relationship nurturing and had been planning and implementing initiatives for a long time to spread awareness around the philosophy of COP26. Sri Bhanu Vashisht from Healing Himalayas Foundation thanked the Hindu Forum of Britain for having a







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futuristic vision and yet creating a platform like HETF to meet the need of the hour. He pointed out that it was not possible to sustain planet Earth as long as high ideologies were not translatable into day to day environmental action.

Dr Shorna Pal, Founder-Director, LEAP, shared its objectives in serving as an Environmental Partner for Communities, and lauded the Hindu Forum of Britain as proactively working with LEAP in taking forward the agenda of grassroots action for environmental protection, starting with a roll out of the Environmental Assessment & Management (EAM) toolkit, which would not only help temples celebrate their achievements in the area of climate action, but would provide a tool for ongoing assessment of areas with scope for improvement in environmental protection, as well as in leading to a formulation of an environmental policy for the temple organisation which would impact not just its devotional community, but also those within its wider network of interaction such as suppliers.

Smt Manjulika Singh from the Glasgow Hindu Mandir mentioned that the temple had planned several key activities during COP26 and shared how the temple had trialled the Environmental Assessment & Management (EAM) Toolkit offered by the Hindu Forum of Britain, supported by LEAP and had found it very useful to recognise the good practices the temple had in place whilst helping to identify those areas of temple activity which could be made more environmentally friendly.

The Launch was concluded by Dr. Ramesh Pattni, Vice-President (London & South), Hindu Forum of Britain, who summarised the launch to reflect on how there was a lack of alignment between the spiritual world view of Hindus and the material world view, leading to the main factors resulting in the disbalance in the environment and the resultant climate crisis. He urged participants to go through a self reflective practice to understand where they were deviating from their spiritual world view and to bring their way of life back into alignment. Dr Pattni endorsed also the idea of a self audit to map the lifestyle choices we were making everyday and to try to see how these could be realigned to prevent an overuse of resources beyond that of the individual need. Similarly he endorsed the collective audit of externalities such as the Environmental Assessment and Management Toolkit, to bring wider Hindu practices as a community within community spaces into alignment with the Hindu way of life. Following Dr Pattni's insightful summary of the Launch, Smt Trupti Patel recited the closing prayer, the Shantipath, invoking peace within all beings of nature.







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### Retracing the Hindu Forum of Britain's journey into environmental awareness & action...

The Hindu Forum of Britain is the largest umbrella organisation representing British Hindus and with a membership of over 20 member organisations across England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The Hindu ethos embedded within the practice of its member organisations is reflected positively within its ecological footprint which gains salience particularly in context of the climate crisis we face today.

With a view to upholding and sharing these best practices as well as making every effort to improve upon and add to the efforts of all member organisations and their communities, and in the light of its role in contributing to the COP26 UN summit, the Hindu Forum of Britain formalised a Hindu Environmental Task Force (HETF).

The Hindu Forum of Britain rolled out earlier, a pioneering Environmental Assessment & Management (EAM) toolkit supported by Lancaster Environment Action & Protection (LEAP), for use by community organisations such as Hindu temples and samaj buildings. Earlier discussions with Mrs Patel around the need for building a specific environmental management plan that suited the needs of Hindu temples, had made Dr Shorna Pal realise how necessary it was at this climate crisis juncture, to have an Environmental Partner for Community organisations, and she had gone on to establish LEAP. She was soon joined in her efforts by Dr Richa Soni, an Environmental Engineer with particular interests in waste-water treatment, and soon after by Dr Gargi Das, a veteran anaesthetist with a lifetime interest in environmentalism, Mrs Binoti Tanna with a background in Environmental Science, and community leaders Mrs Harsha Shukla MBE & Mrs Kailash Parekh MBE. As the newest member of the Hindu Forum of Britain, LEAP was excited to support HFB on its journey to COP26 and beyond, in celebrating and promoting sustainability within British Hindu communities.

Dr Amesh Pattni OBE, Vice President (London & South) for Hindu Forum of Britain, observed, "It is about refreshing and rebuilding the Hindu environmental sustainability narrative through pragmatic principles and action. The EAM toolkit will ensure that for and beyond COP26, Hindu temples continue to acknowledge the excellent contribution they make towards protecting Mother Earth. This will assist in expression of the great Hindu truths about the co-dependability of human beings and the environment. The EAM Toolkit is the first step in a chain of events and action that Hindu Forum of Britain has planned to undertake under its environmental wing, the Hindu Environmental Task Force (HETF) which draws in Hindu organisations from all across the UK."

Training on the EAM toolkit was organised by the Hindu Forum of Britain and delivered on 4<sup>th</sup> September to Hindu temple & organisational representatives by LEAP Directors Dr Richa Soni and Dr Shorna Pal. The EAM toolkit includes a versatile Environmental Assessment & Management Plan which comes with detailed guidelines, including in understanding and formulating an Environmental Policy from the EAM plan. The session was initiated by Swami Surya Prabha Didi, Brahmareshi Ashram, London.



HINDU  
CLIMATE  
ACTION







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Prior to rollout of the toolkit, consultations were held with Environmental representatives from Brahmakumaris and ISKON, two large Hindu temple organisations, who reviewed the toolkit. It was then piloted by the Hindu Mandir Glasgow. After the training on the EAM Toolkit and formulating an Environmental Policy was delivered, Sister Maureen from Brahmakumaris UK enhanced the training by sharing the spiritual underpinnings of the environmental policy followed by their group, with the core principles of Living with Simplicity, Buying Compassionately, Using Economically, Learning Continuously and Sharing Generously.

Mr Puneet Dwivedi, Vice President (Scotland) for Hindu Forum of Britain, detailed the essential action of having a unified Hindu Environmental Charter, to be agreed and signed by all temples following on from their Environmental Assessment and formulation of an Environmental Policy. The closing prayer was recited by Mrs Harsha Shukla, Vice President (North) for Hindu Forum of Britain.

The training was received with great positivity and commitment. Dr Srihari Vallabhajousula, who represents the community on Interfaith Scotland, commented during the session on social media, "A very informative and productive webinar working on an Environmental Assessment & Management Toolkit for Hindu places of worship – the first in the series of events in the lead up to COP26. Attended by around 40 representatives from various Hindu groups across UK." Dr Srihari Vallabhajousula's viewpoint was echoed in the remarks of Dr Harsha Jani from the Param Shakti Peeth of UK group, who said, "I attended the training session. Much work has gone into preparing the guidelines. Must be shared widely."

Post event feedback has been extensive and has encouraged further nation-wide uptake, as with Mr. Avnish Thakrar from Hindu Climate Action who stated, "Excellent and very informative presentation. Thank you. I will try and get my local Mandir (temple) to do the assessment." A repeat of the first session will be organised as there have been multiple requests such as from Krishna Pradyumna Dasa, ISKON (Leicester), who asked, "For those who missed the training will there be a repeat or will guidelines be shared?"

Mrs Harsha Shukla, Vice President (North) highlights the enormous impact of having in place an Environmental Assessment & Management Plan for Hindu Temples & Samaj Buildings across the UK. She explains, "This means that temples all over the UK will start to use our Environmental Assessment & Management toolkit to surface all the points at which they can start or improve on existing environmentally friendly practices such as asking temple users all across UK to bring all fruits and sweets offerings in biodegradable packaging and using steel or biodegradable food trays at events and activities like elderly luncheon clubs, as well as sourcing groceries locally. This grassroots impact will be effected through many thousands of people across UK."



**HINDU  
CLIMATE  
ACTION**





# HETF Sequence

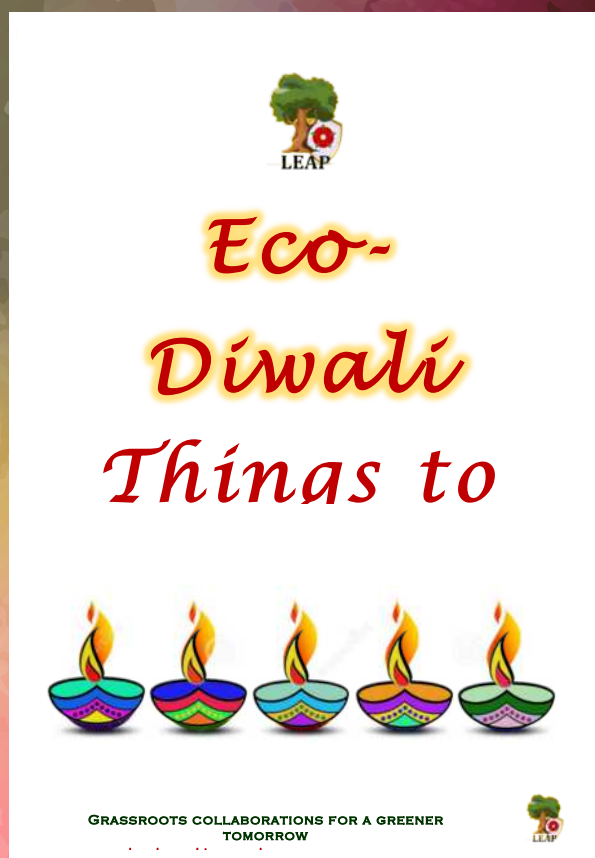
## Diwali Eco Diwali Utsav

### Guidance booklet



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## Eco-Diwali

### - Things to Make & Do

#### Reduce, Reuse & Recycle

to make exciting diyas, flower garlands, lanterns, fireworks (minus the fire!) and more to celebrate Diwali in a wonderful, traditional way that has always taught us to use resources we need and not more. This keeps the resource balance in order & hugely helps to counter climate change.

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Eco-Diwali - Things to Make & Do

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## Contents

1. What is Eco-Diwali?
2. Diya Lamps
3. Garlands
4. Lanterns
5. Rangoli
6. Eco-Fireworks
7. Sweets
8. Gift Boxes

What next?

GRASSROOTS COLLABORATIONS FOR A GREENER TOMORROW





# HETF Sequence

## Diwali Eco Diwali Utsav

### Guidance booklet



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### 1. What is Eco-Diwali?

As environmental issues are rising at frightening rates, it is time to go green in every possible way. Diwali, the festival of lights, celebrated with great pomp all over the globe is a celebration that marks the victory of good over evil, light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance.

We all need to call for an eco Diwali (a Green Diwali) to ensure we celebrate this festival with minimum impact on the environment.

Let's Reduce our consumption and Reuse our existing and waste items at home to make things like cards, gift boxes, gift bags, garlands, lanterns and decorations.

Let us make things in ways that can easily go back to nature by using biodegradable material. We can model using flour to make figurines and diya lamps we can use spices to make beautiful rangoli patterns!



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time, till the mixture becomes like biscuit dough. Then shape the dough into a small number of diyas. The diyas are ready to use!

If you want them harder, as they would be easier to decorate, place them on a foil covered baking tray and ask the adult to put it in the oven for 20 minutes. After this time, the diyas can be taken out and left to cool completely. Then decorate with organic paints, little stones etc. They make great gifts for boxes.

**Traditionally a diya is lit through a handmade cotton wool wick dipped in cooking oil in the diya. You could instead place solar tea lights inside, but the carbon cost of burning the wick may be less than that of producing and transporting the commercial solar tea light.**

### 3. Garlands



**Make pretty garlands for yourself and your family from old tinsel, ribbon, waste paper, sweet wrappers, crepe paper ribbons, bits of cloth. You will need an adult to help you**



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Eco-Diwali - Things to Make & Do

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Fireworks at all festivals of world faiths when burnt add to the pollution and also are not eco friendly in the resources they use. But there are exciting alternatives!

**So let us celebrate Diwali in an eco-friendly way - it's great for our environment and economical for us!**

### 2. Diya (Lamps)



Diya lamps are traditionally made both out of dissolvable clay and atta(wholewheat)-flour. By making these diyas you will be using biodegradable material and also reducing the carbon footprint of transport costs of commercial diyas sent in bulk by truck and plane. For making atta-flour diyas, you will need an adult to help you, and ....



cup of atta (wholewheat) flour and about cup of water

Ask the adult to pre heat the oven to 200 degrees Celsius. Meanwhile pour the atta flour into a bowl and keep adding water little at a

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Find a steady space like the floor or a part of the table and place on it the things you might need like safety scissors, stapler, String, Glue, Old Coloured Paper or Crepe Paper ribbons, Sweet wrappers, Ribbon, Cloth.



Tie 3 ribbons or paper chains in a knot at one end, make a long



plait, Take 3 of these plaits and make a thicker plait and tie the two ends together to make a garland.



several to make a flower, tie many flowers on a long string to make a garland.

fold a square paper or paper napkin lengthwise like a fan, fold double, tie in middle, glue together



### 4. Lanterns

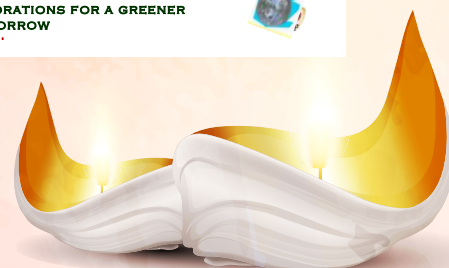
You will need...an adult to help you and also...



- A solar bulb
- A tin can opener



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A screwdriver A cork mat  
• ire

- ❖ Bj i M Mhed dPeSiU iVd
- ❖ Kh iU QMef d gp hQg l PgV gie  
c Ma wUebhl U g iU g PhfeihMg M  
eiU g dPeSiU
- ❖ IBf iU Qeff gl Vg iUgej TU iU l Vg  
UeP geSiU Nj BNMP iV iU Nj BNf fBM  
VhP iU QM iUgej TU wUeb hV iU BP eS  
iU QM
- ❖ G Ma MUEb Vd iU O dig eSiU c M MiP iV l Vg Sgec  
iU iVd QM iUgej TU iUwUeb Mgej dP iU c Mqc MaVdTM  
NMh Segnej gDQe CV MBFMdi gd eg HVTU i FMf  
❖ C QegM iU iVd Nnf MiVdTFM gMgej dP V MiP  
f MdVdTed iUM snej gBMc f Vg MPnie j h t



AdPU g VhMl NhV Segc MaVdTiGMPVedMbfM gBmDi gdht  
BUMb dT nej gh bSie c Ma hec l VUFMdi PePd l hfM ghegM  
QeBM l VUNhSegc ePc MMVd ht  
<https://botanicalpaperworks.com/blog/crafts-seed-paper-lanterns-for-party-accent/>

### 5. Rangoli

Make rangoli patterns, cut out in paper, old calendars, cardboard boxes, coloured in,



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### Eco-Diwali - Things to Make & Do

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pasted on surfaces or painted/ sprinkled on the ground. They also make fantastic Diwali cards!! You will need an adult to help you and

...

- Safety scissors glue
- se natural colours like turmeric (yellow), peppercorn (black), dried leaf like mint (green), coffee (brown), flour (white) etc. or use organic Paints and a brush
- Old calendars or cardboard boxes



old plain paper in half and cut out any



shapes you like, such as circles, shapes and hearts. ou can also draw outlines of patterns on the floor or paper



and colour them in using spices or organic colours which don t harm the environment.

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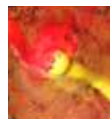


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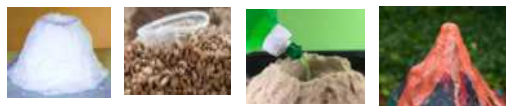


### 6. Fireworks alternatives

There are fun alternatives to fireworks such as making your own mini-volcanoes which erupt with coloured foamy lava!!



or making a volcano, you need an empty tin or reuse plastic cup, some dishwashing soap, about 3tbsp of baking soda and cup vinegar per eruption, food colour or organic paint and



water.

To make your mountain, you can make a mound of soil from your garden, or of pebbles or snow or sand, and make a little cavity at the top in which you place the tin or cup. ou can also squish brown paper or egg cartons or newspapers in hot water and then use that to shape a mountain round the cup.

ill the cup with water, then stir in the baking soda properly, then stir in a bright coloured paint, then mix in a teaspoon of soap. hen you pour vinegar into the cup, you will get a wonderful frothy, bubbling, colourful lava spilling over the edge of the cup and cascading down the sides of the mountain!



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### Eco-Diwali - Things to Make & Do

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DdQej gM eiU ghie jh hj OU Mi gdMWk hiee MIP VS Sg l egah Mg hVbN VdT  
Nej Tuiqie dhjg iUM iU h Mg c MP j hVdT g OnOb P c M gWMr BedhNP g Qes  
SgVdPbn QgMa gh uEg d BgMa ghv l UVOU jh de fMhVQVdhi MP eS OU c VOM  
Sg l egah

### 7. Sweets - Diwali Laddoos

Make sweets yourself = they look great in your own homemade gift boxes instead of buying chocolates stifled in plastic packaging!



Diwali Laddoos for gifts

The Laddoo or sweet rounds are super easy to make, easy



to decorate, easy to put into boxes and easy to make a variety of.

J U h c eBdMIMPee g OF hUMg P jhi jh hTgMl M gMiP h c eBdMLej OM  
jh QeQdj i egMre dP fel P gVdhi MP eSh c eBdMie c Ma eiU gkMgViVhrLej  
OM c Ma hj TMgSg ed hieerLej OM MPP hfVO hBd OMdMe ed Vne j l MdirLej  
OM TMgVdVU l VU dj ihgMNdhegeiU gPgV P Sg Vr

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Heat about 3 tbsp vegetable oil on a medium temperature in a thick based pan. Once hot, add about 250 gm semolina powder and cook till it starts to (light) brown, but keep stirring so that the semolina at the bottom does not burn. Add sugar according to your taste (quite a lot in proportion but that is still much less than sugar in most commercial sweets). Keep stirring and soon after, add some water part by part till it resembles a thick cake mixture. Once cool enough, roll into balls or spoon into bowls.

### 8. Gift Boxes

**Make pretty Gift Boxes for yourself, family and friends. You will need an**



**also...**

**adult to help you**



**and**

- A Tape measure



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### Eco-Diwali - Things to Make & Do

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- Safety Scissors
- A Stapler

Cut a 4 cm wide strip of strong cotton cloth from an old pillowcase to same length as width of plastic box. Fold it along its length. Apply glue evenly over one side of the cloth. Apply glue along hinge area of width of old box to same depth as strip of cloth, then press the cloth strip along the hinge are along width of box (making a V shape along width of lid as in picture)



- Glue
- Old Coloured Paper, Ribbon, Cloth, Plastic or Cardboard boxes (yes, plastic too... reusing old plastic boxes is a great way to reduce waste!)



Measure size of lid of plastic box. Cut old wrapping paper 2 cm wider on all 4 sides.

Glue wrapping paper on top of old box and fold sides under and glue securely.

On inside of lid, glue old wrapping paper or coloured paper of same size as lid and smooth down edges



Measure front and back of box, then cut 2 pieces of old wrapping paper 2 cm wider than this and glue to front and back of box, folding into inside of box and gluing down.

### What Next?

*Diwali is a sum of many tiny rituals lighting diyas, drawing rangolis, decorating, praying*

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*to God, exchanging sweets and, of course, spending time with loved ones*

*and the list does not include creating waste, noise and other pollution.*

*And likewise, when we enjoy and celebrate other festivals like Hannukah, Christmas, Eid and occasions such as birthdays and weddings, we must remember that no faith or traditions of a way of life asks us to create waste or pollution.*

*All we must do is increase self-awareness and try to find more eco-friendly ways to celebrate our festivals.*

*Adopt a sustainable lifestyle and mindful approach to reinvent Diwali traditions to be more environmentally friendly.*

### Gift a Plant this Diwali



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### Eco-Diwali - Things to Make & Do

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**Plants make beautiful, sustainable gifts. Grow your own saplings and pop them into little decorated earthen pots for a wonderful Diwali gift. Remember the energy and fossil fuels wasted in making, packing and transporting the**



**products in superstores that you buy as gifts, including potted plants!! Make gifts yourself or atleast buy locally!**



GRASSROOTS COLLABORATIONS FOR A GREENER TOMORROW



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## HEALING HIMALAYAS

Pradeep Sangwan an intrepid traveller who is committed to restore the pristine natural environment of the Himalayas. He is the first volunteer at Healing Himalayas Foundation and along with his team he has cleared approximately 8,00,000kgs of non biodegradable waste from foothills of Himalayas.

Pradeep Sangwan has taken over the onerous task of cleaning out the trash from the picturesque Himalayas. Teams upcoming circular vision is to establish Material Recovery Facilities at the famous tourists hotspots and recycle it in a scientific manner.







Dr Bhavna K Pandya, MD FRCP FRCPI  
MSc in Quality Improvement  
Consultant Nephrologist (Aintree site) & Honorary Clinical Lecturer  
Medical and Dental Staff Governor,  
Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
Aintree University Hospital  
Liverpool L9 7AL



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Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons

## ***HFB Medical Committee Covid-19***

2020-2021 Diwali to Diwali has been full of medical activities for the pandemic and our community. Having stuck with COVID during last Diwali I experienced true missing feeling of DI-WALI which we otherwise don't realise. Catching COVID before vaccine was frightening. Our community lost many healthcare professionals. It became evident that ethnic minority doctors dominated amongst those who lost their lives due to COVID. We lost many of our family and friends in pre-vaccine era.

The first and second waves took in to unprecedented grip with lack of availability of basic PPE and rationing. Mortuaries had to be built overnight to accommodate the number of dead bodies. We helplessly watched people dying and the number of deaths per day in thousand and then over two and three thousands per day in the U.K. Our community experienced this even more with our tendency and philosophy to help the others even with risking our own lives. Our community worked at the frontline much more than the proportion of our population share.

Then the fast forward vaccine came. We all hesitated to make the decision to what to do. As medical committee we followed the queries and anxieties of our community regarding safety and efficacy of vaccine. All the information was scattered and coming over daily to confuse even more and to put people in dilemma. There were even enough information messages, videos and comments on social media to oppose the uptake as those believed that it was wrong to take the vaccine.

We took up the challenge of protecting our community by the use of the only available source of protection: The COVID vaccine. We prepared a comprehensive COVID vaccine information leaflet. We organised videos in English and Indian languages to help our community to understand more. We organised a webinar with our own speakers and the speakers from the Government. This was a great success in demystifying the mysteries about the vaccine. The live poll suggested 88% of our community will accept the vaccine which was very promising even before the vaccine was launched.

To help increase vaccine uptake HFB prepared over 20 videos in a number of languages to demystify vaccine related information.

We also participated in a webinar "Pandemic Crisis-facts" organised by Gujaratis in the UK where I participated as a speaker.

I participated in webinar about faith and medicine which was focussed on end of life care and approach of all the faiths practised in the U.K. by their representative medical professionals. Our concept of Aatma as eternal and body as time bound was very much touching to the





panel members and the audience.

We took up the challenge led by Dr Sapana Bhansali, vice-chair, Medical Committee Hindu Forum of Britain, to support Steward Volunteering in association with Mediareach advertising company to run the UK vaccination programme.

As a chair of medical committee I attended BBC Newsnight with Kirsty Wark. I was challenged with a series of political questions while Bharat got in the grip of wild delta variant and the prime minister Boris Johnson announced India to go in to red country.

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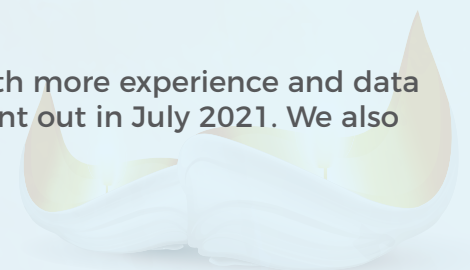
This resulted in many of our community members stranded in Bharat and also family and friends stuck in the UK. We tearfully watched our near ones and dear ones back home in the hospital fighting for beds and breath. The media also gave us horrifying glimpse of Bharat's funeral homes where our friends and family were cremated soon after the death rather than putting the bodies in mortuary as per our culture. We tearfully saw the (Indian) delta wave details in very fine details which we even had not seen in our own UK inspite of similar challenges and intensity of COVID waves. This has raised concerns of the ethics applied in the UK regarding publicising the images of vulnerable patients and carers and scenes of funeral areas with visible and identifiable individuals. The funeral homes got inundated with bodies for Antim Kriya in India which is understandable with the number of deaths similar to the UK and many other western countries. However the difference was very visible between the media presentations. The mortuaries were built overnight due to the sheer number of dead bodies with COVID wave in the UK as the mortuaries could not cope with the existing capacity.

However, in India as our Sanatan culture suggests the body must be cremated as soon as possible, there was no question of building mortuaries and preserving bodies. This obviously inundated the crematoriums with burning pyres used by the media to project as the failing system. This and other similar experiences in the past year have raised a number of questions of education and dissemination of knowledge of differences in culture etc. We are planning to work on these in future.



[https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/976/cpsprodpb/E8EF/production/\\_118213695\\_pyres\\_india\\_reuters\\_976.jpg](https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/976/cpsprodpb/E8EF/production/_118213695_pyres_india_reuters_976.jpg)

The vaccine experience and rollout proved efficacious and safe. With more experience and data it was necessary to update our leaflet. Our vaccine supplement went out in July 2021. We also managed to translate the leaflet in other Indian languages.





Organ donation change in the law came in from May 2020. The law now provides an opt-out system which means every can be a potential donor on death. However it is very clear that the organs will not be used without the family's consent. Therefore it is very vital that we as individuals keep our family aware and knowledgeable about our wish in case of death. Our sister organisation JHOD (Jain and Hindu Organ Donation) has been very active with various events.

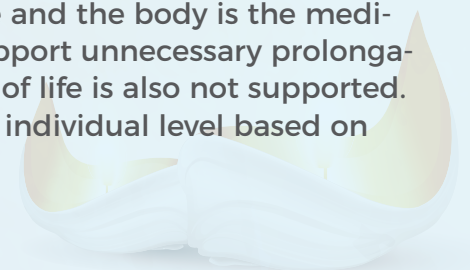
With lock down and impact of COVID on all of us, we wanted to know the details of how we have felt, to help us take actions for our community while recovering from the pandemic. We organised a detailed survey in collaboration with Ambacare solutions CIC, with 24 questions including open questions to get some themes. The survey was carried out in March 2021 and has shown a number of striking findings. The first and the most important striking finding was very applauding to our community as over 98% were either vaccinated or will take the vaccine when offered.

The other findings are as below:

1. Slightly more men than women responded to the survey
2. Maximum responses were in the age group 65-74
3. Majority of responses were from England
4. High blood pressure was the most prevalent long term condition followed by diabetes followed by heart disease
5. Around 12% individuals of our community experienced mental health issues with more common in women than men and more in age group 35-44. Interestingly older people were more positive about mental well-being compared to the younger people in our community.
6. The impact of Covid-19 was maximum on leisure and spiritual activities (over 55%) for our community compared to finance or money (30%).
7. Over 65% of respondents showed that they will be willing to participate in free programme of advice and support. The maximum willingness was from younger age group.
8. Around 10% of respondents were tested positive for COVID-19 and 23% had their family members tested positive until the survey was carried out.
9. Around 17% of respondents suggested that they worked in high risk covid environment and 31% of them said they were inappropriately placed in high risk area. The professions affected the most were doctors followed by the teachers.
10. The free text comments had over 115 responses. The main theme of the comments suggested lack of a variety of support and the need for support, positive views about this survey, supporting Hindu unity-awareness actions, Hindus to take on wider role, supporting HFB, willingness to participate, Hindus as BAME community at disadvantage, The themes regarding healthcare and NHS were both positive with praising Gov and NHS along with pessimistic views about the available support from NHS and the Gov, not enough research and information available about COVID vaccines and needing to get more support in various areas including finance, support for women, elderly, mental health support line, language line and health and well-being support post-covid.

Our short term and some of the long term future plans are based and focussed on our recent survey findings. We will be working in collaboration with Ambacare solutions CIC and other organisations to target above survey findings to support our community in the UK.

Assisted dying: As I write these details, the country is consulting on assisted dying law. We as HFB are clear about our Sanatan philosophy of "Atma does not die and the body is the medium for Aatma to live and experience". Our philosophy does not support unnecessary prolongation of life but at the same time unnatural premature termination of life is also not supported. As per our Sanatan Philosophy we believe the decisions as per the individual level based on above principals.







## SIMPLY SANATAN

Sanatan Dharma is the oldest philosophy and way of living in this world yet most people still don't understand the real science behind Sanatan Dharma. The reasons behind this are the multitude of concepts present in Sanatan Dharma which has been evolving due to the free open philosophy of this Dharma. The way to understand Sanatan Dharma as always mentioned in our shastras have been Dhyaan & Yog.

Hence Simply Sanatan was Started in 2021 by Abhi Yogi as a medium to talk about basic concepts of Sanatan Dharma & explain these concepts using basic science, physics principles and relating it to texts and symbolism present in our shastras.

Simply Sanatan is now present on all the platforms and is growing it aims to deliver on two main objectives, bring the love for Sanatan back to lives by simplifying the concepts of Sanatan & also bring back the concepts of Dhyaan & Kundalini

Yog as a practice to make the lives better & stress free by adopting Sanatan Principles & as a way of life.





## HINDU FORUM OF BRITAIN

The Hindu Forum of Britain (HFB) is the largest umbrella body with a broad-based membership of over 320 Hindu organisations from different regions and cultural backgrounds in Britain. HFB is the first port of call for UK Government, the media and other faith groups seeking to understand the Hindu faith, our aspirations and the concerns of the British Hindu community which contributes generously to the UK economy. HFB's activities are broadly divided into four main areas: communicating with the UK Government at local and national level, public policy and community consultation, capacity building and project development, and developing good interfaith relations with other faith-based communities to build a cohesive and inclusive Britain.

HFB facilitates consultation and communication to support and influence public policy by providing broad and collective views of the Hindu community on a wide range of issues. HFB also identifies issues and requirements of the community nationally and regionally through its large network of member organisations and links with other Hindu bodies. Some of the consultation exercises conducted by HFB include responses to the Home Office policy on race equality and diversity, the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, QCA and Religious Education Curriculum, Home Affairs Select Committee on Terrorism and Community Relations, Ministers of Religion from Abroad and others.

At the core of the Forum's activities is a strong belief in the richness and diversity of the Hindu culture, its value system that encompasses respect for all beings and faiths and a cultural heritage that facilitates volunteering, community cohesion and coexistence.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Hindu Forum of Britain shared with its membership the questions which the Justice Committee is seeking evidence for regarding the Coroner service in England and Wales.
- Overwhelming number of replies (92%) to the survey expressed deep concern about the unacceptable delays in release of body and lack of understanding of urgency of performing Hindu rituals for the deceased.
- There was unevenness in processing requests for release of bodies and it was apparent that the requests from other faiths were prioritised over request by a grieving Hindu family.
- A noteworthy point was that some regional Coroner Offices were notoriously unsympathetic in understanding the reasoning for expediting the release of the body for the Hindu family. Hertfordshire and Greater Manchester South Coroner Service were cited.
- A clear view emerged that bereaved Hindu families did not benefit from Guidance No 28 issued by the Chief Coroner in May 2018 relating to decision making and expedited decisions.
- There is an urgent need for training and educating Coroner Office personnel about Hindu post-death rituals.
- The present Coroner Service is outdated and antiquated and requires a comprehensive disparity audit and overhaul.
- Hindu Forum of Britain and its membership are willing to assist to improve the Coroner Service to make it encompass the needs of our faith.

## REASONS FOR SUBMITTING EVIDENCE

HFB's reasons for submitting evidence are based on collective concerns and experience of our member organisations who have expressed worries about the Coroner Service in England and Wales particularly in relation to expediting decision-making and early release of body of the deceased. There is a glaring lack of urgency and understanding at the level of the Coroner's office regarding the necessity for prompt release of the body so that Hindu rituals which must be performed after the cremation on the 11th day, 12th day and 13th day post death can take place in keeping with our faith and to the satisfaction of the grieving family.



## **BACKGROUND**

At a roundtable meeting led by Lord Dolar Popat in March 2019, representatives from the Hindu Forum of Britain expressed concerns on the issue of delays in release of bodies of deceased persons of the Hindu faith. In communicating these concerns to the Chief Coroner, Lord Dolar Popat set in motion the process of raising the collective concerns of the Hindu community. The Chief Coroner in a letter cited a recent judgement against the Senior Coroner for Inner North London<sup>1</sup> and clarified that, on the basis of this judgment, the national guidelines had been amended which should inform and advise the considerations of all coroners across the country.

In a letter addressed to coroners across the country dated 17th May 2019, The Chief Coroner Judge Mark Lucraft QC issued guidance, The Chief Coroner's Guidance No 28 - Report of Death to the Coroner : Decision making and expedited decisions. This was released as a practical guide to assist coroners, where a bereaved family had made a request to the coroner for urgent consideration of the report of a death of a loved one and/or early release of the body.

These guidelines to expedite release of the body appear to be followed by the Coroner's office for the deceased of the Jewish and the Muslim faith. However, the families of the deceased of the Hindu faith and Jain faith face long, agonising and often unnecessary delays in the release of the body by the Coroner's Office because there is woefully inadequate understanding of Hindu religious rituals which need to be performed within a set time frame after death.

## **RESPONSE TO CALL FOR EVIDENCE - THE CORONER SERVICE**

### **PARAGRAPH 1**

#### **Question 1.**

The extent of unevenness of Coroners Services including local failures and a case for a National Coroner Service.

#### **Response to Question 1**

Grieving Hindu families are not afforded the same level of understanding as other faith communities. The majority of the grieving families who voiced their concerns through member organisations, felt that they were pushed to the background as they were mild mannered and accepting of the rejection of their requests to expedite the release of the body. In their already traumatised state, that these families felt that they had to be assertive in order to be heard as much as others, signals a serious flaw in the service.

Concerns outlined that a culture of 'on demand' prompt service was limited to specific faith groups. A reason for the delay in releasing the body was often not given and even when the cause of death was clear there was unjustified delay.

There was no willingness on the part of the Coroner's offices to understand the ritual practices of the Hindu faith. It was disheartening to learn that often the phone calls were not answered and replies to emails were not forthcoming. On the odd occasion when a phone was answered, the experience of several bereaved families was that the official from the Coroner's office dealing with the request to expedite release of the body was irate, unsympathetic and often rude to member of the grieving family. Changing goal posts in decision making to release the body was a common practice from one Coroner's region to another.

Hindu Forum of Britain would like to be consulted when a National Coroner Service is formed so that we can adequately address the requirements of the Hindu community.



**PARAGRAPH 2 and 3**

**Question 2**

The Coroners Service's capacity to deal properly with multiple deaths in public disasters.

**Response to Question 2**

As a community organisation we feel strongly that the Coroner Service requires adequate modern technology to actually be prepared and Covid-19 has proved that disaster management needs to be properly in place. It is salient that the service has the capacity and resources to continue to deliver the service competently through a disaster situation leading to multiple deaths. It is of great importance that the service has in place a strategy by which they can work with relevant faith organisations in order to expedite the process.

**Question 3**

Ways to strengthen the Coroners' role in the prevention of avoidable future deaths

**Response to Question 3**

From our understanding of the Coroner's role, we believe that it is not in the hands of the Coroner to be able to prevent avoidable future deaths? We would imagine that it would be within the qualifications and expertise of the GPs (and not Coroners), who would identify patterns in similar reasons for death across numbers, in order to alert and flag an escalating health issue that if addressed by the local authority and NHS, can prevent avoidable future deaths.

**PARAGRAPH 4**

**Question 4**

How the Coroners Service has dealt with Covid 19

**Response to Question 4**

Delays have been compounded by Covid 19, but whilst some faith groups still enjoy priority in release of bodies, Hindu families have to endure a prolonged delay. A member organisation reported that there was removal of barriers at the Coroners office in dealing with the release of the body but because of lack of staff, ultimately delays were experienced. Several deaths that were not Covid 19 related were treated as if they were, and these families were confronted with rules and restriction which were often not explained to the family in a sympathetic manner.

In consultation with physicians within the community, HFB was given to understand that there is scope for the coroner to often have a telephonic conversation with the GP and if satisfied that the death is natural, it is possible to release the body through a faster process. Even as the Covid 19 related death rate increased in April 2020 and the Coroners service was overwhelmed, it was blatantly obvious that because bereaved Hindu families were understanding of Covid 19 pressures on Coroners service and because they were not over-bearing in their demands, their requests to process release of the body was pushed to the back of the queue.

**PARAGRAPH 5**

**Question 5**

Progress with training and guidance for coroners

**Response to Question 5**

An urgent need for special training for Coroners Office staff relating to Hindu rituals and practices and the reasoning for early release of body was repeatedly called for by member groups.





Hindu Forum of Britain would be willing to share expertise in this area to prepare a tailor-made guidance booklet and video which can be shared with the regional Coroners services to better understand the sensitivities of the needs of the bereaved families. A strict time frame must be laid out within which training and guidance can be completed.

## **PARAGRAPH 6**

### **Question 6**

Improvements in services for the bereaved

### **Response to Question 6**

Our membership observed that all faiths with urgent religious requirements to expedite the release of the body must be dealt with fairly and similarly across the board without prioritising a particular faith group. There were a considerable number of cases where members noted the Coroner Service's ignorance of Hindu rituals resulting in an unsympathetic response from Coroners office.

There was a call for improved communication between the doctor certifying the death and the Coroners office. Hindu funeral directors expressed the opinion that bereaved families were burdened with the need to show the passport along with several other identity documents of the deceased which resulted in unnecessary delays and compounded the distress of the family.

Despite the fact that Guidance No 28 issued by the Chief Coroner in May 2018 relating to decision making and expedited decisions was to apply to all faiths, the sentiments of the post-death rituals of Hindu faith have been overlooked.

A Faith Disparity Audit of the Coroner Service with a view to shining light on how bereaved families from different faiths are treated would be welcomed by HFB and its member organisations. The findings and the recommendations would, we hope, redress the imbalance in service offered by the Coroner Service to the Hindu community.

Other improvements can take into account good practices such as followed in other parts of the UK, for instance where the GP services are not involved, allowing for a quick release of the body. There are also technological processes in place that Coroner Services are availing in some parts of the country, leading to a faster process in those areas. Such processes should be rolled out uniformly across all Coroner Services. We would also encourage that the process be made chronological to ensure fairness to all families who have lost a loved one.

It is imperative that for a sympathetic and understanding service, the Coroner Service liaises with relevant local faith organisations, the local authorities and the NHS Trust.

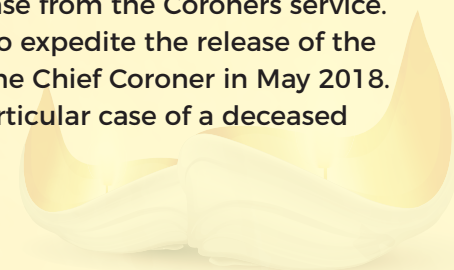
## **PARAGRAPH 7**

### **Question 7**

Fairness in the Coroners system

### **Response to Question 7**

Systemic failures in fairness to grieving Hindu families were reported by our membership. Distinct lack of understanding of Hindu funeral practices led to unsympathetic response from the Coroners service. There were instances where religious reason was not deemed sufficient to expedite the release of the body. This is contrary to guidelines set out in Guidance No 28 issued by the Chief Coroner in May 2018. The Coroners were not open to representations on the grounds that a particular case of a deceased Hindu should be treated as a matter of urgency due to religious reasons.





The Hindu community fared worse because Hindus show acceptance of a decision and are not over-bearing in demands. A balance needs to be achieved so that a well-founded request for acceleration of processes at the Coroner Office is dealt with fairly and swiftly.

**September 2020**

### Citation

1. Judgment of the Administrative Court in R (Adath Yisroel Burial Society) v Senior Coroner for Inner North London [2018] EWHC 969 (Admin) ("the AYBS Case").

The following key regional member organisations in England and Wales, as well as other organisations responded to the survey:

- 1) Hindu Council of the North UK
- 2) Hindu Council of Brent
- 3) Hindu Council of Birmingham
- 4) Shree Prajapati Samaj UK
- 5) SKLP
- 6) ISKCON





# HINDU FORUM – CENSUS England and Wales



HINDU FORUM  
of BRITAIN 2021  
Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons

## HINDU FORUM – CENSUS England and Wales

Census Basically is the collection of Data on Ethnicity, Religion, Occupation and Household Composition. Hindu Forum Britain, in liaison with the leading body, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) supported and worked to ensure success of Census procedure.

**CENSUS DAY** in England and Wales was on 21 March 2021 and the information assimilated allows the Government amongst other matters to assess social, health and economic needs.

For **Members of Hindu Forum**, this meant help in planning permissions for temples, community centres etc., obtaining grants which our community lacks, facilities in Education of Hinduism, Hindu Chaplains in Government Institutions, diet Requirements etc.

With the spread of COVID, contacting the members of HFB physically was not possible. HFB organised a large number of meetings virtually to explain in detail various aspects of Census, importance for filling the form and encouraged members of the community to complete the forms.

**HFB** also attended several meetings with the CENSUS ADVISORY GROUP.

The **Broad Timetable** was: **12 Feb to 03 March 2021, CENSUS CAMPAIGN.**

Communities were provided leaflets etc in various languages and were able to provide voice over on video clips provided by the Government which then were sent via social media. Organisations were able to send in their publicity clips which could be spread.

In February 2021, people started receiving publicity cards in various languages. HFB actively assisted the process until the end of March 2021. Among other aspects, queries as to how to fill details about Nationality and Religion needed greater efforts to explain.

The Census 2021 collection operation was a fantastic success with more than 97% of households in England and Wales completing their questionnaire to make sure they are represented when it comes to provision for local services. But just as big a challenge is turning the information all have provided into statistics, we can all use. The ONS explains that there is still plenty to do ahead of publication of the first results in late Spring 2022.

The ONS had set a pre-census target of at least 75% online completion. However, that was beaten, with 88.9% of households responding to the census choosing to do so on a digital device.

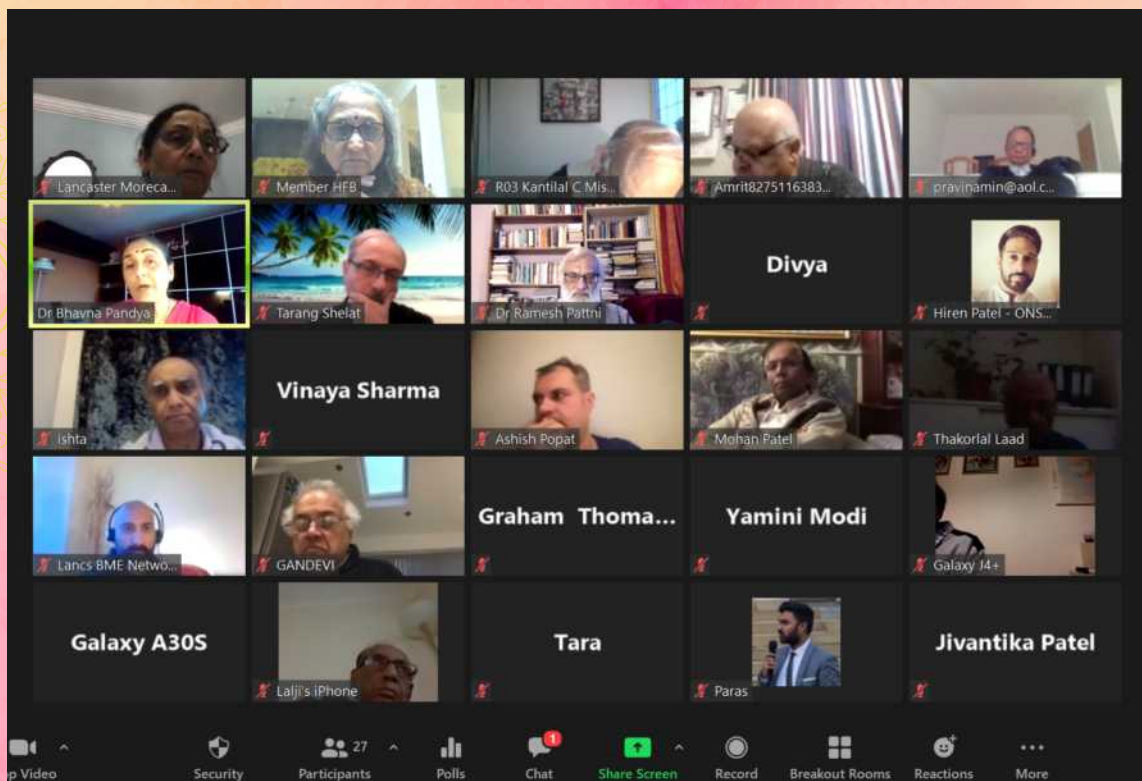
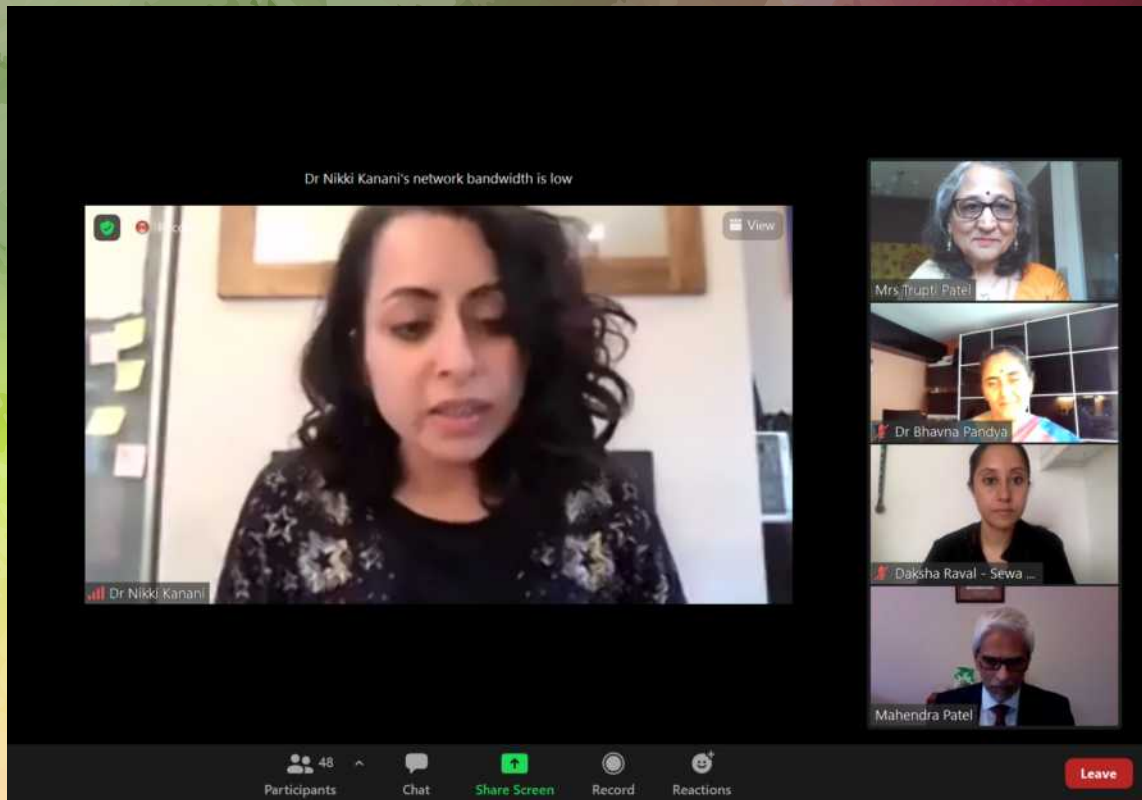
Percentage of online and paper Census for Wandsworth was 96.5, Lambeth was 96.3 and Harrow was 96.2.

The ONS has set out a series of initiatives to ensure the inclusivity of UK data, so that the issues facing the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society are fully represented in statistics and evidence.

Pravin Amin BSc, CEng, MICE  
President, National Association of Patidar Samaj  
Lead Census Task for HFB











Hindu Forum of Britain

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### HINDU FORUM BRITAIN: COVID AND CENSUS WEBINAR

The Hindu Forum Britain organised a seminar for a diverse group of leaders from the HFB membership in the community to discuss the Covid-19 vaccination programme and the imminent Census taking place in March this year. Both of these are very important for the community and it is important for the community to have the right information and be able to act on this information making the correct choices. The participants included:

Mrs Trupti Patel, President of the HFB welcomed everyone to the seminar saying this was a brief meeting for everyone present to familiarise themselves with the issues and the solutions for what needs to be done by the community, the organisations and the leaders. HFB collaborated to create the **HEART** Hindu Emergency Action Response Group consisting of all the five major Hindu umbrella bodies so that issues facing the community can be dealt with in a concerted manner. The vaccine issue is being led by HFB medical team: Dr Bhavana Pandya, Dr Sapna Bhansali and Dr Pratibha Datta from HFB together with Mr Anand Nayak of SEWA International

**Mrs Harsha Shukla MBE VP HFB North** : *NEC member* and President of the Hindu Council of North recited a prayer and requested everyone to observe a one minute silence for those who have passed on during the pandemic.

### COVID Vaccine:

**Dr Bhavana Pandya** *NEC member* :medical committee gave a presentation on the Covid-19 vaccination programme giving details of the programme, the resources available for the dissemination of information and the ways in which the community needs to deal with misinformation that is going on. She has prepared a leaflet that can be distributed to the community through various digital channels. This gives an accurate picture about the vaccine, its preparation, the ingredients, the programme rollout and the likely effects of taking the vaccine. She emphasised that as far as the medical side is concerned there are no concerns for taking the vaccine for the community members and on the question of whether it is appropriate for the Sanatana Hindu Dharma religion community, if it is vegetarian or not, she said that there are no issues with the vaccine, its method of preparation and the ingredients.

There followed a discussion on the points presented by Dr Bhavana Pandya. There were questions about the misinformation about the vaccine having genetic effects that are refuted by the scientific evidence. Also, there was an interview on the BBC news programme with a member of the Hindu community who appeared to be claiming that most Hindus will refuse to

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take this. It was based on one person's opinion, completely baseless and without evidence. Truptiben emphasised that the misinformation must be countered and make sure that the community is aware of this and there is no doubt about taking the vaccine. The discussion centred around this issue and the two approaches of discrediting false information and giving the correct information were agreed on.

**Care and Share: Dr Ramesh Pattni OBE VP HFB South:** *NEC member* and P Chinmaya Mission **the Sewa Helpline** Dr Pattni spoke about the setting up of the Sewa Helpline with the unprecedented situation caused by the Covid-19 lockdowns last year prompted this project to be initiated, recognising the needs of the community who felt isolated, depressed, anxious and needing help. The Helpline was a line of communication for them to get the help needed whether help with shopping or with their state of mind. A dedicated group of professionals came together and created a structure and process for this purpose and has not been firmly established for the community to go to for help.

**SEWA perspective Mr Anand Vas Chairperson of the SEWA UK** explained further about the Helpline that is open from 9am to 5pm and it is helping with anything and everything including getting their medical supplies and also helping people with mental health issues. There is a strong team of professionals led by a consultant psychiatrist, which is handling the mental health issues and the call handlers have all undergone training so that they can handle the calls in the right way and give referrals as appropriate. If it is required, the call handlers will also be trained to deal with vaccine enquiries.

As regard the vaccine rollout of information, SEWA has dedicated teams at the local level on the ground which are prepared to disseminate and help people with their concerns. He also proposed a social media campaign to encourage people to take the vaccine. There is medical expertise in the community, and this can be put in the service of the community and HFB can play a key role, together with the NHS, in giving the right information to the community members.

**The Scottish Perspective: Puneet Dwivedi: VP Scottish Chapter** *NEC member* explained about the situation in Scotland and he also stated that Glasgow Temple has offered to provide their facility as vaccine Centre.

**Further information: Links on the HFB website:**

The files are available as clickable links which open the pdfs:

<http://www.hfb.org.uk/safety-guidance-for-covid-19.html>

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**CENSUS** : CENSUS DAY will be on 21 March 2021 in England and Wales

**Overview** : Truptiben spoke about her consultations with the Government for this important issue for the community and how the HFB is taking the lead in the dissemination of information about the Census 2021 taking place in March.

**Mr Ramesh Mishra** and **Mr Sushant Rathod**, two of the Hindu community coordinators from the census office explained the whole process for general public. They both offered to provide their services for all member organisations of the HFB.

**Mr Ashish Popat** NEC member of the HFB illustrated how to fill in various questions and for making greater impact of the community and ensure availability of Government Services : For Nationality, Tick : BRITISH then OTHER and then INDIAN – This will Register you as BRITISH INDIAN. For Religion, Tick : HINDU and not various SECTS – This will enable maximum services for HINDUS.

**Mr Vipul Mishra** : NEC member of the HFB General Secretary, Hindu Council Birmingham facilitated the group discussion.

**Mr Prafulla Acharya** - NEC member of the HFB Chair of the National Association of Patidar Samaj, explained about the resources available in various languages and has compiled the following information for our members . Census is Basically the collection of Data on Ethnicity, Religion, Occupation and Household Composition.

The census allows the Government amongst other matters to assess social, health and economic needs. For Members of Hindu Forum, this means help in planning permissions for temples, community centres etc., obtaining grants which our community lacks, facilities in Education of Hinduism, Hindu Chaplain in Government Institutions, Diet Requirements etc.

**COVID EFFECT**: Field Workers will be appointed to assist completion of Census. PPE for Field Staff will be provided ensuring that the staff do not enter households. In the meeting we alerted the Census Body need for security. Advice will mainly be conducted via phone. Field workers will be based at various census centres.

Invitation Letter with access code unique to that household will be sent to around 10 million addresses in the UK and Wales. More people are able to complete census electronically. Around 10 million likely to complete online will be sent paper questionnaires. Paper forms will also have optional access code.

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The Broad Timetable will be: 12 Feb to 03 March 2021, Public Awareness – Establishment of Contact Centres – Initial Contact -In February, people will start receiving publicity cards in various languages – communities can request publicity in languages of their preference.

From 21 March Census Day to 04 May: Field Follow-up, reminder letters, additional intervention.

Fine for **NOT FILLING UP CENSUS** -may be up to £1000.

**CENSUS CAMPAIGN:** Main Campaign will be from February via Television Channels, National and Ethnic News Papers, by Post and social media – Radio advertisements will particularly assist visually impaired.

Communities will be provided leaflets etc in various languages and will be able to provide voice over on video clips provided by the Government which then can be sent via social media. ORGANISATIONS MAY BE ABLE TO SEND IN THEIR publicity clips which may be included.

**EDUCATION:** Campaign will be carried out in Primary and Secondary Schools. STUDENT CAMPAIGN WILL BE COMMENCED EARLIER DUE TO EASTER PERIOD. Special requirements for the University students – they will be required to put down their term time address even if they might be home due to Covid related restrictions.

**Census Indian Community Advisors:** Any organisation wishing to hold meeting relating to Census via ZOOM etc, contact us for names of Advisors for your Area

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## COVID--19 Vaccine Information guide



Hindu Forum Britain

info hfb.org.uk

Adapted from DOH UK Gov and aligned resources as per the available information on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2021.

### What is the Corona virus illness

The Corona virus illness is an infection caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

The illness results from an exposure to this virus. The virus mainly gets transmitted via airborne droplets while coughing, sneezing or talking.

The virus also can infect via any object that is contaminated with it. It is not quite known how long the virus remains active on any object or surface but it is likely to remain active for 72 hours.

The illness is manifested in around 5 days after the infection. Majority of infections however do not result in an illness.

The illness can be mild, moderate or severe which may need admission to the hospital and also support in an Intensive Care Unit. Those with severe illness develop low oxygen levels and difficulty in breathing. They also can develop complications as

damage to other organs like the kidneys and also increased risk of blood clots in addition. COVID-19 infection can also result in long term illness also.

### What is the treatment for coronavirus illness

Currently there is no specific treatment available to kill this virus.

There are a number of drugs for example Dexamethasone that the U.K. Government has approved to use in severe cases in the hospital according to specific selection criteria.

The virus infection is more severe in older individuals and those with other long term illnesses particularly those with low resistance to fight infections.

With severe infection the death rate is around 20-50%.

The main stay of treatment at present is prevention which we are following as per the Gov guidance by wearing a mask, keeping with social distancing, self-isolating and washing hands.







## Vaccine

The other prevention option which we now have is the vaccine. Vaccines have been known to prevent many illnesses during our lives such as measles and polio.

### Vaccine manufacturing and approval

With Gov support the vaccine now has been made available to fight with COVID-19 infections. There are a number of companies which have prepared these vaccines. Like any other drug the Gov has supported designing manufacturing and the approval process throughout.

The U.K. has a national body called the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) which goes through all the details of steps in production of any drug for safety and efficacy before it is approved for use in the UK. All the currently approved vaccines had to go through this process from designing laboratory studies studies on animals with criteria set according to Good Laboratory Practice. This is then followed by trials on human volunteers. Once efficacy and safety are confirmed to the satisfaction of U.K. standards the vaccine or the drug gets approved or licensed for use for specific purpose.

Currently the U.K. Government has approved 3 types of vaccines manufactured by 3 different companies for the COVID-19 infection. The designing and manufacturing process is different for these vaccines but the criteria used for manufacturing them the same as set by the U.K. MHRA.

### Details of the approved vaccines

The Pfizer/Bio Tech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are synthetic vaccines which use manufactured protein similar to a virus particle to be used as a trigger to generate immunity against the virus in the body. The protein is manufactured in the laboratory and not sourced from any animals as per the information from the vaccine manufacturing process.

The word used as recombinant vaccine in simple terms means synthetic. The molecules which natural substances harbour are created in the lab. There are many examples of substances produced in a similar way but one most common example is insulin which many people with diabetes take is made in a similar way.

Also synthetic colours flavours etc. that we eat and also perfumes which we smell have synthetic chemicals.

The vaccine made of a synthetic substance involves manufacturing of virus like particles. These particles when injected as vaccine produce the same immune response as the virus itself in the body without the damage which the real virus can cause.

The Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine uses a weakened adenovirus particle. This is a protein of a different virus used to imitate coronavirus in order to produce an immune response. The licensed COVID-19







vaccines do not use the real COVID-19 virus.

The manufacturing process involves the use of laboratory grown body cells to see the effect of vaccine protein. The modern science uses a lot of cultured laboratory grown cells tissues from various resources to test most of medicines. The original cells taken from dead tissues are not used.

The cells are instead modified and grown to copy the living cells.

The cultured grown lung cell lines have been used to see the effects of vaccine in the prevention of infection from coronavirus. This is necessary to see how effective the vaccine is and whether it will work.

The use of artificial intelligence software the MHRA and the manufacturing company uses helps to make sure the vaccine is safe. It is used for a compulsory protective net to capture any nonsense side effects even to magnify them. In short all the allopathy medicines are processed in a similar way before they are licenced to be used.

## Sanatan Hindu Dharma religion on Vaccination

As far as our Sanatan Hindu Dharma religion there is no real prohibition from our scriptures to use this vaccine for our health. For scientific and medical purpose to find a cure for any new illness the use of dead tissue or anything which can be used for the betterment of the mankind is acceptable.

The process here does not kill anyone has not killed anyone and

does not intend to kill anyone. The approved 3 vaccines do not contain any animal products or egg as ingredients. However all the medicinal products have to go through laboratory studies on animals as per the laws in the U.K. There is no short cut. A commonly used drug like paracetamol also has to go through the same process when it is being researched.

The process of approval in this country is quite strict and robust. The MHRA and the company together have responsibilities to make sure the vaccine is safe to be used before approval.

## Vaccination process Process of administering vaccine

It is recommended to have 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine by the manufacturer at a few weeks apart to have the maximum effect. However the first dose still gives up to 90 protection in a week or two.

The roll out of vaccine requires time space availability of the vaccine and storage at very low temperatures.

These aspects are required to be set before vaccination.

Currently keeping all these aspects in mind the government has decided to give one dose to start with which provides better protection far more than being unvaccinated to more people.

The initial round is for the high exposure individuals as health care frontline workers the elderly and high risk individuals while the government is setting up more resources to







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The Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine uses a weakened adenovirus particle. This is a protein of a different virus used to imitate coronavirus in order to produce an immune response. The licensed COVID-19







before the trials and approval taking the risk of wasting their money if it did not work.

## Can children and pregnant women have the vaccine?

Currently the children under 16 and pregnant and breast feeding women are not offered the vaccine except in the circumstances of increased risk. The doctor will decide.

## Does vaccine change person's fertility?

The vaccine does not change any DNA and does not affect person's fertility.

## Does the vaccine work against the new strain of COVID-19 strain of virus?

The vaccine is likely to still be effective against the newly identified mutant strain COVID-19 virus strain.

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Please note that this leaflet is prepared according to the information available at the time of preparation. As we know that medical science has only limited experience and knowledge about this novel virus and the illness it is likely that there will be new and more information available as the time passes on. Please contact your health team for any further queries. You are also welcome to contact the above helpline number for any general queries.

**Note** Currently this leaflet is being prepared in various Indian languages. Please contact Hindu Forum of Britain H B if you require it in any Indian language.

## Useful help line



1 1 9



**The H B has collaborated to form HEART Hindu Emergency Action Response Team working together with the HSS Hindu Swayam Sevak Sangh VHP Vishva Hindu Parishad HCUK Hindu Council UK and NCHT National Council of Hindu Temples**







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Lord Dholakia Mr Rickie Sehgal Mr Joginder  
Sanger Mr CB Patel Prof. Nat Puri

**President & Trustee:** Mrs Trupti Patel  
**Hon. Treasurer & Trustee** Mr Devshi Chothani  
**Vice Presidents:** Mrs Harsha Shukla MBE  
Dr Ramesh Pattni OBE Mr Puneet Dwivedi  
Mr Tarang Shelat

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www.hfb.org.uk, Twitter: @hinduforum,  
Facebook.com/hinduforumgbr

C/O Vascroft Estate :  
861 Coronation Road , Park Royal , NW10 7PT

## Useful web links

You may find the following web pages useful for further information

Corona Virus information NHS UK:  
[https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIk9XezY-7qIVCbrtCh013ALhEAAAYASAAEgKCmFD\\_BwE](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIk9XezY-7qIVCbrtCh013ALhEAAAYASAAEgKCmFD_BwE)

Coronavirus vaccines explained in five South Asian languages  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55171293>

[Latest vaccination data](#)

[Action fraud](#)

**Bristol University "Global experts urge everyone to talk about COVID-19 vaccines responsibly - YES  
NIHR - Covid and me videos - case studies portrayed through actors - coronavirus and vaccination - TO TAKE PART IN COVID RESEARCH TRIALS"**

## Vaccine committee :

Mrs Trupti Patel	HFB
Mrs Harsha Shukla MBE	HFB
Dr Bhavna Pandya	HFB
Dr Sapana Bhansali	HFB
Dr Ashok Khandelwal	HFB
Dr Pratibha Dutta	VHP
Mr Anand Vyas	SEWA UK





# COVID-19 Vaccine Information Guide

As pandemic progresses, we identify different patterns and the risks associated with COVID-19 illness. The general trend continues with overall fewer than 1 in 100 people who are infected will die from COVID-19, but in those over 75 years of age this rises to 1 in 10. However, it is observed that in the recent wave in India the new strain has affected younger people much more than previous waves in the world.

There is no cure for COVID-19 although some newly tested treatments do help to reduce the risk of complications.

Vaccine remains the mainstay of plan to prevent infections and come out of the pandemic.

So far over 45 million people have been given over 75 million jabs in the UK against COVID-19 and the vaccine has already prevented many cases and more 27,000 deaths from COVID-19 in England. All adults are expected to receive their first doses by late July 2021.

Four serious adverse events occurred in 168 participants so far out of millions of doses being administered in the UK. The MHRA (Medicine and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency) from UK, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the European Medicines Agency have concluded that the balance is very much in favour of vaccination.

## Pregnancy

- The analysis of data from a number of trials including around 90,000 women vaccinated with Pfizer and Moderna, have been found to be safe as per the evidence monitored by UK, USA, Canada and EUROPE. These are the preferred vaccines for any age. There have been no specific safety concerns identified with any brand of COVID-19 vaccines in relation to pregnancy.

- In the UK it has shown that the COVID-19 vaccine has shown effectiveness along with a good safety profile amongst the pregnant women who received the vaccine. The vaccines used in the UK don't contain any live coronavirus and therefore cannot infect pregnant woman or her unborn baby.
- Now the UK Gov has decided to offer the COVID vaccine to pregnant women as per the advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). The vaccine should be offered at the same time as depending on age and clinical risk as the rest of the population. COVID-19 illness can increase the risk of severity of illness in pregnant women once they catch it. It also carries a 2-3 times higher risk of premature delivery in particular with other medical conditions.

Pregnant women who are accidentally immunised should notify vaccine in pregnancy surveillance programme via their doctor.

## breast feeding

The vaccines can be received when breast feeding. As the vaccines do not contain any live virus, there is no risk of baby getting COVID illness either.

## Fertility

- The Association of Reproductive and Clinical Scientists (ARCS) and the British Fertility Society (BFS) recommend that all people of reproductive age should receive the vaccine when they are offered.
- Those who are trying to get pregnant or planning for future pregnancy also should get the vaccine.
- There is no evidence, and no theoretical reason, that any of the vaccines would affect the fertility of women or men.





## AstraZeneca Oxford vaccine and under 10 year old:

With recent data about extremely rare blood clots events in young recipients of this vaccine, the UK Gov has decided to roll out Pfizer and Moderna vaccine for this age group. There have been 10.5 brain clots per million doses, according to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). The majority of the events occurred within the first 14 days following vaccination but have also been reported after this period.

People aged 30 to 39 will not be given the AstraZeneca jab unless there is a delay in vaccination due to unavailability of another vaccine.

As a precautionary measure, administration of the COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca in patients with a history of cerebral venous sinus thrombosis or antiphospholipid syndrome should only be considered when the benefit outweighs any potential risks.

## Children 12-18:

Pfizer vaccine is approved for children between 12-18 year age by UK regulator MHRA. However as of publication of this leaflet the plan is being prepared to vaccinate this age group.

## Individuals on Immunosuppressive or cancer treatment:

Individuals with immunosuppressive treatment and cancer treatment should contact their specialist team for advice on their suitability for receiving COVID Vaccine.

# COVID-19 Variants

## What do we know about the different variants

The viruses circulate as thousands of variants. The COVID virus is not an exception. Viruses mutate all the time as all undergo changes to their spike protein - the part of the virus which attaches to human cells. However, most of the changes are inconsequential. The virus mutates to improve its survival however some changes even harm the virus. But others can make the disease more infectious or threatening, and these mutations tend to dominate.

There are 12 variants detected in the UK so far.

The naming had not been internationally agreed until recently, but they were recognised as type of mutations and country of origin. As published on 31st May 2021, WHO has named key variants of SARS-CoV-2 using COVID-19 mutations as Alpha, Beta, Gamma and Delta.

There are total 5 variants responsible for majority of cases in the UK.

There are other variants with 1st detection in South Africa, Philippines, Japan, Brazil.

One previous variant now has been reclassified as it has become extinct. Those with the most potentially concerning changes are called "variants of concern (voc)" and **kept under the closest watch** by health officials.

## These include:



**Ipha** (B.1.1.7 mutation, also known as UK or Kent variant) is prevalent in Britain - with more than 200,000 cases identified - and has spread to more than 50 countries and appears to be **mutating again**



**eta variant** (B.1.351 mutation, also known as South Africa variant) has been identified in at least 20 other countries, including the UK



**gamma variant** (P.1 mutation also known as Brazil variant) has spread to more than 10 other countries, including the UK



**Delta variant** (B.1.617.2 mutation, also known as India variant in the media): The numbers of cases of this mutation are on the increase in the UK and current concern for public health.

WHO label	Pango lineage	Earliest documented samples	Date of designation
Ipha	.1.1.7	United Kingdom, Sep-2020	18-Dec-2020
eta	.1.351	South Africa, May-2020	18-Dec-2020
gamma	P.1	Brazil, Nov-2020	11-Jan-2021
Delta	.1.617.2	India, Oct-2020	VOI: 4-Apr-2021 VOC: 11-May-2021

(Latest Nomenclature from WHO; VOI = Variant Of Interest, VOC=Variant Of Concern)



Leaflet Name: COVID-19 vaccine information guide: Supplement 1. Produced by Medical Panel Hindu Forum of Britain Led by Dr Bhavna K Pandya. Date Leaflet Produced: 5th July 2021.  
Contact Details: e-mail: [info@hfb.org.uk](mailto:info@hfb.org.uk)



## **efficacy of vaccine against variants**

Efficacy of vaccine against the majority of variants is unknown, however the data is coming out that there will be protection from the vaccine for the new variants. According to recent data, a single dose of vaccine provides 33% reduction in disease symptoms but two doses seem to be as effective against hospital admissions as the original alpha variant.

## **The COVID-19 vaccines currently approved for use in the UK are:**

- Pfizer/ BioNTech vaccine
- Oxford/ AstraZeneca vaccine
- Moderna vaccine
- Janssen vaccine (Now approved in UK)

## **Are the vaccines being updated to target new variants**

There are some discussions ongoing from Pfizer and Oxford-AstraZeneca regarding updating their vaccines to target new variants. Meanwhile, Moderna has said it is waiting on approval from regulators for a number of variants.

## **Vaccine and age groups:**

The German regulator approved the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine for adults under 65. The European Medicines Agency, and many other countries have approved this vaccine for the over 65s, including, most recently, Canada. In France, the Oxford/ AstraZeneca vaccine is now approved for adults up to 75, after originally being restricted to those under 65.

Early data suggests that the Pfizer vaccine single dose offers 61% protection and single dose of the Moderna vaccine offers 72% protection against symptomatic disease.

## **What is happening in the UK with new Delta variant which apparently mutated in India are they more dangerous**

The Delta variant (B.1.617.2 mutation) appears to be spreading more quickly than the other two in the UK. It is also seen to be causing more severe illness and affecting younger people. However, this is still being looked at in detail. This variant is now being seen in many places.

Surge testing is being used to identify these infections, but it may not be stopping the spread.

Over-18s can now book a Covid jab in parts of Lancashire due to the presence of this variant in Lancashire.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has announced that second jabs for all over-50s (and the clinically vulnerable) in England are now being brought forward. Second doses will come eight weeks after the first, rather than 11-12 weeks.

The concern is that certain new variants of the virus, like the B.1.617.2 variant, may be able to spread more easily, make people sicker, or overpower vaccines. As with the original version, the risk remains highest for people who are elderly or have significant underlying health conditions. But a virus being more infectious and equally dangerous will in itself lead to more deaths in an unvaccinated population. Some research suggests the Alpha variant (B.1.1.7, UK variant) may be associated with a 30-50% higher risk of death in individuals, but the evidence is not conclusive.

## **What can be done to prevent COVID-19 infection**

COVID-19 spreads through droplets breathed out from the nose or mouth, particularly when speaking or coughing. It can also be picked up by touching your eyes, nose and mouth after contact with contaminated objects and surfaces.

The advice to avoid infection remains the same for all the variants: wash your hands, keep your distance, wear a face covering and be vigilant about ventilation.

## **Will vaccines still work against variants**

Current vaccines were designed for earlier versions of coronavirus, but scientists believe they should still work in preventing severe illness.

Experts are confident existing vaccines can be redesigned to better tackle emerging mutations.

## **Do variants mean booster jabs are more likely**

The Gov plans to offer booster dose to vulnerable individuals from September 2021 followed by all the adult population in stages. Some variants will inevitably escape the current vaccines, as a result, changes to vaccine design will be needed to make them more effective. However, the vaccinations now available are still likely to slow down the spread of the disease.

## **"long Covid" or "Post-Covid-19 syndrome"**

We now know that the death rate from COVID infection is around 0.6-1.6%, which is 16 times higher than the deaths due to common flu. However, the death rate is around 20-30% for hospital admissions and around 40-50% for those who are then taken into intensive care unit.





The people who have recovered from COVID infection continue to have ongoing symptoms ranging from severe breathlessness with severely damaged lungs to long term fatigue, sleep disturbances, neurological symptoms, chest pain etc. These long term symptoms are now well recognised as "long Covid" or "Post-Covid-19 syndrome". The data so far suggests 1-3.5% individuals depending on their age develop "long Covid" symptoms. The majority of individuals with long Covid symptoms are found to be between 35-69 year age group and women slightly more affected.

As the severity of COVID illness goes down with COVID vaccines, the rate of long Covid also will be less in people who had the COVID vaccine.

## Recent Survey about COVID-19 impact on Hindu community UK

A recently carried out survey by Hindu Forum of Britain (HFB) and AmbaCare solutions CIC suggested that

97% of 1004 Hindu community respondents had taken at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Further details of this survey about an impact of COVID-19 on Hindu community will be shared in near future.

While this is very encouraging and great achievement for our community we continue to say:

**"Please take the vaccine you are offered. Do not make the mistake of hesitating and waiting for an ideal vaccine."**

**"We urge everybody to get the vaccine as soon as they are eligible to protect yourself and your loved ones."**

### SOURCE:

UK DOH and related resources as available on 5th July 2021

## Useful web links

You may find the following web-pages useful for further information.

[Latest vaccination data](#)  
[Action fraud](#)

[Corona Virus information NHS UK](#)  
[Find out more >](#)

[Coronavirus vaccines explained in five South Asian languages](#)  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55171293>

## Sewa Helpline - 0208 167 4189



**Please note** that this leaflet is prepared according to the information available at the time of preparation. As we know that medical science has only limited experience and knowledge about this novel virus and the illness, it is likely that there will be new and more information available as the time passes on. Please contact your health team for any further queries. You are welcome to contact the above helpline number for any general queries.

**Note:** Currently this leaflet is being prepared in various Indian languages: Please contact Hindu Forum of Britain (HFB) if you require it in any Indian languages.

The HFB has collaborated to form HEART- Hindu Emergency Action Response Team, working together with the HSS VHP HCUK and NCHT.

## Team , working together with the HSS VHP HCUK and NCHT

### Patrons Council:

Chair: Mr Shashi Vekaria  
Lord Dholakia  
Mr Rickie Sehgal  
Mr Joginder Sanger  
Mr CB Patel  
Prof. Nat Puri

### President & Trustee:

Mrs Trupti Patel

### Hon. Treasurer & Trustee:

Mr Devshi Chothani

### Vice Presidents:

Mrs Harsha Shukla MBE  
Dr Ramesh Pattni OBE  
Mr Puneet Dwivedi  
Mr Tarang Shelat

### Vaccine Committee:

Mrs Trupti Patel, HFB  
Mrs Harsha Shukla MBE, HFB  
Dr Bhavna Pandya, HFB  
Dr Sapana Bhansali, HFB  
Dr Ashok Khandelwal, HFB  
Dr Pratibha Dutta VHP  
Mr Anand Vyas, Sewa Day





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- Washing and dressing facilities
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- Priest arranged for performing last rites



*Wishing our clients, family and friends a very Happy Diwali and a Prosperous New Year*

Chandu Tailor      07957 250 851  
Jay Tailor      07583 616 151  
Bhanubhai Patel      07939 232 664  
Dee Kerai      07437 616 151



e: [info.cts@tailor.co.uk](mailto:info.cts@tailor.co.uk) | w: [www.tailor.co.uk](http://www.tailor.co.uk)  
Chani House, Lower Park Road, New Southgate, London, N11 1QD



# HFB Current Members



## HINDU FORUM of BRITAIN 2021

Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons

Aberdeen Hindu Temple  
Aden Mitra Mandal (London)  
Aden Vanik Association (London)  
All India Brahmin Association (UK)  
A.I.S.A Dancing School  
Anand Overseas Brotherhood UK)  
Angel Dancers Cultural Group  
ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION (UK)  
Arusha Vidya UK  
Arya Samaj (Vedic Mission) (West Midlands)  
Arya Sangathan- Hindu Vedic Culture Group  
Arya Vedic Society Leicester  
Asian Foundation for Help (London)  
Athia Samaj (London)  
Audichya Gadhia & Kharedi Brahma  
Samaj Society (London)  
Aurobindo Circle (Manchester)  
Baaj Khedawal Samaj  
Baj Khedawal (Brahmin) Association UK (London)  
Baladia Leva Patel Sarvodi (UK)  
Bardai Brahmin Samaj (Leicester)  
Bardai Brahmin Samaj (Birmingham)  
Bardai Brahmin Samaj (London)  
Barnet Asian Old People Association  
Bavis Gam Patidar Samaj (UK) (London)  
Bengali Cultural Association  
Bhadran Bandhu Samaj (BBS UK)  
Bhagvati Vani Trust (London)  
Bhramarishi Ashram (London)  
Bharatiya Mandal Aston U-Lynn  
Bhatia Association (UK)  
Bhatia Mahajan (Leicester)  
Bhandhani Samaj (Wembley)  
Birmingham Pragati Mandal  
Blackburn Hindu Centre (Blackburn)  
Bolton Hindu Forum  
Brahma Kumaris UK  
Brahm Samah (Leicester)  
Brahm Samaj (South London)  
Brahm Samaj (Birmingham)  
Brahm Samaj (Luton)  
Brahm Samaj (Wilmslow)  
Brahm Samaj Manchester  
Brahm Samaj Nottingham  
Brahmbandhu Association  
Brahmbhatt Samaj  
Brahmin Association Of Luton  
Brahmin Samaj of United Kingdom  
Brahmin Society North London  
Brent Retired Brahmins Association  
British Sanatan Doctors Forum  
Caribbean Hindu Society (London)  
Charoter Leuva Patidar Samaj (Manchester)  
Charoter Patel Samaj  
Chha Gaam Patidar Samaj  
Chha Gam Nagrik Mandal (CGNM UK)  
Chinmaya Mission UK  
City Hindus Network  
Coventry & Warwickshire Brahma Samaj  
Darji Mandal (Bolton)  
Datta Yoga Centre, (London)  
Dharma Foundation  
Dharmaj Society of London (DHASOL)  
Dosti Club (Milton Keynes)  
East Anglian Indian Association (Ipswich)  
East London & Essex Brahma Samaj  
Edinburgh Hindu Mandir  
Federation of Brahmin Associations of Europe  
Federation of Hindu Priests UK  
Garba Group (Leeds)  
Gaud Brahma Samaj  
Gaur Govinda Trust  
Gayatri Pariwar & Unity of Hinduism (Bolton)  
Geeta Bhawan (Birmingham)  
Geeta Bhawan Leicester  
Gaudiya Mission  
Gujarat Arya Kshatriya Mahasabha UK (Leicester)  
Gujarat Hindu Association (Leicester)  
Gujarat Hindu Society Preston  
Gujarati Arya Association (Aston)  
Gujarati Arya Association (Leicester)  
Gujarati Arya Association (London)  
Gujarati Mahila Mandal. (Leeds)  
Gurjar Hindu Union Ram Temple (Crawley)  
Hare Krishna Centre for Vedic Studies (Leicester)  
Harrow Gayatri Satsang Mandal (London)  
Hindu Aid (UK) (London)  
Hindu Centre East London  
Hindu Centre for Communications  
Hindu Chaplains Leicester  
Hindu Charitable Trust & Hindu Mandir (Leeds)  
Hindu Community Centre & Lakshminarayan Temple  
(Birmingham)  
Hindu Council of Birmingham  
Hindu Council of Brent (London)  
Hindu Council of Harrow (London)  
Hindu Council of the North  
Hindu Council of Waltham Forest  
Hindu Cultural and Welfare Society of Derby  
Hindu Cultural Organisation (Liverpool)  
Hindu Forum Walsall  
Hindu Forum Nottingham  
Hindu Society of Kirlees & Calderdale  
Hindu Mandir of Scotland  
Hindu Temple and Community  
Mandhata Youth & Community Association - Wembley  
Hindu Temple Cultural & Community Centre (Nottingham)  
Hindu Unity Council (London)  
Hindu Voluntary Services (Barnet)  
Hindu Womens Association  
Hindu Womens Network  
Hindu Youth UK  
Holy Mission of Guru Nanak (Sindhi Mandir) I-Foundation  
India Culture Social Centre Oldham  
Indian C & C center Cambridge  
Indian Association Manchester  
Indian Association Oldham  
Indian Association Rochdale  
Indian Community Care Ass of Newham  
Indian Cultural Society  
Indian Education Society (Leicester)  
Indo European Kashmir Forum (LONDON)  
Indo European Kashmir Forum (UK)  
International Pushtimargiya  
Ipswich Hindu Samaj  
Vaishnava Association (London)  
International Society for Krishna  
Consciousness (UK)  
ISKCON Belfast  
ISKCON Bhaktivedanta Manor Hare Krishna Temple  
(Watford)  
ISKCON Birmingham  
ISKCON Coventry  
ISKCON Educational Services, Oxford  
ISKCON Govinda s - Car  
ISKCON Inis Rath (Ireland)  
ISKCON Leicester  
ISKCON Manchester  
ISKCON Newcastle  
ISKCON Radha Krishna Cultural  
Centre, South Norwood, London  
ISKCON Radha Krishna Temple London  
ISKCON Scotland  
ISKCON Swansea  
Jain Samaj (Bolton)  
Jain Sangh, Birmingham  
Jalaram Bhajan Mandal (Aston)  
Jalaram Mandal (Leicester)  
Jan Kshatriya Seva Mandal (London)  
Jansari Gnati Mandal (Blackburn)  
Jeeyar Educational Trust  
Kodki Ganga Leva Patel Community (London)  
Karamsad Samaj (UK)  
Kashmir Pandit Cultural Association  
Kannada Balaga (Durham)  
Kannada Balaga UK  
Kera Kundanpur Kutch Leva Mandal  
Kera-Kundanpur Community (UK)  
Kingsbury Asians Elders Group  
Krishna Temple, (Bolton)  
Kshatriya Samaj (Bolton)



# HFB Current Members



## HINDU FORUM of BRITAIN 2021

Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons

Kutch Leva Patel community - East London  
Kutch Bharasar Seva Mandal  
Kutch Leva Patel Community Centre, (Bolton)  
Kutch Leva Patel Community UK (London)  
Kutch Madhpar Karyalya (UK) (London)  
Kutch Satsang Swaminarayan Temple (Bolton)  
Kutch Satsang Swaminarayan Temple Harrow London  
Lancaster Environment Action & Protection  
Leeds Pragati Mandal  
Leeds Sai Centre  
Leicester Hindu Festival Council  
Leuva Patidar Samaj (Bolton)  
Leuva Patidar Samaj (Bradford)  
Leva Patidar Samaj (Aston)  
Leicester Bhatia Mahajan  
Limbachia Gnati Mandal (London)  
Lohana Association (Birmingham)  
Lohana Association (Stockport)  
Lohana Community (Birmingham)  
Lohana Community (South London)  
Lohana Community (UK) HQ  
Lohana Community Manchester  
Lohana Community North London  
Lohana Community West London  
Lohana Community, Coventry  
Lohana Community, Luton  
Lohana MahajanAston-U-L  
Lohana Mahajan (Leicester) Shree Ram Mandir  
Lohana Mahajan (UK) Trust  
Lohana Mahajan Mandal (Bolton)  
London Sathsangam (London)  
London Sevashram Sangha (London)  
Maha Lakshmi Vidya Bhavan  
Mandhata Hitvardhar Mandal & Krishna Temple (Bolton)  
Mandhata Mandal of West Yorkshire  
Mandhata Youth and Community Association  
East London  
Mandhata Youth and Community Association Wembley  
Mangala Pati Vel Murugan Temple  
Mankuva Sewa Mandal (Forest Gate)  
Medway Hindu Centre  
Metropolitan Police Hindu Association  
Milan Women s Group  
Milton Keynes Hindu Association  
Mirzapur Association UK (London)  
Murugan Temple (Huddersfield)  
National Congress of Gujarati Organisations  
National Association of Patidar Samaj  
National Hindu Students Forum (UK)  
Navnat Vanik Association of Uk  
Navratri Garba (London)  
Napali Hindu Forum  
North East Hindu Cultural Trust  
Northampton Hindu Samaj  
OM Youth  
Oxford Hindu Temple  
Param Shakti Peeth of U.K.  
Pandava Sena (Birmingham)  
Pandava Sena (Crawley)  
Pandava Sena (East London)  
Pandava Sena (UK)  
Parajiya Patni Association (London)  
Param Shakti Peeth of UK  
Patel Samaj of Northampton  
Patel Samaj UK  
Pragati Mandal (Leeds)  
Prajapati Association (UK)  
Prajapati Association Birmingham  
Prajapati Association Bolton  
Prajapati Association Bradford  
Prajapati Association Coventry  
Prajapati Association Leicester  
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Prajapati Association Loughborough  
Prajapati Association Luton  
Prajapati Association Preston  
Prajapati Association Rugby  
Prajapati Association Tameside  
Prajapati Association Wellsall  
Prajapati Association Wellingborough  
Prajapati Samaj (Bradford)

Punjabi Maha Sabha, (Leeds)  
Punjabi Society of British Isles (London)  
Raghuvanshi Mahajan (Greenford)  
Rajput Sangathan Samaj (Leicester)  
Rajput Seva Samaj, (London)  
Ram Dhoon Bhajan Mandal (Bolton)  
Ram Krishna Bhajan Mandal (Leeds)  
Ram Krishna Ram Bhajan Mandal  
Ram Mandir (Leicester)  
Rama Samaj (Leicester)  
Ramdev Pir (Leeds)  
Ramkrishna Vivekananda Centre (Bolton)  
Rampar Community (UK) (London)  
RK Seva Samaj, Leicester  
Rohit Kshatriya Samaj (Bolton)  
S.K.L.P (Vadasar) UK  
S.S.S.S. Mandal (Bolton)  
Sai School of Harrow  
Samatra Kutch Leuva Patel Community  
Sanatan Mandir (Leicester)  
Sanatan Seva Samaj  
Sangat Advice Centre (London)  
Sanskriti Foundation (London)  
Saraswat Samaj (UK)  
Sarvdesic Satya Samaj (London)  
Sarvoday Samaj UK  
Sarvodaya Navyug Samaj (Bolton)  
Sarvodaya Samaj (Leicester)  
Satsang Mandal (Birmingham)  
Satsang Parivar (Leicester)  
Sattavis Gam Patidar Samaj of Europe (London)  
Satya Sai Centre (Aston)  
Satya Sai Centre (Bolton)  
SEWA Internationl North West Area  
Shakti Mandir (Leicester)  
Shree Hindu Community Centre  
Shree Jaganath Hindu Society UK  
Shree Kera Kundanpur Community London UK  
Shree Kutch Kadva Patidar UK  
Shree Swaminarayan Satsang  
Shree Swaminarayan Gadi Sansthan (London)  
Shirdi Saibaba Temple Wembley  
Shirdi Saibaba Temple Leicester  
Shirdi Saibaba Temple and community centre Reading  
Shiva Trust  
Shrimali Soni Mandal  
Sivayogam Hindu Temple  
SKLP UK (Vadasar) (London)  
Sojitra Samah (UK)  
Sorathia Prajapati Community (Leicester)  
Sorathia Prajapati Community (UK )  
Sorathia Prajapati Community (Bolton)  
Sostarjuth Limbachia Samaj (UK)  
Sostra Juth Nayee Samaj (Crawley)  
South Indian Association  
South Indian Society  
Sparkhill Hindu Youth Association (West Midlands)  
Sukhpar-Roha Mitra Mandal (UK)  
Sukhpur Seva Mandal  
Swaminarayan Sidhant Sajivan Mandal (Bolton)  
Tamil Association North West (Bolton)  
Tamil Heritage Foundation  
Tamil Women s Organisation  
Tayside Mandir  
UK Luhar Gnati Mandal (London)  
UK Valam Brahmin Association  
UK RK Seve Samaj  
Utsav Sangeet  
Vanza Community of South London  
Vanza Society of London  
Veda Mandir (Bolton)  
Visa Sorthia Vanik Association (London)  
Vishwakarma Association of UK (London)  
Wanza Samaj (UK)  
Warrington Rama Krishna Temple  
West Midland Hindu Forum  
World Hindu Mahasangam  
Yog Foundation  
Yorkshire Jain Foundation (Leeds)  
Yuva Sanskar Kendra (Tooting)





# HINDU FORUM of BRITAIN 2021

Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons



## Diwali Message from Mr Shashi Vekaria Chair of Patron of the HFB

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though celebrated with unbounded joy and charm; signifies the importance of peace, prosperity, and communal harmony amongst the people in our society and more pertinently in the extended world

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always prevails over evil.

So, Diwali is increasingly celebrated by all regardless of cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. This is simply because;

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## Happy Diwali from the Team HFB



r p i b e n a e l



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H a r s a b e n l a



r i c i e e g a l



r n e e i e d i



r i s V e k a r i a

## Tribute to Late Late Shri Arjanbhai Karandas Vekaria JP



## Tribute to Late Late Shree Haribhai Halai







## HINDU FORUM OF BRITAIN 2021

### An Introduction

The Hindu Forum of Britain is the largest umbrella body for British Hindus from all affiliated member organisations from different regions and cultural backgrounds in Britain. At the core of the Forum's activities is a strong belief in the richness and diversity of the Hindu civilisation. It also encompasses respect for all beings and aims to achieve a harmonious community cohesion and coexistence.

### HFB Objectives

Facilitate consultation and communication or identifying issues affecting British Hindus and coordinate methods for finding solutions thereof.

Aid integration of British Hindus by supporting their social, cultural, educational, economic, democratic and psychological needs.

Build stronger links between British Hindus and other religious communities in the UK to establish friendship and trust in keeping with the multi-cultural multi-faith nature of British society.

Work in partnership with various government departments to provide non-governmental initiatives and media assistance in the process of nation building, community cohesion, community empowerment and capacity building.

Represent the Hindu community through a broad-based membership and widespread consultation and representation through the Hindu community in the UK.

Representation at the Home Office 'Securing Faith Building' scheme.

Raise awareness on media about rich Vedic Hindu culture.

Keep the role of the Hindu community in the UK and its contribution to society.

### HFB Consultations

The Hindu Forum of Britain has conducted various consultation exercises in the past and submitted formal responses to Government departments and agencies. These include responses to:

- **Caste in Great Britain and equality law**
- **Crematoria facilities for Hindus**
- **Dharmic issues with respect to Covid-19 & Vaccine Campaign**
- **The Home Office on 'Strength in Diversity', to formulate the Government's race equality and community cohesion policy.**
- **Response to the QCA on the national Religious Education Framework.**
- **The Home Affairs Select Committee on 'Anti-terrorism and Community Relations'.**
- **The Home Office Consultation on Ministers of Religion from Abroad.**
- **Seminar and conferences on Hindu Issues and Celebration of Diwali at the Parliament.**

Patrons Council: Chair: Mr Shashi Vekaria Lord Dholakia Mr Rickie Sehgal :

Mr Joginder Sanger Mr CB Patel Lord Nat Puri

President Mrs Trupti Patel Trustee: Hon. Treasurer Mr Devshi Chothani

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Contact : Mrs Trupti Patel : ph: 07875015865 ,email: president@hfb.org.uk ,

www.hfb.org.uk, Twitter: @hfbritain Facebook.com/hinduforumgb

C/O Vascroft Estate : 861 Coronation Road , Park Royal , NW10 7PT







HINDU FORUM

## Diwali 2021 : of BRITAIN 2021

Trupti Patel - President HFB & Trustee HFBC

Virtual Diwali at the House of Commons

Velji Vekaria - Chair of Diwali

### Artists

Trupti Patel

Harsha Shukla MBE - VP North

### IT and Invites

Velji Vekaria - Guest List and coordination

Shiv Khetani - Data collate & Invites

### E-Magazine

Trupti Patel

Bimal Patel

### Parliamentary Hosts

Hon Bob Blackman MP

### Parliaments & HCI liaison

Trupti Patel

Dr Richa Sharma

Dr Shorna Pal

### EVENT WEBINAR

Velji Vekaria

Host

Cllr Reena Ranger OBE !

### Technical :

Harsh Haria -HSS

Ritesh Thaker - HSS

Vishal Shah -HSS

Shiv Khetani

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Chandu bhai Taylor

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### HFB Scottish Chapter Diwali

Mr Puneet Dwivedi

Dr Richa Sharme







## The NEC Team 2021-22

### Designation

Chair of Patrons ( Vascroft Foundation )  
 "President and Company Director of HFB Trustee - HFB Chairty  
 Patron and Chair of Governance  
 Hon. Treasurer and Trustee - HFB Charity  
 V.P. South & Chair of PR & RE ( Religious Education )  
 Vice President North and Company Director, ( President HC North )  
 Vice President ( Scotland )  
 Company Director ( Vascroft Foundation )  
 Chair of Diwali Committee ( SKLP )  
 Ass Sec General ( Vascroft Foundation )

Chaplaincy Committee  
 Chair of Parliamentary Engagement Committee  
 Member ( Mandhata YNC Association )  
 Chair of the Membership Committee (Mandhata YNC Association)  
 Chair of Medical Advisory Committee - NHS  
 Member ( Medical Advisory Committee - NHS )  
 Member ( Nepal )  
 Member ( Asian Foundation )  
 Member ( NAPS ) -Cencus Representative  
 Member ( Interfaith ) Joint Chair of Faith Forum London  
 Member (HC Brent )

Member (HC Brent )

Member ( Brahmin Samaj )  
 Member ( NCGO )  
 Member ( Diwali SKLP )  
 Member ( IT )  
 Member ( Shree Prajapati Samaj & Hindu Council Birmingham )  
 Member ( Shree Prajapati Samaj )  
 Member ( Isckon )  
 Member ( Isckon )  
 Member ( Special Project )  
 Member ( SRM Birmingham )  
 Member ( Community Engagement )  
 Ex -Officio -NEC ( VP West Midlands )  
 President of HFE ( HFB Representative to HFE ) Ex -officio of NEC  
 Member Ex officio -ISKCON

### Spiritual Commission

Brahmrishi Mission London  
 Brahma Kumaris London  
 Isckon

### Patrons

### Name

Mr Shashibhai Vekaria  
 Mrs Trupti Jagdish Patel  
 Mr Rickie Sehgal  
 Mr Devshi Chothani  
 Dr Ramesh Pattni OBE  
 Mrs Harsha Shukla MBE  
 Mr Puneet Dwivedi  
 Mr Mitesh Vekaria  
 Mr Velji Vekaria  
 Ms Panna Vekaria

Mr Swami Nathan  
 Dr Harsha Jani  
 Mrs Darshini Patel  
 Mrs Tara Patel  
 Dr Bhavna Pandya  
 Dr Sapna Bhansali  
 Mr Chiranjibi Padyul  
 Mr Sumantra Desai  
 Mr Pravinbhai Amin CE  
 Dr Deesha Chadha OBE  
 Mr Manubhai Makwana  
 (Mr Mahendra Pattni)  
 Mr Ashwin Galoria  
 (Mr Upendra Solanki)  
 Mrs Harsha Trivedi  
 TBA  
 Mr Shivji Khetani  
 Mr Sudeep Singh  
 Mr Vipul Mistry  
 Mr Balu Lad  
 Mr Bhaskar Rughani  
 Nandarane Naina Parmar  
 Dr Shorna Pal  
 Mr Hitesh Kukadia  
 Mr Ashish Popat  
 Mr Tarang Shalet  
 Dr Lakshami Vyas  
 Dr Sachi Patel

Swami Suryaprabha Didi  
 Sister Jayanti  
 Visakha Devi Dasi

Lord Navnit Dholakia  
 Prof. N Puri  
 Mr C B Patel  
 Mr J Sanger







## How are we structured?

Management Committee : Elected and Nominated at first NEC  
from membership : General management decisions.

NEC : Elected at AGM: Policy making

Secretariat: Elected at First NEC. Execution and daily decisions.

performing projects

Department & Project Teams : Appointed and dismantled by NEC.

Specific tasks and projects. Report to Secretariat

## Patrons Council :

spiritual mission

Advisors : Political &

community

## How are we Governed:

- Constitution – Memorandum & Articles
- elections or elections
- policies in place
  - correspondence policy
  - Financial policy
  - declaration of interests
  - non disclosure agreement

## What is our specification?

- clear outline of jobs
- communication completeness
- Reporting and evaluation – Analysis
- a board of agreed representatives all concerned to achieve and improve the outcomes.

- How are the accountable responsibilities and accountability defined and assigned
- who is responsible person or a group
- a process of cooperation required
  - internal and external
  - meaning participation
  - monitoring and evaluation
  - action taken to improve.
- process logic
- reporting standards regularly
- involvement and effectiveness

- How are we performed
- good awareness in modern
- cellen of reaction media
- High profile events
- the department and projects
  - initiative
  - decision making
  - media
  - initiative
  - In era of initiative
- 'Caste' Bill
  - relation facilities
  - place of worship and religious
  - religious experience





# HINDU FORUM of BRITAIN 2021 Scotland Chapter



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## Hindus and Deepawali in Scotland

Janani janmabhūmiśca svargādapi gariyasi

**“Mother and motherland are superior even to heaven”**

For the 0.3% (2011 census) Scottish Hindus who have made Scotland their home and occupy the top 2 occupational groups or highest social grades along with Jews, this is a mantra they keep close to their hearts.



Hinduism or Sanatan Dharma ('The Eternal Way'), as followers like to be referred to, has steadily risen in Scotland over the last 20 years. It is the 3rd largest religion in the world (1.2 billion) and the oldest (4000-2500 BCE) extant religion. With no single founder, prophet, concept, deity, holy text, theological system or religious authority, in some ways it does not fit in any other mould of religion. So much so, that it is considered more of a way of life and set of guidelines to live one's life by, more than a religion per se. It could be monotheistic, polytheistic, henotheistic, pantheistic or atheist. It is this diversity that makes this community hard to box in one group although there is a set of commonalities. These beliefs in many deities also bring about a plethora of festivals. The two major festivals for Hindus are Deepawali - The festival of Lights, and Holi - The Festival of Colours. They are celebrated every year and follow the Lunar calendar.

### **Festival of Deepawali**

The festival of lights, 'Deepawali (Deep-light, awali-Row) or Diwali' as it is commonly called, is celebrated on the 15th day of the Hindu month of Kartik in late October to early November each year. It is celebrated over 5 days and marks the triumph of good over evil, light over darkness. Homes are cleaned, made clutter-free and illuminated at night, while fireworks light up the night sky.

### **Origins**

Its origins can be traced back to ancient India as an important harvest festival but various other historical legends point to the origin of Deepawali. Deepawali commemorates the return of Lord Rama, with Mata Sita and Lakshman, to his capital Ayodhya after vanquishing the demon king Ravana. The People of Ayodhya lit diyas and set fireworks to celebrate his return. Some celebrate the marriage of Goddess Lakshmi to Lord Vishnu on this day. Others celebrate it as Her Birthday. In Jainism, it is on this day that Lord Mahavira attained nirvana.

Outside India, Deepawali is more than a Hindu festival. It is a celebration of our Hindu Identity. If you are away from home, clean your surroundings, light a diya and quietly sit in a place focussing on the supreme light and illuminate your soul. **“Shubh Deepavali”**



### **Hindu Forum Britain, Scotland - An Introduction**

The Hindu Forum of Britain (HFB) is the largest umbrella body for the Hindus in the UK, with more than 300 member organisations from around the country. HFB is the first port of call from the central government and the most reported Hindu organisation in the British media. At the core of the Forum's activity is a strong belief in the richness and diversity of the Hindu culture, its value system that encompasses respect for all beings and faiths, and a cultural heritage that facilitates community cohesion and coexistence.

HFB's activities are broadly divided into three areas:

- Public policy and community consultation for the government.
- Capacity building and project development for the Hindu community.
- Developing good interfaith relations with other faith communities to build a cohesive & inclusive Scotland

Hindu Forum Britain was at the forefront during the war against COVID19. There were many projects that started off in response to the virus and consequences of lockdown e.g., The Hindu Emergency Action Response Team (HEART) working together with other organisation, dealing with grass-roots issues affecting faith communities across UK. Scottish HFB team provided guidance, data and evidence, and reporting to Connected Communities division of Scottish Government on re-opening places of Worship, Vaccination and other faith related. Helped Hindu Temples with Government Funding to keep their lights on. Consulted for Hindu Priest visa with Home office, MPs and Ministers.

### **Climate Initiatives**

HFB officially launched its Hindu Environmental Task Force (HETF) on 18th September 2021 to raise awareness about Hindu values with regard to the environment, to the wider world, and to support its member organisations to become increasingly more environmentally friendly. All the Hindu temples of Scotland signed an Environmental Charter to take steps towards sustainability.





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आपदाम्-अपहर्तारम् दातारं सर्व संपदां  
लोकाभिरामं श्रीरामम् भूयो भूयो नमाम्यहम् ॥

Prostrations again and again to Lord Rama who is the beloved  
of the entire universe. He dispels dangers and obstacles and  
endows good fortune on all His devotees.



आर्तानामार्तिहन्तारम् भीतानां भीतिनाशनं  
द्विषतां कालदण्डं तं रामचन्द्रं नमाम्यहम् ॥

Prostrate before Sri Ramachandra, the Supreme Lord,  
who is the benign healer of the distressed,  
the remover of all fears and dispeller of injustice.

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

ॐ असतो मा सद्गमय । तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ।  
मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय । ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Supreme Lord, lead me from untruth to truth,  
lead me from darkness to light,  
lead me from death to immortality.  
Let there be peace, peace and peace.



HFB MANTRA:

सं गच्छध्वं सं वदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम्  
देवा भागं यथा पूर्वं संजानाना उपासते  
समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानी समानं मनः सह चित्तमेषाम्  
समानं मन्त्रमभि मण्त्रये वः समानेन वोहविषा जुहोमि  
समानी व आकूतिः समाना हृदयानि वः  
समानमस्तु वो मनो यथा वः सुसहासति ॥

Let us walk together. Let us sing together

In togetherness can we understand each other's minds.

Thus, did the ancient seers share together to reach their divine ends.

May our intentions come together.

May our hearts become inseparable.

May our minds become as one to truly know one another.

May we all unite in togetherness.

Happy Diwali from the Team HFB



Truptiben Patel



Devshi Chothani



Dr. Ramesh Pattni OBE



Harshaben Shukla MBE



Mr. Rickie Segal



Mr. Puneet Dwivedi



Hindu Forum of Britain



प्रधान कौंसल  
Consul General



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वेबसाइट/Website: [www.cgiedinburgh.gov.in](http://www.cgiedinburgh.gov.in)

09<sup>th</sup> October 2021

### **Message on the occasion of Diwali**

Diwali, the festival of lights, symbolises the triumph of good over evil. It is also a time of renewed hope, joy, happiness and time together with family.

I am happy to note that the Hindu Forum of Britain is celebrating Diwali at the Queen Elizabeth House, Edinburgh. It is also heartening to note that celebration will be commemorated in an eco-friendly manner.

I wish the Scotland Chapter of the Hindu Forum Britain and everyone a very happy Diwali.

Yours sincerely,

  
(Bijay Selvaraj)



**Raksha Bandhan- To show our gratitude to Armed forces, Police Scotland, NHS Staff & Fire officers for their service in protecting (Raksha) of our Border & Society**





## Bhakti, Trupti and Abhivridhi: Alochana (reflection) for Diwali 2021

**-Dr Srihari Vallabhajousula FRCS (Edin)**

Consultant General Surgeon, Borders General Hospital, Melrose, Scotland | Volunteer Priest, Hindu Temple of Scotland, Rutherglen, Glasgow | Trustee and Hindu representative on Board of Interfaith Scotland



I wholeheartedly wish you all a lot of prosperity this Diwali and hope and pray for Sri Lakshmi blessing us all with prosperity.

We all individually in our homes and our hearts and in the temple offer prayers to Sri Lakshmi during Diwali time. We pray for our own prosperity, and we have always been praying for the prosperity of 'Smasta Loka' – the entire universe. Our ancestors have been praying Sri Lakshmi for abundance of resources to live a fulfilled life and right to this present day say the same prayers with the belief that Sri Lakshmi's grace and blessing always stays with us.

Sri Lakshmi has heard our ancestors' prayers and is hearing our prayers and has granted us abundance of resources to help us sustain. We have been granted an abundance of space to live, food to eat, air to breath and water to drink.

In our prayers we promise Trupti – contentment, however the past few centuries, our access to abundant resources has turned the humankind Greedy. Our want for 'more' is damaging our Prithvi Maa – Mother Earth and we are exhausting and misusing the resources Sri Lakshmi has granted us.

Diwali 2021 is very special because all the leaders of the world are gathering in Glasgow during Diwali time to take decisions which impact the very sustainability of Mother Earth and life on Earth.

With this article I request the readers to offer sincere prayers to Sri Lakshmi with Bhakti (devotion) seeking Abhivridhi (prosperity) and promise to cultivate and practice the habit of Trupti (contentment).

Let's stop being greedy and show Bhakti to Mother nature today hoping our next generations will learn to live life of Trupti – contentment so that the future generations will see 'Abhivridhi'.



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### Message from Alister Jack, Secretary of State for Scotland

I would like to wish everyone in the UK and overseas a very happy, healthy and peaceful Diwali. This festival, which celebrates hope over despair and light over darkness, represents the values shared by so many of us in the UK and, more than ever, a feeling of optimism as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic.

As the five day Festival of Lights begins, it is also important to celebrate the rich cultural, social and economic contribution that Hindu communities make to the UK.

As British Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists join friends and family in person or virtually, I wish you all the very best for your celebrations. Have a very happy and prosperous Diwali.





Puneet Dwivedi  
Vice-President, Scottish Chapter  
Hindu Forum of Britain

vicepresidentscotland@hfb.org.uk

19 October 2021

Dear Puneet,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Hindu Forum of Britain's Eco-Diwali programme.

I send my very best wishes for a Happy Diwali to everyone celebrating this joyous and popular festival.

Last year Covid-19 restrictions meant that Diwali could not be celebrated in the usual way, so I am delighted that this autumn people will once again gather to share in the festival of lights. The universal message of Diwali - that light will overcome darkness - will truly resonate with so many of us, as we emerge from the darkest days of the pandemic. Each lamp that is lit is a symbol of hope for the year ahead.

This year Diwali coincides with COP26, when the attention of the world will be focussed on the challenge of climate change, and the actions that all nations must take towards our common climate goals. The conference seeks to unite the world to tackle climate change and the success of any action depends on that unity. Such a unity finds wonderful expression in this festival of Diwali, which is celebrated by different faith communities across the globe and enjoyed by so many people here in Scotland.

I hope this Diwali will be particularly special, drawing you together in warmth and happiness, inspiring you with stories of goodness, and bringing joy and peace to our diverse communities across Scotland and the world.

Yours sincerely,

**SHONA ROBISON**





Interfaith



Other



Engagements





## ABERDEEN HINDU TEMPLE TRUST



The Hindu community of the North East of Scotland were delighted when after some years (since 2014) of working towards the dream of having a place of worship, they received the necessary permissions and organised finances entirely by voluntary donations to allow them to make the Old Stoneywood Church at Bucksburn into a Hindu Temple. This is the first Hindu temple in Aberdeen and it opened in January 2020. Then followed the uncertain times with all the covid challenges; things are slowly getting to as it had been eagerly envisaged for the temple – as a community hub for all the Hindu community not just of Aberdeen but the whole of the Northeast and beyond and also for the wider community. While the upper floor is for religious Hindu ceremonies and worship, the lower floor has a number of rooms that can be booked for a range of community activities, for example, yoga, dance and singing classes, functions and celebrations, interfaith and climate awareness dialogues, and children's activities. We, the Hindu community of the North East, look forward to welcome all of the wider community of the North East and beyond to our temple.

## Edinburgh Hindu Mandir & Cultural Centre (EHMCC)



The Edinburgh Hindu Mandir and Cultural Centre (EHMCC) was registered as a Charity in 1981 to provide a Temple and safe space where the Hindu Community of Edinburgh could come together to celebrate and practice their faith. In 2015, after multiple fundraising, *Pran Pratishtha* was enacted at the Hindu Temple in St Andrew's Place and the deities were consecrated. Since then, EHMCC has grown exponentially. Many festivals are celebrated enthusiastically in the Temple showcasing the diversity of the different cultures and regions within India and bringing together the whole community of Edinburgh. The Cultural Centre of the Temple is an integral part of the organisation and charity focused on enhancing the wellbeing and education of, not only the Hindu Community of Edinburgh but also the public. The Centre is thriving with an array of activities ranging from children's activities to yoga and meditation sessions to performance evenings filling the Temple with music and dance. As part of the ongoing development of the Temple, EHMCC is planning to extend the Building as a requirement for more space.



**Hindu Mandir Glasgow:-** The history of Hindu Mandir Glasgow dates back to the later part of 1967 when some Hindu women got together and started Bhajan/Kirtan from home to home. They started collecting funds with the intention of setting up a place of worship for the Hindu community.

From the funds raised, the building at Great George Street was purchased in 1971 and the first Hindu Mandir was established in the city of Glasgow. An organisation was set up under the name of Hindu Mandir Sabha with its own constitution and which later obtained charitable status.

Building a Temple is believed to be a pious act in which the Hindu community of Glasgow has been involved. Hindu Mandir took its final shape and the Murti Pran Pratishtha Mahotsav was conducted by learned Acharyas and scholars, from India and UK on 23 July 2006.

Some key centres/activities of the Mandir are: Shanti Bhavan Social and Cultural Centre, BalaGokulam, Hindi Classes, Classical Music & Bhajan Classes, Dance & Yoga Classes.

**ISKCON Scotland :-** ISKCON Scotland is based at Krishna Eco Farm in Lesmahagow, South Lanarkshire. Also called Karuna Bhavan or Sanctuary of Peace, it is a space for people from all walks of life to practice a more living and compassionate way of living. Run by the Hare Krishna community since 1987, it is being developed as a holistic spiritual centre, to help re-establish the sacredness of life, based on the motto of "simple living, high thinking". We welcome you throughout the year for festivals, day visits, short stays, retreats and volunteering programmes.



## Hindu Temple of Scotland

### *The Hindu Temple of Scotland*

The Hindu Temple of Scotland in Rutherglen, Glasgow, had two idol consecration ceremonies. During Navrathri 2019, Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati idols were consecrated and Hanuman in 2020. Regular Sunday pooja was conducted through Zoom during lockdown. With temples being allowed to re-open, regular pooja and special pooja and festivals have been conducted. The regular support of volunteers and devotees has helped the temple continue serving the Hindu community in Glasgow.

## Tayside Hindu Centre Cultural and Community Centre - Dundee Mandir.

Since 1984 the Tayside Hindu Cultural And Community Centre, also known as the Dundee Mandir, has been promoting Sanatan Dharma and Hindu culture, serving the Hindu and wider community in Tayside and its adjacent areas, from our premises in central Dundee.

Our aim is to promote the Hindu way of life, with its practical and philosophical values of community, peace, respect for others, moral decency and harmony in society. This is done through ongoing community engagement, working alongside other organisations, education, including spiritual guidance, faith-based functions and activities, both within the Mandir itself and out in the wider community.



Humans are very small part of this amazing nature but they pollute in a big way... Practicing Yoga will help in appreciating nature, when one is closer to nature it helps in our physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Wishing you all peaceful Diwali with your family and friends. Manjulika (Yoga with Manjulika)





## Message from the President of the Hindu Forum of Britain

Namaste

The team HFB wish all our Scottish brothers and sisters Happy Deepavali 2021 and prosperous coming year.

The Celtic and Vedic cultures go back to antiquity, sharing many common folklores and traditions. In modern times, Hindus of Bharatiya (Indian) origin although in minority amongst the minority communities add valuable contribution in IT, businesses, art and Interfaith. Their hard work in recognising their place in the Scottish society, interacting with local population, respecting Scottish traditions and yet keeping true to their cultural roots is commendable.



These two years have been extremely hard with CV 19 for all our places of worship (PoW) to survive and temples are not exceptions. All temples and communities worked hard to help the NHS and needy in selfless volunteering. We acknowledge hard work of Mr Puneet Dwivedi, Vice President Scotland in perusing the PoW Security Grant scheme with the Scottish Government resulting into the scheme coming into operation this year. This week is also crucial for humanity as we participate in various program associated with the CoP 26 and spread goodwill to all who walk with us, meet us, mingle with us on our path to environmentally friendly and sustainable living. Happy Deepavali

**Mrs Trupti Patel FCIHT, MSc. H &T, BEng CE, Visharad Bharatnatyam & Yoga Teacher**

President and Company Director of the Hindu Forum of Britain & Trustee of the Hindu Forum of Britain Charity.

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### Message from the Vice-President of the Hindu Forum of Britain Scotland Chapter

Namaste,

On behalf of Hindu forum of Britain Scotland Chapter, I wish everyone Subh Deepawali.



I am very pleased that on behalf of the Hindus in Scotland, HFB Scotland chapter been able to host the first Diwali in 2019 at Scottish parliament and this year, at UK Government office of Secretary of State for Scotland at Queen Elizabeth House at Edinburgh. Last year we have to celebrate virtual Diwali celebration due to on-going pandemic and Government restrictions, and as a community we demonstrated our remarkable capacity to adapt and embrace change and new normal of virtual meetings.

Diwali, the festival of lights is the time when we think of the triumph of good over evil, of light over dark but also a time when we British/Scottish Hindus, think of the importance of family and the importance of community. During this pandemic, it's heartening to see our communities make every effort possible to keep in contact with those in needs. From the amazing doctors and nurses on the frontline, to the temples that have open their kitchens to feed the vulnerable and support our key workers to individuals taking mental health support calls. I am filled with awe and respect for the way Scottish Hindus have risen to this challenge and participated in Sewa, which represent living example of Hindu Values.

This year, with a view to supporting COP26 which occurs in the same week as Diwali, the Hindu community in Scotland are celebrating Eco-Diwali, to raise awareness about Hindu values with regard to the environment.

Hindu philosophy consists of eco-friendly principles and practices and has been passed down through generations. Growing up as a Hindu youth, I think faith and the environment have always been connected in everything that we do whether it's our rituals or our prayers. We Hindus worship everything around us; be it mother earth as Prithvi or Bhumi Devi, or Varun Devta - the water in the Kalash Pot, the Tulsi plant, the animals. We believe in *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* - Everything is part of one interconnected global family.

Concern for preserving our one shared planet is certainly not something exclusive to any one religious tradition. Every Faith, no-faiths, each individuals, everybody should be involved and taking responsibility for what's going on, really taking on that concept of Dharma recognizing that the environment is everybody's duty and responsibility. With that note, I wish you all Happy Diwali.

- Puneet Dwivedi, VP -HFB Scotland.





Past Diwali Celebrations



## JOURNEYING INTO UK's SUSTAINABLE FUTURE IN THE HINDU WAY

**Dr. Shorna Pal & Dr. Richa Soni**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> October this year, we shall be standing on the sands of time – literally. The COP26 Walk stops at Morecambe Bay, near our offices, and the LEAP team will join hundreds of others looking into the future through this enormous hourglass that the climate crisis has placed us in.

“What are we doing and what can be done about it?”

LEAP is doing quite a lot and can do a lot more. Look up away from the and you will see how many wondrous hands are outstretched towards you, loving your tiny effort and waiting to add to your drop to make it the boundless ocean that every being can joyously bathe in!



We at LEAP gladly embraced the very first hand - that of the Hindu Forum of Britain who invited LEAP to pave the way as an Environmental Partner by joining hands with their member organisations: the Art of Living, Brahamakumaris, ISKCON and HCA, together with representatives from the Hindu Mandir Glasgow and the Hindu Temple of Scotland with a view to form the Hindu Environmental Task Force.

We felt extremely humbled and excited to join hands in this initiative, the brain child of the HFB President Mrs Trupti Patel. The Hindu Forum of Britain has been working with temples - places of worship and Samaj - Community buildings across the UK for some time.

The Hindu ethos is an enormously powerful life force powering its way through millennia and leaving a living gigantic trail of conservation of life. HFB member organisations such as the Art of Living and ISKCON, have proliferated several projects like blossoming into eco-farms, tens of thousands of solar powered homes, planting of millions of trees, sustainable practices by temples such as the Glasgow Hindu Temple.

LEAP's Environmental Assessment & Management Plan allows temples and samaj buildings to reflect on their daily practices and celebrate the strides made in protecting Mother Earth and making definitive SMART goals to achieve more.

And so we reach on... hand after hand.. from working with schools in Lancashire to instil family learning on making eco-friendly celebrations to creating LEAP Sustainability Youth Ambassadors who think, talk, act and influence the world around them.

Covid, despite the terrible sadness and colossal blanket of loss and pain, has taught us a valuable lesson – we are not alone and can collectively move mountains.

Covid-19 is the trailer, Climate Crisis is the movie. This realisation is both frightening and empowering. If Climate Change is Kumbhakarna, the sleeping giant Prince, only snores are heard now. We must act before he wakes up.

The key here is **to act**. Think the thought and take the action to do everything you can do to protect the environment. This much is a minimum duty that comes with the privilege of living. The planet does not need human beings. We need the planet.





MATHS ENGLISH



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\* Research based in England in 2020. Further details can be found at [kumon.co.uk](https://www.kumon.co.uk).