

DIWALI ON TRAFALGAR SQUARE
9th OCTOBER 2022
London
1-7pm
BK SERVICE REPORT



Video of the event can be seen at: <https://youtu.be/hlyl0JftJog>

The Mayor of London on Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/SadiqKhan/status/1579579709373186048?t=pmJvqAWa6BL5GFWn9Tzs9w&s=08>

It was a sun filled day on Sunday 9th October 2022 . From 1pm-7pm London's biggest Diwali event took place, organised by the **Mayor of London's office** and supported by **Diwali in London Team (DIL)**: a collaboration of 14 Hindu organisations, including Brahma Kumaris, to deliver Diwali celebrations at Trafalgar Square for its 21st year. Each year it attracts thousands of people from many backgrounds and online reaches out to a global audience. The BK representation was once again led by **BK Jaymini Patel** with **BK Urvashi Patel** managing the main stage and **BK Dipti Khattry** and **BK Toots Beckett** supporting the BK coordination along with a great team of BK volunteers from GCH and local centres.

The stage show was filled with live music and dance from a wide range of Indian cultural groups and dance academies from across London and the UK as well as from different states of India. This year there were many folk, classical and Bollywood styles and all were performed





with great energy and enthusiasm; overflowing with colour, movement and positive sounds of celebration. There was even a group from Spain. The Hindu, Sikh and Jain Communities were all represented in the Opening Ceremony and in the dances performed.

.. As well as the stage show there is a huge festival on the Square with over 20 varied food stalls and many zones. The Brahma Kumaris returning with 'Glimpse of Goddesses' and also curated the 'Yoga and Meditation' marquee. There was the popular puppet theatre- enacting the story of Sita and Rama. The Soho Comedy Theatre again showcased young Asian acts. On the North Terrace The 'Tie a Turba' n and 'Sari Stall' both returned and were as popular as ever. There was also a 'dance marquee' and 'children's marquee' and A Diwali London Culture marquee and Unity marquee, run by young people.

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan said Diwali was a reminder of **"hope for a brighter tomorrow"** during challenging times:

At 1pm the festival began with Opening Dance Sequences with over 400 dancers, from 10 different dance groups from across London, coming together to dance to songs of Krishna. Dances, involving over 200 dancers who gave a spectacular performance and transformed the Square for 20 mins into a beautiful swirl of harmony and colour.





On the large video screen just before the stage opening, **Sister Jayanti's** message wished everyone a Happy Diwali, along with other messages from the various DIL committee's organisations leaders.

DIL representatives **Sister Jaymini Patel** from BK's and **Nil Kumarbhai** both compered the Opening Ceremony and invited the following to give a Diwali message: DIL co-hosts **Krushali and Deepan** from **BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir** as well as **Trustee Dr Mayank Shah** of **BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir**. **Jayesh Jayantilal Shah** from **Oshwal Association of UK**; followed by Sikh representative **Dr Surjit Singh Bhalla**. They were joined by Mr **Gyan Chandra Acharya** the **Ambassador of Nepal to UK** and **Nimisha Madhvani**, the **High Commissioner of Uganda to UK**. The **High Commissioner of India to UK Mr Vikram Doraiswami** then gave a warm and inclusive greeting reminding everyone that *'Diwali is for everyone as it is the reminder of Light overcoming darkness in the world'*. Screen and theatre actress **Sheena Battessa** introduced the **Mayor of London Sadiq Khan**.



The Indian High Commissioner, **Mr Vikram Doraiswami**, embraced everyone present with a warm and inclusive Diwali message. Followed by **Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan**, who greeted and addressed the gathering, reminding everyone that:

"Diwali on the Square is a wonderful and timely opportunity for Londoners to join in that spirit, celebrating our diversity and demonstrating the strength we draw from



our many and varied communities," Mr Khan told the BBC. He also mentioned on twitter later in the day *'Here in London – we don't just tolerate our diversity. We respect, embrace and celebrate it. Diwali on the Square was amazing! #DiwaliLDN*

Indian High Commissioner, Mr Vikram Doraiswami with Sister Jaymini and dancers.





Later in the afternoon Sister Jaymini held a 'Yoga Moment' on the stage with two seated BK yogis joining her. She led the whole gathering of thousands into a reflection on making Diwali real...and experiencing inner stillness whilst in the gathering.



The BK contribution was, as each year, highly valued and significant, with over 50 BK volunteers energetically donating their time and energy in various different areas of the festival including, beforehand at Global Cooperation House, organising and packing food for over 600 volunteers and 50 BK volunteers from GCH.



BK's also worked with the production team to manage the main stage show:



The Glimpse of the Goddesses Marquee had been beautifully decorated by BK Manju Patel and team and offered different creative activities for people to benefit from:



- ❖ A Raja Yoga Exhibition
- ❖ Taking drishti from the goddesses in situ.
- ❖ Invoking the shakti within by spinning the shakti wheel



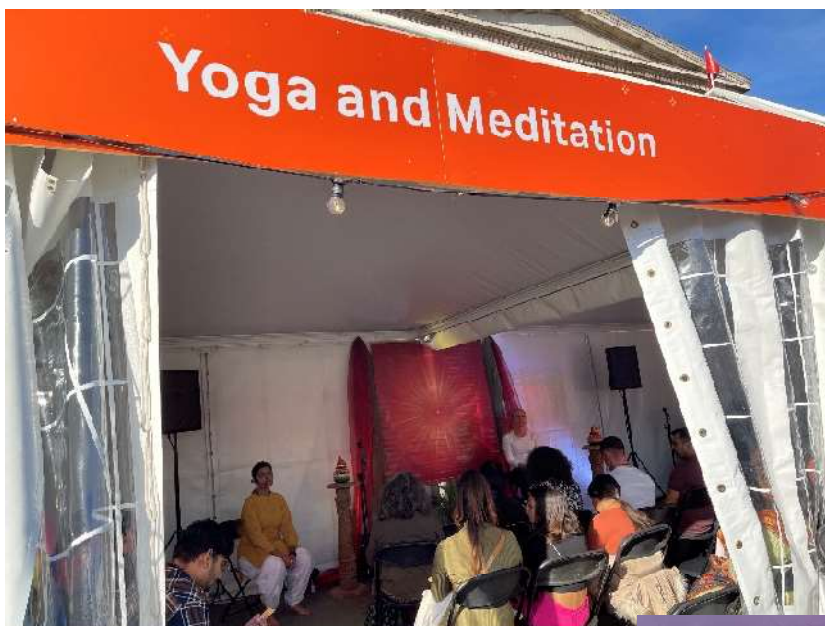
Some feedback from BK's helping at the zone:

- *Having the posters before the vision was wonderful, many, many really appreciated understanding what it was about, especially the eight powers.'*
- *People were really ready to listen, most people were not rushing and were happy to spend a few minutes listening. There were people from all backgrounds, quite a few from other countries too!*
- *The Shakti wheel was a hit as always - It was absolutely non-stop and we were on our feet throughout, it was a joy.*

- *Apart from almost everyone enjoying the Drishti and taking photos of the Goddesses, many many took pics of the powers poster. One person who was a regular meditator had goose bumps seeing Baba's pic! Said this was very powerful and asked to take a pic of it :)*
- *It was beautiful day and everyone enjoyed it, we had many many visitors to the Goddess Marquee and one of them said it was an excellent space.*
- *One lady was overwhelmed when she got the goddess card with auspicious omens. The explanation made her feel blessed.*



The Meditation and Yoga Marquee was looked after by **BK Ashmi** and team, and showcased many varied yoga practices ; including Yoga Mudras, and Chair Yoga, Children's Yoga, as well as Raj Yoga with young BKs from Southall BK Centre.



This year the event finished at dusk, and the spiritual dimension was acknowledged by the Chair for this year BAPS Swaminarayan with an Aarti, before the final acts.



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