

**DIWALI ON TRAFALGAR SQUARE**  
**15<sup>th</sup> October 2017**  
**London**  
**1-7pm**  
**BK SERVICE REPORT**



Diwali on Trafalgar Square 2017 was organised by the **Mayor of London's office** with organising partners, **Diwali in London Team**, with the BK representation led by **Sister Jaymini Patel**. **BBC Asia Network**, for the second year, were the Media partners. It was a magical day with much joy shared amongst so many, from organisers to performers and the many thousands who came once more to celebrate this festival of light. At 1pm the celebrations began on the North Terrace with a dance of flags followed by a Garba.

On the large video screen before the opening ceremony **Dadi Janki's video message** was shown

*Om shanti. Om shanti. Om shanti.*

*Why did I say om shanti three times? Because "Happy Diwali" takes us beyond any caste, colour, language, creed. What happens through that? East and West will become the best. Not that it will become, but it is becoming that now. Everything is wonderful with purity, peace, love and happiness. God, our Father says: Stay together, united as one, with one another with love and beyond any type of discrimination and what will emerge through everyone's lips. Happy Diwali. Happy Diwali. Ok. Om shanti.*

To open the afternoon **Nil Kumar** welcomed the invited guests on stage and there were welcome speeches by **His Excellency Mr Y K Sinha – High Commissioner of India to UK; Ravi Bhanot, Chair for Diwali in London for 2017, from Vishwa hindu Parishad, Ilford; Spiritual leader Acharya Krishan Kant Attri MBE; Mr Ajit Singh MBE, representing the Sikh Tradition; Mr Rajesh Agrawal, Deputy Mayor of London, and Ms Anila Dhami** who introduced Mr Sadiq Khan as one 'who believes in equal pay and gender equality, who believes London is open to all and is the greatest city in the world'. **The Mayor of London, Mr Sadiq Khan**, reminded everyone that 'This is the biggest and best Diwali on the Square ever! Thanks to all those who make London the greatest city in the world and those from the Hindu, Sikh and Jain faith who help London to be so. In these troubled times around the world, the teaching of the Diwali festival is as important as ever.....for light to triumph over darkness, goodness over evil, for friendship to triumph over enmity....London is so important this year.....when we light our candles across London at this time, remember these lights are beacons for the

*rest of the world to show that we not only tolerate - but we respect, embrace and celebrate each other. This year all those of faith or no faith, rich, poor, old, and young are celebrating Diwali. Thank you Londoners, Happy Diwali'. The Mayor and other speakers and Diwali in London Team took a selfie with the crowd before the show began.*



For the next five hours the stage was filled with live music and dance from a wide range of Indian cultural groups and dance academies performing classical to Bollywood with great energy and enthusiasm. There was fusion of many different styles too. Overflowing with colour, movement and positive sounds of celebration the large crowds in the Square enjoyed and danced too.

**BK's Parul Shah and Dr Nora Vyas** met with **Brent Councillor Muhammed Butt** and the many Trustees from the Diwali in London member organisations in the VIP Marquee.

Held after a high energy bhangra dance at mid-afternoon, Sister Jaymini led a **two minute YOGA CALM** at the centre of the stage. Taking everyone into a place of quiet and beyond, in the midst of it all, and a large image of Supreme Soul was displayed on the screen.



BK's were involved in many activities this year, on stage and around the Square. **The virtue wheel** was very active at the Diwali in London Zone; At the popular **dance marquee** BK's also led a session.

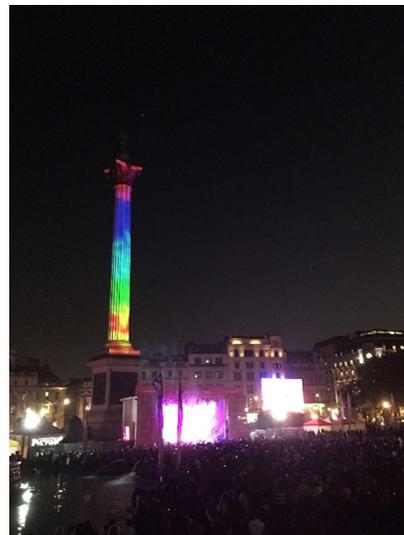
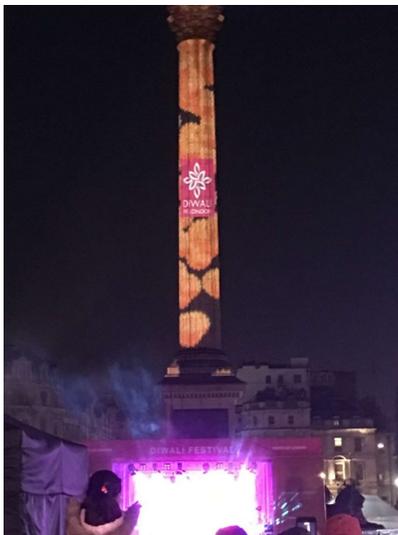
The **Glimpse of the Goddess Marquee** was a new BK initiative and people were invited to spin the goddess wheel and were given goddess blessing cards. Two kumaris became Lakshmi and Saraswati and gave dharshan throughout the day!

BK's also coordinated the **Yoga/Meditation Marquee**. It was decorated with a large image of Shiv Baba providing the backdrop. BK's conducted two of the meditation slots. Each session was full even with the marquee being double the size!



There were over 50,000 people who came throughout the afternoon.

The event finished as night closed in, with a wonderful Aarti and Kirtan by Aradhana Group and the Diwali in London Team. The Square, still full of people, was lit up with everyone's mobile phones, so from the stage there was sea of lights and Nelson's column had filmed fireworks projected onto it to make it a dramatic closing to a wonderful day full of happiness.



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