

# DIWALI ON TRAFALGAR SQUARE

## 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2019

### London

### 1-7pm

## BK SERVICE REPORT

A short video of the event can be seen at: <https://youtu.be/NILs21jD98E>

*'Diwali lights up the autumn gloom....thousands of people from the Hindu, Sikh, Jain and other communities marked the annual Diwali festival celebrating the triumph of good over evil, by gathering in Trafalgar Square, London for a free event'- front cover of Guardian, 4.11.2019*



*'Thank you to everyone who came to celebrate Diwali in Trafalgar Square yesterday. It was incredible to see Londoners from all backgrounds and faiths sharing Diwali's central message of peace and mutual respect' Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan on Twitter. #Londonisopen*

On Sunday, 3 November, 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 Khatri** and **BK Toots Beckett** supporting the BK coordination along with a great team of BK volunteers from GCH and local centres.



At 1pm the festival began with an **Opening Annukut Ceremony** began in the centre of the Square, off stage. This was a huge celebration of vibrant dances, involving over 150 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 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. This year youth from the DIL Committee, including **BK Roshni Kumar**, came on stage to offer flowers to Ganesh to start the stage Opening Ceremony then the DIL Chair for 2019 **Anita Nomula**, **Mallesh Kota** and **Srinivasa Sharma Yadati** from **Telugu Association of London (TAL)**, gave beautiful speeches of welcome.

The **Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan**, arrived to greet and address the gathering, reminding everyone that *'Many celebrate the wonderful festival of Diwali, and the story of Rama and Sita is as relevant in 2019 in London as it was thousands of years ago when it was first told...the moral is simple.....light over darkness.....good over evil.....friendship over enmity and knowledge over ignorance...and now those lessons are needed more than ever before....and that is why the central message of Diwali is so important as we celebrate in this great city.....our diversity is a strength and not a weakness and this is why we are a beacon for the rest of the world.....because in London we not only tolerate difference but we respect, embrace and celebrate it.*



Senior DIL members: **Sister Jaymini, Brahma Kumaris; Nitin Palan, Baps Swami Narayan; Nilesh Badiani, Sai School; Ravi Bhanot, Ilford Hindu Association** along with the chairs **Mallesh Kota** and **Anita Nomula** received on stage:

**The Indian High Commissioner, Ms Ruchi Ghyansham**, who embraced everyone present with a warm and inclusive Diwali message before garlanding Ganesh. *'I want to thank the Mayor of London and the organising DIL committee for arranging this keenly awaited spectacular event. May the Festival of Lights fill your life with lasting happiness, prosperity, enormous success, peace and wonderful health... The festival of Diwali underscores the composite character of the Indian character, with so many communities celebrating.....and the underlying message of light over darkness is relevant for the entire humanity.... Our joy is multiplied when we celebrate together and each festival is an opportunity to celebrate family and relationships.... You are the living bridge between our two countries, India and UK. I love the joy of all the people who have come today to celebrate Diwali with us...wonderful spirit...thank you very much...'*

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.



**Later in the afternoon at dusk Sister Jayanti was invited to hold a 'Yoga Moment' on the stage with four seated BK yogis joining her and she led the whole gathering of thousands into a reflection on making Diwali real...Let's send peace to everyone in the Square, in the Gallery, to everyone across this city and... lets be ambitious... to the entire planet....Let's firstly find that space of inner silence, stillness and peace...this natural state of being within us....and in this awareness the light of the soul is ignited...filled with joy, peace, truth....a true celebration of Diwali by igniting the true spirit... and we can go on a journey Up Above ...and from here we can see this planet, this very precious home for all humanity....one home, one family...and there is a feeling of togetherness, love and joy...from Up Above we send out thoughts of love, light and peace to those in distress and those seeking hope so all can experience their own true nature of peace... this peace is able to travel to all forms of life and we can live together in harmony and peace...and Nature starts to work in cooperation with the human family again and shares its abundance with all...so that light enters every heart and home and this precious world of ours.....hold this light in your awareness and share this light with all... so that it shines and radiates out.....have a wonderful New Year and a new chapter of love and joy. Thank you. Om Shanti**

<https://mobile.twitter.com/DiwaliLondon/status/1191032244133126146> #DiwaliLDN#LondonIsOpen#Spiritual#Soul



As well as **Sister Jayanti, Sudesh Didi** and **Sister Meera of Malaysia** also graced the event.

**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, organising and packing food for over 200 volunteers and 50 BK volunteers from GCH.

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



**Glimpse of the Goddess Marquee** had been beautifully decorated by **BK Jasu Ladva** and team and offered 4 different creative activities for people to benefit from:

- ❖ Invoking the shakti within by spinning the shakti wheel
- ❖ Taking drishti from the goddesses in situ.
- ❖ Experiencing the 'goddess within' by applying a tilak and crown
- ❖ Treasuring your divinity by taking a selfie with the above!



*'we witnessed that everything was totally organic and fluid. The whole time there was a non-stop flow and constant queue of public visiting the marquee, and all the BK volunteers continuing to make all hearts content!...the whole atmosphere was so vibrant with both young and old enjoying the journey of spinning the Shakti Wheel, then having a vision of the Goddesses and then selfie photos with their crown and bindi on!'* **BK Bhavna Patani** who coordinated the activities, along with **BK Preeti Bhudia**.

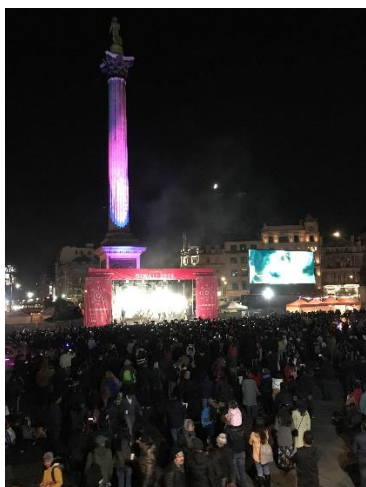
**Meditation and Yoga Marquee** was looked after by **BK Pavan Kumar** and team, and showcased many varied yoga practices ; including Nidra Yoga, Laughter Yoga, Chair Yoga Salutations as well as Raj Yoga with **Sister Jaymini** and later with **Sudesh Didi**.



It was also wonderful to see the other offerings by the DIL committee organisations which included this year:

- **A puppet theatre** showing the story of Sita and Rama
  - A **'Tie a Turban'** stall as well as the forever popular **'Sari Stall'**.
  - The **Dance Marquee** which rocked all afternoon with many of the performers from the main stage then running workshops with many.
  - The **Children's Marquee** with fun Diwali based activities running all afternoon.
  - A **DIL Culture Zone** and **Unity Zone**
  - **Soho Comedy Theatre** showcasing Asian comedians
- There were also over 20 food stalls all selling vegetarian and vegan food.

The evening finished with great joy as **MC Nil Kumar** encouraged everyone to put on their mobile phones and light up for Diwali to the finale dance fusion, which followed the Aarti by the DIL team and Kirtan by Telagu Association of London.



ENDS