

Diwali celebrations lit up Britain's House of Commons



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Rini Kakati 9 November 2010 8509 views

In Britain, Diwali, the festival of lights, the main Hindu festival and second largest religious festival in the UK was celebrated on Wednesday, October 23, 2010, in the House of Commons. Followed by traditional lamp lighting before a bronze figure of Ram standing amidst traditional rangoli patterns.



Lord Ram Chandra whose home coming is celebrated as Diwali, worshipped as the perfect monarch by Hindus worldwide. This tradition is still observed by Hindus on Diwali night to mark the victory of good over evil and light over darkness. His rule of law is still held as an example of perfect social order and well being. The festive joy of Diwali its colourful exuberance and its universal message of peace, reconciliation, justice and family values appeals to people of all faiths and none.

Britain is a nation of many faiths and culture and the mother of all democracies. The institution of the British parliament has upheld the best principles of equality, justice and peace that have influenced and affected world ethos and thoughts. Its diversity is the envy of the world. The House of Commons is the (Lower House) of the parliament of the United Kingdom, which also comprises the Sovereign and the House of Lords the (Upper House). Both Commons and Lords meet in the Palace of Westminster.

The celebration of Diwali in the House of Commons is therefore a fitting tribute to the legacy and friendship between India and Britain. This multi-party event is an expression of the British Hindu communities success in cohesively integrating into British society. It offers parliamentarians, civil servants, faith leaders, business persons, youth, women and elders a unique opportunity to showcase the Hindu contribution to the British way of life.



The evening transforms the Members room at the House of Commons, Palace of Westminster into a mini-India with its colourful decorations, lamps, floral patterns, Hindu images, sweets and Indian music and dance.

Prime Minister David Cameron sent a warm Diwali message. The Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, Attorney General Dominic Grieve and the Leader of the Labour Party Ed Miliband all helped to light the lamp of the Hindu Forum of Britain's celebration of Diwali. Dignitaries were welcomed with the traditional 'tilak' being applied to forehead and offer sweets. On his opening speech Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the Liberal Democrat party RT. Hon. Nick Clegg MP said " the Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist and Jain communities have made and continue to make an enormous contribution to British society and culture and its great that so many people up and down the country celebrate Diwali. The festival of lights is a real opportunity for all of us to celebrate that contribution and to reflect on the spirit of hope and optimism which Diwali embodies". v Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition and the Leader of the Labour Party RT. Hon. Ed Miliband MP said " this wonderful festival is a brilliant example of the great cultural diversity of our country and it is an opportunity for us to reflect on what we have achieved and on our hopes for the future".

Attended by over 120 MPs from all parties. Peers, local councillors, community leaders, volunteers and members of the public in one of the largest gatherings of Hindus in the House and also Rini Kakati, Director of FASS UK was also present at this event. Vijay Mallya, founder of united breweries and Member of India's Rajya Sabha (Upper House) made a guest appearance after receiving 'Entrepreneur of the year' accolades at the Asian Awards the night before.

The celebration ended with everybody singing the Indian National Anthem.

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BY RINI KAKATI

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