

## 22nd annual Ahimsa Day celebrated at the House of Commons

The Institute of Jainology (IoJ), in partnership with the Jain All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG), held its 22nd Annual Ahimsa Day at the House of Commons on 16 October 2025.

The event drew Members of Parliament, faith leaders, academics, and community representatives to reflect on this year's theme: "The Role of Faith During a Time of Multiple Existential Crises – with specific reference to Nostra Aetate."

This year marked the 60th anniversary of Nostra Aetate, the landmark Vatican declaration encouraging interfaith dialogue and recognition of other spiritual traditions. The evening was graced by Msgr Santiago Michael, representing the Vatican's Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue, and His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain.

The programme began with a warm welcome from Dr Mehoor Sanghrajka, Managing Trustee of the IoJ, followed by devotional recitations of the Navkar Mantra and verses from Maitri Bhavanu, invoking peace and compassion. Matt Turmaine MP, newly appointed Chair of the Jain APPG, reaffirmed his support for the IoJ's campaign to include a "Jain" tick-box in the next UK Census and highlighted the importance of parliamentary



IOJ Directors with Ahimsa Award recipient Dr Sohan Lal Gandhi, Archbishop Nikitas, Msgr. Santiago Michael & Matt Turmaine MP

engagement for the community.

A tribute was paid to the late Nemubhai Chandaria, former IoJ Chairman, recognising his pivotal role in establishing Jainism in the UK. The IoJ Ahimsa Award 2025 was presented to Dr Sohan Lal Gandhi for his lifelong dedication to non-violence, peace, and interfaith understanding, including leadership of the global Anuvrat Movement and advocacy at international forums such as the United Nations.

Msgr. Santiago Michael conveyed a message from Cardinal George Jacob Koovakad, praising Dr Gandhi and reflecting on the enduring

relevance of Nostra Aetate in promoting dialogue, compassion, and moral guidance in a time of global challenges. Archbishop Nikitas emphasised faith as the soul of civilisation, urging self-reflection, humility, and the nurturing of shared virtues across communities. Dr Gandhi, in his acceptance speech, described Ahimsa as an active, courageous commitment to peace, reminding attendees that every act of violence begins in the mind and so must every act of peace. The evening concluded with updates on Jain manuscript studies and a vote of thanks, celebrating Ahimsa as a timeless ideal of compassion and understanding.

## Lions Club of London-Finchley marks Diwali in style

The Lions Club of London-Finchley marked Diwali with style and enthusiasm on Friday, 24 October, at the Everest Abercorn, joined by over 80 guests.

Distinguished attendees included CB Patel, Publisher and Editor of Asian Voice and Gujarat Samachar; Praful Pattni, Past Zone Chairman and President; and Jay Gohel, Past President.

The evening featured lively performances by India's 'Bombay Gang' and a sumptuous dinner served by the restaurant.

The Finchley Lions Club, established over 45 years ago, has long served both local and



Club President Viresh Paul (centre) with Past Zone Chairman and Past President Praful Pattni, and Past President Jay Gohel



Praful Pattni, Mini Pattni, Mahendra Kara, Rekha Kara, Rekha Goel, Rajan Kohli, Naresh Chatralia, CB Patel, Kalpna Patel, Pawan Kumar, Rita Pawan, Jay Goel, Bharti Kantaria, Jyotsna Shah and Subhash Patel

international communities through initiatives such as eye camps in Gujarat and Punjab,

food donations via Jalaram Mandir, and fundraising for childhood cancer charities.

Its next major project focuses

## Double honour for Shree Kutch Satsang Swaminarayan Temple at UK Parliament

In the heart of Forest Gate, the Shree Kutch Satsang Swaminarayan Temple – East London (SKS Temple) has been a pillar of faith, compassion, and community service for over 40 years. Beyond being a place of worship, it has fostered cultural, educational, and social growth across generations.

were nationally recognised as it received 'Charity of the Year 2025' at the UK Parliament, Westminster, on 15 October 2025, in the presence of prominent political leaders.

SKS Temple and Swaminarayan Sports World (SSW) together earned two honours – 'Charity of the Year 2025'



L to R: Taruben Hirani, Pulkit Korat, Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka (Former Vice President of Kenya), Dharmesh Vekaria, Shamjibhai Vekaria, Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP, Lalji Vekaria, Kishan Devani BEM, Dhanuben Varsani and Kishor Varsani

Temple representatives received awards from Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms, the local MP, in recognition of their decades of service. In Parliament, Committee Member Kishor D Varsani delivered an emotional speech honouring the tireless efforts of President Shamjibhai Vekaria and the temple team. Cllr Miraj Patel and MP Uma Kumaran joined in the celebration, where Shamjibhai was named 'Philanthropist of the Year 2025' at the London Political Summit and Awards.

This year's Indian New Year celebrations were extra special for the Shree Kutch Satsang Swaminarayan Temple (SKS Temple). The temple's decades of devotion and community service

and 'Philanthropist of the Year 2025'. Founded by devotees from Kutch, Gujarat, the temple has grown into a vibrant hub of devotion and 'seva' (selfless service), welcoming all in the spirit of unity and compassion.

The SKS Temple has long led disaster relief efforts both in the UK and abroad, raising funds and mobilising volunteers during crises. Its commitment shone during the Covid-19 pandemic, providing over 5,000 meals and essential supplies to vulnerable East London residents.

Beyond worship, the temple runs youth programmes, Gujarati classes, and charitable initiatives, nurturing the next generation in faith, service, and leadership.

## Devotion and joy mark Ankut at Kenton Temple

Shree Kutch Satsang Swaminarayan Temple in Kenton, Harrow, joyfully celebrated Ankut and the Hindu New Year under its newly renovated ceiling with enhanced lighting and an upgraded sound

including children and adults, preparing over 250 food items as offerings to Lord Swaminarayan.

The celebration embodied the community's unity, faith, and devotion, filling the temple with joy and gratitude. As devotees



Devotees present Ankut offerings at Shree Kutch Satsang Swaminarayan Temple

system.

The celebration reflected deep devotion and community spirit, with hundreds of devotees,

welcomed the New Year, heartfelt prayers were offered for peace, prosperity, and spiritual growth for all.