

## A HAUTE & HAPPENING DIWALI

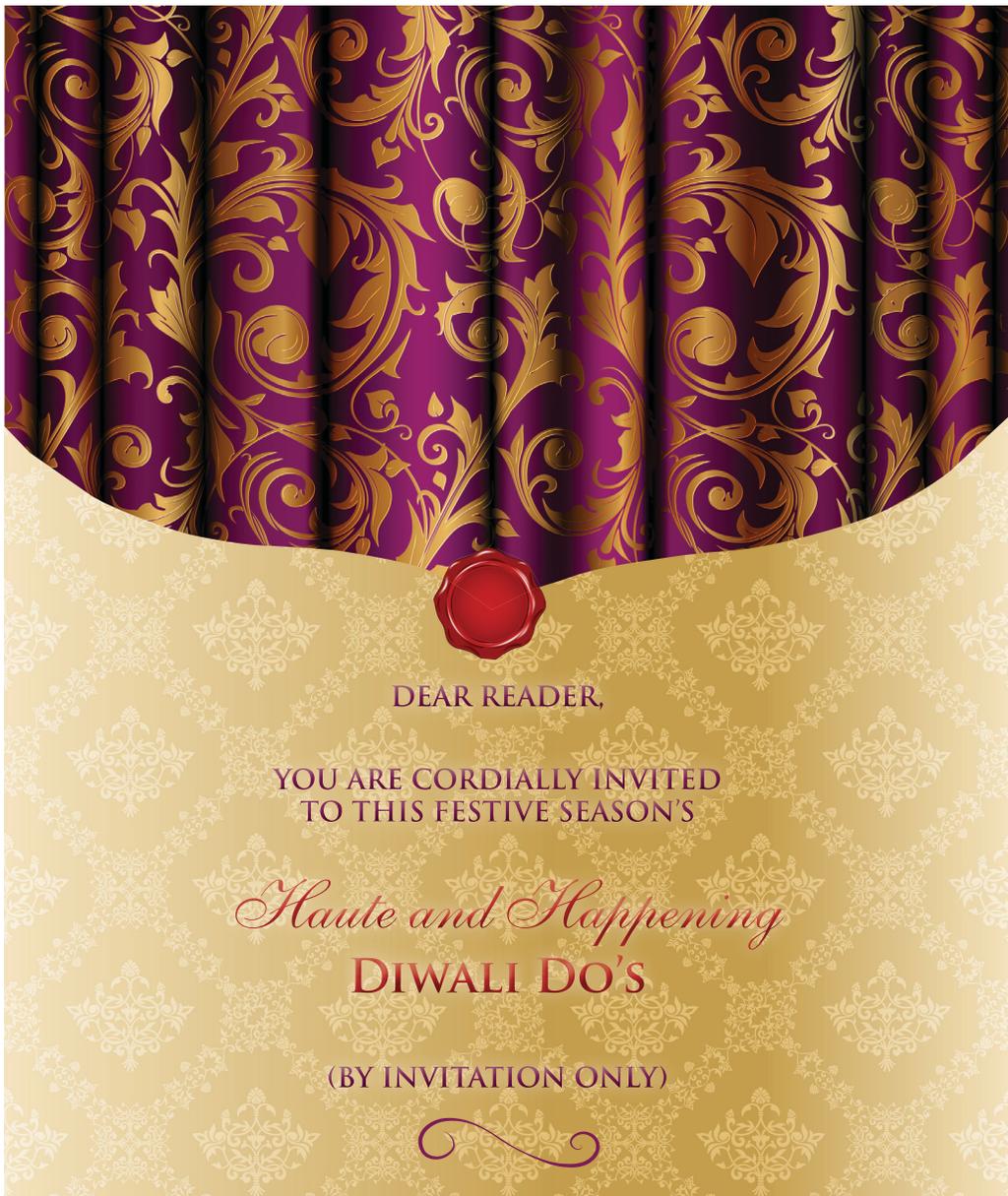
Diwali is becoming an increasingly fashionable affair, literally and figuratively. It is oh-so-fashionable to host and attend Diwali do's, and of course it's all about looking the part in the latest fashion. After all, you never know which society magazine you might find yourself featured in – there's no scope for a fashion faux pas! The buzz word this Diwali seems to be fashion, as Diwali fashion shows are all the rage in London. Taking our cue from this, the new spirit of Diwali, we bring you a fashion focused feature which is a one stop guide to all that's 'haute & happening' this festive season. May the fashion goddess, along with the pantheon of other gods and goddesses, bestow you with their divine grace this Diwali.

### **i** on LONDON:

A pictorial guide to some of the top India events in London

INDIA *Digest* HIGHLIGHTS:

An update on recent developments in the Indo-UK domain





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# i on LONDON

**They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Well, here's a few thousand for you. Jyotika Oberoi brings you an exclusive pictorial guide to some of the key events that caught the diaspora's attention in London recently.**



**AN OUTSTANDING EVENING**

Singing sensation Jay Sean with legendary playback singer Asha Bhosle, recipients of the Outstanding Achievement in Music and Lifetime Achievement award respectively at the Asian Awards ceremony at the Grosvenor House Hotel



**WELL RECEIVED**

Mayor of London Boris Johnson and Dr. K.P. Singh, Chairman of DLF – the world's largest real estate company – and recipient of the Entrepreneur of the Year Award, with Ruby Parmar, partner at PwC, at the Asian Awards



**SPREADING THE WORD**

Co-founder Alpesh Patel explaining the concept behind spreadtrading platform BATrustmarkets.com, an innovative approach to charity fundraising launched by WorldSpreads to support the British Asian Trust, at an event at the Oxford and Cambridge Club



**POSE FOR THOUGHT**

Pratham UK Trustees Reita and Vilas Gadhari, the hosts of the evening, take a minute to pose for the cameras at the Pratham UK ARTiculate Charity Gala at the Roundhouse



**A MOMENTOUS ACHIEVEMENT**

Hitanshu Mehta, Director of the British Asian Trust, Alpesh Patel, author and financial commentator, Conor Foley, WorldSpreads CEO and Chairman, and Parsh Kiri, Director of Sterling Markets, share a moment at the British Asian Trust BATrustmarkets.com event



**STAR POWER**

Bollywood superstar Akshay Kumar making an acceptance speech electronically on receiving the Outstanding Achievement in Cinema award from director Gurinder Chadha, with Lord Sebastian Coe, the host of the Asian Awards



**LIGHTS, CAMERA, AUCTION**

Lord Dalmeny, Deputy Chairman of Sotheby's and the auctioneer for the evening, making a style statement at the Pratham UK ARTiculate Gala, that raised over £370,000 for the charity



**CAUSING A STIR**

Socialite Hofit Golan looking every inch the part at the Pratham UK ARTiculate Gala, to raise awareness and funds for the cause championed by the charity to educate India's underprivileged



**CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME**

Industrialist Lakshmi Mittal lends his support to the cause of educating underprivileged children in India by marking his presence at the Pratham UK ARTiculate Charity Gala at the Roundhouse

# INDIA Digest HIGHLIGHTS

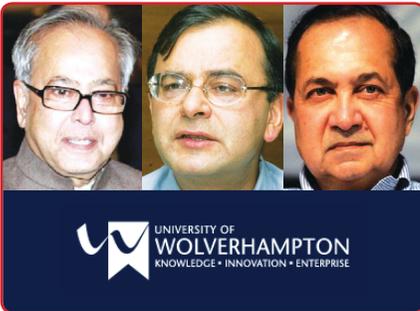
India's multi-faceted bilateral relationship with the UK has strengthened over the years. Dialogue at the highest level has underlined strategic partnerships in all areas – economic, political and cultural. The India Digest Highlights segment summarises recent developments that have taken place in the Indo-UK domain.



## UKIBCTO HELP INDIAN COMPANIES TRAIN STAFF

The UK India Business Council (UKIBC) is in talks with Mahindra & Mahindra, Hero, Mittal Group of Companies and Globsyn Technologies, amongst other firms, to enhance the productivity of their employees by providing skill-building solutions. A delegation of 59 skill providers, led by the UKIBC, visited Kolkata to explore business opportunities and find partners in the state of West Bengal. The delegation brought along a range of skills and education providers, including A4e, City of Westminster College, Tribal, Edexcel, City & Guilds and Hull College. The delegates, along with senior government representatives and skill providers, participated in an interactive seminar which was jointly organised by the UKIBC and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), along with the British Council. UKIBC signed a

Memorandum of Understanding with FICCI to work together to support the state government and local industries to expand manpower capacity in order to ensure long-term and sustainable economic growth. Some of the sectors UKIBC has identified to train workforce in the state are media and entertainment, healthcare, food and processing, manufacturing, retail, construction and, travel and tourism.



## UK UNIVERSITY AWARDS HONORARY DOCTORATES TO THREE DISTINGUISHED INDIANS

The University of Wolverhampton awarded honorary degrees to three distinguished figures in India. The awardees included Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, Leader of the Opposition Arun Jaitley, and Narasimhan Ram, Editor-in-Chief of the English daily, The Hindu. The Doctor of Letters (D. Litt.) was conferred on Mukherjee in recognition of his outstanding service to Indian society and contribution to international affairs. Jaitley, who was also conferred the honorary D. Litt, was recognised for his contribution to Indian politics and service to the people of India. Ram was conferred an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Social Sciences in recognition of his prolific and distinguished journalistic career. The Rt. Hon. Lord Swraj Paul, Chancellor of the University was also present on the occasion. Speaking about the awardees, Lord Paul said,

"First-class scholars understand the value of education, and what can be achieved when the right foundations are in place. Through their inspirational careers, they have come to play a vital role in the prosperity and global standing of India."

He added, "I am always pleased to attend and confer such awards, to help promote and strengthen relations between the U.K. and India."



## UGC SIGNS MOU UNDER UK-INDIA EDUCATION INITIATIVE

The Chairman of University Grants Commission (UGC), Prof. Ved Prakash, and Rob Lynes, Director of British Council, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) as part of the UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI) Phase Two expansion programme. The MoU was signed in the presence of Union Minister for Human Resource Development Kapil Sibal, and Sir Richard Stagg, British High Commissioner to India. The UGC-British Council MoU will support collaboration between higher education institutions in India and the U.K., and work with key partners and stakeholders in both countries with the aim of providing opportunities to teachers, faculty members, senior staff and students from universities, colleges and other educational institutions to build capacity and to facilitate activities and strand programmes that aim to foster mobility of students across the two

countries, and also activities and strand programmes for jointly supported scholarships and fellowships. Post the signing ceremony, Sibal said that the UKIERI Phase One was a huge success, and that he was expecting greater success in the second phase.



## INDIA, UK JOIN HANDS FOR DEFENCE R&D

India and the United Kingdom entered into a letter of arrangement to pursue collaborative defence R&D cooperation with the United Kingdom's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, and facilitate making the best use of respective research and technology development capabilities through joint projects, collaborative research and industry and academia participation. The agreement was signed in London by Dr. V.K. Saraswat, Scientific Adviser to the Defence Minister, Secretary - Defence R&D, and Director General - Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), India; and Professor Sir Mark Welland, Chief Scientific Adviser, Ministry of Defence, the United Kingdom. Dr. Saraswat was on a visit to the U.K. on the invitation of the U.K. Ministry of Defence. The agreement marks a milestone in the technical collaboration between the two countries, and a

number of projects are being planned in the coming months. "India and the U.K. have a history of cooperation and have thriving science and engineering communities. India is a powerhouse of technology. Indian and British defence scientists will be working together on technologies to face their country's defence and security challenges, thanks to the new agreement," Sir Mark said.

**Content sourced from India Digest, a publication of the High Commission of India, London**

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# DIWALI AT DOWNING STREET

It doesn't get bigger than this. British Prime Minister David Cameron hosted a glittering Diwali reception at his residence, No. 10 Downing Street, to celebrate the festival of lights, with a distinguished guest list comprised of luminaries of the Indian community. As guests walked into the hallowed portals of No. 10 Downing Street, they were transported to what can best be described as a Rajasthani *haveli* in the heart of London, resplendent with *diyas*, garlands and Indian handicrafts. Leading members of the Hindu, Sikh and Jain communities, along with parliamentarians and British-Asians serving in the armed forces celebrated Diwali with Prime Minister Cameron. Prominent attendees included acting High Commissioner of India, HE Rajesh Prasad, and other dignitaries such as Lord Dolar Popat, Lord Navnit Dholakia, Lord Karan Bilimoria, Jimmy Mistry and Sir Mota Singh QC. Addressing the guests, Prime Minister Cameron said, "I want to send my very best wishes to all our communities here in the United Kingdom and around the world celebrating the festival of Diwali. Diwali, with all its references to friendship, family and fellowship, is something that we can all embrace and celebrate. It gives me enormous pleasure to be able to again host Downing Street's celebration of Diwali. As well as celebrating Diwali, which is so important to British Hindus, Sikhs and Jains, we should also recognise and celebrate the immense contribution the British Hindu and the British Indian community make to our country. In every single sphere you have excelled, bringing our cultures and communities much closer together. So may this New Year bring you great success in your endeavours. I wish you and your family a happy Diwali." On a more political note, he went on to say, the Libyan people have deposed their dictator, like Lord Rama did of Ravana, and that the departure of the Libyan dictator marked the beginning of a new dawn for the Libyan people.



Anjana Bhargav Festive Fashion Show and India Today UK Diwali Do at O'nitaa



A select guest list of well-heeled socialites and media and corporate big-wigs made their way to ethnic designer store O'nitaa to attend an exclusive fashion show by celebrated Indian designer Anjana Bhargav, as she showcased her special Diwali festive collection at the India Today UK Diwali do. The high profile guests enjoyed an evening of fashion and glamour, as the much anticipated look of the season was unveiled. Says designer Anjana Bhargav about her Diwali collection, "My collection was created with an international perspective, keeping my London clientele in mind. The collection was essentially traditional, but rendered in a modern and contemporary way - it has been designed to be festive yet very wearable." O'nitaa is a fashion fusion store that has, over the past couple of years, established itself as the brand for high-end ethnic wear in London, resplendent with collections by leading designers from India and Pakistan,



hand-picked by the store's owner Onita to cater to the needs of her select clientele. "With the social scene picking up considerably around Diwali, what better time to have a fashion event than Diwali, to showcase the hot looks this season," says Onita. Teaming up with India Today made the event all the more exclusive, as India Today is the magazine of choice for the top brass of the Indian community in the U.K., and it's high profile readership is an extension of the customer base that O'nitaa caters to. Good and evil forces collided on the runway in a mock tussle, as the male models dressed in white and black, representing good and evil respectively, enthralled the audiences with a modern day fashion forward rendition of the Ramayana epic, in keeping with the Diwali theme for the fashion show, with the willowy female models sporting a high fashion look providing the customary Diwali fireworks as they scorched the ramp.



SALIM MALIK PHOTOGRAPHY

**Anjalee & Arjun Kapoor Fashion Show and Events by Design Charity Diwali Do at Mint Leaf**



India's leading couturiers Anjalee and Arjun Kapoor weaved magic at a fashion show that left guest spellbound at Mint Leaf restaurant in London as they teamed up with Events by Design to raise money for IIMPACT, a charity whose goal is to combat the low female literacy levels in rural Indian communities to promote gender equality. High profile guests were treated to an evening of 'cutting edge' fashion as they savoured delectable delicacies against the backdrop of the designer duo's latest collection being unveiled. Gemstone, colors, cuts and the love of romance comprises this Victorian inspired collection which included Opera style ball gowns. A special line for the fashion conscious of London, inspired by the Phantom of the Opera, the collection combines traditional Moghul motifs with The Victorian Art of Faberge and gold inlaying with jewels encrusted into the garments to create textile masterpieces. Events by Design, the organizers of the fashion show chose to time their event with Diwali. They said, "Diwali is a time when



Indian communities the world over come together for social events. At the same time it is when we remember those less fortunate than ourselves and try to help and to give. We have tried to combine these themes by creating a fashion show for our community that will benefit a charitable cause. IIMPACT raises funds to educate women in India and Events by Design believe this will help to ensure that their lives improve, their rights are protected and they achieve long term sustainability. We have been supported by Anjalee and Arjun Kapoor who are leading figures in India's fashion industry. Their collection gave the show an exquisite look and glamorous feel making this charitable event extra special for all the guests." Designer Anjalee Kapoor said she supports IIMPACT because she believes that their work in helping to educate women is vitally important to the future of India and that she hopes to be able to encourage more women to be involved with IIMPACT, and to support the cause as it is one that she feels all women can relate to.



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# A BESPOKE DIWALI-DESIGNS ON LONDON

Indian fashion designer Anjana Bhargav tells *Jyotika Oberoi* she has designs on London this Diwali as she showcases a special Diwali collection at exclusive ethnic designer store O'nitaa.



■ **Tell us about the special Diwali collection you've designed, which you showcased in London?**

My Diwali collection was created with an international perspective – the collection was traditional, but rendered in a modern and contemporary way. The fabrics are soft and the embroideries minimal. Colours are a mix of the vibrant

and subtle, and the collection has been designed to be festive yet very wearable.

■ **What is the scope for Indian designers in the international market, particularly in London and the UK, home to a large and ever-increasing, affluent Indian diaspora.**

I feel the scope for Indian designers is immense, particularly in the UK, because of the presence of a large and affluent Asian community and the fact that not everyone can travel to India as frequently as they may want to. Having said that, I also feel that the collections must be suited to western sensibilities and lifestyle, to cater to the international market i.e. Indian in feel and texture but international in silhouettes and appeal, so that they can be worn to mainstream events – traditional Indian fabrics and embroidery with a modern twist.

■ **India has a rich history of its own unique fashion – saris, lehengas etc. The sari or lehenga can be a wonderful red carpet dress – as extravagant as any ball gown or as fashionable as any cocktail dress. How do you get more celebrities in the west to wear Indian fashion on the red carpet – Hermes saris, anyone?**

For this to happen, like I mentioned earlier, Indian sensibilities have to evolve and become more contemporary and mainstream, without losing their Indian appeal, of course. What is more likely to happen is for international celebrities to wear Indian fashion inspired outfits on the red carpet rather than Indian outfits per se – an evening gown which takes its inspiration from the *lehenga* would look sensational.

■ **In the West, designers come out with seasonal collections while as in India there are also festive collections such as the Diwali and Eid collection. Is that because it is customary to wear new clothes on festive occasions or is it because the Indian social scene is getting more and more fashionable?**

World over, seasons in fashion are limited to spring summer and autumn winter. India is unique in that in addition it also has festive collections –

*Diwali, Eid, Raksha Bandhan, Karva Chauth* are festivals that people want to dress up for and buy gifts for their loved ones. There's a ready market there for designers to tap into and cater to. Also, there is the wedding season in India, which in particular is getting increasingly fashionable, which is bigger than any Spring Summer or Autumn Winter season, or even the festive season for that matter. So the sky's the limit when it comes to business potential for Indian designers if you look at the combined opportunity that all the 'seasons' put together present, which is unique to India.

■ **There was only one Indian designer (Ashish Gupta) showing at the recently concluded London Fashion Week. Why is it that more Indian fashion designers are not able to penetrate the western/international scene?**

I don't know the answer to this for a fact, but perhaps this is because the logistics of showing internationally is something that not many Indian designers can manage, and the ones that do showcase their collections on the international scene choose Paris or Milan over New York or London because they can't be at all of them (one possibly needs deep pockets and a really big setup for that), and the former translate into more visibility and bigger business opportunities than the latter given that Paris and Milan are the Meccas of fashion.

■ **Particularly for Indians abroad it can be said that Bollywood (movies/celebrities) dictates Indian fashion rather than the Indian fashion designers/industry. Do you agree?**

I don't think Bollywood dictates fashion so much anymore. I think fashion statements are endorsed by celebrities and Bollywood stars make them more visible and all the rage. But the rage actually starts at the designers' working table when they create something that will appeal to a celebrity who will want to sport it and make it a fashion statement. I think Bollywood and fashion are inextricably linked, but Bollywood does not dictate fashion as such... in fact it's increasingly becoming the other way around.



# AN EPIC DIWALI - OF INDIAN RAMAS AND RAVANAS

Lady Kishwar Desai - Columnist; Author; Winner of the Costa First Novel Award for 'Witness the Night'

This year the historic Ramlila Maidan in Delhi has held a special significance for the Indian people because two middle class mini-revolutions took place there in the past six months. Or perhaps they were just rehearsals for the larger battle between good and evil, which is still to take place – and before the actual enactment of the mythological Ramlila, earlier this month.

The first off the mark was yoga guru Baba Ramdev's rather tortuous (and aborted) skirmish against "corruption". It was followed by social activist Anna Hazare's more successful *aandolan* to annihilate evil with his *brahmastra* of the Jan Lokpal Bill. The whole country had practically ground to a standstill watching the barbs flying back and forth, between civil society and the *sarkar*. The arsenal comprised not of magical weapons of yore – but of poisonous comments made on TV, Facebook and Twitter. These are often more dangerous than a lethal blow – because the victim dies, but far more slowly, of vitriol.

Thus by the time the real Ramlila was staged at the historic Delhi grounds and Congress President Sonia Gandhi bravely took up a bow and arrow to pierce the effigy of Ravana, there was a blurring of reality and theatre. For many the actual battle may have already been won by the unlikely warrior from Ralegaon Siddhi, Anna Hazare, a rather diminutive Rama.

India is a country of symbolism – and no one did it better this year than Team Anna, as the civil society group of change-makers around Hazare came to be known.

For instance, one of the most striking images of this year so far has been of the Anna Hazare cap or topi, which is quite regularly worn by the frugal Gandhian. Using it successfully as a symbol of protest, Hazare revived the Gandhi topi cult in India, taking it away from politicians and planting it squarely on the head of the *aam aadmi*. Painted with the slogan 'I am Anna Hazare'

thousands of topis sold within the space of a few weeks. While Hazare himself has become an icon – his topi has also become associated with defiance in the fight against corruption, of good against evil.

Interestingly, therefore, as the Ganesh festival took place around the same time as Hazare's agitation, many of the idols of the elephant god cheekily wore the topi. Others bore a marked resemblance to the 74-year-old Hazare, with the easily identifiable *kurta-pyjama*. In India it is always street art and popular culture which immediately begins to reflect the mood of the moment—and those nimble fingered sculptors who prepare the idols for worship were quick to grab a topical idea.

But as the issue of corruption continued to dominate mainstream debate it was apparent that during both Durga puja and Dussehra the idol-makers were spoilt for choice for villains. Which corrupt demon would the Goddess Durga crush this year, and which hydra-headed Ravana would Rama annihilate? Let us not forget all the wonderful politicians – modern day Ravanans – languishing in Tihar Jail, albeit none really as intellectual as Ravana was supposed to be.

There were just too many alleged crooks to choose from this year. Whether it was Suresh Kalmadi allegedly playing Ravana in the CWG scam, A Raja or Kanimozhi allegedly grabbing the loot in the 2G Telecom scandal, or an Amar Singh allegedly indicted in the cash-for-vote outrage...the list is endless. But with the constant turmoil and fresh allegations emerging every day we barely remember the older scams when a new one emerges. In this fast moving scenario in India, we can have a brand new Ravana each week! Even though there has been hot competition this year for the leading parts in the mythological drama, the jury is still out about who is Ravana No 1. Seriously, the problem appears to be that there are too

many contenders for Ravana of the Year and very few for Rama. Or even Sita.

But in some cases, even the anti-corruption crusaders have had their roles somewhat muddled.

Yes – Ramdev had everyone agog over his actual status. Was he a baddie or a good guy? No one knew for sure, and many are still puzzled. At first ministers rushed to the airport to greet him with fervour (when he first materialised as a possible avatar of Rama). Within a few days of interaction they decided he was actually a *behroopia*, and had been Ravana all along. Honestly –if governments were given the task of writing the Ramayana it would be a complete mess! Thus Ramdev's fateful enactment of the famous epic fell rather flat – with many questioning how the erstwhile Ram alias Ravana could leave the Ramlila ground while dressed like Sita? It was definitely theatre of the absurd as Swami Ramdev saved life, limb and *lajja* to actually dress as a woman in order to escape from the chaotic grounds, while the police conducted a midnight swoop. I think the idol makers may be a little puzzled where they place him in the Ramayana pantheon – so I would suggest that they make a tableau of Ramdev playing all three roles –complete with his beard!

So could we say that it was the Anna Hazare 'Ramlila' which seemed a little true to type (and hype), even though Hazare played an older, fasting Rama? He certainly had his supporting team with the activist Arvind Kejriwal and lawyer Prashant Bhushan as his Hanuman and Lakshman, and even a safari suit clad Sita (no offence meant), in Kiran Bedi. But in this version of Ramayana, he had to rescue the Jan Lokpal Bill by setting the parliament on fire – and in fact, he almost succeeded! Hazare's event at the Ramlila grounds even lasted close to ten days. So is life imitating mythology? Or is it the other way round? And how long will this show last?

I can only say *Hey Ram!*

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# A PROSPEROUS DIWALI - HEAR MY PLEA LAKSHMIJI

■ **Alpesh Patel - Member UK India Roundtable (2000-5); Trustee Chatham House; Board Member UK India Business Council; author of thirteen books on investing including 'The Mind of A Trader'**

Dear Lakshmiiji,  
Although living in the economically bankrupt West, I really think at this time of Diwali there is something for us to learn from Christmas. Not the mindless materialism and the perennial complaint that Diwali is going down the route of Christmas and a time of unaffordable gifts, lavish show and hedonistic parties, all losing the true religious root of the celebration. Rather the thing for us to remember at the time of Diwali, from Christmas, is hope. Hope is what Christmas and the Christian New Year brings. Hope is what Diwali and the Hindu New Year brings – this year more than most.

As the New Year approaches, my hopes springs, Lakshmiiji, from several avenues, and I pray to you it continues. First, there is the upside to economic devastation. Yes, indeed there is. I have never been to more charitable functions as I have this year – in India, in London and in New York. Is it that the rich are embarrassed? From Akshaya Patra, Pratham, the Global Party to the Loomba Trust. Or that it is the vogue way to show wealth – by hosting a charity function. Either way, it is working, and I am encouraged. Austerity seems to bring those with prosperity to charity. Amen.

Of course for every negative economic story making the headlines is a good story buried under the fold on page 54. 'Twas always thus. I am hopeful, not dejected, that unemployment in the UK and US is under 10%, despite the credit crunch. I am even hopeful that the land of our beloved leader (Soniaji), Italy, has debt levels to destabilise the Euro – for Lakshmiiji, it is Italy – they go through three recessions in the same time frame any other major economy goes through one. And as for Greece bringing gloom this Diwali to

European celebrations – Lakshmiiji, it is a micro-economy – Greece is to the EU as a mouse is to Ganesh.

And when we talk about your specialist topic of wealth creation, I am hopeful because even if the US and Europe do not grow at all, both economies will still produce around \$14 trillion each of goods and services. And that is without the precious 1% growth that their politicians are chasing. Do they not realise they are spending more in debt to try to create that 1% than the 1% itself?! Someone needs to do some basic math. I am hopeful because when India grows at 8% annually, it not only creates wealth, but also makes up for America not making it's targeted 1% annual growth.

Take stock markets Lakshmiiji. Yes, every major stock market in the world is down this year. Some as much as 20%, and others, like the Americans, as little as 1%. Even our much praised and sometimes envied communist Chinese neighbours' stocks are down. But the Indian market, although down 15% this year, is surely an opportunity to buy into an economy growing at the fastest rate of any major democracy. And when it recovers that lost 15%, I will have made about 20%. Again, something to be very hopeful about. (I did the math, Lakshmiiji). At this rate, I will not have to consider moving from Mayfair to Kensington – just when Mayfair was becoming 'Little India', with so many Desi summer homes, or should I say monsoon homes.

That brings me to property prices. The luxury home market is going up in the UK – well London – rich Russians don't want to live outside London (I am thinking of starting Knightsbridge United Football Club as my next venture – your chicken farmers may be willing to

go to Blackburn but Delhites want to be walking distance to their football team). The rich stay rich, even in recession. Little wonder Ferrari and Aston Martin launched this year in India.

And what of debt? I am hopeful here because the Chinese and the Japanese are willing and able to buy Spanish and Portuguese and Italian debt. And we easily forget major corporations are producing more profits than ever in their history. Take Tata Motors – 1 billion pounds in profits from their UK base. Who speaks of that, and the tax revenues, and the jobs? Yes, governments and individuals are indebted and pray to you – you but you have answered the prayers of the corporates. After all, we live in a world where Apple has more cash in its bank account than the US government has in its.

But am I being too optimistic? Am I putting too much reliance on India (and China) bailing out the world? India – where I read about corruption? As the Wall Street Journal said, 'The roots of continued poverty lie in four decades of socialism, not in two decades of half-hearted capitalism that, for all its flaws, lifted more Indians out of poverty than any other force in history.' Although, unlike the simpletons, I am aware in 1975 and 1976 India achieved 9% growth spurred by an increase in savings and investments following bank nationalisation during the so-called 'socialist' era. I mention this Lakshmiiji, as you are the Goddess of Capitalism, and capitalism is in crisis. But I am hopeful for the poor regardless.

I am not merely being optimistic, as I should be at Diwali – as a man once said, 'when you believe in things you do not understand, then you suffer', and I fear this is what is happening with the press and economy. Amen.



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A photograph of two tigers in a jungle at sunset. The tigers are standing on their hind legs, facing each other, with their front paws raised as if in a playful or confrontational gesture. The background is filled with golden light from the setting sun, illuminating the trees and the tigers' fur. The overall mood is warm and majestic.

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