



British Indians deserve an Independent review into Covid-19 deaths

As India's Independence Day is celebrated around the world, I would like to send my warmest wishes to all British Indians.

The contribution that Londoners of Indian descent have made and continue to make to the success of our capital and our country is incalculable.

From life-saving work in hospitals, surgeries and the emergency services, to helping keep our city moving with public and private transport and powering the economy through businesses large and small, Londoners of Indian descent have helped to shape all aspects of our society.

Throughout this pandemic, we have seen this more than ever, with Londoners of Indian descent serving their communities on the frontline, volunteering to help others or simply playing their part by staying at home. Even in the toughest of times, they have shown the very best of the spirit of our city. But, tragically, we have seen many lose their lives.

It has long been clear that people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds have been disproportionately impacted by Covid-19, with those from South Asian communities among the most



likely to die in hospital. This is simply unacceptable and British Indians deserve proper answers.

The events of recent months have spurred much-needed conversations about racism and systemic injustice and it is clear significant action must follow. That is why I have repeatedly called on the Government to ensure that the ethnicity of people who die from Covid-19 is recorded on their death certificates, and why I continue to call for an independent public inquiry into the causes of the disparity and for measures to be put in place to ensure change.

So, as we celebrate another year since India gained its independence, we must also ensure the hard-won rights and freedoms in Britain, secured through generations of activism and sacrifice, are available to all. And as we begin to recover from this crisis, we must prioritise forging a new social contract - one which advances the twin causes of racial and economic equality and supports the welfare and wellbeing of every single community in this country.

- Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London

Celebrating Indians who laid their lives for us

On this historic day, let us remember the thousands who laid down their lives to protect the dignity of the flag of India. At a time where there is much uncertainty in the world due to the terrible pandemic that is COVID-19 we must take the opportunity to celebrate those who have left their homeland and settled in the United Kingdom and who have become pillars of society.

My constituency Harrow East is one of the most diverse constituencies in the country and I am proud to represent a high percentage of people who have left India to begin a new life in the UK.

In Harrow East, the Indian community are always prominent in local events and are the first to help. I was greatly touched by the number of volunteers from the Indian diaspora that immediately offered their help during the height of the pandemic to offer resources such as food, drinks, PPE and medicine to those in need. In my opinion this embodies the kind and sympathetic nature of the Indian people who have always been most welcoming when I have had the pleasure to visit community events.

Sadly, the pandemic has cost too many lives in the local Indian community. It is vital that we establish why so many people were afflicted with



this dreadful virus and also why so many have died.

On this day, it is important to celebrate the spirit of freedom today and enjoy the independence which was hard won. Happy Independence Day!

Jai Hind

- Bob Blackman, Conservative MP for Harrow East

A tribute to the anti-colonialists

I am incredibly proud of the multiculturalism of my home city. Leicester is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse places in the UK, and each of our interlinked communities contribute significantly to our collective religious, cultural and political life. In my first months as the MP for Leicester East, I have been working hard to ensure that I am a friend and ally to all communities in our wonderful city.

Leicester's identity is forged from a proud history of immigration, particularly from India. As a staunch anti-imperialist, I celebrate Indian Independence Day for igniting many global anti-colonial independence movements in the decades after WWII. Since independence in 1947, many Indians have travelled to the UK and made Leicester their home. According to the latest census, Leicester has the second highest Indian-born population in the UK.

Leicester is defined by our diversity. Over two-thirds of our community are from an African, Asian or minority ethnic background, and nearly half of our residents were born outside the UK. We are home to 240 faith groups across 14 different faiths, and our residents hail from over 50 countries.

This is what makes Leicester special. We are the city where the minorities make up the majority, and we are richer for this vibrant exchange of cultures. I have been



working hard to represent the Indian community throughout my short time as Leicester's MP, from lobbying the government for the safe return of British residents stranded in India to advocating for protections to the British Asian Wedding Industry.

I am incredibly proud to have been born and bred in such a wonderfully diverse city. Yet I do not take tolerance and multiculturalism for granted. The right for different communities and cultures to live side by side has been fought for by generations of struggle.

At a time when hate crime has more than doubled since 2013, and when powerful people are attempting to blame communities for the government's mishandling of the coronavirus crisis, it has never been more important for our communities to come together and unite. We must oppose any attempt to divide us based on nationality or religion.

On the 73rd anniversary of Indian Independence, I wish all members of Leicester's Indian community a happy and safe celebration. I will join you in celebrating the unique and enduring contribution of the Indian diaspora to Leicester's economy, culture and identity.

- Claudia Webbe, Labour MP for Leicester East

Masala curry to artificial jewellery: The new Kohinoor of India's success in the UK

I am very pleased to see the immense progress made by India in its 74 years of Independence. The recent confirmation from Chancellor Rishi Sunak (first Indian-origin MP with keys to No. 11) about wanting Mahatma Gandhi's face on the British coin is a hallmark of Indian diaspora's success in the UK.

Hard-working Indians have been making success stories long before Independence.

During two world wars, the British Indian armies played leading roles and were awarded with prestigious awards and knighthoods. Maharaja Duleep Singh was brought to the UK with his Kohinoor diamond. Crying one day, he had said, "I have no one to talk with me in my mother tongue." Since, then the UK has changed.

Today, Indians are living in every town and city of the UK. Soon after Indian independence in 1947, the British felt that they were in dire need of Indian workforce who came in without any problems and baggage attached to them. Fellow Indian-origin individuals from Uganda have made worthwhile and

notable contributions to the UK today. Thousands of Indians are celebrated success stories in the UK for their hard-work, skill-set and business acumen thereby, contributing to the UK's economic growth.

Indians have established their footprint in various industries such as medicine, ophthalmology, dentistry, pharmacy, accountancy and law. Lately, there has been a good record of Indians operating in hospitality, trade and property sectors as well.

The influence of Indian culture right from masala curries to artificial jewellery and ethnic sarees have become a style-statement for British ladies. Thousands of places of worship including the Gurudwaras and Mandirs have been brought into culmination by the united efforts of the Indian diaspora.

I offer my heartiest congratulations to the India diaspora for the significant milestones achieved across UK and wish them luck for all future endeavours. And I congratulate India for her magnanimous journey in becoming "Great India".

- Lord Rambir Singh Suri

