



Asian lawyers dine out at annual awards bash

HUNDREDS of Asian lawyers gathered together last week to celebrate their achievements in the industry.

The annual Society of Asian Lawyers (SAL) Awards and Ball, one of the biggest social events in the legal calendar, saw 500 guests in attendance at the Lancaster Hotel in west London.

In his address, Jo Sidhu QC, president, Society of Asian Lawyers told the guests that SAL's doors were "always open to

those who shared their values and our mission to promote genuine equality of opportunity".

"We've inputted constructively to consultations about the big changes confronting the legal services industry. And we've stood up strongly for Asian firms and barristers because we recognise the invaluable contribution they have made to the broader community of British lawyers," he said.

"Because, quite simply, we

believe the livelihoods of thousands of hardworking Asian lawyers up and down the country should not be sacrificed on the altar of political ideology or short sighted expediency.

He added: "I believe that we, as Asian lawyers, have an indispensable role to play in mediating that tricky ground between citizen and state.

"If ordinary people are to feel confidence that the legal system is there to protect them

from injustice so too must they feel that the lawyers who are the face of that system are also part of their communities."

Camilla Choudhury-Khawaja won the Rising Star Award, Sujata Sharma, the Commercial/Civil Lawyer of the Year Award, Kiran Mehta, the Criminal Lawyer of the Year Award and Kim Hollis QC won the Lifetime Achievement Award.

■ For more, see www.societyofasianlawyers.co.uk

LEGAL STARS: Nabeel Sheikh, Camilla Choudhury-Khawaja and Jo Sidhu



HEALTH DRIVE: Keith Vaz MP; Chizzy Akudolu and Jesse Jackson

MPs take up charity health diabetes test

KEITH VAZ LEADS SILVER STAR CHALLENGE

SENIOR politicians who celebrated Diwali at Westminster took a diabetes test in support of a charity health challenge while indulging in Indian sweets.

The MPs took part in the Silver Star Diabetes Health Challenge as part of Diwali festivities at the House of Commons last month.

The national charity raises awareness of diabetes by delivering free diabetes testing and lifestyle advice and through advocacy.

Minister of state for culture, communications and creative industries Ed Vaizey MP; minister for defence procurement Philip Dunne MP; former first minister of Scotland Alex Salmond MP; minister of culture, arts and leisure (Northern Ireland) Gregory Campbell MP; and the chairman of the Home Affairs Select Committee, Keith Vaz MP, along with other MPs, were issued with a Silver Star Diabetes Pedometer, which measures the number of steps taken on a chosen day. The MPs also took a diabetes test.

Actor Chizzy Akudolu, who plays Dr. Mo in BBC's *Holby City*, joined in the efforts and handed MPs the pedometer.

Silver Star Diabetes runs Mobile Diabetes Units (MDU's) which tests the public for free for diabetes and offers lifestyle advice. The event was supported by Astra Zeneca and Abbott Diabetes Care.

Dr Modhwadia, chairman of the trustees for Silver Star Diabetes, said: "I am delighted so many MPs took the test and the pedometer challenge. Silver Star has tested over 49,000 people for diabetes and continues to reach out to communities to raise awareness for the condition.

"Being tested is important to ensure that the condition is spotted early and people can get the right treatment as soon as possible."

National clinical director for Obesity and Diabetes at NHS England, Professor Jonathan Valabhji, added: "Diabetes is one of the biggest health challenges we face today. There are 3.2 million people living with diabetes, the majority of whom have Type 2 diabetes, the onset of which can be prevented or delayed by a healthy lifestyle.

"Exercise is an important component of a healthy lifestyle. I applaud Silver Star's efforts to provide practical support and information to so many MPs who have decided to take the test."

Preston celebrates new BAPS temple

HUNDREDS of local residents took part in celebrations to mark the inauguration of the new BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Preston last month.

Saints from India and the UK attended the opening of the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in the presence of Sadguru Pujya Swayamprakash Swami.

The first BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir in Preston was set up in a disused synagogue in 1984. As the Hindu community grew, fundraising activities were launched to help the temple.

Over two days last month (November 7-8), celebrations began with a special prayer followed by consecration of the deities. A colourful city procession, with floats, traditional dances and devotional music, made its way through the city.

The occasion was marked with a programme at the University of Central Lancashire



CEREMONY: Idols are consecrated

where saints and young people sang hymns to the accompaniment of musical instruments.

The new temple will serve as the hub of spiritual, community and charity services for BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha in Preston and the Lancashire area.

MP for Preston, Mark Hen-

drick, said in his address: "I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to everyone at the Preston Mandir. I would like to congratulate all the individuals who have worked extremely hard over the last few years to get this ambitious project completed."

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