



SANGH MAIL

Sanskār • Sewā • Sangathan

JULY/ AUGUST 2023:
Sangh Shiksha Varg

Sangh Mail is a monthly publication showcasing the activities of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (UK) for circulation to it's members and well-wishers.

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46th Annual HSS (UK), Sangh Shiksha Varg 2023



The annual Sangh Shiksha Varg (SSV) was held from 29th July to 6th August 2023, in the Midlands, UK. A record number, 439, attended this year, representing 60 towns and 15 Indian languages. Participants spent 9 days completing Prathmik, Pravesh, Praveen, Prabandhak and Shikshak Varsh for under 18's. For the third year running, this also included Prathmik and Pravesh Varsh for Swayamsevaks and Sevika's over the age of 25 years as well. Each Varsh (year group) had a detailed schedule, covering a range of activities over the 9 days.

Shiksharthi's (students) followed a structured daily timetable, from 6.00 am to 10.30 pm covering Shareerik (Physical) and Bauddhik (Lectures, Discussions and Workshops) activities. A range of sessions covered Yoga, learning how to play instruments, self -defence, learning new Geet (songs) and discussions about Hindu dharma. There was also the much loved Ratri-karyakram (night program) which allowed the students to showcase their learnings and talents through performances. Sewa bhav (selfless service and values) was also inculcated through each year, by taking turns to serve others during Bhojan (meal) time. To ensure the Varg ran smoothly, the Prabandhaks (support teams) managed the logistics of the Varg, from cleaning and cooking, to the tech requirements for the sessions. Everyone came together and played their part.

Guests including, Suresh ji from Shrimad Rajachandra Ashram Koba, Trustees of Heartfulness UK, Key officials of BAPS, Iskcon, and other Hindu organisations as well as local councillors from across the UK and were impressed with the dedication and discipline of the Shiksharthi's living and learning harmoniously together.

The Varg concluded with a memorable Samarop function where the Chief Guest Shri Nitin ji Palan (MBE, FCA), with Dr. Ramesh ji Pattni (OBE, Trustee of Chinmaya Mission UK) and Smt. Madhvi ji Haria (Joint General Secretary, HSS (UK)) addressed the gathering of over 500 guests.





44 Shikshaks
(30 Swayamsevak / 14 Sevikas)
38 Prabandhaks
(30 Swayamsevak / 8 Sevikas)
12 Adhikaris
(7 Swayamsevak / 5 Sevikas)



439 participants in total!



Left to Right: Shri Dhiraj ji Shah - Kendriya Sanghchalak, HSS (UK), Shri Nitin ji Palan - MBE, FCA, represented BAPS Sanstha for 27 years as interfaith representative, SSV Samarop Chief Guest, Dr Ramesh ji Pattni - OBE, Trustee of Chinmaya Mission UK and Varg Sarva Adhikari, Smt Madhvi ji Haria - Kendriya Saha-Karyawaha (Joint General Secretary), HSS (UK), Dr Yogish ji Joshi - Kendriya Saha-Karyawaha (Joint General Secretary), HSS (UK)



Dr Ramesh ji Pattni shared his profound experience of SSV at Samaroop, as the Varg Sarva Adhikari, witnessing participants embrace Dharmic values of Tapas, Ahimsa & Satya. His hope and gratitude for future dharmic leaders shone through after engaging with Karyakarta's, Shikshak's and Shiksharthi's during the Varg. Shri Nitin ji applauded the Shiksharthi's for completing SSV and urged them to be Hindu Dharma ambassadors, spreading the message of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam - 'One World, One Family'. Smt. Madhvi ji emphasised our joint responsibility - educators, parents & students alike - to infuse Hindu Values into our lives. She encouraged all to forge a stronger, prouder Hindu Community, which positively contributes to the UK's future.



Smt. Madhvi ji Haria - Kendriya Saha-Karyawaha (Joint General Secretary), HSS (UK)



Chief Guest at Samarop Function: Shri Nitin ji Palan - MBE, FCA, represented BAPS Sanstha for 27 years as interfaith representative

Mission Accomplished at 4.23pm!



Organising Sangh Shiksha Varg is no simple matter! For many months a core team of Karyakartas are planning, galvanising secondary teams, and making sure all preparations are diligently managed. At the centre of this and from the day the venue is confirmed, is the team that lends all support from the Nagar. For the year 2023, it was Leicester. They helped with all logistics, including food purchase, transport, and site setup, ready for receiving around 500 full-time residents.

Little wonder, that they breathe a sigh of relief when their mission is accomplished when they hand back the venue in the same condition as they found it. Signing off at 4.32pm on Sunday 6th August 2023, just in time for a cuppa!

Bringing generations together



This year, SSV was a unique year for two families. Three generations of the same family attended SSV - Mananiya Dhiraj ji D. Shah (uncle of Vishal ji), Vishal ji Uttam Shah (father) and Veer ji (son). To top this, another family had four members across three generations attending. Shri Vidula ji Ambekar, with daughter Jahnvi ji Dadarkar, and grandchildren Pallavi ji and Bhushan ji.

We hope that we will continue to see many generations come together and bond over their SSV experiences!





Vistaar Varsh- The start of a new journey!

It was an auspicious start for Ushni ji Rabadia of Vistaar year in Bradford. Post-SSV, she begins her Vistaar Varsh (sabbatical year). Over the year she will travel across the country, meeting and engaging with many people and communities, and be involved in many more HSS(UK) activities. Another Vistarak has stepped up for an incredible journey and life changing experience. We wish Ushni ji all the best for this wonderful year ahead!



More News!

संगठन में शक्ति है!

Sangathan main shakti hai!

SCHOOL VISIT TO SHARE THE IMPORTANCE OF YOGA



Leamington Shakha

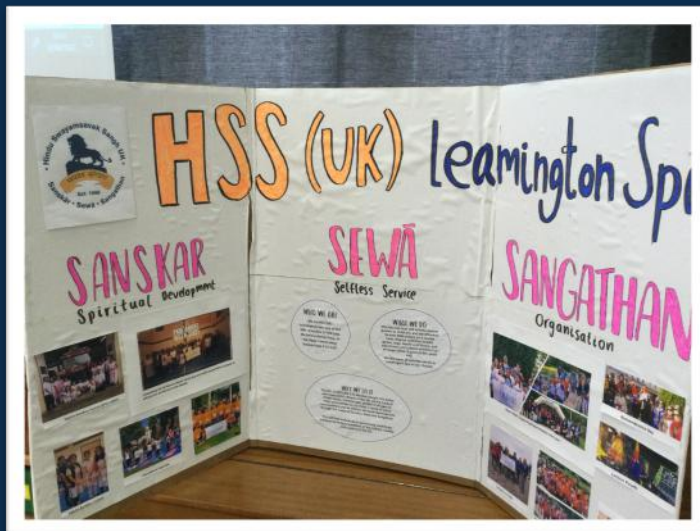
A week dedicated to health and wellbeing cannot be complete without having at least one day devoted to Yoga.

Shrubland Primary School, Leamington Spa invited HSS(UK), to conduct a session on Yoga for children in the school for their health and wellbeing week.

We started the session with a brief introduction to HSS(UK). A video presentation highlighting the three pillars of our Sangh which are Sanskar, Sewa and Sangathan was shown to the children.

After that, we did a warm up sessions, and then taught the children different yoga postures, laughter yoga, meditation, and mindfulness. The session was concluded by chanting 'Om' and bowing down with gratitude to our life and our life journey ahead.

The program was thoroughly enjoyed by all the children and teachers. The school was very happy with the session being part of their program and are keen to have more sessions like this with us in future.





INDIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS



ABHIMANYU AND SITA SHAKHA SLOUGH

The Abhimanyu and Sita Shakha Slough radiated with patriotic pride on the 13th of August 2023, as it celebrated 77th Independence Day of India with fervour and unity. The Shakha began with an inspiring display of national spirit, as everyone adorned themselves in the vibrant colours of orange, green, and white, symbolizing the revered Indian tricolour. The atmosphere was charged with enthusiasm, setting the tone for a remarkable celebration.

Following the regular Shakha activities, the spotlight turned to the young and enthusiastic primary school children, who had been diligently practicing a selection of patriotic Geets (songs) for the past few weeks, showcased their dedication and talent. Their performances were a testament to their unwavering commitment to paying homage to the nation's freedom struggle. The rendition of the national anthem, "Jan Gan Mann," was a collective tribute to the unity and strength that bind the nation together. It was followed by the soul-stirring "Prāṇo Se Priya Hame Hai Yaha Hindu Bhū Hamārī," geet, a heartfelt ode to the motherland.

Adding an educational touch to the celebration, a session was held sharing intriguing fact about Independence Day, enriching the understanding of the nation's history. Mananiya Bharat ji Mistry, the Sanghachalak of West London Vibhag, further enriched the session by addressing the Indian Flag code of conduct and its inherent significance, highlighting how it is an embodiment of our values and ideals.

This Independence Day celebration in the Abhimanyu and Sita Shakha underscored the fact that despite the diversity of cultures we hail from, our shared devotion to Bharat Mata always takes precedence, embodying the essence of unity in diversity.



READING HANUMAN SHAKHA INTRODUCING KABBADI TO THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM!

During our kishore baithak a pivotal moment arose when Shri Sharad ji Shah (Kendriya Shareerik Pramukh) visited and attended the baithak with an interesting proposal. He urged the kishores to consider forming a kabaddi team for the khel competition. The idea resonated deeply with the kishores, sparking a series of kabaddi sessions in the following weeks. Delving into the essence of this sport, we held insightful sessions to understand its qualities and intricacies. Motivated by their newfound knowledge, a group of us attending Reading School, approached the Head of PE, to talk to him about the inclusion of kabaddi at school. Impressed by the enthusiasm shown, this intrigued our teacher and he decided to explore and learn about this sport further and within a mere month, kabaddi was introduced as a house competition!

The format was set as each house within the year group (years 9-11) would nominate their top 9 kabaddi players. The chosen representatives from the five houses would then engage in a kabaddi tournament. Over the last term of 2023, kabaddi was such a success it has now been integrated into the school's wrestling program! **The school newsletter states that: "Kabaddi has become a big part of our wrestling scheme of work for year 9-11.**

Confidence, teamwork and intense competition! Also learning the rules!" In essence, what began as a group of young Swayamsevaks speaking proudly about kabaddi and its unique qualities to a schoolteacher, we are now able to share something from India with school children from all backgrounds. We are proud this is now part of our school curriculum.



The Chattri memorial commemorates the efforts of our Indian soldiers during the First World War.

Over one and a half million Indian soldiers bravely fought in the war. In Brighton alone, 53 soldiers from India sacrificed their lives fighting for this country. The Chattri site is placed in Brighton to give thanks for those soldiers who lost their lives. These soldiers played a role in a significant part of history. When someone asks you about the Chattri memorial, what would you think?

For myself, it invokes two things, gratitude and motivation to give back. The Indian soldiers fought for Britain, our current karma bhoomi. Many of us identify as British Indian Hindus, which means Britain and India are key to our identities and shape who we are. These soldiers fought for a country that now forms a strong base of our identities, so it connects us in not just one land, but in two.

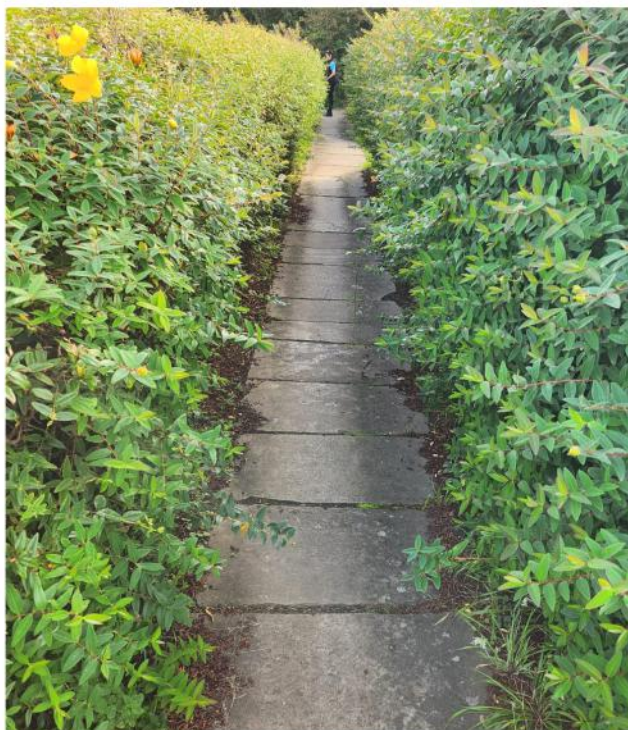




The importance of this memorial speaks for itself, yet when discussing it with fellow Indians, there seems to be a minority of those who are aware of its presence let alone the significance. In my journey of seeing the memorial for the second time, we came across a family that had also come to see the memorial, not because they had previously known about it before coming to Brighton, but simply because they stumbled upon it on Google maps. The forest overgrowth and lack of signage nearly prevented them seeing the site, without guidance they may have missed the chance to see the proof of what our own ancestors have done.



Seeing the memorial was a wake up call for myself and fellow Swayamsevaks and Sevikas. This is our history on our land, yet without maintenance and care, it will be a fading history. Memorials are sites that should be cared for with proper maintenance and respect, yet seeing the site in person and looking at the pictures it is clear the upkeep has fallen behind. The Chattri was built and designed to protect the memories of our fallen soldiers that were cremated in that area. For the history of this monument to continue, we too should uphold this care for this land.



How do ensure the protection is maintained? How do we give back to those who fought so bravely to ensure their memory is protected? We use our values: Sanskār, Sewā and Sangathan. Let us educate ourselves on our history, let us go see these sights that are so vital to our history, our present and our future. Let us share the knowledge with those around us, educating them on the impact of our soldiers. Let us unite and serve these grounds, giving them the care and service rightly deserved. I myself will undoubtedly be joining the memorial service on June 12th, will you be joining me?

- Nikita Trivedi, Ekata Parivaar Shaka



HSS(UK) Outreach with BAPS

Shri Chandrakant ji Sharma HSS(UK) accompanied by Adarniya Bal Brahmachari Shri Suresh ji of Shrimad Rajchandra Adhyatmik Sadhana Kendra (Koba), at a meeting with Yogvivek Swami and Paramtva Swami of BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, Neasden.



Photo by Aaron Burden on Unsplash

Essential Reads

*“The gift of **knowledge** is a far higher gift than that of food and clothes; it is even higher than giving life to a man, because the real life of man consists of knowledge”*



- Swami Vivekananda



HSS(UK) congratulates ISRO for the success of Chandrayaan 3!



DID
YOU
KNOW?

- Chandrayaan 3 made history by making India the first nation to land a spacecraft near the south pole of the moon.
- India is now the fourth country to have landed on the moon, along with United States of America, China and Russia, but the first to put their flag on the south pole.
- Chandrayaan 3 soft landing mission live stream on 23rd August 2023, became the most watched Youtube Live stream in Youtube history, with 8.06 million real time viewers on ISRO's official Youtube channel.¹
- The lunar lander is named Vikram, after the Indian scientist Vikram Sarabhai, who is regarded as the father of the Indian space program.
- The lunar rover named Pragyan, which will explore the moon's surface through videos and images, and collect data, to help us learn more about the moon.

India isn't 'wasting' aid on its space programme

Critics fail to see that we can reduce poverty at the same time as push new boundaries beyond Earth

VIKRAM DORAISWAMI



India's third moon-shot mission – Chandrayaan-3 – touched down on the moon's south pole last week, landing not just a rover, but also human dreams collected over the ages. Space exploration inspires us because it is genuinely exciting to see mankind's boundaries being extended. And so the excitement in India, as well as the outpouring of goodwill from thousands in the UK – including dignitaries speaking for His Majesty's Government – has been hugely heartwarming.

And yet, there has been carping in influential media outlets about why the UK's aid recipients still include India, or worse, that a developing country such as India "wastes" money on space.

This is surprising, not least because this "aid" is not at India's request. Nor

is any going to the Indian state, either.

First, India has stated that, while we welcome bilateral and plurilateral partnership with the UK to meet our collective global goals, "aid" is not needed. Such funding that continues to flow to India is thus only to non-governmental entities selected directly and solely by the UK Government. And in any case, the direction and context of such spending, as described in the Government's response to the Independent Commission for Aid Impact, is that this is essentially an effort to support Sustainable Development Goals, or promote UK business in India, through actors of the UK's own choice. So the benefit and beneficiaries of this spending are in line with your own political priorities, and not at our request.

Looking at the sums required to ensure, for instance, sustainable energy transitions in a country of India's size, the actual amount of funds being so disbursed is also genuinely small. At best, it could help catalyse large doses of funding through public-private partnerships.

As to "wasting" money on space research: our space programme is a value-for-money proposition. Put it this way: the current moon mission had a programme budget of \$75 million. Even if there are overruns, it is well below

what was spent on the Hollywood film *Avengers: Endgame*, which reportedly had a budget of \$356 million.

Our space programme also delivers hugely valuable developmental services. As prime minister Modi said at our space headquarters in Bengaluru on August 26, more than space exploration, data from the space programme has been directly used by farmers, fishing communities, water departments, meteorologists, and now for the design and monitoring of infrastructure projects. Our indigenously built satellites have provided India with state-of-the-art remote sensing services for all these needs, as well as communications support for education and healthcare, well before the internet became ubiquitous.

And so to answer why we spend on space "instead" of poverty alleviation, it might surprise some to know that we can actually walk while chewing gum. Here's how: our space programme has launched 389 satellites, earning some £320 million over the past nine years. While space earns revenue and saves us money, we have also managed to lift more than 450 million people out of multidimensional poverty since 2006. In certifying this, the UN Development Programme noted that, in this same period, incidence of poverty fell from 55 per cent of the population to 16 per



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cent; the proportion of people with lack of access to electricity fell from 24 to 2 per cent; sanitation deprivation fell from 50 to 11 per cent; and lack of potable water access fell from 16 to 3 per cent. In short, deprivation rates fell in every sector, and in every region.

The right question is to ask precisely why there was so much deprivation in India to begin with. It is instructive to see where we were on freedom from British rule in 1947: 90 per cent of India's 370 million population at the time subsisted below the poverty line, living short, precarious lives for an average of 30 years. With our freedom we inherited abysmal levels of poverty, enormous human developmental challenges, a violently divided nation, little modern infrastructure, especially in rural areas, and of course, no space programme! All these modern requirements have been built over the decades, while lifting millions out of poverty. This effort in particular has been turbo-charged in the past decade.

So to the critics: to rephrase Shakespeare's immortal quote about stars and the faults within ourselves, perhaps today, if humankind is indeed destined to reach for the stars, we need only reach within our better selves.

Vikram Doraiswami is India's High Commissioner to the UK

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When submitting your articles, here are a few points to consider:

- Provide a summary- keep articles short, highlighting the best parts
- A picture tells a thousand words - select your best photos (maximum of 8) to go with your article in the same email
 - Don't forget to include your Shakha name and location

Send all articles to sanghmail@hssuk.org

