



# SANGH MAIL

**Sanskār • Sewā • Sangathan**

**JUNE 2023:  
FOREVER YOUNG**

*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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# Shibirs







# Jyeshtha Shibir 2023



More than 80 of our 'Over 60's' experienced and lifelong Swayamsevaks came together from all across the UK, to this annual event called Jyeshtha Shibir, at Beaumanor Hall in the scenic Leicestershire countryside.

A range of sessions were hosted, learning sessions, discussions, lectures, ball games, yoga and more. The Swayamsevaks' were able to relive their memories of previous events, by taking charge once again! The whole retreat was planned and executed by themselves, from dealing with registrations, cooking delicious food for everyone and displaying excellent team work to put up tents. This was no challenge for these expert and efficient Swayamsevaks! The evening program organised brought out many individual talents, proving age is just a number and our senior Swayamsevaks are always ready to tackle new challenges. The event was thoroughly enjoyed and all the members are looking forward to the next Jyeshtha Shibir.





# North East Vibhag Shibir 2023



North East Vibhag had a successful family Shibir (camp) with 85 people who stayed overnight, with a total of 100 participants, including the day attendees. A range of activities were hosted, children's creative activities, yoga, sports and even dancing around the camp fire!

Dr Ramji Vaidya (Vishwa Vibhag Saha Samyojak) and Dr Raveendraji Surange (HSS (UK) Karyawaha) also visited and participated in the activities. Everyone worked together to organise the camp, cook and serve food and run the sessions, helping everyone develop their skills, whilst giving a personal touch to this family event. It was thoroughly enjoyed by all the ages who attended, as we got to spend lots of quality time with our HSS (UK) family.





Kannada Association Hindu Organisation (KAHO) hosted their annual Shibir (camp). This year, it was held at Leamington Spa, with a total of 350 attendees from Kannada families all over the UK participating, the highest number yet.

A range of activities were organised, including a Bharatnatyam (a classical Indian dance form) offering to Maa Chamundeshwari, and a Shibir Geet (camp song). There were art sessions, yoga sessions and lots of children's activities planned. The camp was packed with activities, a quiz and lots of scrumptious food! A range of learning sessions/ lectures were organised by a range of speakers, including Dr. Ramji Vaidya, Shri Chandrakant ji Sharma and Dr. Aarthi ji joined online from India, giving insightful talks on various topics. This Shibir was a great opportunity for attendees to meet each other, network and share their experiences, and for the children to engage in more cultural activities and make lots of new friends.





# International Yoga Day







# Shakhas across the UK hosted yoga sessions for International Yoga Day

## Leamington Spa

Leamington nagar took part in an International Yoga Day session organised by Shree Krishna Mandir. Leamington Shakha and Balgokulam led the session with Surya Namaskars (sun salutations) on the theme of Shri Vishnu's Varahavatar. The lovely weather allowed us to host the event outdoors, where everyone gathered with their yoga mats, ready to participate.







## Reading Nagar

Reading Nagar celebrated International Yoga Day in conjunction with the local Reading Pranyog team. The event, facilitated by trained yoga instructors from both HSS and Pranyog, aimed to promote physical and mental well-being among individuals of all age groups.

Opening the event was Swami Ambikananda, a Hindu monastic and the distinguished founder of The Traditional Yoga Association, who currently resides in Reading. The event boasted a diverse range of activities catering to participants of varying age brackets. For those seeking a gentle introduction to yoga, chair yoga sessions provided an accessible option, while specialised classes were offered for children, women, and men. Attendees also had the opportunity to attend informative talks on the principles and benefits of Ayurveda, as well as engage in pranayama (breathing exercises) and meditation to foster inner peace and tranquillity. To infuse an element of lightheartedness, laughter yoga (also known as Hasya yoga) sessions were included, allowing participants to experience the joyous union of laughter and yogic principles.

The celebrations of International Yoga Day in Reading Nagar was an embodiment of unity and shared dedication to nurturing both the body and mind, reminding us of the timeless wisdom and profound benefits that yoga brings to our lives.



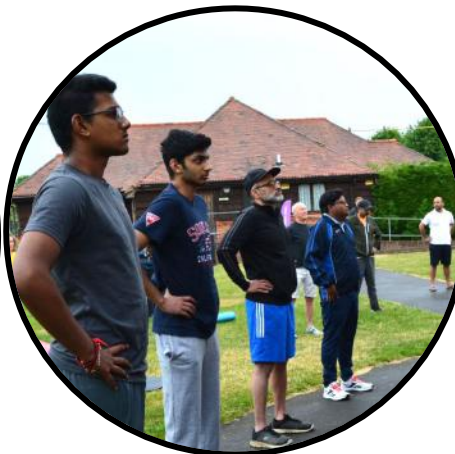
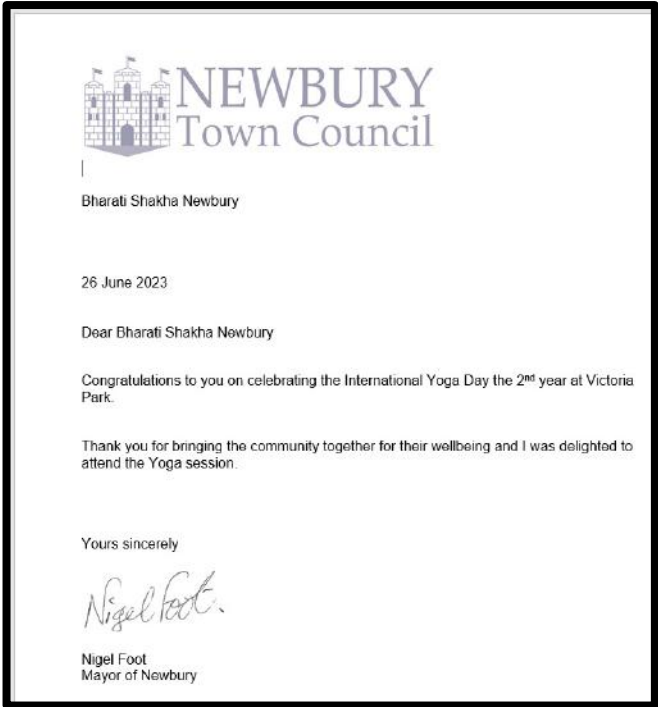




## Bharati Shakha, Newbury

Bharati Shakha, in collaboration with Newbury Town Council and Swasti Yoga, organized a remarkable Yoga Day event, coinciding with International Yoga Day. The presence of esteemed dignitaries, including Mayor Nigel Foot of Newbury, added prestige to the occasion.

The Yoga Day event aimed to promote the physical and mental well-being of the community. Participants of all ages and skill levels gathered to experience the transformative power of yoga in a serene outdoor setting. The event showcased various yoga techniques and practices led by experienced instructors from Swasti Yoga.







# Sewa Activities







# YORKSHIRE THREE PEAKS

## Slough Shakha

Yorkshire 3 Peaks Challenge is one of the most rewarding challenges in the UK. The challenge involves walking 26 miles (38.6km). There is of course the great feeling of collecting certificates for our achievements but also the achievement of climbing all three peaks.

The challenge is a test of both physical strength and mental fitness and needs a lot of training and preparatory work. However, it is also about seeing the beauty of the area. For the hike, we had hiking boots and gear, such as trekking poles to help us climb the hill. From Slough, over 80 people stayed at YHA and in other accommodations to enable an early start, thus helping in bonding with each other. I have been busy with my studies but in between, I prepared by walking to Windsor, walking from school, or going to the park with my sister to have some walking practice.

The walk is a very scenic route. If it wasn't for the rush to finish the climb within the time allotted, I would have surely spent some time enjoying the countryside and the sunrise and sunset. Last year's weather had some rain and sun, which made the hills look more picturesque, but this year it was a very hot day making it a good time to go for this walk. I have now completed the walk twice with Slough Shakha.

**By participating in the Challenge, we get to fundraise money for the charity, which will go to Sewa UK. From the Slough area alone, our group collected donations equalling over £1,100.**





# YORKSHIRE THREE PEAKS

## Northampton



10 participants from Northampton joined groups from Peterborough, Leamington Spa, Milton Keynes and Nottingham in our accommodation to take on the Three peaks of Yorkshire. We dined together on the first night, all nervous with anticipation for the hike the following morning.



On the second day, we set out to the 3 peaks. Some did one, while others took on all three. The youngest in our group, at 4 years old completed one peak whilst oldest at 67 years manage all 3. All of us, however, got the chance to face our limits and push beyond what we thought ourselves capable of. After scrambling up the first peak, participants shared the joy of looking back on how high they had climbed, and those who made it to the top of the third peak revelled in an even greater feeling of accomplishment. The walk back was gruelling, and upon return we had some pizza, showers, games, and some well-needed rest.



It was a truly amazing and enjoyable experience, and we highly recommend those interested should start training right away!





## COMMUNITY OUTREACH- MEETING SWAMINIJI SUPRIYANANDA JI

Earlier this month, HSS(UK) Sah Karyawaha Madhviben Haria and Shri Digantji Das met with Pujniya Swamiini Supriyananda, Shri Rameshji Pattni, and Shri Priyaji at Chinmaya Kirti with some good discussions.

A psychologist by profession turned Sanyasini (Hindu Monk), storyteller, author, and teacher, Swaminiji was inspired by Swami Chinmayananda's teachings. She understood this ancient wisdom's adaptability to solve modern problems. She adopted a life of monastic living and service to the vision of her Guru and scriptures. True to the Mission's motto she aims to reach people of all walks of life.

Embracing modern technology she has a bite-size podcast called 'Thinking about It'. Her ability to break down the Highest Truth in a language that we can understand and relate to without sacrificing its profoundness is what draws people. She nurtures the mind by providing food for thought to contemplate on. Her chosen medium may be words, but it is the wisdom, warmth and gentle nature behind them that leave you in awe and wanting more.



# HSS UK featured in Partner story in June edition of UK Parliament Week Newsletter



## Partner stories: HSS UK



An official partner since 2019, Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh UK (HSS UK) has played a big role in getting people involved in UK Parliament Week! They've helped to facilitate local activities for Hindu participants including polling, how to draft a petition, contacting MPs, and organising a mock Prime Minister's Question Time. In November 2020, the then Leader of the House of Commons, Jacob Rees-Mogg MP, invited HSS UK representatives to join him for a special episode of the 'Why Parliament Works', podcast.





To the care home manager,

As part of Seva (which means selfless service) in our Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, I, Shounak Kulkarni, 11 years old, would like to give my time socialising with the elderly at your care home.

I would like to spend quality time with them by playing games, like cards, puzzles or crosswords. I could make them tea and talk to them. Reading is also what I can help them with. The elderly may have issues with their mobile phone or computer, so I could solve those problems as well.

I am available on weekends, and parts of the summer holidays. Please let me know if I can be of any help. I am looking forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,  
Shounak Vikram Kulkarni



## Sewa Activity - Ekta Parivar Shakha, Milton Keynes

Ekata Parivar Shakha of Milton Keynes has been focusing on learning about Sewa. In a recent learning session, we were asked to write letters to our neighbours to see how we can practice Sewa in our neighbourhood. Two of our kishor gana, decided to write a letter to their local care home to see how they can give their time to practice Sewa and where their service would be most beneficial and mentioned ways that they can help.

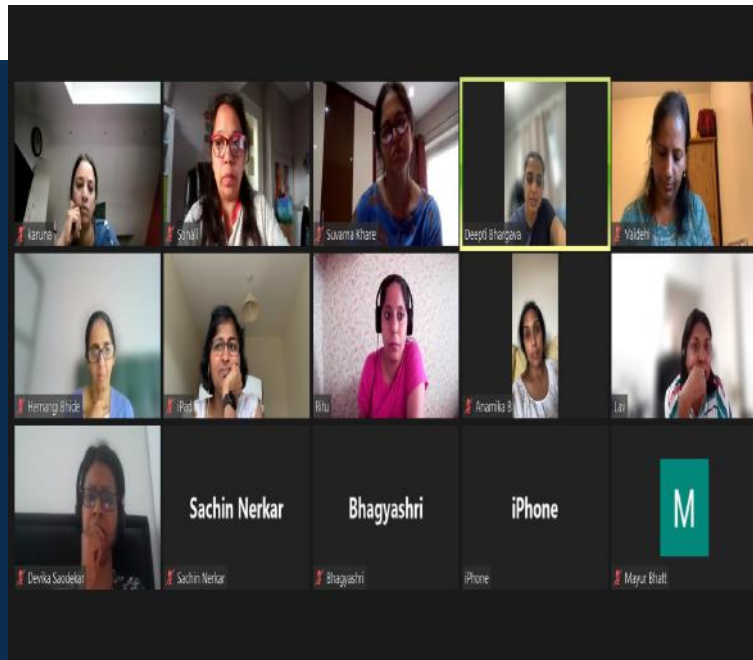
While they await a response from Lace Hill Manor Carehome, its interesting to see how simple and how effective this type of activity can be. No doubt, this exposure at early age, will go a long way to shape their understanding of Sewa and become responsible citizens of the country, in line with the ethos of HSS(UK).



## Durga Shakha, Reading

### ONLINE HEALTH SESSION TALK

Durga Shakha took an initiative to arrange online health sessions once in two- three months. to discuss common health issues and gain a better understanding of how to remaining physically fit. A 60 min sessions was arranged with a talk followed by Q&A. In the second session, the guest doctor was a Consultant Neurosurgeon from Liverpool. Attendees asked various questions based on headaches, migraines, backpain, effects of drugs and pain killers and type of exercises etc . The audience found this sessions very informative and beneficial.



### VISHWA PARYAVARAN DIVAS A.K.A. WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

To increase public awareness of environmental challenges and encourage actions 'The United Nations' General assembly founded World Environment Day in 1972. It is celebrated every year on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

Similar to previous year, Durga Shakha organised a workshop on 9<sup>th</sup> June, run by new Sevikas. They made bags made from recycled paper and sowed coriander seeds in coconut shells, to give a nice decorative piece, as well as a plastic-free, environmentally friendly plant pot.





# Shakha Activities







## Adi Shankaracharya Jayanti- Durga Shakha Reading

To mark the birth anniversary of Jagat Guru Shri Adi Shankaracharya Ji, Durga Shakha organised chanting of 'Nirvana Shatakam ' during Shakha. Nirvana means *Moksha*, *Shatakam* means Six verses. It is a powerful mantra composed by Shankaracharya Ji which is based on the concept of *Advait Vedanta*.

The team arranged practice sessions for a month to help new participants and ensured

Link to a short video clip of the chanting

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UElqol4pdNI9hyRqlUeNeWEYMmshROTS/view?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UElqol4pdNI9hyRqlUeNeWEYMmshROTS/view?usp=share_link)





## Shakha Milan- Leamington Nagar visits Reading Nagar

### A POETIC REPORT BY LEAMINGTON KARYAKARTA

T'was a glorious Sunday Shakha afternoon,  
Karyawah's news was such an awesome tune,  
He delivered the news, we are visiting Nagar  
Reading!  
Everyone's nerves got the excitement spreading,

Freezy Feb Friday evening we were told,  
Plenty of Plans plans plans, began to unfold.  
Discussions, a lot of them followed soon  
We all became like kids with balloon  
Questions popped who, how, and where  
No questions about how much we learn from  
there.

We all left in our cars, picked a spot to assemble,  
What better place than the town's Hindu Temple!  
Intense Khels, thought-provoking sessions ;  
wonderful planning.  
Lots of energy; musical songs ; greatly  
enchanting,  
Rotating Karyakartas, Shikshaks what a great idea  
plenty to pick like a new homeowner trip to Ikea

Kishoris showcased excellent bonding,  
We came, we saw, we found it wanting,  
When the activities were all done we had food,  
Served with fondness, all our hearts felt good.

Tushar Ji's analogy of a Shakha's growth,  
was just a brilliant and an astounding approach,  
Lots and lots of objectives to take,  
Inspired like a kid in front of a cake.

The visit gave us a fantastic feel,  
all are one with nerves of steel,  
Whilst driving back it became totally,  
One message flashed inside notably:

**Leamington, Reading what's in  
the name?**

**Deep inside us, we all have the  
eternal Shakha's flame.**



# Outdoor Visits

## Woolwich Nagar



Woolwich Pannabai and Shivaji Shakha Balikas (primary school age girls) visited Bhaktivedanta Manor in Watford. The day began with visiting Hare Krishna Mandir first, followed by a very exciting visit to the *Gaushala* (cow shed) where the Balikas had the opportunity to feed the cows. Cows are very sacred in Hindu dharma. They are considered as a mother, as they provide milk which is very important for the growth and health of children, so this was a great opportunity to learn more about this.

After spending a good few hours in the Krishna Lila playground, where the children had a lot of fun, we then visited Neasden mandir and ended the day with some yummy dinner.







## More News!

संगठन में शक्ति है!

Sangathan main shakti hai!



# A Hindu School Assembly

Glasgow



Photo by Nathan Dumlaio on Unsplash

In my first year of high school, students were instructed to attend a religious assembly. As a curious new student, I was eager to attend as I wanted to understand other religions and cultures. However, after some time I began to wonder: What about a Hindu Assembly? I understand that going to these assemblies will increase my knowledge and understanding of different religions, however I was still curious as to why my religion wasn't included in the assemblies, as other students could learn too. So, I took the initiative and asked some of the teachers why a Hindu assembly wasn't in place, surprisingly, their responses were quite dismissive. Considering that my school has a significant Hindu population, I expected an assembly to be established for the students but nothing happened.

In my 5th year of high school, I voluntarily joined the school anti-racism club and was introduced to the senior team to make changes around the school. I immediately thought the one change I had to make was to start a Hindu assembly. So, I introduced my idea to my friends and the teacher in charge of the club and they were all supportive and delighted. The teacher in charge suggested we take the idea to our deputy rector.

We arranged a meeting with them and presented our idea, which he was delighted to hear about and announced that he can arrange it, as long as we bring a speaker. Now I was facing another hurdle, I had to find a speaker for the new assembly. We wanted a speaker who can connect well with the younger generation; hence I brought up the idea at my local Shakha. The Shakha team was very welcoming of the idea, so upon agreement, I forwarded some contact details to my teachers. However, there was no response from the school.

To help move the situation forward, a perfect opportunity arose: Shikshak Vandhan Divas. I invited a key teacher and he came to the event wholeheartedly. In the process, he was able to develop a deeper understanding of our religion and culture. I believe this was the turning point for my teacher and afterwards, he encouraged other staff members to initiate the Hindu assembly. Finally, someone contacted the Shakha team, and a date was set up to announce the very first Hindu assembly in my final year of high school.

My school now officially has a Hindu assembly which is run once a month. I hope my experience can inspire other kids to start a Hindu assembly in their own schools by approaching staff members and inviting them to Shikshak Vandana Divas and work with their Shakhas to help achieve this.





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*





## THE GREAT ESCAPE

As I write this, I, like many of you, will be experiencing 'The Great Escape' - the mass exodus of our family and friends to India. Nothing curious about that right? Or is there more to this yearning towards the Motherland beyond the sunnier climes, the wedding season, and the yearning to meet far flung families? Scratch beneath the surface and it appears there's certainly more to this phenomenon than Sun, *Shaadi* (marriage), and *Sasural* (house of in-laws).

In the weeks running up to their latest 'Great Escape', my parents [and the in-laws too by this time], were giving me the third degree on the importance of getting my 'OCI' application submitted (whilst I energetically sat on their overfilled suitcases). It's a well-heeled discussion topic, but the importance for them is much more than the visa saving. I know that for them, it's one way to ensure I and my family retain my ties to India. I don't just mean to retain my connections with my extended family or to keep an eye on our 'family interests' in India. To them India plays an important part of our Hindu identity, who they are, and in turn to who I am. So, what warrants such attachment?

### THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS

Where would we be without acknowledging the great ancient Indian civilisation? One that discovered many firsts across so many topics from Medicine (see the *Sushrutaa Samhita*), Mathematics (see Baudhayan or Aryabhatta for example) and modern sciences (see the *Nyaya Sutras* or the *Vaisheshika Darshan*).

Then there are the *Mahapurush's* (stalwarts) hailing from India. Where would be without the giants, the shoulders on which we have our freedoms, from Rana Pratap, Chhatrapati Shivaji, to Swami Vivekananda, M.K. Gandhi and Bhagat Singh? There is certainly something in the '*mitti*' (soil) of India that gives birth to such inspiring, patriotic, and fearless individuals.

### THE SPIRITUAL TREASURE TROVE

I was speaking to an 'Indian-American' colleague a while ago. He too has been bitten by the 'Great Escape' bug on many a frequent occasion, mainly to tend to his elderly parents. On this occasion, he was a little apprehensive of his trip stating the trip would be 'a little different'. I pressed 'how so?' 'Well, I'm taking the kids (who are actually young adults), and they're a little reluctant / full of trepidation with the usual nervousness of the stereotypically Delhi-belly, views on cleanliness, and poverty.





What caught my attention however was his game plan to mitigate these stereotypical views. 'Well, I am not the religious type, but these kids have got to see the real India, I'm keen on showing them their spiritual home, several temples, their historic significance and amazing architecture'.

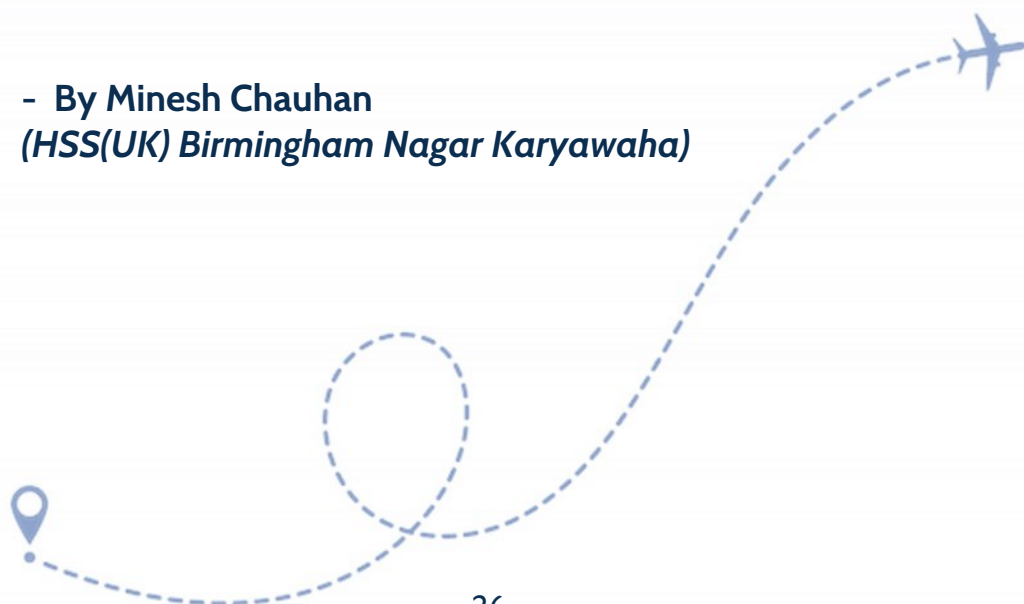
He may not know it, but he refers to the '*Teertha Yatra*', which is spread all over India, from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari (North to South), and from Somnath to Puri (West to East). The *Teertha Yatra* is not exclusive to Hindus, but is also just as much significant to Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs, i.e... all who are rooted in Dharmic traditions. Then there is the overlapping of the yatra across faiths. Hindus often would visit Amritsar to take darshan at the Golden Temple, while some would visit famous Jain or Buddhists landmarks also. My father always stated that the Pandava's learnt so much from their yatra during their years of exile – and so too must we!

This spiritual treasure trove is not confined to the physical either, as the tirtha yatra also covers the mind [to find peace, inner truths, compassion to name a few]. It is a reason why many a Western individuals [and famous Liverpoolians] sought India as their Nirvana, and why its secular nature finds itself home to many fleeing persecutions.

## THE CALL OF DUTY

Whilst we will all understand the notions of *Matrubhoomi* (land of my ancestors), and *Karmabhoomi* (land of my present-day action), today, those worlds are ever-increasing overlap. Directly and indirectly, our ability to contribute and to experience, the responsibility to protect, preserve and promote all that India represents, falls to those who; identify with its glorious past; who can contribute to its success and help it through the challenges of the present, and to those who understand that it's not only an India, but a Bharat. This Bharat, a spiritual home, will ensure our dharmic futures are preserved for generations to come. One certainly worth completing an OCI application for, and one that is a call to duty for me!

- By Minesh Chauhan  
(HSS(UK) Birmingham Nagar Karyawaha)





# SANGH MAIL



**Sanskār • Sewā • Sangathan**

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**



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](mailto:sanghmail@hssuk.org)

