



The National Council of Vanik Associations (UK)  
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# Vanik Voice

December 2013

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**NCVA WISHES ALL READERS  
A VERY HAPPY DIWALI,  
PROSPEROUS AND  
HEALTHY  
NEW YEAR**



**Prime Minister Cameron and his wife at BAPS**

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Website: [www.ncva.co.uk](http://www.ncva.co.uk)

Newsletter: [www.ncva.co.uk/newsletter](http://www.ncva.co.uk/newsletter)

**Affiliated Associations**

Aden Vanik Association of UK, Digamber Jain Visa Mevada Association of UK, Jain Association of UK, Jain Samaj Europe, Jain Samaj Manchester, Jain Sangh Birmingham, Jain Network, Mahavir Foundation, Navnat Vanik Association of UK, Navnat Vanik Bhagini Samaj, Navnat Youth Association, Oshwal Association of UK, Shree Jain Sangh East London & Essex, Shree Navyug Jain Pragati Mandal, Shree Sidhpuria Vanik Samaj, Shrimali Soni Mandal London, Sorathia Vanik Association (UK), Vanik Association UK, Vanik Samaj Coventry, Vanik Samaj Leicester, Vanik Samaj of UK Brighton, Vanik Samaj Southampton, Veerayatan UK, Young Jains

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## EDITOR'S REPORT

It is a great privilege to be appointed new editor of Vanik Voice at the NCVA biennial general meeting. I hope to be able to carry on the footsteps of my predecessors Heena Modi and Paresh Gandhi.

It will be my objective to keep the readers informed about the activities, aspirations, and vision of NCVA and its member organizations and about items of interest relevant to the objectives of our organization and its members.

I have been member of NCVA for six years from 2003 to 2008 and have participated in some of the current projects including Jain Chaplaincy and Community health.

I will endeavour to generate interest and discussion on our activities and vision for the future.

I will welcome suggestions contribution and ideas for the improvement on layout and contents of the newsletter.

I request all Member organizations to submit articles about their activities and events for the benefit of the wider community and any other articles of interest to our community.

Please contact me by email to: [newsletter@ncva.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@ncva.co.uk)

Jay Jinendra and Jay Shri Krishna  
Anil Parekh

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

### NCVA's 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

NCVA is celebrating its 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on Sunday 22 June 2013. Like previous celebrations, i.e. 21<sup>st</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> anniversaries this event will also be a day to enjoy.

NCVA plans to arrange cultural programmes, drama, Raas Garba, Childrens programmes and much more with lunch.

The whole Vanik Community will be able to attend hence an opportunity to meet your friends from the North of England to the South of England.

The venue is spacious and there is ample car parking available.



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## Statement by President Obama on the Observance of Diwali



For the Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists celebrating Diwali this weekend, the Festival of Lights reaffirms the things in life that matter most. Dancing, celebration, and good food remind us that life's greatest joys are the simple pleasures that come from spending time with people we love. Contemplation and prayer remind us that that people of all faiths have an obligation to perform seva, or service to others. And the flame of the diya, or lamp, reminds us that light will ultimately triumph over darkness. Here in the United States, Diwali also reminds us that our nation is home to many faiths and traditions, and that our diversity makes us stronger, which is why I'm proud that this year Democrats and Republicans in Congress joined together for the first-ever celebration of Diwali on Capitol Hill. Over the last five years, Michelle and I have been honored to have the chance to observe this ancient holiday, both at the White House and in India, and we wish all those celebrating this weekend a Happy Diwali and *Saal Mubarak*.

Our prime purpose in this life is to help others. And if you can't help them, at least don't hurt them."

[Dalai Lama XIV](#)

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## ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS AT BIENNIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 20TH OCTOBER 2013

The following were duly elected at the meeting:

Position	Name	Proposed by	Seconded
Chairman	Manharlal Mehta	Gajendra Chhatrisha	Bina Holden
Vice Chair North	Kiranbhai Mehta	Manharlal Mehta	Mahesh Gandhi
Vice Chair Midlands	Kalpiti Doshi	Usha Mehta	Gajendra Chhatrisha
Vice Chair London	Vijay Sheth	Kirit Batavia	Bharat Mehta
Vice Chair South	Harkishan Mehta	Mahesh Gandhi	Bharat Mehta
Secretary	Mahesh Gandhi	Kirit Batavia	Kiran Mehta
Joint Secretary	Bina Holden	Manharlal Mehta	Bharat Mehta
Treasurer	Jayesh Shah	Vijay Sheth	Vinod Kapashi
EC Member 1	Roopal Punater	Bina Holden	Mahesh Gandhi
EC Member 2	Bharat Mehta	Kirit Batavia	Vijay Sheth
EC Member 3	Kirit Batavia	Jayesh Shah	Manharlal Mehta
EC Member 4	Ramesh Shah	Manharlal Mehta	Mahesh Gandhi
EC Member 5	Saroj Varia	Bharat Mehta	Kirit Batavia
EC Member 6	Chandrakant Mehta	Mahesh Gandhi	Vijay Sheth
EC Member 7	Asha Mehta	Saroj Varia	Kirit Batavia
Editor Vanik Voice	Anil Parekh	Manharlal Mehta	Mahesh Gandhi
Honorary Auditors	PSJ Alexander & Co		

## **SELFLESS: Care For Yourself, But Think More Of Other Beings**

**Being selfless (egoless) doesn't mean giving all your money away, lacking confidence or not caring of yourself.**

Selflessness is one of the most important tenet in both Jain and Hindu beliefs. It is the main requirement for breaking the shackles of Karma leading to liberation. For a lot of us, pursuing this means we will be failing in our duties and not enjoy the fruits of our well deserved actions.

Selfless actions, on the other hand, is done without expectation of reward from the action. It does not mean that there is no reward for the action. It is only that there is no *expectation* of the reward, but the reward is instantaneous in the enjoyment derived in carrying out that action. Any other reward that follows will be a bonus which can be used for further selfless action. Most of us would easily identify for example the joy a mother derives in looking after her child in a selfless manner. Her reward is the enjoyment in bringing up the child. But there is still the ego lurking there, as it is her own child she is caring for. True selfless action would be getting rid of that mine factor also by caring for someone, without any relationship, cast, nationality or religion. It is surprising to note that there is a tremendous amount in increased energy and ability when a selfless action is carried out as opposed to an action with selfish motive. The chances are that the focus on the reward of action is going to deflect the doer from putting enough energy in the action itself and increase the chances of failure of the action.

Time spent caring for your mental, physical and spiritual health only becomes selfish when your intentions are solely to use your health and other resources as a means for attaining more personal gain only.

A recent study of various species which became extinct showed that the prime reason of their extinction was that their behavior were mostly selfish and not helpful to others. Selflessness unites and selfishness divides a community, a nation and the whole mankind

In the boomerang truth of Karma and virtuous actions, there will be someone there for you to provide for you when you need something, even a spiritual lift. Think of a time someone helped you, did you not want to show gratitude and rebalance the energy equation. Generosity returns a profit! Greed gets debt.

Regardless of karmic reward, pay closer attention when you think and act for others. You will notice that your energy and spirit feel much stronger and more sustainable. By practicing thinking of others we become happier and stronger, like a solid oak tree giving shade to those around it.

NCVA and its member organizations all work on this important principle and have been running for many years by contributions of volunteers and selfless action. There are many opportunities for us to practice this, not only in our community but also in the community and world at large. The joy of being able to give something is tremendous. And each and everyone has the ability to give something.

There are many projects running within NCVA and its member organizations. Jain Spiritual Care and Jain Chaplaincy is now running for a few years and facilitates spiritual care for patients, relatives and carers at a time of illness or distress. This is a massive and unique project and probably the only one in the world requiring many volunteers for different tasks. NCVA can arrange for the necessary training and the Government is providing some support towards the spiritual care.

Anil Parekh

## The Jains, silent heroes of Nairobi mall attack response

**Nairobi:** As a jihadist commando sowed death and horror inside Westgate mall last week, Nairobi's Jains became the silent heroes of the days-long emergency effort.

The Jain community, whose small Indian religion upholds non-violence as a sacred principle, opened their doors at the onset of the attack on September 21 claimed by Somalia's Al Qaeda-linked Shebab group.

As the crackle of gunshots filled the air, the Oshwal religious centre just 100 metres (yards) away was a haven where survivors, relatives, security forces and journalists were sheltered, treated, counselled and fed.

"We have a lot of space and numerous parking places," said Bhupendra Shah, a senior member of the Visa Oshwal community.

On the Saturday the raid was launched, "I made a round, I saw soldiers and policemen standing, who were hungry and thirsty."

"We sent emails to request help, and donations started to arrive on Sunday morning," said Shah.

Within hours the Jains mobilised like an army and tapped into their formidable economic power.

Families brought gallons of juice freshly squeezed at home, a sporting club donated eight vans packed with food, an industrial bakery and a top retail chain gave tonnes of bread and water bottles.

The Jains have only 12,000 members in Nairobi, a city of four million with a large population of Indian descent, but among them are the CEOs of Nakumatt, East Africa's retail giant, and other top companies.

On the second and third days of the brutal siege, Oshwal volunteers served around 15,000 meals inside their religious centre, an imposing ochre building of Hindu architecture surrounded by sprawling grounds.

Three times a day, the red vests of the Red Cross, the green ones of the St John ambulance service, the camouflage gear of the elite forces battling the mall attackers, mingled in the queue.

Police officers bristling with assault rifles and journalists with cameras also got in line for a plate of food, taking a short break as the siege dragged on.

Serving this exhausted crowd on the front line of one of the worst attacks in Kenya's history were 400 Jain volunteers working in shifts to welcome their visitors.

A first aid centre was set up in the underground car park to ease the burden on the city's overwhelmed hospitals.

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The Oshwal centre also made space available to teams offering psychological counselling to traumatised survivors and bereaved families, or helping people to report a missing person.

## **'Do not kill, don't have anger'**

At least 67 people, including children, are so far confirmed to have been killed in the attack, that also left dozens wounded and 61 people are still reported missing.

"Jain is one of the oldest religions in the world," Shah said. "Our religion says 'do not kill, don't have anger', 'respect any form of life'."

Jainism is thousands of years old, a religion whose philosophical roots date back to ancient India and are inspired by the same principles of tolerance that influenced Mahatma Gandhi.

Most its followers are vegetarians or vegans and some of them even refrain from eating roots and tubers in order not to kill insects.

Jain monks sweep the floor in front of them and cover their mouths with their hands as they walk to avoid stepping on or swallowing the slightest creature.

The community is estimated at barely five million worldwide.

Conspicuously absent from the temporary crisis management hub set up at the Oshwal were the Kenyan government services.

"When you live in Kenya, (help from the government) is the last thing you ask. You have to rely on yourself," said Shah.

"Not a single person from the government came to ask what they could do."

But the Jains' efforts didn't go unnoticed, galvanising good will among other religious communities and in some cases even breaking down the prejudice that permeates Kenya's complex social fabric.

"The important thing is that all Kenyans came together as one, as Kenyans, people from all origins, all communities came to help," said Miten Shah, another member of Oshwal's Jain community.

"I never thought the Indians could be so generous," a black African Kenyan who survived the attack said.

A week after the bloodshed, as the nation took stock and licked its wounds, hundreds of people were back at the Oshwal centre for a marathon ecumenical prayer vigil for the victims of the massacre.

Source: NDTV news

## Spiritual and Mental healing of patients in hospital



Reading of Jain scriptures and songs  
specially written for  
healing of Mind and Soul

This is Spiritual Care of patient

Doctors and Nurses heal patient's body,  
you can heal their mind and soul by spiritual care

You can join as a Jain Volunteer  
with Spiritual Care (Chaplaincy) department  
of a hospital near you

Will you like to join?

Contact: [secretary@ncva.co.uk](mailto:secretary@ncva.co.uk)

NCVA will train you and find a volunteer place with  
a hospital near you

## NCVA Vanik Conference – 7<sup>th</sup> April 2013

### Theme of the conference: Serving our community.

NCVA was formed in 1978 to act as an umbrella body for all the Vanik organisations in the U.K. NCVA held its first major National Conference on 7th April 2013 at the Navnat Centre in Hayes, London.

#### Conference Aims and Objectives:

- To gather all organisations serving the Vanik community.
- To provide an overview of services provided by NCVA and participating organisations.
- How can Communication and Networking between organisations be improved?
- Exchange views and ideas on ways in which more services for the community are added and what role can NCVA play to deliver these.
- Discuss ways in which NCVA can support the affiliated organisations.

The conference was attended by executives and trustees of 27 organisations affiliated to NCVA. This conference provided an opportunity for all affiliated organisations to give an account of activities carried out by their respective organisations thus allowing exchange of ideas and improving communication.

Nitin Parekh facilitated the morning session of the conference.

Mr. Manharbhai Mehta, opened the morning session and in his welcome speech, stressed that NCVA belongs to all the affiliated organisations and we should all think of it as our own organisation.

Mr. Mahesh Gandhi, General Secretary of NCVA informed the attendees of the activities carried out by NCVA, which are as follows:

- a) Speed Dating – Biannual events organised with around 300 candidates attending.
- b) Matrimonial Register - matrimonial register with details available to registered members.
- d) Printed Directory – Published free since 1982. Next publication due in 2014.
- e) Jain Chaplaincy Service – Establishment of chaplaincy service for Jain patients.
- f) Health Seminars – Events organised to help educate our community.

Mr. Mahesh Gandhi and other executive members of the Council further elaborated on the NCVA activities.

All affiliated organisations were then given an opportunity to present activities that they undertake.

Mr. Wineman, President of The Board of Deputies of British Jews, was invited as Guest Speaker and spoke of the difficulties faced by the Jewish Community in UK and how they have coped with these and managed to integrate in the British Society.

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A workshop was scheduled in the afternoon, led by Kiran Mehta, Regional Vice Chairman, North.

The workshop was held with the following aim -

BENEFIT	- Unique opportunity for all organisations to meet one place. Co-operation. Unity.
PURPOSE	- Engage organisation leaders to shape future of NCVA.
OBJECTIVE	- Brainstorm, exchange ideas and identify areas that could benefit us as an organisation.
FEEDBACK	- Select ideas to take forward.

Attendees were divided in 8 groups and were asked to put forward views about how the individual affiliated organizations could help NCVA in becoming more pro active in their ongoing activities.

The following is the outcome of the Conference:

- There should be better communication between NCVA and the affiliated organizations.
- Use up to date database, Website, social media etc.
- All the organisations should make concerted effort to make sure they are represented at future NCVA meetings and events.
- Organisations should make their individual members aware of NCVA activities.
- National Calendar of activities of individual organizations on NCVA website.
- More financial support for NCVA from the organizations.
- Introduce NCVA web calendar. Communication is integral to the community. Use website to promote events of all affiliated organisations.
- Centrally organised Health Seminar.
- Chaplaincy service to be extended to cover elderly, disabled and widows/widowers who are living on their own (by home visits or as necessary).
- Make individual members of the organization aware of what activities are carried out by NCVA.
- Resurrect 'Vanik Voice'
- Better awareness, support and attendance at affiliated organizations
- Community Participation at local and national level.
- Plan and capture vision for the next 4-5 years.
- Conference every two years.

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