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## Driving change through economic power and political engagement

**The Reverend Jesse Jackson**  
speaking in London on 22 August met  
Dipen Rajyaguru who was representing  
the Hindu Council UK and spoke in  
support of the Indian community in UK  
and Equanomics UK.

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# Could Boris be the next London mayor?



by Alok Mitra



The Mayoral election campaign for London is set to become very interesting next year with the nomination of Boris Johnson as the Conservative mayoral candidate for London. Boris is probably the best known and most charismatic politician the Tories have and will be able to give Ken Livingstone a good run for his money.

Ken, being a very shrewd politician recognises this and appears to be taking the challenge seriously and for good reason. In a recent YouGov poll for the London Policy Institute Ken Livingstone was ahead on 45%, Boris Johnson on 39% and Brian Paddick on 8%. These numbers show a very high share of the vote for the two main candidates presumably because the other candidate does not have a high recognition factor amongst Londoners. Past polls of mayoral contests rarely showed anything other than a huge Livingstone lead but this is far closer and therefore we believe Ken is right to take the Boris challenge seriously. It will be interesting to see how the polls change next year once the campaigns hot up.

We were introduced to Boris at the Conservative party reception held at City Hall on 24th September where Dilip Joshi and Alok Mitra represented the Hindu Council (UK) and EMBG. We took the opportunity to ask Boris for some comments in relation to the mayoral election and recently followed it up once he was confirmed as the Conservative candidate.

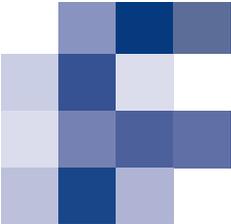
This is what Boris had to say:

*"It's little wonder that so many people are desperate to live and work in London. It is a phenomenal place: a pre-eminent cultural centre, a global city of dazzling diversity and the economic engine room of the nation.*

*The contribution of small and medium-sized enterprises to London's economy is immense. Together, London's small and microbusinesses make up over 99% of London business, employ over 35% of the private sector workforce and have a turnover in excess of £200bn. This is a fantastic achievement that represents an enormous amount of individual endeavour, enterprise and dedication.*

*But I know that SMEs have even greater potential to generate money and jobs across the capital. The current mayor's policies on the low emission zone (LEZ) and the ennuis of the police service towards some crime have not created the right climate for young businesses to survive. If the Mayor refuses to*

continued on page 3



# Goliath has had his day! David is ready to take over...



As I'm sure you know, there is a giant called Goliath who provides IT support and products across the land. Whilst Goliath may be large he doesn't care much about anyone but himself and he only knows his customers as account numbers and not by their names. Goliath's service isn't great and he frequently doesn't deliver when he says he will. Can Goliath really spare the time to understand your business challenges, or does he only work for his own advantage? Goliath isn't the only IT provider... David might not be as big as Goliath but he can give you a real partnership. David works with you to truly understand your business needs and help you reach your goals. In David's world, the customer always comes first. If you are unfortunate enough to be one of Goliath's customers, is it now time to talk to David?

The moral of this story is... **If Goliath isn't saving you money or helping you make more, then does he really deserve your business?** Just look at these differences:



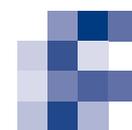
**David vs.**

## Goliath

- Rolling monthly agreements **vs.** 12 Month fixed contracts
- Flexible monthly invoicing **vs.** Large upfront payments
- Vendor independence **vs.** Off the shelf solutions from fixed vendors
- Friendly & personal service **vs.** Account number – not by name
- Customer service driven **vs.** Driven by targets and margin
- IT planning aligned to your business plan **vs.** Not looking past your next requirement
- Long term account ownership **vs.** New contacts every month
- Efficient, effective and personal **vs.** 'Hit & Miss' service
- Budget sensitive **vs.** No understanding of SMB customers

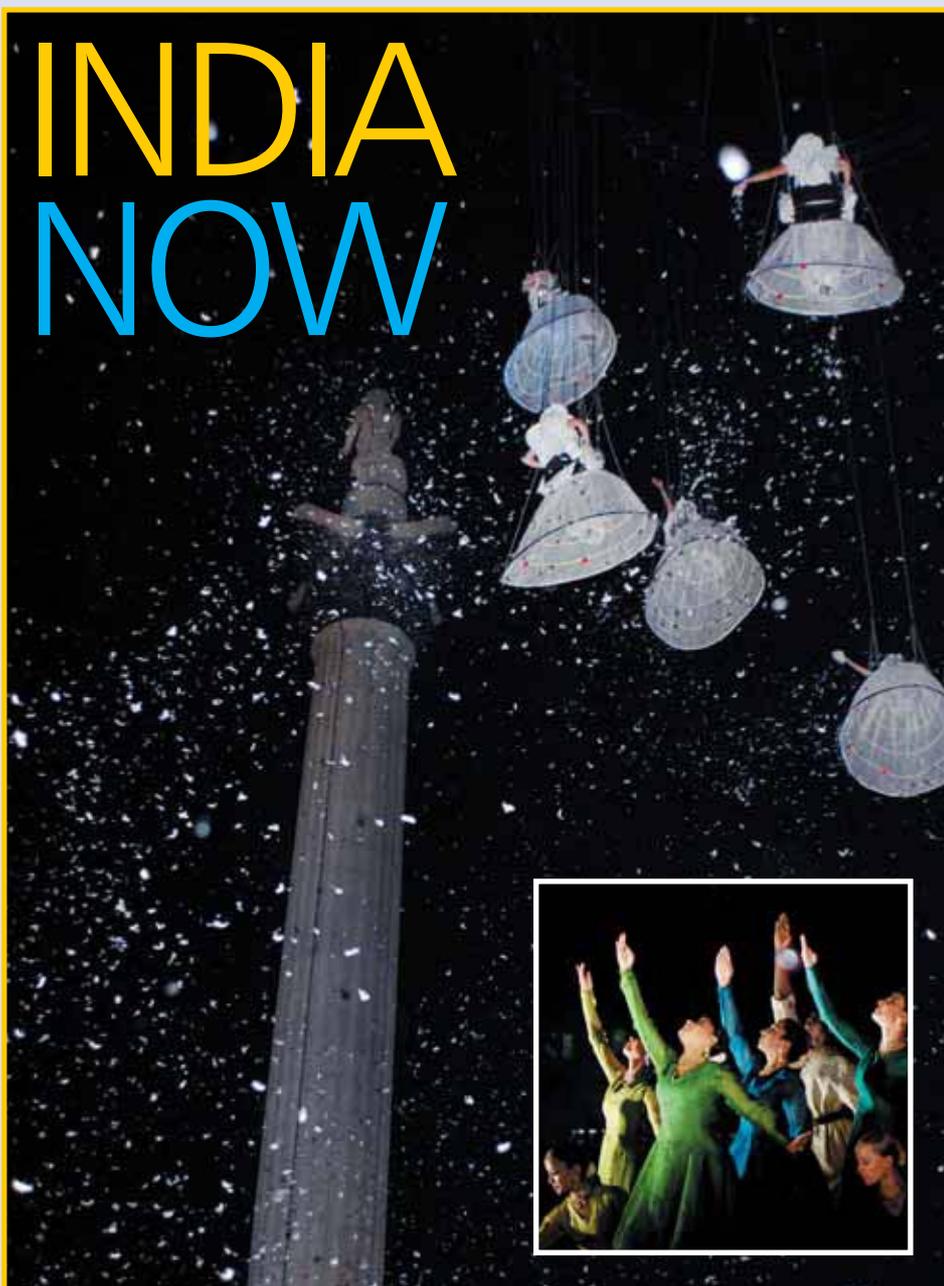


If you think it's time to speak to David then call Fotec on **0845 601 6480**  
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# INDIA NOW



The London mayor Ken Livingstone strengthened London's relations with India with three months of cultural events. The mayor said "India Now is an opportunity to experience the richness of Indian culture and will underline the relationship London has with India". He also said that one of the main goals of the festival was to help Londoners who "know no more about India than the fact that great curries come from there" to understand the value of Indian culture and business.

As part of Indian-themed outdoor performances a spectacular show was put together in Trafalgar Square, featuring dance and music by Akademi, a London based cutting-edge, progressive south India Dance Company with an international outlook. Akademi is run by Mira Kaushik, a member of EMBG. The event was very successful and attracted a packed audience in the square. It was great to see so many people from different communities and spanning all age groups soaking up the entertainment and a great atmosphere.

Mira invited EMBG to attend a reception before the Trafalgar square event which provided a good opportunity to network with a number of organisations involved in the Arts and also introduce some of our other members such as the Palace Theatre in Watford (WPT). WPT have been running India themed productions in Watford (covered in our last issue) and want to broaden its reach to the ethnic communities. It therefore seemed a good idea for the two organisations to get together to explore the possibility of working together.

To find out more about Akademi visit [www.akademi.co.uk](http://www.akademi.co.uk)

AKADEMI'S BELLS AT THE TRAFALGAR SQUARE FESTIVAL 2007. A COLLABORATION WITH THEATER TOL & NARESH KAPURIA.  
PHOTOS BY: PETE SCHIAZZA. SEE THE VIDEO ON: <[http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=Mv4\\_05t8lvw](http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=Mv4_05t8lvw)>

*continued from front cover*

*consult more widely on the LEZ, remains opaque about Supplementary Business Rates, and fails to focus on increasing the reporting of crime, small businesses in London will suffer.*

*It is for this reason – and a host of others – that I am standing in next May's election for Mayor of London. I want to encourage people's aspirations and ambitions, not stifle them. London should be a land of unparalleled opportunity; a place in which everyone with a good idea, a will and a way to start their own business is given every chance to succeed. I know the Ethnic Minority Business Group does great work in fomenting entrepreneurialism. But*

*there is still much to be done to ensure that everyone can participate in one of the most dynamic economies on earth. I want to make a difference to the lives of Londoners, wherever they're from, by allowing them to realise the opportunities that are available to them in this city."*

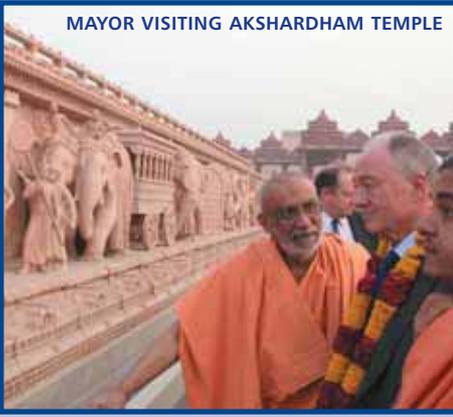
We will be following this up with more interviews and comments from Boris and the other candidates. Given the interest amongst our London networks and affiliates we will be following the election closely and raising issues with all the main candidates. We have been consulting our members and those of the Hindu Council UK and we now have a good idea of their key issues. These include transport, planning, affordable housing, the performance of the London Development Agency, Transport for London and the GLA,

ensuring ethnic communities benefit from the Olympics, transport, crime, policing, climate change, congestion charges and fairer compensation for business owners who have had their business premises compulsorily purchased to make way for the 2012 games.



FROM THE RIGHT: ALOK MITRA, BORIS JOHNSON, DILIP JOSHI, RICHARD BARNs

MAYOR VISITING AKSHARDHAM TEMPLE



THE MAYOR PAYS HOMAGE TO MAHATMA GANDHI AT RAJGHAT



# INDIA

## Building Strong Ties with

**Prior to the Mayor of London Ken Livingstone's visit to India the Hindu Council (UK) and EMBG were delighted to have been able to help to facilitate a meeting between the Mayor and Mr Pranab Mukherjee, the Indian Minister of External Affairs as part of the ongoing efforts to help to continue strengthen the capital's ties with India.**

At the meeting in central London the Mayor stressed the importance of links between London and India highlighting the contributions made by the Indian community to London in both business and culture.

After the meeting Mr Livingstone said "India is an emerging economic superpower and one of the world's greatest cultures. The importance of London's relations with India is already very great and is only going to grow further. That is why London was proud to stage India Now, a three month celebration of India in the summer." He added that he was looking forward to his visit to India and opening London offices in Mumbai and Delhi.

The visit took place from 18th-23rd November 2007 when the Mayor and his delegation of London 'ambassadors' that included a cross section of its talent from business, creative industries, sport, culture, tourism, education and science, visited India to promote closer ties between the capital and India in business, tourism, education and the creative industries.

The high level delegation included Lord Sebastian Coe and Paul Deighton, Chairman and Chief Executive of London 2012 Organising Committee; Peter Hendy, Commissioner for Transport for London; Michael Charlton, Chief Executive of Think London; James Bidwell, Chief Executive of Visit London; and Adrian Wootton, Chief Executive of Film London

The Mayor sees India and London as 'Partners in Globalisation'. "India is a rising economic superpower. It has a growth rate of over nine per cent a year, 1.2 billion people and it already



**BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS – MAYOR MEETS MR PRANAB MUKHERJEE**

accounts for the second highest number of inward investment projects into London after the US. Last year, India was one of the three countries accounting for the majority of world economic growth".

"The Indian community is already the largest minority ethnic community in London and London's strength as the most globalised city is helped immensely by its Indian community – there are already 10,000 Indian-owned businesses in the capital. Cultural interaction between India and London is already strong and is going to increase even further".

The aim of this visit is to continue to build on and reinforce these links to strengthen a deep rooted and special relationship between London and India.

The Partners in Globalisation visit is a key part of the Mayor's strategy to promote London as a pre-eminent global business centre. The emerging markets are particularly important to this strategy due to their rapid growth rates. Last year the Indian, Russian and Chinese economies all grew at a rate far faster than the world economy as a whole – 9.2 per cent in India (World Bank), 6.7 per cent in Russia

and 11.1 in China, while the world economy grew at 5.4 per cent in 2006. Goldman Sachs (2006) showed that the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) economies accounted for over a quarter of the world's economic growth over the previous five years. Last year, for the first time, India, China and Russia accounted for the majority of increase in world Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The growth of the Indian economy is already having a direct impact on London. According to Think London, the capital's foreign direct investment agency, India already has the second largest number of foreign direct investment projects to London after the US. In 2005/06 India accounted for 18 per cent of all foreign direct investment projects, an increase of six per cent over the same period in 2000/01. The UK capital has become a gateway to Europe for Indian companies, and many businesses have chosen the UK capital city for their European and UK offices.

Over the past three years, over 50 major companies to set up in London, including WIPRO, ICICI Bank and Punjab National Bank. Twenty seven companies incorporated in India are listed on the London Stock Exchange (LSE) with a collective market value of UK£4.4 billion. This is more than the market capitalisation of all Indian companies on both NASDAQ and the New York Stock Exchange combined.

Indian tourism has grown significantly. In 2006, 230,000 Indians came to London up from 166,000 in 2005. For the first time in 2006 Indian visitors spent more than those from Japan (£152 million by Indian visitors compared to £134 million by those from Japan).

The education sector overseas students in London contributed approximately £1.5 billion to UK GDP in 2005/06, with India representing one of the fastest growing student markets in the world. In London the number of students from India has increased from 2,190 in 2001 to 4,320 in 2005 making the growth of Indian students second only to the Chinese.

# Specialised support for your business.



*"Free, independent and impartial advice for your business is what we're here for,"* says Saline Moore, a Business Adviser with Business Link in the East of England. *"So*

*go on and give us a call, whether you're running an established business or just thinking about starting one up – we can really make a big difference."*

Saline is one of the Business Advisers in the East of England who specialises in supporting small and medium-sized businesses run by ethnic minority owners. *"Businesses like these often face barriers to growth as well as sometimes very specific issues. And that's where my in-depth experience of working with under-represented groups and ethnic minority businesses often proves invaluable,"* says Saline. *"I can work with people and companies to identify and help overcome*

*any problems, by offering support, identifying training opportunities, like our free seminars, and providing practical advice on other possible sources of help."*

## Great track record

*"Business Link is a government-funded service designed to promote enterprise and help grow the economy,"* explains Saline. *"We have a great track record of supporting ethnic minority businesses through every stage of their development, and we're keen to do more."* She adds that the organisation *"has a tremendous amount to offer ethnic minority businesses"*, including:

- Free one-to-one consultations with a Business Adviser, to identify and analyse the needs of a business, to develop an action plan, and to provide support
- Access to a wealth of quality research and resources – everything from mailing lists and company reports to focused market intelligence

- Workshops and seminars covering a vast range of business topics.

## Local business support

*"Although Business Link is a national organisation, it's run on a regional basis with Business Advisers who live and work in your area and understand your challenges,"* says Saline. *"So whether you or your business are based in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk or Suffolk, you'll be very close to a specialised Business Adviser who will be delighted to visit you and help support your business growth."*

To speak with Saline or one of her colleagues, or to find out more about what Business Link could do for you and your business, call **08457 17 16 15**, email [questions@businesslinkeast.org.uk](mailto:questions@businesslinkeast.org.uk) or visit [www.businesslink.gov.uk/east](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/east).

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# The story of Aarif Merali.



Aarif is the proprietor of the Prontaprint franchise in Watford and also a member of the Ethnic Minority Business Group (EMBG). He came to the UK from Tanzania at the age of 10 and, after graduating from

Kingston University in Computer Science, he spent 14 years in IT, specialising in developing web applications for blue chip companies including Sainsbury's, Bank of Tokyo, Mitsubishi and British American Tobacco.

Whilst running his IT Consultancy, Aarif decided to look at other business opportunities due to the increased "offshoring" of IT services by organisations. Although he looked at a number of business opportunities, he preferred to buy into a franchise as he saw this as a lower risk option. This was mainly due to the fact that he would be acquiring a proven business model and would have the support and backup of a large organisation. Aarif considered a number of different franchises including Subway, Costa Coffee, Kall-Kwik and Prontaprint. Previously when Aarif wanted to have some business cards printed he used Prontaprint and was impressed by their operation and set up. He was also attracted to the expanding and dynamic Print-on-Demand market and felt the print and design business would make the best use of his IT and software skills. Therefore, when the chance came to acquire the Watford outlet from an existing owner Aarif took the plunge and bought the franchise.

More than two years into the franchise, Aarif has seen changes in the print industry. The volume of work from smaller businesses looking for short runs and quick turnaround work is reducing with cheaper colour printers and design packages now being widely available. Additionally, as more businesses move to electronic delivery methods for their marketing campaigns the demand for printed material reduces. Aarif explained that the traditional print industry is very competitive with margins being squeezed and there is a requirement for large investment in IT infrastructure, equipment, staff training and innovation to stay ahead of the pack.

Aarif spent over two years building capacity and understanding the market place and the changing needs of his clients. This enabled him to expand the range of services. Prontaprint Watford



AARIF MERALI

provides a wide range of print and design services that include copywriting, mailer creation, and running a full "end-to-end" direct mail campaign including response tracking to gauge the return on investment for clients. Aarif has also developed a unique "personalised direct marketing" service within the Prontaprint franchise that is showing great promise. In regards to this Aarif says, *"We have implemented campaigns for businesses including a prestigious hotel group using the new personalised mail service which increased their response rates many times. Typical response rates for direct mail the "traditional" way are limited to between 1-2% but using Prontaprint's personalised approach this can be increased to as much as 15-20% and in some cases over 40%. This results in a tremendous return on investment for our clients"*.

Aarif's understanding of his customers' needs and the high quality of customer service he provides has enabled him to keep growing his business and keep the performance of his operation within the top quartile of Prontaprint's 175 centres. Aarif has been marketing to organisations

with 60-100 employees who have a requirement for significant quantities of quality marketing and printed material for both in house and external use. He has been able to attract a number of well known organisations who now do their entire design, printing and mailing at the Watford centre.

Aarif is delighted with the franchise. His turnover has increased by 12% per annum and he is now looking to develop this business further. Prontaprint Watford has been one of early adopters of Prontaprint's new brand repositioning with the aim of creating a stronger corporate image with a new fascia, logo, marketing and services which appeal to the business to business community. Typically, this investment would be expected to produce an increase in sales of around 17%.

**Aarif joined EMBG to gain more business and contacts through networking and has been a member of EMBG for seventeen months. To contact Aarif call (01923) 230822 or to learn more about his business visit [www.watford.prontaprint.com](http://www.watford.prontaprint.com)**

## 2007 – Another successful year for the Lloyds TSB Asian Jewel awards.

EMBG were invited for the second year by Lloyds TSB to these prestigious Awards, held this year at the London Hilton Hotel in Park Lane. These awards are seen as the flagship event for the national calendar for the celebration of Asian success and achievement in business, public service and service to society.

Truett Tate, Group Executive Director at Lloyds TSB said that "The Lloyds TSB Jewel Awards is a celebration of the wealth of experience, expertise and success which is becoming increasingly evident in the Asian



community today. The success of Britain's Asian community is a shining example to us all. As these nominations demonstrate, British Asians are truly making their mark across fields as diverse as commerce, culture, politics and professional services. In business alone, Asian firms are outpacing other companies in their rate of growth. The Lloyds TSB Jewel Awards are just one way we are helping to recognise and nurture this success".

Given that there are over 200,000 Asian enterprises in the UK, generating wealth at a rate three times the national average, many of which are based in the South of England there was no shortage of nominations for the seven coveted Jewel Awards. The judges must have had a hard time short-listing 20 finalists from over 6,000 nominations. What struck us about the finalists was that Asian women and the younger generation are playing an increasingly important role in the success of our community which bodes well for the future. Examples include Dipna Anand and Imraan Ladak. Dipna Anand, a nominee for the retail, food and franchise award, is an Indian cookery expert. At just 23 she is set

to create the next wave of Indian food as the number one health option. The winner of the business & commerce award, Imraan Ladak, is a director of DRC Locum, a recruitment business supplying locums to the NHS and the private sector. He acquired a 33% stake in 2003 and grew the turnover from £800K to £24m. He is probably better known as the owner of Kettering Town football club.

Other winners include two women, Dr Pampa Sarkar (healthcare & education excellence) and Superna Sethi who with Harjit Singh founded Manhattan Properties and won the award for entrepreneur excellence. The other winners were Asif Rangoonwala (retail, food and franchise), Hamid Yunis (professional excellence), Raj Joshi (public service excellence) and Ahmed Randeree (lifetime achievement)

At the awards we also ran into Syed Ahmed of The Apprentice and learned about what he has been up to since leaving the hit TV show. We understand he is the managing director of a company whose aim is to reduce the impact on the environment by creating energy saving and energy efficient technology products. He also has a number of other business plans which include overseas trade and investments. We wished him lots of success with his future endeavours.

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Focus on people

## Patrick S. Frederick Chairman of Conservative Business Relations (CBR).

**Patrick S. Frederick is Director of Business Affairs for the Boris Johnson Conservative Campaign for Mayor of London and Chairman of Conservative Business Relations (CBR) for South East England and Southern London, encompassing 104 parliamentary constituencies.**

Patrick is the founder & Chief Executive of Aimex International, his consultancy company which provides corporate funding and advisory services to international clients. He began his professional career with Smiths Industries Plc, the International Industrial Group where for over 14 years he trained and held a number of senior positions, during which he qualified as a Chartered Production Engineer. He then joined J.P.Morgan Inc, the American Investment Bank in London for 7 years, during which he made considerable progress and in recognition for his significant contribution to the bank's profitability was rapidly promoted to Head of Global Custody Operations. He later left to establish his financial consultancy which over 10 years, grew significantly to provide business and investment advice to Private clients and Small & Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs). He is currently establishing a new group to directly fund international projects and assist in the global development of SMEs through an expanded range of products and services.

Among his many involvements in organisations which promote and advise businesses throughout the world, Patrick is a member of the board and executive committee of the MENA-OECD Enterprise Financing Network (EFN) and is also on the advisory council of the Bahrain MENA Investment Centre. This programme was established by 18 Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and 30 OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development) countries to stimulate entrepreneurial investment within the MENA region. In addition, he is also a board member of Hays Executive Inclusion Network and a strategic adviser to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Entrepreneurship consisting of members from the House of Lords, House of Commons and a wide range of entrepreneurs. His former appointments include memberships of the London Corporate & National SME Councils for the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and Private Investment & Creative Industries Commissions for the London Development Agency (LDA).

For his excellent contribution and leadership in globally promoting Small & Medium Sized Enterprises, Patrick has been presented with the International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) World Bank Group and IMF African Society Achievement Award for 2007 from Washington D.C.

Patrick is a Creole from Dominica in the Caribbean and has been a British national since 1956. He holds a Bachelors Degree (B.Sc) in Mechanical Engineering from Middlesex University and an MBA from Cass Business School in the City of London. His interests include politics, ancient rituals, martial arts, athletics, travelling, arts & culture and nutrition.

As part of its agenda to promote the business and professional interests of its members, EMBG works with all the major political parties. In this regard, EMBG are therefore pleased to have established a good working partnership with Patrick who has helped us to get our message to the Conservative party and actively engaged with them in shaping policy.

For further information about Patrick Frederick and his business and political interests, please refer to:

**www.backboris.com**  
or [www.conservativebusinessrelations.com](http://www.conservativebusinessrelations.com)

or contact him on; [patrick@backboris.com](mailto:patrick@backboris.com)  
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## British Indians and Pakistanis jointly celebrate their 60th Independence Day.

On 16th August 2007, in London, Pakistanis and Indians jointly celebrated the Independence Days of their countries, 60 years after they gained their independence from Britain in 1947.

Back then the independence was marred by bloodshed and upheaval on an unprecedented scale and since then the two countries have fought many bloody wars and remained at loggerheads. However, there is now a growing call to build bridges, move forward and work together to meet the challenges of the future.

The Pakistan, India & UK Friendship Forum was set up in 2006 with the aim of bringing the two communities together and improve British Community Cohesion. For this celebration, over 500 British citizens of Indian and Pakistani descent came together

in perfect peace and harmony to celebrate the Independence of the two countries and their common background.

Speakers with roots in Pakistan and India, including Dr Ashraf Chohan, (the General Secretary) and Sir Gulam Noon (one of the Patrons), spoke of their happiness at seeing so many Pakistanis and Indians joining together for the celebrations and spoke of their hopes for the future. The Chairman, Dr Rami Ranger, spoke of the need for attitudes to change between the two communities, and how pleased he was that there are now a large number of people of goodwill on both sides working towards this friendship and understanding.

Members of Parliament joined in the celebrations and pledged their support to the Forum. These included Rt Hon. Keith Vaz MP, who has worked tirelessly to promote Asians in Britain and Mr Stephen Pound MP, who expressed his delight at seeing communities come together for the greater

good of society as a whole. He also acknowledged the contribution that Asians make in enriching British culture and business life

Lord Rana warned of the consequences of religious disharmony as he had first hand experience, having lived through the Indian partition, and also the sectarian divisions in Northern Ireland. Lord Nazir Ahmed praised the work done by the Forum and pledged his support in promoting community cohesion in Britain by helping bring these two communities together. Mrs Sayeeda Warsi, Shadow Minister for Community Cohesion, stressed the need for putting Britain first and working for its success.

The hope now is that the initiative which has had a good start can lead to greater harmony and cooperation between the peoples of the Indian subcontinent.

**Visit: [www.pakindiafriendship.com](http://www.pakindiafriendship.com) to learn more about the forum.**



## Lets kick off 2008 with a great networking event with Grant LeBoff and his unique sales philosophy!

If we believe all the doom and gloom we read in the papers, 2008 will be a bad year for sales and for profits. So get one step ahead and come and learn from the expert how to boost your profit with some Sales Therapy.

Our speaker at our next networking meeting on 29 January in Watford at the POB restaurant will be Grant Leboff. Grant has formalised his own sales philosophy Sales Therapy® after being frustrated at the way the traditional methods of selling are being taught and conducted within the workplace. He will share his vision with us as well as giving practical tips to increase sales and profits.

Grant is the Managing Director of two successful companies. Phone Intelligence Ltd is a business-to-business telemarketing company and

The Intelligent Sales Club Ltd provides sales and marketing support to Business Owners through seminars, training and resource materials.

Grant spends a significant amount of time giving talks about sales and marketing for a variety of business groups and is able to put what he says into practice every day in his businesses and those of his clients with spectacular results.

He is also a regular contributor to many business magazines and newspapers. His first book Sales Therapy®, Effective Selling for the Small Business Owner was in the top 10 Amazon bestseller list when it was published in October this year. The book is currently the 6th best selling business book in the UK for 2007.



# 10 Doing Business with INDIA



EMBG members are increasingly showing interest in doing business overseas. The main areas are India, China and Africa. This is a trend that is set to continue going forward. In a study from Goldman Sachs (dreaming with BRICS) it said that if things go right, in less than 40 years, the BRICs economies (Brazil, Russia, India and China) together could be larger than the G6 in US dollar terms. By 2025 they could account for over half the size of the G6. Of the current G6, only the US and Japan may be among the six largest economies in US dollar terms in 2050. This report predicts that India is likely to overtake Europe and Japan.

Since this report was published in 2003 the GDP growth of both India and China has outpaced Goldman Sachs projection by a long way. Gross domestic product in India has grown at more than 8 per cent per year for three years in a row, with the figure for 2006 put at 9.4 per cent. The mood of Indian business is very buoyant and there is tremendous pride and a new found confidence amongst Indians generally. This has been fueled more recently by high profile overseas takeovers by top businessmen such as Lakshmi Mittal of Arcelor Mittal who fought a hard battle and finally acquired Arclor for \$33bn. Others include Rata Tata who acquired Corus for \$3.3bn and is now the front runner to acquire Jaguar and Land Rover Cars from Ford and Kumar Mangalam Birla with a \$6.4bn acquisition of Novelis. Flamboyant billionaire Vijay Mallaya's contribution is not limited to bringing Kingfisher beer to the UK curry houses; following his \$1.2bn acquisition of Scotch whisky maker Whyte & Mackay he can now serve his own whisky as well.

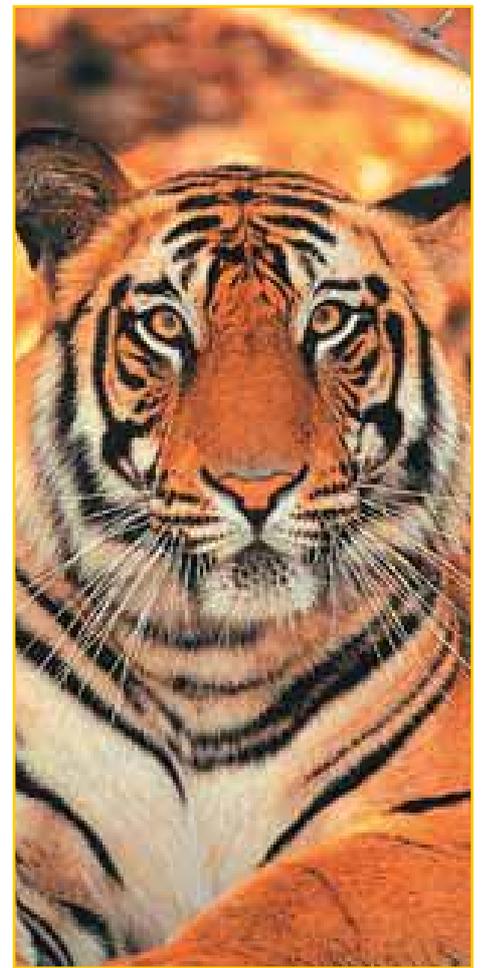
India has always been a globalist looking outwards and has in the past held a significant proportion of the global trade. India is now dreaming again of being a major global player. What is interesting is that so far it has been Indian businessmen and a handful of global Indian companies that have been making the running. This is now changing as more global companies join giants like IBM, GE, Microsoft, Samsung



and Vodaphone in investing in India. However, India should not be seen as the preserve for the multinational as many SME's have great opportunities to profit from trading with India. Many non resident Indians (NRI's) or people of Indian origin (POI) are increasingly doing this or want to. Others have still to fully understand the opportunity and are therefore cautious.

The types of business opportunities in India that our members have been looking at include real estate, manufacturing, out sourcing, IT (software and website development) and entertainment. However, almost any type of business venture is possible.

The main business language in India is English but there are 18 recognised regional



languages. Many of the businessmen have had a western style education and are profit motivated. The legal system has similarity to English law. There is an independent judicial system but it can be slow at times. The population is around 1.2bn people and has a large graduate workforce. There is also a large and growing middle class with increasing affluence. India's economy is extremely diverse, encompassing subsistence farming and modern agriculture to a range of modern industries; however economic growth is unevenly distributed. Although India is big (almost 3.3m sq km) it has good communications including the world's largest postal and rail networks. Indian Railways is one of the world's largest employers, with over 1.6 million people employed. It is said that the number of passengers travelling on the rail network every day is the same as the population of Australia. The powerhouse of the Indian economy includes the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, West Bengal, Gujarat and Rajasthan with high GDP and an educated workforce. Punjab is also called India's breadbasket, and has one of the country's highest per capita income.

The case for getting involved in the Indian economy is compelling. However, a key message to remember is that Indian companies are now aware of their economic power and are tough negotiators who are ready to play on the international stage with a more aggressive mindset. The rules of the

game are changing and the tried and tested methods of the past will not get the best results and may even fail.

From a practical point of view before making any investment including doing business in India take steps to avoid losses and manage risks. We suggest the following:

- Decide what business you want to be in and where you want to locate in India. If you can locate in more than one state then talk to a number of them, as they are competing with each other and may offer you some incentives especially if your investment is big. There are special economic zones and other incentives available, so check if they apply to you.
- Research the market before you go, make sure your product or service is right for India. Understand the size, potential, price and competition. Plan how you want to enter the market and the exit route if relevant.
- Choose your partner with care and ensure you include a dispute resolution clause in your contracts. Do thorough due diligence and take professional advice from lawyers and start-up specialists. You can contact UK Trade and Investment who can introduce you to potential partners and professionals who can help you to navigate the hurdles.
- Indian businessmen are tough negotiators so don't be surprised if they want to take a controlling share in your UK business. Don't give away too much information in advance of finalising any agreement and negotiate hard.
- Allow plenty of time for meetings and travelling around the country. Things are likely to take longer than you expect. It is best to keep a sense of humour, don't be aggressive or expect too much too soon.
- Don't assume anything, make sure you are dealing with the right person and find a way of checking facts and progress without causing offence to your hosts.
- Learn the business culture and the body language otherwise you are likely to mislead or to be misled and be frustrated when events unfold in a different way to which you expect.

Doing business in India can be rewarding but it has its challenges and one needs to proceed with good advice and sound research. Fortunately such advice is readily available from a number of sources including the UK Trade and Investment (See page 14), and the various industry associations and trade bodies across India. Visit our website [www.embg.co.uk/india.html](http://www.embg.co.uk/india.html). Going forward we will publish various articles about doing business overseas and also encourage our members to share their experiences.

## The Ethnic Minority Business Group (EMBG) engages with the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) with a meeting with its chief executive – David Marlow.

On 7th August 07 Alok Mitra (CEO) and Larry Rach (Marketing Director) representing EMBG had a meeting with David Marlow and his colleagues Fei Toole (Equality and Diversity Manager) and Alan Pain (Head of Business Development) with the purpose of discussing how EMBG and EEDA could collaborate more closely in the future in driving the Regional Strategy. This was an opportunity to discuss the specific issues and problems faced by EMBG's members and other stakeholders with whom EMBG consults.

Alok Mitra explained to David Marlow that the generally held perception is that the policy makers within the Region see Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) issues more as a problem rather than an opportunity. Alok also said that there is a need for specific BAME Businesses support within the EEDA region underpinned by a coherent strategy. David Marlow took the comments on board and assured Alok and Larry that he recognised the frustration with the slow pace of delivery, but that EEDA was always trying to ensure that their policy is strongly evidence-based. He also added that EEDA has further work to do on BAME business development and referred to the ongoing barriers work with MENTER and upcoming opportunities to feed BAME business strategy issues into the next Regional Economic Strategy (RES) and Corporate Plan.

EMBG are taking a number of positive initiatives, one being the encouragement of the Ethnic Diasporas to promote global trade. They have already started to do this successfully with their own members. However, by working together with EEDA, it was felt that a lot can be achieved faster. Alok cited that the London Mayor and many of the City Institutions recognise the value of the local ethnic community and the importance of building international business links with their help and have taken positive steps to develop this further. EEDA needs to do the same. David explained that the main channel for business support is Business Link in the East of England (BLE) and EMBG were advised to work with BLE, and consider how they might best position themselves as a potential provider through the BLE Gateway. East of England International is there to help with overseas trade and it was suggested that EMBG work with this body in respect of this.

Since our meeting we have asked follow up question and are waiting for a formal response to these. We have also taken part in the RES workshops and consultation process so that we have an input into EEDA's next corporate plan proposals and have offered to work with them to develop a framework for EEDA's approach to supporting networks. Both EMBG and EEDA are committed to working together for the benefit of our members and of the region.



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# New Laws came into force on 1 October 2007 – Are you compliant?

By Jenny Mitra, Partner of AMitra & Co, Chartered Accountants

## The National Minimum wage – The new rates.

The minimum wage is a legal right that covers most workers above compulsory school leaving age. The new rates are:

- the main rate for workers aged 22 and over £5.52
- the development rate for 18-21 year olds £4.60
- the rate for 16-17 years olds £3.40
- the rate of the accommodation offset £29.05 per week (£4.15 per day).

Unless covered by an exemption, all workers in the UK are entitled to be paid at least the national minimum wage. These rules apply to, amongst others, all workers over school leaving age, overseas workers even if they are only in the UK for a short time, agency workers and home workers who may not otherwise qualify as 'workers' in employment legislation.

Some of the main areas where the above rules do not apply include the genuinely self-employed, office holders, directors (unless they have an employment contract), school children below school leaving age, and voluntary workers.

## Companies Act 2006

The implementation of this Act is being phased in. The main provisions in force from 1 October 2007 are:

- It is no longer necessary for private companies to hold annual general meetings.
- Directors' duties and responsibilities are codified clearly and now come into force. The directors should now take into account not just the shareholder's interests but in doing this, they need to have regard to long-term factors, the interests of other stakeholders, such as employees, the community, and the company's reputation. Until there is case law or other clarification it is hard to know what this actually means. The directors should continue to keep written records of their decisions and the reasons for them.
- Shareholder meetings for private companies can now all be on a 14-day notice period, unless the company's articles allow different arrangements.

- It is now easier for shareholders to make a derivative claim against a director on behalf of the company – for instance, for fraud.
- The procedure to follow for decisions by written resolution of a company's shareholders has changed significantly. Written resolutions now need a signature from a majority of shareholders, not all of them. Special resolutions need a majority of 75%.
- Unless a company files small company accounts, its Directors' Report must contain a Business Review.

## Pre Budget announcements – If adopted, how will you be affected?

The pre budget statement is supposed to be a statement that provides a progress report on what has been achieved so far and gives an update on the state of the economy and the government finances. It also sets out the direction of government policy in the run-up to the traditional spring budget. The intention was that the pre-budget report would be an informal announcement of the long-term government plans and not formal policy announcements. That would happen in the spring budget. In practice however, the chancellor has increasingly used it to launch headline grabbing initiatives and ditch unpopular policies. This year was no exception; in an apparent effort to deal with the huge negative publicity in the media relating to the 10 per cent tax rate for private equity bosses the

Government have announced a flat rate of Capital Gains Tax (CGT) which has caused a great deal of controversy within the business community. Some of the proposed changes that are likely to impact many small businesses include:

- **CGT** – May change to a flat rate of 18% with effect from 6 April 2008. As a result of the adverse reaction to this announcement the final legislation may be watered down. However, those with long term investments should seek professional advice to determine whether they need to take any action to crystallize their gains at a lower rate of CGT before April 2008.
- **Domicile** – At present non UK domiciled individuals can arrange their affairs to avoid paying UK taxation on income and gains that are not remitted to the UK. In addition individuals that have been resident in the UK for more than seven years will now pay extra tax of £30,000 per year if they wish to retain non domicile status.
- **Inheritance Tax (IHT)** – Nil rate band - Married couples (and civil partners) will be able to share their IHT nil-rate band. This, in effect, doubles the amount married couples can pass on free of IHT.

The implications of the changes are complicated and you should seek professional advice.

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# Congratulations to CREME for a successful Conference.

The Ethnic Minority Business Group (EMBG) was delighted to have been able to promote and take part in the 11th Annual Ethnic Minority Conference held in October in Luton. This year, East of England Development Agency (EEDA) was the main conference sponsor and hosted the event with the Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CREME), De Montfort University.

The conference brought together leading researchers, policy makers and practitioners in the field of ethnic minority entrepreneurship from across the UK and Europe. The high calibre of speakers and participants provided an invaluable, challenging and inspirational couple of days. The conference addressed some of the key issues facing ethnic minority entrepreneurship today. It explored the opportunities and challenges presented by the rapidly changing patterns of immigration seen in the UK. It considered the barriers facing women in enterprise which are often even greater for women from ethnic minorities. And it examined the recent changes that have taken place in the structure of business support in England and its effect on ethnic minority businesses.

There was also a celebration of the contribution that Ethnic Minority Businesses (EMBs) make to the UK, and the positive changes that are taking place as this contribution is more widely recognised. These changes can be seen in the range of different stakeholders now supporting ethnic minority businesses, from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

There was a strong international dimension to the conference. EMBs often excel at fostering international links and the increasing globalisation of business means that this characteristic is becoming an ever greater asset.

Ethnic minority entrepreneurship itself is an international issue. In an increasingly globalised world the challenge of integration is now being faced by most countries. The conference looked at how enterprise can play a key part in integration, and how ethnic minority entrepreneurship is changing across Europe.



**THE CREME TEAM**

Many of the speakers and attendees stressed the importance of the Ethnic Minority Business Conference not just as a means of celebrating the success of EMBs but also as a great networking event and a unique chance to share knowledge, provide peer support and discuss opportunities and make the most of the emerging global trends which are increasingly impacting all businesses.

This year's 2 day event focused on the role of intermediaries in realising the government's objective of encouraging enterprise in all communities. It also explored emerging trends such as the contribution of new migrant groups and the potential of minority ethnic graduate and international business activity. There was a focus on Working with the Corporate Sector, Financing Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurs and the state of Women's Enterprise.

Karen Livingstone from EEDA said that the region benefits enormously in both social and economic terms from the different communities and cultures within its population. However, a range of barriers still remain for some groups including women, disabled people and some ethnic minority groups in accessing the available opportunities. This has long term effects on the aspirations and achievements of many sections of our community, and limits our potential. EEDA also explained about the available regional business support and funding connected with international trade.

A number of academics presented their research findings including Peter Ramsden from the Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion who outlined some important new research (funded by EEDA) into the barriers that BME communities face in accessing

skills, employment and enterprise services in the East of England. Dr Mascarenhas-Keyes from CREME who has been researching entrepreneurial activity amongst UK domiciled Indians and Chinese, presented her findings and explored the link between self employment and education, with a focus on graduates.

In the panel discussion session four business groups comprising EMBG, ABF Enterprise4all, Black Business Association and Liverpool Chinatown Business Association presented how they have responded to meet the needs of their members. Each group had a different business model for their operation and funding which reflected the needs of their members and maturity of the organisations.

At the end of the first day there was a superb gala dinner with two guest speakers. Adeeba Malik explained why she believed that despite the rapid growth of ethnic minority entrepreneurship there is a need for the Ethnic Minority Business Task Force to provide independent strategic advice to government on policies as they relate to ethnic minority businesses. She was followed by Dr Rami Ranger MBE FRSA, MD of Sun Oil Ltd. Dr Ranger is a successful entrepreneur and he gave his personal experiences and views of the evolving patterns of ethnic minority business in the UK, and the opportunities and challenges open to ethnic minority entrepreneurs. Rami ended his speech with an inspirational talk on globalisation and the many opportunities there are for us in Britain to compete with the rest of the world. The future is ours and it is up to each one of us to make the most of it. This conference had a lot of thought provoking material and certainly produced a number of new ideas for entrepreneurial opportunities. Professor Monder Ram and his team who have put this together should be proud of their achievements.

To learn more about CREME and to obtain a full report of the event visit [www.creme-dmu.org.uk](http://www.creme-dmu.org.uk) or email: [creme@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:creme@dmu.ac.uk) The report should also be available for download from our website [www.embg.co.uk/download.html](http://www.embg.co.uk/download.html) from January 2008.



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# Research into Hindu/Indian Business in London



**In our last newsletter we mentioned that EMBG(UK) have been commissioned by the London Development agency (LDA) to carry out research into Hindu/Indian owned businesses.**

This is the first time that the LDA have commissioned such a research into the Hindu/Indian businesses. Whilst it is now acknowledged that the Hindu/Indian businesses are already significantly contributing to the London economy there is a belief that there is still a great untapped potential within this business community. Some of the outcomes of the research are expected to be practical recommendations as to the interventions that the LDA should make to help to remove barriers faced by this business community and the extent to which they can stimulate more start ups, encourage greater growth, provide access to public contracts and generate overseas trade.

This is an exciting opportunity for the Hindu/Indian business community to take part and influence the policy makers with a view to improving the business environment in which they operate. In this regard we have outlined below some of the objectives of the research. We would like to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate in this research so that we can meet the needs of the majority and would welcome and value your input. There will be a number of opportunities for you to take part including completing a questionnaire which we are preparing and taking part in interviews and focus groups.

We currently have a researcher coordinating this activity who may contact you directly. We are also building a website which will enable you to complete an online questionnaire. More information on this will be sent out shortly. You can also get more information by visiting [www.embg.co.uk/hibr](http://www.embg.co.uk/hibr).

**The background to this project** The LDA recognises the contribution of BAME groups to London and in this regard they support a number of different BAME groups. They now wish to focus on Hindu/Indian businesses to determine the extent to which they can support the future growth of these businesses in their role of driving London's sustainable economic development.

**Objectives:** EMBG (UK) will carry out a review of existing research and commission new research within BAME (with an emphasis on Hindu/Indian) businesses from various sources in order to collect information to enable the profiling of these businesses. The purpose would be to:

1. Determine the common characteristics of the main BAME and Hindu/Indian business groups.
2. Identify the ascertainable differences between the BAME, Hindu/Indian and other business groups.
3. Identify if these individuals start businesses for different reasons to the general business population.
4. Identify the key impediments to the start up and their relative success or failure of the enterprises compared to businesses generally.
5. Identify barriers to growth for Hindu/Indian businesses and identify how this differs from other groups.
6. Identify the business support needs by different types of Hindu and Indian businesses (e.g. sector, size, and stage of business).

7. Ascertain the relative business performance of various BAME-owned businesses (e.g. turnover, growth rates, R&D spend, survival rates etc) compared to businesses generally.
8. Identify experiences of Hindu and Indian women-owned businesses to ascertain any special needs or opportunities.
9. Identify how successful Hindu and Indian enterprises have overcome barriers in enterprise, and how these lessons can be applied to other businesses.
10. Ascertain the methods for successfully engaging with the hard-to-reach section of the various groups.
11. Ascertain how to encourage the various BAME groups to network with each other to share best practice and cooperate in areas of common interest.
12. Make recommendations on how to take forward key findings of the research.

*Alok Mitra*

Alok Mitra  
CEO – EMBG (UK) Ltd

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# 16 Newsletter UPDATE

## Next Event

Our next event will be held in Watford at the Prince of Bengal restaurant at 51 Langley Way, Watford, Herts WD17 3EA on 29th January, 6pm start. Grant Leboff will be giving his tips for improving sales. See article on page 9.

## London Mayoral Election

Over 40 % of Londoners are from an ethnic background with some 30% from black, Asian or mixed race. In some boroughs such as Newham and Brent the majority of the population are non white.

Against this background it would be interesting to see if any member of the ethnic community is selected as a running mate.

Given the high level of interest and the importance of London as a place for business for many of our members we will keep a close eye on the election campaign next year and publicise the key facts and issues so that our London business community can determine which candidate is best for them.

We would urge all those eligible to vote to register and to use their vote.

## Hindu Business Research

We have started to carry out a review of existing research and are in the process of creating baseline data and developing questionnaires to carry out interviews and online surveys.

I hope you will participate in this important work. Please read the article on page 15 which explains more about the project. We will be carrying out new research early next year.

## Back Issues

If you have missed our previous editions please visit <http://www.embg.co.uk/newsletters>

## Next Issue

Our Spring issue to be published in March 2008.



*continued from front cover*

*Equanomics UK is a growing coalition of organisations across the UK who want to develop a more economic basis for arguing for a fairer society and greater equality in the UK. The idea behind this is that Black and Asian people have considerable economic power by virtue of their contribution to the UK and that they should use this to make a case for creating a more equal society where everyone can be even more prosperous. The programme was spearheaded by the 1990 Trust, which promotes the interests of the UK's black communities, and Operation Black Vote, which seeks to engage more black people in politics.*

*As part of a week long programme Mr Jackson travelled the country and covered both social and economic issues. Amongst the many things Mr Jackson said, he called for the UK's black and ethnic communities to be encouraged to play a bigger role in politics. He also said "People of colour in Britain should stand proud as creditors, not as debtors – after all, the slave trade was the basis of the*

*economic foundation, the basis of the industrial revolution. Work without wages as an act of the slave system meant that the enslaved were the creditors and the slave masters were the debtors."*

*Dipen Rajyaguru in his speech said that there are more than a million people of Indian origin living in the UK many of whom live in London and they are amongst the highest achievers in both the academic and economic fields. He said "A recent Greater London Authority study showed that Indians own 4.4% of London's businesses and employ over 51,000 people (Dewani 2004). UK-resident Indians feature among the highest levels of owner-occupation. Yet despite these advancements that we are proud of, we have been overlooked in the access to and representation at higher levels including at Board level. This is particularly evident within the public sector". Dipen said that we are on the cusp of great change and urged for political participation through mobilizing the Hindu Vote and by all communities coming together to encourage economic justice for all.*



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