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Mayor confirms plans for Diwali in the Square, the festival of lights

London's Trafalgar Square will be a place for community celebration on Sunday 31 October, when it plays host to Diwali, the annual festival of lights.

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Organised by the Mayor of London in association with the Diwali in London Committee, and with support from Lycamobile and Zee TV, the free event will feature a joyous mix of music, dancing and live performance, as well as displays and food stalls.

Diwali is an important five-day festival celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs and Jains, which occurs between mid-October and mid-November. It is celebrated throughout India and in many other countries.

On the occasion of Diwali lamps are lit to signify the victory of good over evil, light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance. The word Diwali or Deepavali, in its full form, means 'a row of lamps.' Diwali marks a new beginning, a renewal of commitment to family values, and represents the universally revered values of love, reflection, forgiveness and knowledge.

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, said:

'Diwali is a wonderful festival and, with its underlying themes of peace, renewal and co-operation, it has relevance and meaning for all Londoners. I would like to wish everyone a happy and prosperous Diwali.

'The dynamism and contribution of the Indian community to London's economic, social and cultural life and their commitment to this city never fails to impress me. It is with this in mind that I am calling on all Indian communities to get involved in volunteering during the 2012 Games as well as becoming mentors to work with young people, especially in uniformed groups such as the Scouts and the Cadets.'

Statutory Deputy Mayor, Richard Barnes, said:

'London prides itself on being one of the most diverse, tolerant and multicultural cities in the world. London's cultural dynamism is vital to its economic success and I take



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pride in the diversity of its multi-faceted communities. The Indian community adds a unique and important dimension to the cultural vibrancy of London, hosting events such as Diwali, as well as live music, films, dance and other celebrations throughout the year. I hope that the Indian community will go from strength to strength and continue to excel in every field of influence and achievement.

'I look forward to attending the event and hope everyone has a fantastic time!'

Govind Shahi, Head of Business for Zee Europe, said:

'Zee is proud to be part of Diwali in the Square. The event is a fantastic opportunity to bring together communities, families and friends to mark the joyous festival of Diwali. It also provides us with an opportunity to interact with our viewers which is invaluable to us'.

The Diwali in London Committee (DIL) said:

'The performances will include a mix of traditional Indian dances to an array of diverse talents exhibited by the youth that have been cultivated in London, giving us a modern and diverse take on celebrating this ancient Hindu festival.

'The DIL Committee wishes all Londoners a very Happy Diwali'.

Milind Kangle, Chief Executive Officer, Lycamobile said:

'We are proud to celebrate the festival of lights alongside the GLA and the Indian community. Diwali is an auspicious occasion for the Indian community and is always celebrated in such a vibrant and exciting manner by the UK diaspora. During this years festival of lights we would like you to brighten up your Diwali, and we will be running some very special promotions throughout this festival month. Happy Diwali.'

Diwali on the Square takes place on Sunday 31 October from 2pm-630pm. It is free to attend and open to all.



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