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# Samatra Newsletter

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## Dates to Note:

Dance practice starts  
11 March 2011 @  
Northolt

Elections to be held  
at AGM  
26 March 2011

Samatra BBQ 1st  
week July 2011

Summer Function  
31 July 2011

Diwali Function  
5 November 2011

## Forward

Namaste,  
It has been three years since I took over the mantel piece from our much loved, respected and well appreciated Premjibhai Harjibhai Kesra Varsani. We all knew as a new committee it was going to be a steep learning curve for all involved; new faces, new ideas, but all with the same goal to "Take the gaam forward!"

It gives me great pleasure today in presenting our first "Samatra Newsletter" which I hope you will find enjoyable reading.

I wish to thank the present committee, all the volunteers, donors, and in particular you, the members. You have sup-

ported us in taking the Gaam further, keeping in line with our traditional views whilst integrating with the western culture and continuing to link up with our sister organisations around the world and our Gaam back home. On behalf of the current committee I would like to express our thanks for the support and opportunity that you gave to us to make the events organised over the last three years a success. I am sure with your continued support and well wishes the events will carry on being successful.

You will no doubt have noticed the increase in the number of people and youngsters now attending our functions

and we take great satisfaction from this. We would appreciate if more youngsters came forward to get involved with our committee and bring along new and fresh ideas. We also welcome constructive criticism and appreciate this comes with the best interest at heart from our Gaam members, as without this we would not be able to focus on people's perceptions and ideas of the way forward.

We take this opportunity to thank you for your support, and look forward to continuing to serve the Gaam in the future to the best of our ability.

*Shantilal Kalyan Varsani*  
(President Gaam Samatra UK)

## Cultural Entertainment

As the team leader for the cultural team my main role has been to organise the cultural programme for Samatra's annual summer function. This mainly involves organising the teachers, putting together the dance groups, arranging dance practices, and overseeing the costumes and gifts for the participants.

I enjoy dancing, working with children and being involved in the Samatra functions and have thoroughly enjoyed my role in the committee. It gives me great pleasure in seeing the children become confident performers whilst improving their self-esteem and at the same time having lots of fun with their friends. I

strongly encourage all parents to bring their children; sons and daughters to join the Samatra dance team. On another note, we are always in need for helpers (male and female) to come forward to teach dance to a group of children so if you are at all interested in dancing then please do come and join the team this year.

bring a dance/item from home, before you start setting steps please contact Rina Siyani ([rinasiyani@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rinasiyani@yahoo.co.uk)) to check the song is not already chosen.

*By Rina Siyani*

If you are  
planing to



## Inside Story



By Deeya Varsani

My name is Deeya Varsani, I am 7 years old and I participated for the first time in the 2010 summer Samatra mela. When my mum first asked me to join, I did not know what to expect, my parents explained to me the importance of being a part of our Samatra community. I was very nervous at our first dance practice sessions, would I make new friends? Will I be able to learn the dance?

Our teacher was very good, she often brought us special treats if we were good! I made lots of friends and looked forward to Friday evenings. My little sister Priyana who is 3 years old would also join in, she would dance with us and play with the other younger children. Also my mum and dad made lots of new friends. On the day of the summer mela, we had a lovely sunny day and I was really excited

about wearing my costume. I was very nervous but my family and friends were watching me and I wanted them to feel proud of me. Afterwards we were given nice presents!! It was the best day ever!!! My mum and dad feel more part of the Samatra community, and are hoping my little sister will also perform this year. To all the children who would like to dance this year please come along, it really is FUN!!!



By Dipak Varsani  
On behalf of The Samatra Sports Team

Firstly, a big thank you to you all for participating in the events and activities organised by the sports team in the past few years. These have included the annual Snooker,

## Sports!

Pool, Badminton and Squash tournaments as well the newer Samatra's Strongest contests, which have been pretty popular since they were first introduced. We're always looking for new sporting events and games to try out, so if you know of something that you think might be a hit in the gaam, please get involved and share your ideas with us. This year we are also planning on resurrecting the much loved Samatra Fun Day/BBQ.

These have always been very popular, and a big success, so we thought it was about time to organise another. Again, if this is something that you'd like to get involved in, whether it be in terms of sharing ideas, helping to organise or getting your hands dirty on the day then please let us know. We look forward to your continued support and participation in these events!



By Sushma Varsani & Naina Varsani

The Saturday before the Summer Function is a day that no gaam member needs an invitation for. On this day our ladies, and gents, get together to prepare the feast for the Function. Some would say why don't we cater out? The answer is quite simple, yes it can be expensive, however it

## Saturday Rasoi - Summer 2010

is not about the cost. The day of the rasoi actually encourages people to participate in the function and get to know new faces and bond with one another.

If we catered out we would lose this important participation and the sense of belonging to the gaam. We would definitely miss not seeing, meeting people, and chatting with people whilst having a laugh over potato peelings or the frying. We absolutely love the hustle and bustle and the sense of achievement at the end of the day. Don't just think it is just „the oldies“ who come to help. We had a wide range of people last year,

from the garba participants who come for the final dance practices to us „the oldies“. But ask anyone who comes. As Deeya says. It really is FUN!!

### Recipe - Mixed Nut Barfi

Ground kaju, pista, & badam - 1 cup  
Elaichi—1 tsp Sugar - 1 cup Ghee -  
1/3 cup Milk powder - 1/2 cup

Make sugar syrup with enough water for the sugar to be submerged. Boil until the syrup becomes like thread. Now add the mixed ground nuts and elachi. In between pour ghee while stirring. Keep stirring until the mix does not stick to the vessel. Turn off the heat. Add milk powder to the mix and mix it well while it is still hot. Then pour the final mix into a greased plate. Leave it to cool and cut into diamond shaped pieces.

## Diwali 2010

What can I say; we as a gaam have such talented and dedicated members. Be it taking part in the productions, working behind the scenes or working as a team to organize and manage the Diwali Milan. There is always something for all to do, from the to the Ankaut,



to the samaiyo to the



children"s art"s and craft,



or cultural programme and not forgetting the raas garba, ramjanyiu and fuderi !!!!

I hope that this year"s successful play titled "Days of Diwali" was as pleasurable for you to watch as it was for me, Sushma, Priya, Meera and all the participants in preparing for it.

I hope that we have encouraged lots of our members to come and join us in our future works.

I have to also say that all the gents who came dressed in

Indian attire looked handsome and I hope that next year more guys will wear their Kurtas !!!



*By Naina Varsani*

## Samatra & Samaj

I have found that being involved in our communities events has been very fulfilling in many ways. I have made many friends in the process and learnt a variety of skills, which will always be with me and be an asset in achieving any future aspirations in life.

Being a Gaam representative at SKPLC is a good starting point and opens your eyes to many other projects that you may wish to get involved in within our community at

large. I found such an opportunity when attending the regular monthly EC meetings where I noticed a gap in the way SKLPC promoted its activities. Samaj needed a more efficient and attractive approach, fitting with current times in notifying and creating an awareness to our community of all ages, about the variety of events that SKLPC offered throughout the year. I decided to take the first step in this challenge in March

2009, and am now the convenor for, INTERNAL PR & Marketing for SKLPC (UK).

For more information on this and all of the activities that our community offers, visit SKLPC.com and take a look for yourselves.



*By Hansa Varsani*

## Bhajan or not to Bhajan

When many youngsters hear the word bhajans they are ready to run a mile, or run out of the hall.

We want to encourage all gaam members to participate and more importantly enjoy what we are playing.

Diwali is the most appropriate time to have traditional Bhajans and Kirtans, as we want to do something special for the Baa"s and Bapa"s who don"t really like this dhichak dhana music.

Thanks to Q Soundz we have an alternative for the rest of us. They know how to entice us with their RnB, Bhangra & Bollywood.

Can you make a difference; bring new ideas and new music? All you youngsters and oldies out there come forward next year and show us your musical talent play the dhol or the tablas, or even sing.

This year we had a new artist, Vanita Bhupesh Kerai. It was great to get a new voice

to sing with us and inspire you to join us.

Let"s get some new Dhamaka for this year"s Summer Mela and Diwali Function.



*By Naina Varsani*

## Paryavaran Tirth— Samatra, Kutch

By Premji Harji Varsani

### A place of pilgrimage & ecology

Ten years after the 26<sup>th</sup> January 2001 earthquake, Kutch has blossomed again from a land of rubble, stones and destruction to a garden of trees, vitality and progress. Corporates are competing with each other to establish their businesses in Kutch, now the fastest growing district of Gujarat, which in turn is the fastest growing state of India.

Samatra is a place where Lord Swaminarayan himself visited four specific sites and bathed in Ujamni Talao with Santos when he traveled across Kutch.

Samatra's growth and environmental development projects are steadily progressing. At present there are around ten new residential buildings constructed in grand style and design. More roads are being stone paved and have 24 hour water supply on tap at a cost of 100 rupees for life. There is also a mineral water filter plant facility free of charge for everyone. During the hot summers, you may hear on the News about water shortages in Ahmedabad, Bombay and New Delhi, but in Samatra, water supply is guaranteed 24/7.

Following new projects have been completed:

- 1) Ujamni Talao widened and deepened with double the capacity to store water.
- 2) Three bridges to walk and drive around the perimeter banks are fully completed. The length of the walk measures up to 1.2km.
- 3) Seventy new Vadlas, Peelis, Limdas and Karanjs (Indian Beech Tree"s) have been planted. Each of these trees have individual concrete encl-



tures to protect them from cattle and wild animals, in their early years of growth. They all have drip irrigation system and will be carefully looked after for about ten years. Same care and attention is required as like bringing up children. At present, all these trees are doing well and confirmed to be established. We sincerely thank all our sponsors for their kind generosity and love for trees, water and ecology, i.e. life itself.

- 4) At our last AGM, it was suggested that every individual has a moral duty to plant at least five trees in return to mother earth for our existence of various stages of our life cycle:

Childhood (Balpan)

Teen Years (Kishor Avastha)

Youth (Yuwani)

Adulthood (Proudh Avasha)

Old Age (Ghadpan)

Imagine what a difference this simple gesture will make in improving our quality of life, overcoming problems of global warming, and immense happiness one will get in performing this noble duty.

- 5) Ujamni Talao No. 2 has now been completed on the south side and palm

trees (Khajuris & Coconuts) will be planted on its perimeter.

- 5) Ujamni Island garden is now being constructed and landscaped with trees and foliage, and work is expected to be finished before this monsoon.
- 6) Hadham Dhado valley (Chadwa-Rakhal) dam is completed with its overflow (ogan) built permanently and excess water diverted and channeled via Chhdas towards Samatra Ujamni and Bhambhrai-(Varnasar) Talaos.
- 7) This water harvesting system has now become very unique and beneficial in storing water both and underground in Bhambhrai's catchments area. Over the years, water table levels have risen and benefited neighbouring villages of Fotdi, Manukva, Bharasar and Sukhpur with their drinking water bore wells in Samatra region.

- 8) At our sports ground, a new generator room has been built and a generator set donated to provide electricity supply to the sports ground. More trees have also been planted around the three sides of the performance stage



in the ground.

- 9) A children's play area has been constructed and trees planted on the annex grounds outside our sports field.
- 10) Nilkanth Mahadev, Bhimnath Mahadev and Hanumanji Mandir near our samaj are all being painted and re-decorated with new colours. All our places of worships will have a new look.

- 11) A new covered Walk Way with Canopy is being constructed in the fore-court of our Samaj and new slab pavings laid out to make it more attractive and give it a tidy look.

- 12) Tiffin Service at our Samaj has now been established and at present 12 people are now using this service. The charge is only 50 Rupees for two meals a day at a discounted rate. You are welcome to support this service.

All these developments, ecology improvements and philanthropic activities are only possible with generous contributions from individuals, overseas and local communities and support of local government. *Together we can make a difference.*

For further information and suggestions please contact:-

Premjibhai Harji Varsani

# Road Trip to India

My Dad (Devji Harji Varsani) talked about driving to India on his 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday with my Mum (Illaben Devji Varsani). I didn't take him seriously until his friend approached me and asked me to start making plans. They set off in March 2009, 3 days before his 51<sup>st</sup> birthday.



Once the word had got out amongst our family and friends reactions to their trip varied. Some thought my Mum and Dad were crazy - Why not just get on a plane? Others thought they wouldn't go through with it and then there were those that thought „good on them”.

I didn't really know how to start preparing for this mammoth trip, not to mention thinking about the possible complications that may lie ahead. Planning was undoubtedly vital for this journey to be successful and safe for my parents. First thing to do was to plan their route and this was it:



- England to France via ferry,
- France to Switzerland
- Switzerland to Italy
- Italy to Greece via ferry
- Greece to Turkey
- Turkey to Iran
- Iran to Pakistan
- Pakistan to the Holy Grail

(India of course).



The signs were promising that on the day of Diwali 2009 they bought the perfect car for the trip. It was a 4 x 4 Toyota Hilux with hard top cabin for £5,500. This was the easy bit! It was the car insurance that was a nightmare - nobody was willing to insure the car for Turkey, Iran and Pakistan....for obvious reasons.

Following some extensive research the problem was solved, I found a company in Holland that was willing to insure the car for Turkey & Iran. The insurance for Pakistan was organised by the sponsor, who helped my parents to obtain their Pakistani Visa's.

The trip was planned with my Dad's friend (a mechanic by trade- very handy on a road trip) and wife Mr C & Mrs R Rabadia (Mandvi). My dad was instructed to phone me twice a day, to inform me of where they were and what their next destination would be. This was purely so that if an emergency were to arise, I would be able to roughly identify their location.

In terms of adventure, it couldn't get much more exciting than this. My Dad said the hospitality they received on the road was exceptional, particularly, in Pakistan where the locals were genuinely interested and supportive of their trip. In Iran, at one point my Dad says they felt like royalty as the Military Police escorted them to the Pakistan border from their Hotel.

*If you have a story to tell then let us know.*

Were there any complications? When the dreaded day had finally arrived - „entering Pakistan” – it was a surprise to all that they were welcomed with open arms. I got my phone call that they had entered Pakistan but they had to divert from the route that I planned. My dad explained that locals had informed them that this particular road was not safe.

You're in Pakistan and you're asked to follow another route, what do you do? Ignore them or take the diversion and a possible ambush further down? After consideration they opted for the 600 mile diversion. At this point I lost contact with my dad for 3 days.....Nothing to panic about though as there was no reception en-route to Lahore. Things weren't brighter when they reached Lahore either, as

there was reporting of bombings in the area.

Luckily, they made it safely to the Pakistan/Indian – Wagah - border and began their journey to Samatra. Upon arriving in Samatra, the word about their road trip spread and before they knew it they were local celebrities - local newspapers and TV channels were lining up for an interview. They even made the news on Gujarat Samachar!

What my parents did was very courageous, ambitious and exciting. It's definitely made me think about venturing out on a Road Trip of my own.

There are not many people that can say they drove from London to Samatra but my Mum and Dad can!

*By Jagdish Devji Varsani*

**ચાર દહીલ વાટે દસ રાષ્ટ્રો નિહાળ્યા...**

ભુજ, તા. ૫ : અમેરિકાના શોધક કોલેબસને સાચો રાહ ચીંધનાર કાનજી માલમ હોય કે સદીઓ પહેલાં વહાણવટુ ખેડીને આફ્રિકા પહોંચેલા ભાટિયા હોય કે પછી હવે વિશ્વભરમાં પથરાઈ ચૂકેલા પાટીદાર હોય... આ કચ્છી પ્રવાસીઓની શ્રેણીમાં માધાપરનાં 'વિશ્વપ્રવાસી'નું બિરુદ મેળવનારા ધનજીભાઈ મેઘાણી આવે છે અને હવે ઉમેરાય છે માંડવીના ચંદુલાલ રાખડિયા અને દેવજીભાઈ વરસાણી. દેશ-વિદેશમાં ફરવાનો શોખ કચ્છીઓમાં વધતા જાય છે તેનો પુરાવો આ બે લેવા પટેલ પ્રવાસીઓ છે.

અમેરિકા, ઈંગ્લેન્ડ, આફ્રિકાની વાત હોય અને પ્રવાસ જેવો વિષય હોય તો સુરજે યાય કે વિદેશીઓ રમખાણો પોષે છે અને વારંવાર જોખમ ખેડીને નીકળી પડે છે. પરંતુ આજે એવા કચ્છીઓના ઓળખ આપવી છે જે દાયકા અગાઉ કચ્છથી ગયા અને લંડનમાં જે જીવ્યાં પોતે ફરતા હતા તેનાથી ૧૦થી વધુ દેશોનો પ્રવાસ ખેડતાં ખેડતાં પરત માઠે વતન પહોંચ્યા.

મુજ માંડવીના ચંદુલાલ રાખડિયા અને તેમના પત્ની રામભાઈ રાખડિયા તથા દેવજી વરસાણી અને ઈલાબેન વરસાણીએ ચાર જણ ૧.૩મી માર્ચના લંડનથી પોતાની ટોયોટા Kwo3 juus નંબરની જીપમાં નીકળ્યા અને ફ્રાંસ, બેલ્જિયમ, જર્મની, સ્વિટ્ઝર્લેન્ડ, ઈટાલી, ગ્રીસ, તુર્કી, ઈરાન, પાકિસ્તાનના લાહોર થઈ 'વાહાજટારી' વાહાબોર પરથી પંજાબમાં પ્રવેશ્યા અને અમૃતસરમાં સુવર્ણમંદિર થઈ, હરિદ્વારમાં ગંગાસ્નાન કરી રામવત્સીના ભુજ પહોંચી આયા.

માધાપર હાઈવે પર હોટલ 'ટ્રી ટોપ' ખાતે 'કચ્છમિત્ર' સાથેની વાતચીતમાં આ પરસ્પર વેવાઈ અને બાબપણના ગોકિયા એવા લંડનવાસીઓએ કહ્યું કે, છોકરા કમાતા થઈ ગયા, અમે ૪૮ અને ૫૧ વર્ષની ઉંમરે નિવૃત્ત થઈએ તો વાંધો નથી તેવું લાગતાં સહોડે પોતાની જ ગાડીથી 'વેર' જવાનો નિર્ણય કર્યો વચ્ચે જે દેશો આપ્યા તે પણ જોતા આયા.

ઈંગ્લેન્ડમાં બેઠે બેઠે વિશ્વપ્રવાસ ગાડીમાં જ કરવો તેવું નક્કી કર્યાં ખાદ ચંદુભાઈએ ઈમિગ્રેશનની વિધિ આટોપી, દેવજીભાઈએ ખાડીની તૈયારીઓ કરી અને બંને યુગલ નીકળી પડ્યા... યુરોપમાં તો અમારા જવા ઘણાં ફરતા હોય તેથી કોઈએ નોંધ ન લીધી પણ ઈરાને ખૂબ આઠર વારંવાર જોખમ ખેડીને નીકળી પડે છે. પાકિસ્તાનનો અનુભવ કેવો રહ્યો? અમે પ્રશ્નની જ જાણે આ ચારેય જણ રાહ જોતા હોય તેમ અફ્રીસાથે બોલી ઊઠ્યા... ભારત જેવો... ક્યાંયે કોઈ તકલીફ ન પડી લોકો તો ઊભાજાઈ મળતા હતા. પોલીસ અને લશ્કરના જવાનો તથા વિદેશાપાતાનો વ્યવહાર સંભાળનારા પણ સાલસ હતા... ફરી આવજો... પાકિસ્તાનમાં રોકાજો... આ વાડય બધાની જીભે હતું. પાકિસ્તાનમાં રસ્તા ખૂબ જ ખરાબ હોવાની નોંધ લેતા આ કચ્છી પ્રવાસીઓએ કહ્યું કે, લંડનથી પરિવારજનો કહેતા હતા 'જલદી પાકિસ્તાન છોડો' પરંતુ વાસ્તવિકતા અલબત્ત હતી જાણે હવતની હોય તેવો પ્રેમ પરોશી દેશો આપ્યો.

લંડનમાં મોટર ગેરેજ અને એલ્યુમિનિયમ સેકન્ડના ધંધામાં પ્રવૃત્ત આ પટેલ પ્રવાસીઓ ૩૦ વર્ષ પહેલાં લંડનમાં સ્થિર થયા છે. પણ માંડવીની દરિયો, કચ્છની ખેતી અને વતનની મહેક મોટેનો તલસાદ તેમને સદા માનુષ્ય પર ખંચી લાવે છે. હોટલ 'ટ્રી ટોપ'ના સ્ટાફ તથા માલિકમંજી સ્વાગત કરી વધુ રોકવા આગ્રહ કર્યો તો આ લોકોએ કહ્યું કે, 'માંડવી વાટ જુવે છે...'

મોટરમાં લંડનથી નીકળી અનેક દેશો કરીને પંજાબ વાટે ભારતમાં પ્રવેશી કચ્છ પહોંચેલા માંડવીવાસીઓની ટોયોટા સાથેની તસવીર.

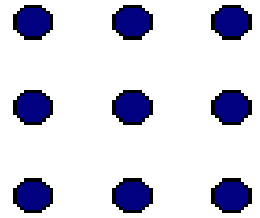
લંડનથી માંડવી વાયા ફ્રાંસ, ઈટાલી, જર્મની, ગ્રીસ, તુર્કી, સ્વિટ્ઝર્લેન્ડ, ઈરાન, પાકિસ્તાન... પોતાની ગાડીથી કચ્છ પહોંચેલા પાકિસ્તાન ઓળખો

# Quiz

By DipakVarsani

1. For you all young and old...How can these nine dots be connected by four straight, connected lines (i.e. without 'lifting up the pen' in between)?

**Let us know on the day the answer to this one and if your name is picked from the 'hat' you'll get £50**



2. What are the next two values in the following sequence of numbers:

3 3 5 4 4 3 5 ??

## We're on the web!! [www.samatra.org](http://www.samatra.org)

Please let us know of any changes ie. address, new arrivals via email, phone or post.

[memberupdate@samatra.org](mailto:memberupdate@samatra.org) (Clearly stating subject as "details update").

Manju Lalji Varsani, 99 Paxford Road, Wembley, HA0 3RJ. Telephone: 0208 908 0200

## AGM Election of New Committee 2011 - 2014

### Committee Positions

<i>President</i>	1
<i>Vice President</i>	1
<i>Secretary</i>	1
<i>Assistant Secretary</i>	1
<i>Treasurer</i>	1
<i>Assistant Treasurer</i>	1
<i>Reporting Accountant</i>	1
<i>Samaj Representative</i>	1
<i>Advisors</i>	8
<i>Cultural Entertainment (Dance &amp; Drama)</i>	8
<i>(Music)</i>	3
<i>Sports</i>	6
<i>Event Management</i>	6
<i>Catering</i>	6
<i>Audio &amp; Visual</i>	6
<i>Media</i>	5
<i>Overseas</i>	3

The Samatra AGM function is to be held on 26 March 2011. This year marks the end of the last committee and the beginning of a new committee who will continue to help Samatra move forward with the times.

As we grow and new members come on board we get new ideas and with these comes the need for more members helping with the organization of the events, from lighting, videomen, to table decorations as you saw on Diwali kindly provided by Dimita.

We also realise that there are many of you who would like to be a part of the committee but don't quite fall into the old committee roles that we had. Therefore we have come up with the suggestion alongside.

We also considered the voting process. At the AGM our procedure has always been someone puts a name forward and this gets seconded. However people sometimes get nominated by mischance and agree sometimes out of face when they cannot dedicate the time and help that is required for organizing the events.

Therefore the new procedure will be of people who wish to be considered for any of the alongside positions to show / put their names forward. At the AGM the members will have a vote on which of the names will form part of the committee.

If you wish to be considered for any of the position please either email Naina Varsani

email: [n41n4@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:n41n4@hotmail.co.uk)

Or send in your forms to:

Naina Varsani  
126 Eastcote Avenue  
Greenford  
Middx  
UB6 0NR

## Finally...

**Our apologies to all our members who can not read English. Unfortunately due to time constraints we were unable to translate sections into Gujarati.**