

THE MUSLIM COUNCIL OF BRITAIN

A step towards greater consultation, cooperation and coordination on Muslim Affairs in the UK.

Muslim Council of Britain Weekly E-Newsletter

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Course for School Teachers

The MCB held its second one day course for school teachers entitled "Understanding Islam: A View From Within" at the Muslim World League offices on Saturday 9th March. The course was attended by approximately 40 headteachers and religious education co-ordinators.

The course aimed to provide an 'insiders view' of the Islamic faith and a 'working appreciation' of Muslim parents' aspirations and concerns. Furthermore, it also aimed to introduce educational resources that could usefully be introduced at different stages of the National Curriculum.

Research and Documentation Committee Member, Dr. Sangeeta Dhami, stated, "With a mixture of interactive presentations, panel discussions, educational resources to view and purchase, and exhibits to see, there was much to keep delegates occupied and entertained throughout the day.

Post-course evaluation was overwhelmingly positive, with delegates commenting on the 'warm and friendly atmosphere', the 'honesty' and the willingness of the organisers to engage in 'frank and open discussion'. Presentations were described as 'excellent', 'intelligent' and 'professionally relevant'.

Situation in Gujarat

Raising Awareness Conference in Batley

Ibrahim Master, Chair of the Lancashire Council of Mosques, attended a conference in Batley on Saturday 9th March. Gujarati people from throughout the UK attended the meeting at the Al-Hikmah Centre. The speakers included Lord Adam Patel and Ibrahim Master, who on behalf of the MCB informed the audience of the work being carried out by the MCB and the Lancashire Council of Mosques to help the people of Gujarat.

A victim of the tragic event, whose family was caught up in the violence, shared his disturbing experiences with the audience.

Meeting with the Prime Minister

Discussions are currently taking place to arrange a meeting between the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and the family of the three persons from Batley who died in India.

House of Lords

Secretary General, Yousuf Bhailok, attended a meeting on 13th March at the House of Lords with the lawyer and human rights activist, Mr Abdul Majid Memon and Lord Adam Patel, where he was briefed on the situation in India.

BBC Response Letter

The MCB received a letter from Richard Sambrook, Director of BBC News, with regards to coverage of the violence in Gujarat. The letter stated that the BBC did not intend to "stoke the fire of communal conflict" and reported the deaths of both Muslims and Hindus in a fair

and unbiased fashion.

Inter Faith Network

Yousuf Bhailok, Secretary General, attended a meeting with Brian Pearce of the Inter Faith Network UK to discuss how to address the stance of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad on communal violence in Gujarat.

Prince's Trust - Faith Communities Advisory Forum

The second meeting of the Prince's Trust's Faith Community Advisory Group was held on 6th March. Iqbal Asaria, Chair of the Business and Economics Committee, attended on behalf of the MCB.

The main discussion focused on the launch of the Jubilee Initiative, which was suggested as the Faith Communities' contribution to Her Majesty's Jubilee celebrations. The basic idea is that Britain's faith communities should design and promote a UK wide programme of activities aimed at inspiring people of different faiths to give time to individuals or groups from another faith community.

The idea was welcomed as a solid step in promoting Britain as a multi-faith and multicultural country.

Al-Khoei Foundation

The Al-Khoei Foundation held a reception in honour of the visit by His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, to the Islamic Centre and Mosque on 12th March.

Yousuf Bhailok and Dr Abdul Raheem Khan, Chair of the Membership Committee, attended on behalf of the MCB.

Blackburn Mission

A delegation sent by the Archbishop of Canterbury and led by the Bishop of Birmingham, came to Blackburn on 11th March for a two-day visit as part of a tour of six towns in the UK. The aim of the tour is to find out the views of the Muslim community on current issues. The delegation met Ibrahim Master at The Lancashire Council of Mosques offices and also visited local schools and organisations.

International Affairs Committee

The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) held a Parliamentary Reception on the 12th of March at The House of Commons in order to celebrate the production of their Statutory Code of Practice following the passing of the new Race Relations Act.

Tanzeem Wasti, Chair of the International Affairs Committee, attended on behalf of the MCB and met with a number of politicians including the Minister for Community, Race Equality and Europe, Angela Eagle MP and Simon Hughes MP to discuss the new Act.

Community Affairs Committee

Dr Jafer Qureshi, Vice-Chair of the Community Affairs Committee, has been taking a lead in the stem cell research debate in conjunction with the Health Committee. Last Sunday he participated in discussions on BBC Radio 4 and Radio Five Live.

The Committee is also looking into the case of five American Muslim students aged between 14 and 16 years who were turned back from Heathrow Airport. A report is currently being prepared in association with Al-Hira School and College in Birmingham.

Social Policy, Welfare and Regeneration Committee (SPWRC)

Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid, Chair of the SPWRC committee was a guest speaker at an event "Standing Together against Intolerance" on Wednesday 6th March at Lambeth Town Hall. The event was organised by the Mayor of London and the London Civic Forum. Imam Sajid addressed the gathering on behalf of the MCB and spoke about the Muslim Community in London, their economic contribution and Islamophobia. He asked for Religious Discrimination to be outlawed and for legal recourse to be provided.

Media Committee

The Media Committee held a meeting on 12th March to discuss the programmes currently being broadcast on Channel Four on British Muslims. Programmes include "Trouble at the Mosque" on 14th March at 9.00pm and "Who Speaks for Muslims" on Friday 15th at 7.30pm, in which the MCB is featured. A detailed response from the MCB will be issued after the programme has aired.

On Wednesday 13th March, Inayat Bunglawala, Secretary of the Media Committee, participated in a panel discussion that is part of the Best of British Islamic Festival organised by ArRum, FAIR and other Muslim bodies. In his presentation he described how the MCB had reacted to the events of September 11th.

Events

Connecting Futures The British Council is holding a reception on 15th March to meet the participants of the Connecting Futures Youth Forum. Saqeb Mueenuddin, Secretary of the Public Affairs Committee, will be attending on behalf of the MCB.

