



National Indian Students and Alumni Union (UK)

PRESS RELEASE

15th November 2017. For immediate release.

UK's National Indian Students and Alumni Union celebrates fifth anniversary; hosts Indian student politicians at "Ideas for India"

The National Indian Students and Alumni Union (NISAU), the **UK's apex national organisation representing students, alumni and young professionals of Indian origin** has today hosted "**Ideas for India**" a unique event celebrating the UK-India educational and youth partnership. The event was held in association with the **Foreign and Commonwealth Office**, and the Mayor of London's official agency, **London and Partners**.

A 13-member delegation of young Indian politicians, holding influential positions in the student wings of India's major political parties, is in the UK as guests of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The purpose of the visit is in a bid to support India's reform and growth priorities. To build awareness of parliamentary and good governance, deepen political links and open up opportunities to build cross cutting networks and future collaborations between our two great nations. This opportunity will enable the delegation to learn from UK's political and parliamentary systems, governance and regulatory systems and higher education sector.

The NISAU, which is **celebrating its fifth anniversary**, provided the visiting cross-party Indian student politicians with an opportunity to present their ideas and vision for India's growth and reforms, focusing on what they think are the most crucial issues needing attention and focus, in the form of a succinct, short pitch. The pitches were followed by a passionate discussion with an intellectually driven audience, consisting of academics, students, young professionals and senior stakeholders in the UK-India relationship.

During the event, the NISAU announced the **appointment of its newest Patron and the launch of its 'Friends of NISAU' initiative**, to mark the **start to the celebrations of its fifth anniversary**. NISAU's newest Patron is the renowned businessman in the hospitality sector, **Mr Ramesh Arora**, Managing Director of The Montcalm Luxury Hotels, who was appointed as Patron of the NISAU in recognition of his guidance and support to the young Indian community in the UK, and his passion of promoting India as a leading global tourist destination. Under Mr Arora's guidance, the NISAU hopes to effectively equip the Indian student community, i.e. the young brand ambassadors of brand India, with the knowledge to promote India as the leading global tourism destination, and thus contribute towards India's socioeconomic development.

Announcing the **Friends of NISAU initiative**, Miss Sanam Arora, founder and chairperson of the organisation commented "It is absolutely incredible to have come such a long way in just 5 years. I started the NISAU during my time at the LSE, in 2012, because there was no organisation that united the very dynamic Indian student community on a national basis, and there was so much we could do, only if we collaborated together! It was at this time that all the immigration changes were also coming into play, leading to thousands of Indian students getting negatively impacted. Yet, there was no representation for them. That's how the NISAU was born – to become that thread that joins all the beads together and fights for justice for these young, faultless students! And today that is precisely what we have – our members and followers can be found at almost all UK universities, we have our affiliate student societies at more than 30 universities, and have complete coverage of all four countries of the UK, and a team in India. We collaborate today with all government and non-government stakeholders, and it is testimony to our exceptional work that we have been invited by the Indian Government to represent the Indian student community at its Pravasi Bharatiya Divas forums, every year since 2014, as well as many other prestigious forums, including Westminster Policymaking forums, the University of Oxford, and even an event by the Australian International Students Body. So, we have come a long way in five years. To celebrate this special moment and to help us grow further, we have today launched a very special initiative, Friends of NISAU. This is a network of people who can help us grow and deliver on our ultimate vision of positively contributing to our great nations. I am absolutely delighted that some very special people such as the **Rt. Hon Preet Gill, Member of Parliament for Birmingham Edgbaston; the Dame Asha Khemka, Principal of West Nottinghamshire College, Mr Anand Kumar, the Deputy Chief Executive of the Union Bank of India, Lord Meghnad Desai, Mrs Tara Naidu, Manager for UK and Europe, Air India and Mrs Mira Mishra Kaushik, the Director of Akademi**, have come forth as friends of the Indian student and alumni community in Britain."

Commenting on the event, Mr Mohanish Borana, President of NISAU, said "Our platform, **Perspective**, aims to promote **dynamic and unbiased discussions on issues facing contemporary India as well as the opportunities that India presents**. Through today's unique initiative we have indulged in dialogue with future policy-makers of India and presented the opportunity for the **#livingbridge**, the young Indian diaspora, to have an open intellectual discourse with those that are likely to lead Indian politics and governments in the years to come. The idea here is to not discuss the problem alone but to develop a solution-seeking attitude in the concerned stakeholders, and that is precisely what we achieved today. When we launched **Perspective**, we brought to the UK, Mr **Utsav Bains**, the 30-year-old lawyer who represented the plaintiffs in the case against the self-styled godman Ram Rahim, and in doing so, brought about what is perhaps one of the biggest judicial wins in India's history. Today through **Perspective** we brought India's future political leaders to the UK. There is a lot more to come."



National Indian Students and Alumni Union (UK)

The NISAU also announced the formal launch of its working partnership with the UK's National Union of Students (NUS). NUS and the NISAU will be jointly marking the International Students Day on 17th November through the launch of the NUS's International Students Conference and the campaign **#StudentsoftheWorld**.

Ends.

For queries please contact:

Sanam Arora
Founder and Chairperson
National Indian Students and Alumni Union UK
M: 0044 (0) 7568 194 851
E: sanam.arora@nisu.org.uk

Mohanish Borana
President
National Indian Students and Alumni Union UK
M: 0044 (0) 7850 394 700
E: Mohanish.borana@nisu.org.uk

Notes to editors

About National Indian Students and Alumni Union UK

The **National Indian Students and Alumni Union UK** is the umbrella organisation representing the UK university students & alumni of Indian heritage. NISAU was created to provide a unifying voice for students with Indian heritage (whether home-grown or international) and promote, educate and celebrate Indian culture with people of all communities. NISAU aims to bring together all Indian student societies and alumni in the UK on one platform and is creating a unique, youth-led ecosystem to foster entrepreneurship, patriotism and leadership. Its ultimate vision is to enable & empower the young Indian diaspora in the UK to contribute positively to India, UK, and the UK-India relationship.

Patrons

Rt Hon Virendra Sharma MP (UK), Hon Dr Shashi Tharoor MP (India), Hon Ram Bilas Sharma (India), Dr Rami Ranger CBE (UK), Dr Virander Paul IFS (Hon Patron 2013-16), Mr Ramesh Arora (UK)

Visit www.nisu.org.uk for further information.

Background of the visit of the delegation:

An Indian delegation of future policy makers are the guests of the **Foreign and Commonwealth Office** during their stay in Britain. The purpose of the visit is in a bid to support India's reform and growth priorities. To build awareness of parliamentary and good governance, deepen political links and open up opportunities to build cross cutting networks and future collaborations. This opportunity will enable the delegation to learn from UK's political and parliamentary systems, governance and regulatory systems and higher education sector. Finally, it aims to promote the UK as India's partner of choice as it seeks to modernise and liberalise its economy and lift millions out of poverty.

India is a young country with 65% of the population below the age of 35. Thirteen future influencers, expected to hold important positions in their parties, government and parliament in the coming years have been chosen for this visit. It will provide a platform for them to promote political, parliamentary and economic reforms in India and develop a network of future leaders in India.

Contact: Protocol Directorate, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Lancaster House, London, SW1A 1BB (Tel: 020 7008 2736) for further details.

Background of the *Perspective* series:

Perspective is an apolitical and areligious platform for critical and constructive engagement with India, based on the principles "**Engage | Enable | Empower**". It aims to promote dynamic and unbiased discussions on issues facing contemporary India as well as the opportunities India presents. Audiences, predominantly young Indians and those interested in India, will get to engage with visionary leaders who are shaping India's future without the fear of being labelled as belonging to a certain political ideology e.g. "Bhakt", "Sickular", "Anti-National" etc. It intends to bring together visionary leaders and do-ers, students, young professionals, academics and researchers in India and the UK for healthy and action oriented discussion, debate and dissent. *Perspective* was launched on the 3rd October 2017, at the London School of Economics, by Rt Hon Virendra Sharma, Member of Parliament, UK.

Delegate bios enclosed separately