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THE PRIME MINISTER

5 October 2007

Dear Mr Patel

Thank you very much for your kind letter of 6 September inviting me to participate in the centenary celebrations of the Swaminarayan Hindu Mission. I am very sorry I cannot be with you today. I am pleased, however, that Tony McNulty MP is able to join you and deliver this message on my behalf.

May I first welcome His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj to the United Kingdom, on the current leg of his international tour. His leadership and public service have provided inspiration to many millions of people around the world. It was his vision and determination that enabled the construction of the beautiful Akshardham monument in New Delhi, India. And I know he has a very special place in the hearts of so many of our communities. I send His Holiness my very best wishes for his stay in the United Kingdom and for his continuing travels.

I have heard much about the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Neasden, which is not only a marvellous architectural landmark in London, but also a beacon of spirituality and an enduring community institution. The contribution you make to the education of our young people and the cultural and community life of London and the United Kingdom is something you should all be very proud of. You espouse ideals of community and voluntary service, which are an example to us all.

I wish you well during these centenary celebrations and I hope I will be able to visit your Mandir in the near future.

With my best wishes,

Yours sincerely

Gordon Bunn

Mr Jitu Patel