



Hindu Forum Britain

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The Editor  
Evening Standard  
Northcliffe House  
2 Derry Street, Kensington,  
London W8 5TT

Dear Editor

I write to you in my capacity as President of the Hindu Forum of Britain, with regard to yesterday's article by Andrew Gilligan – Revealed: the rise and rise of the fundamentalist father.

The article contains numerous factual inaccuracies as well as some highly defamatory unsubstantiated allegations.

I will deal with Mr Kallidai's and the Forum's responses to the allegations later in this letter but at the outset would like to express my disappointment that the article was published yesterday in circumstances where our PR representative had been contacted on Sunday afternoon by Mr Gilligan and, had indicated to him that a response would be forthcoming either on Monday or today (Tuesday). Copies of the relevant email exchange are enclosed with this letter.

Given that we are a voluntary organisation and there was no urgent requirement for you to publish today, rather than tomorrow or Wednesday for instance, I am particularly disappointed that you didn't wait for our response, especially as Mr Gilligan had been put on notice that it would be forthcoming.

I invite you to address this point immediately: failure to do so will leave us with no alternative but to take this matter to the PCC.

Kindly note that, as this letter demonstrates, Mr Kallidai did not make several of the remarks attributed to him.

The article claims that Mr Kallidai 'has close associations with violent extremists'. This could not be further from the truth. Mr Kallidai has given selfless service to the Hindu community and many other faiths. When politicians like Tony Blair and David Cameron (among many, many others) speak so highly of Mr Kallidai, they do not do so off the cuff. The fact that people in such prominent positions have nothing but praise for Mr Kallidai does suggest Mr Kallidai has made a significant contribution to the faith communities in this country.

Mr Gilligan writes that the HFB and Mr Kallidai were involved in a campaign against MF Husain and reports that the exhibition was cancelled due to security fears and vandalism. Then Mr Gilligan suggests that the HFB and Mr Kallidai were not involved. If neither party were involved why mention the campaign at all? We can only conclude that the campaign was only mentioned to add to the general 'slur' inflicted on Mr Kallidai by Mr Gilligan.

Mr Gilligan has failed – or didn't bother – to mention all the many positive campaigns the HFB and Mr Kallidai have been involved in – encouraging Hindus to vote during the last general election, or the destruction of Hindu Temples in Russia, or organising a memorial service with many other faith groups following the Mumbai bombings, interfaith events at St Ethelburgas, multi-faith consultations on public policy, and several bilateral and multilateral initiatives to encourage community cohesion and engagement.

Rather than celebrate the many positive steps that Mr Kallidai and the HFB have taken to create an environment where people from all faiths can happily co-exist in today's multicultural UK, Mr Gilligan and his backers have decided to destroy a reputation because of petty jealousies.


Since the article was published, the HFB and Mr Kallidai, personally, have received considerable support from different faith communities and from across the political divide supporting the work of the organisation and the man.

The agenda of the author of the article is called into question by simply looking at the fact that his family's picture need not have been published, drawing complete bystanders into the debate unnecessarily. This is also a matter which we believe we will have to raise with the PCC if no adequate response is received to this letter. The publication of the photo of Mr Kallidai, his young son, his wife and his mother is a clear intrusion into the private life that this family ought to enjoy. There is no justification for the publication of the photograph and we invite your immediate explanation as to why this happened.

I attach a comprehensive document which is, essentially, a completed copy of the original response which we had hoped to send to you pre-publication. It answers the allegations made.

We suggest that the paper publishes a retraction in the interests of fairness and journalistic credibility as soon as possible. Kindly revert to me with your proposals.

Yours sincerely,



**Ishwer Tailor MBE**  
**President**

Encl  
Gilligan Response Final  
A Gilligan Email1  
A Gilligan Email2