

LORD BOURNE PRESENTS 'WATERMAN OF INDIA' WITH AHIMSA AWARD

On Tuesday 18 October Communities Minister Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth presented Rajendra Singh, the world-renowned water conservationist with the Ahimsa Day award. Popularly known as the 'Waterman of India', the award recognises the innovative water restorations programmes of Mr Singh's organisation, Tarun Bharat Sangh, that have improved the living conditions of those affected by drought in Rajasthan.

Mr Singh has dedicated his life's work to solving some of the biggest problems faced in the subcontinent.

His projects include building thousands of water conservation structures, reviving five rivers and repopulating abandoned villages to take control of reforestation and improve farming practices. He has won many awards including the 2015 Stockholm Water Prize.

Mr Singh was presented with the award by Communities Minister Lord Bourne at the fourteenth annual Ahimsa Day event, held in the Houses of Parliament in London.

Ahimsa Day was established through the hard work of the British Jain Diaspora. The term Ahimsa means kindness and non-violence towards all living things, one of the five chief vows of Jainism.

In presenting Mr Singh with his award, Communities Minister Lord Bourne said:

"Clean water is a vital building block for life and Rajendra Singh's work has made life thrive in some of the driest areas of India.

"He has spent his life improving the quality of water in Rajasthan by twinning his knowledge of the area with modern technology and problem-solving abilities.

"This hard work and compassion is at the heart of many faiths the world over. We have seen this in Britain too, where faith plays its part in supporting social care and welfare; bringing people closer; delivering more integrated communities.

"I would like to thank the Jain community and offer my congratulations to Mr Rajendra Singh, I hope your hard work continues to benefit communities in India and the wider-world long into the future."

Background:

- The event was organised by the Institute of Jainology which aims to increase the profile of Jainism in Britain through arts, culture and education.
- The Ahimsa Day award celebrates the contributions of individuals to the principles of non-violence and compassion and past winners include Nelson Mandela and the Dalai Lama. Last year Prince Charles accepted a special Ahimsa Award in a visit to the Jain Temple in Potters Bar.