



**NAUJAWANI.com**  
Sikh & Punjabi broadcasting on the internet

**\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\***

### **Birmingham crowned winners of university bhangra competition**

A sell-out 3,500 people filled the Hammersmith Apollo in London to see the NAUJAWANI.com powered Bhangra Showdown – the UK's only student bhangra competition – on the evening of Saturday 5 February. Ten teams were successful in applying to take part in the competition this year which was won by the team from the University of Birmingham. The competition is organised by university students from Imperial College Punjabi society and hosts bhangra teams from universities across the UK. The Imperial College bhangra team who were the reigning champions, finished as runners-up this year.

University teams competed from Birmingham, Brunel, Imperial College London, Kings College London, Kingston, Leicester & De Montfort University, Manchester, Queen Mary & St Bartholomew's, St George's, University College London (UCL) and the London School of Economics (LSE) – the latter 2 universities entered a combined team.

This was the fourth time that the competition has been held. Originating in 2007, consecutive years of students from the university Punjabi society at Imperial College London have organised and managed what is still the only bhangra competition in the UK. Each year the competition goes from strength to strength; committee students learn from what has gone before to make for a better show and competition. Previous competitions have been held at Indigo O2, Sadler's Wells Theatre and the London Palladium. The venue for this year's competition, the Hammersmith Apollo has the largest capacity of all previous venues and tickets sold out so quickly that reserve seating tickets were put onto public sale.

Owing to the Imperial Punjabi society and the numerous university societies around the country who have started teams, the Bhangra Showdown has begun to cultivate a similar enthusiasm in the UK for this passionate and unmistakably-Punjabi dance form, as has been seen over the last decade across North America. Co-President of Imperial Punjabi society, Mahipal Singh Gill commented:

*"The Bhangra Showdown has grown to become the UK's biggest bhangra event of the year, bringing together students from all over the country, unified by their desire to express their enthusiasm about Punjabi culture. For The Bhangra Showdown 2011, Naujawani.com have through their sponsorship and continual support, helped the Imperial College Punjabi Society Committee reach our goal of making this the most successful year yet, and set a solid base for more to come in the future."*



As well as being the primary sponsor for the competition, Naujawani.com offered guidance, advice and financial support to the Imperial College Punjabi society as well as a number of bhangra teams that participated. Naujawani.com founder, Harwinder Singh Mander explained, *"In-keeping with Sikh ideology, we endeavour to give back to the community that we serve, harnessing our experience, profits and network of contacts. Students make up a large proportion of our online visitors, listeners and viewers. We have been to two of the previous Bhangra Showdown competitions and were so impressed that real Punjabi culture has been expressed in this way by students, young people who are born and bred in the UK, that it was an easy decision for us to offer our support."*

*In particular, we were enamoured by a number of students whom, for a variety of reasons, convinced us that this was a credible movement of young people returning to learn about their Punjabi roots: Simon Berik and Isha Dhillon of Queen Mary University whose love and knowledge of Punjabi folk is greater than many of their peers studying in the Punjab; Mahipal Singh Gill, Raam Joshi and Gurdeep Seyan of Imperial College whose dedication to the competition whilst studying for medical degrees is unbelievable; and Ramey Singh Bajwa of Birmingham University, who knew almost nothing of his Punjabi heritage before entering university, but today is proudly the President of their bhangra team and by his own admission, brings a tear to the eye of his grandparents when he casually sings Punjabi folk songs."*

Mander continues: *"All too often, young people are derided for not knowing enough about their roots, about the home that their parents and grandparents left for better opportunities. The Bhangra Showdown is evidence that young people and these students in particular are becoming more aware of Punjabi virsa than many adults. Since the start of the competition, many of the teams have grown in their understanding of various Punjabi folk dances and have spent a lot of time studying how music, literature and dance intertwine in what we today call bhangra. Students like Deepak Singh Sethi and Jasveer Singh Poonian at Birmingham; Abhijit Singh Gill, Hardeep Singh Danjal and Jaspreet Aulakh at Imperial; Randeep Dhariwal at St George's, Nitin Chand Doal at Manchester... I could go on and on, the list is endless of students who have dedicated time and effort away from their studies to learn about Punjabi folk dance. They must also be commended for spreading the spirit of this infectious heritage to other students who are not of a Punjabi background, but who are part of bhangra teams and perform with the same zeal and vigour."*

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**\*\*ENDS\*\***



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## **\*\*NOTES TO EDITORS\*\***

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## **IMAGES:**

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## **About NAUJAWANI.com:**

Naujawani.com produce and broadcast both radio and TV shows for a global audience on the internet. Programmes predominantly focus on the lives of Sikh and Punjabi communities worldwide, but also deal with more wide-ranging current affairs, offering a Sikh and Punjabi perspective on general issues.

Naujawani.com is operated by Stylin Productions Ltd, an IT-based media company incorporated in 2002 that initially released a number of musical records and produced promotional music videos. A number of pilot TV shows were produced as well as radio documentaries and shows. Increasingly, the company found many drawbacks to working with mainstream media outlets and coupled with the rise of the internet began to consider broadcasting its productions online. Naujawani.com went live in the summer of 2006 when promotional TV show pilots were produced and distributed on DVD. Naujawani:Radio began streaming online 24 hours a day, very soon after.

**For more information and an electronic press kit visit [www.Naujawani.com/press](http://www.Naujawani.com/press)**

## **About The Bhangra Showdown:**

The Bhangra Showdown is the UK's only national inter-university Bhangra Competition. The show has grown from strength to strength since December 2007 and hosts teams with ever growing talent in the art of bhangra.

The event brings together teams from all over the country to perform in front of a distinguished panel of Judges and a crowd of thousands to be crowned Number 1 Student Bhangra Team in the UK.

**For more information visit [www.thebhangrashowdown.co.uk](http://www.thebhangrashowdown.co.uk)**