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WHITELAW 10/5

RT HON WILLIAN WHITELAW MP

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Rt Hon William Whitelaw MP (Penrith and the Border), Home Secretary, speaking at the 11th Anniversary Celebration of the Publication "GUJARAT SAMACHAR", at Coronet Street, London, N1, said the newspaper reflected the wide contribution which the GUJARATIS had made to Britain in different areas.

It also represented one example of a particular contribution which people of Asian origin had made to our prosperity, namely the establishment of a wide variety of imaginative and enterprising small businesses.

Mr Whitelaw pointed to the many measures taken by the Government to help small businesses:

- raising VAT thresholds, thus taking many small businesses out of VAT altogether.
- cutting substantially the burden of Capital Gains Tax and Capital Transfer Tax.
- advisory services using experienced business counsellors.
- enterprise allowances, which give £40 per week to unemployed people in certain areas who start businesses.
- the creation of 20 enterprise zones, many of them, as you know, in areas where Asian people have settled.

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In the financial year before the present Government came to office, the financial contribution to local authorities to meet the special needs of the ethnic community was £30 million. In the last financial year the figure was doubled, and the ethnic minorities were consulted about its use.

Mr Whitelaw said: "When I meet members of the Asian community, I am often told of their fears for their own safety and the safety of their homes and businesses. I understand this. I took prompt action to study and highlight the problem of racial attacks, and to encourage the development of suitable responses by the police. My Department has also been working to improve the relationship between the police and the public at large, following the stimulus of Lord Scarman's report. We have given the police the manpower and resources they need to improve the protection they give to the community. They will, of course, succeed only with the support and assistance of the community as a whole, and I know that in many areas the police have come to value and rely on the considerable support which they receive from the Asian community."...

"Of course, at a time of world recession it is not possible simply to wave a magic wand and ensure prosperity for everyone in this country. And when the going is tough, there is a tendency to look around and blame each other for the problems we commonly share. The unfair criticism which is sometimes directed at minority communities such as your own should not deter you from the admirable progress your community is making towards a peaceful and prosperous life in this country. For as you have amply demonstrated, the very best form of help available to anyone is self-help, and I include in this the help which the stronger members of a community such as yours can give to those less well placed to cope with difficulties."

End.