

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



*Pinky Lilani CBE DL being presented the Diversity Champion Award 2026 by the Trustees of Diversity UK.  
L-R: Alice Huang, Sareeta Vala, Lopa Patel MBE, Pinky Lilani CBE DL, Ramesh Vala CBE, Sherad Dewedi.*

### **Diversity UK honours three leaders with Diversity Champion Awards**

London, UK, 12 March 2026: Equality charity **Diversity UK** has recognised three outstanding leaders for their contributions to diversity, inclusion and social impact. **Pinky Lilani CBE DL**, **Farzana Baduel** and **Ramesh Vala CBE** were each presented with the prestigious Diversity Champion Award at the charity's event, *The Entrepreneurial Mindset: The Art of Networking*, held in London on 11 March 2026.

The Diversity Champion Award recognises individuals whose actions and leadership have made a meaningful contribution to advancing equality and inclusion. The award is for exceptional contribution to the advancement of diversity, equality and inclusion initiatives and recognises individuals who have demonstrated a long standing commitment to this work over many years, typically more than fifteen to twenty years of sustained impact.

Pinky Lilani CBE DL was honoured for her exceptional contribution to championing women's leadership and building global networks that support the next generation. For more than twenty five years she has nurtured initiatives including the **Asian Women of Achievement Awards** and the **Women of the Future Programme**, both of which have helped thousands of women develop their careers and leadership ambitions. She is also widely recognised for promoting kindness and empathy in leadership and for her tireless support of charitable causes.

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Accepting the award, Pinky Lilani said: *“Creating opportunities for others has always been at the heart of my work. When we invest in people and build supportive communities, we create the conditions for future leaders to thrive.”*

Farzana Baduel received the Diversity Champion Award in recognition of her commitment to empowering women and advancing diversity in leadership and communications. As President of the **Chartered Institute of Public Relations** and Founder and CEO of **Curzon PR**, she has played an influential role in shaping conversations around reputation, leadership and inclusive representation in the media and communications sector. Over the course of her career she has consistently used her platform and professional networks to support initiatives that encourage greater representation and opportunity for diverse talent.

Farzana Baduel said: *“I am deeply honoured to receive this award. Diversity strengthens organisations and communities alike, and it is vital that we continue to open doors and create opportunities for talented people from every background.”*

Ramesh Vala CBE was recognised for his long standing commitment to mentoring, philanthropy and community leadership. A consultant and international brand ambassador, he has spent many years supporting young professionals and students while advocating for greater opportunity and inclusion. Since joining the board of Diversity UK in 2019 as Deputy Chair, he has played an important role in strengthening the charity’s network of partners and supporters.

Ramesh Vala CBE said: *“This recognition means a great deal to me. I have always believed that success is most meaningful when it is shared, and mentoring the next generation is something I care deeply about.”*

Speaking at the event, **Lopa Patel MBE** praised the award recipients for their leadership and generosity in supporting others.

She said: *“These three remarkable individuals embody the values that Diversity UK seeks to champion. Each of them has used their influence, networks and experience to open doors for others and to strengthen the culture of inclusion across business and society.”*

The awards were presented by Trustees **Lopa Patel MBE**, **Sherad Dewedi**, **Alice Huang** and **Sareeta Vala**, during *The Entrepreneurial Mindset: The Art of Networking* event, first of the Changemakers 2026 series hosted by Diversity UK.

The Changemakers Series brings together founders, innovators and leaders to explore the entrepreneurial mindset and the role of networks, reputation and leadership in building successful ventures.

The series aims to inspire and support the next generation of founders, social entrepreneurs, campaigners and visionaries who are shaping the future of business and society. Through discussion, collaboration and shared learning, it promotes inclusive innovation and encourages more diverse voices to participate in entrepreneurship and leadership.

Diversity UK is a registered charity dedicated to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across Britain through research, advocacy and community engagement.

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### Notes for Editors:

Press Images: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/BDXF6yJrhMdzhxRD6>

### Farzana Baduel, Founder and CEO, Curzon PR | President, CIPR



Farzana Baduel is President of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) and CEO of Curzon PR, a strategic communications consultancy advising governments, global corporations and institutions on strategy, reputation and leadership communications. She is the Resident PR Expert at Saïd Business School, University of Oxford, a Chartered PR Practitioner, and an Honorary Fellow of the CIPR. Her board roles include serving as a trustee of The HALO Trust and Soho Theatre, and as a member of the English Law Promotion Panel chaired by the UK Deputy Prime Minister. Farzana co-hosts the Stories & Strategies podcast, a leading PR podcast.

### Pinky Lilani CBE, Founder & Chairman, Women of the Future Programme



Pinky Lilani CBE DL CMgr CCMI is a trailblazing advocate for gender equality, diversity and inclusion. She is renowned worldwide for her pioneering Women of the Future Programme, a portfolio of events, initiatives, and networks designed to support the next generation of leaders. Among the Women of the Future Programme's highlights are the Women of the Future Awards, Summit, Ambassadors Programme, and 50 Rising Stars in ESG campaign. Over the past 25 years, Pinky has made remarkable strides in advancing the cause of gender equality, in the UK and on a global stage. The Women of the Future Programme has impacted thousands of women, all over the world. More recently, Pinky has turned her sights on the role of kindness in leadership, challenging traditional notions of 'strong' leadership and spotlighting leadership styles that truly empower others and effect positive change.

### Ramesh Vala CBE, International Brand Ambassador | Deputy Chair, Diversity UK



Ramesh Vala CBE is a consultant and international brand ambassador for a number of businesses. After graduating from the London School of Economics with a degree in law, he went on to achieve a Distinction in his Finals at the College of Law. Ramesh became a partner within eighteen months of qualification and soon became only a handful of Asian equity partners in one of the top one hundred law firms in the country. To date, he has extensive experience in advising clients with their property related legal affairs. And as part of his professional practice, he is a consummate networker and frequent speaker at universities and other bodies on life skills.

In 2022, Ramesh was appointed Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE). He has also been nominated for awards including the prestigious Dadabhai Naoroji Award inaugurated by the last coalition Government to honour those whose work has helped to improve the UK-India relationship. In his personal life, Ramesh is dedicated to improving the lives of those less fortunate and is very proud to have raised, both directly and indirectly, over £2 million for various charities. Ramesh is Deputy Chair and a Trustee of equality charity Diversity UK.

### About Diversity UK

Diversity UK is an equality charity that researches, advocates and promotes ideas to improve diversity and inclusion in Britain. The charity aims to advance public understanding of diversity and inclusion in the workplace by conducting research for public benefit and by publishing the results.

<https://diversityuk.org/>