Headline: **MIDAS touches Mumbai**

Standfirst: Mumbai hosted Manchester in October when the first elected Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham lead a delegation of industry and public sector organisations around India. The event showcased the best of Manchester-India Partnerships in technology, innovation, culture and tourism. Leaders from across Manchester’s business and public sectors seeking to deepen Manchester-India ties enjoyed lively sessions and lunch at the St Regis Hotel in Lower Parel.

Standfirst: Edited on Indesign

Manchester is home to the UK’s largest creative, digital and technology cluster outside of London. International and local digital enterprises sit side-by-side in the city’s creative and digital clusters, incubators and coworking spaces. They converge, collaborate and drive innovation.

The UK’s second largest recipient of international investment, Manchester has attracted global brands such as Amazon, Raytheon, Jaguar Land Rover, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Tech Mahindra and L&T Tech. The city is also a major European eCommerce hub with a number of home-grown global companies including The Hut Group, Boohoo, Missguided and AO.com. Representatives from MIDAS, Manchester’s Inward Investment Agency, MIQ Digital, 42Gears Mobility Systems, and the City of Salford met business leaders from Mumbai.

A set of roundtable discussions provided great opportunities for knowledge sharing and exchange of ideas between Indian tech industry leaders and their Mancunian counterparts. Mastek CEO, and long-standing BBG member, Shashank Desai, lead the first, and lively, session in the tech round table.

The affable Andy Burnham, Greater Manchester’s first elected Mayor spoke warmly about his respect for the 50,000 people of Indian descent who had built the city. ‘Manchester celebrates its diversity. Our strength is in our people’, he said. His mantra of ‘innovate in Manchester, make in India’ was warmly received. He acknowledged that there were some challenges in this era but that partnerships would work towards meeting some of them.

Jon Corner, CEO The Landing and Chief Digital Officer for the City of Salford spoke animatedly about Digital Salford, of which a great recent initiative is the Smart City Alliance. Manchester’s cutting-edge infrastructure includes MediaCityUK and its 5G Innovation Hub –home to the UK’s first operational commercial 5G network. Jon further described Salford’s ‘Landing’ offering which offers practical help to businesses wanting to set up in the region.

Its Cluster Collectives promotes digital partnerships. One to note is that with Mumbai’s very own Famous Studios. Anant Roongta, MD, spoke with Jon Corner about it being touted as Mumbai’s ‘creative incubator’ promoting education and mentorship and backed by funding.

The event’s finale was in the shape of surprise guest, Asha Bhosle. The grand dame of Bollywood received an honorary doctorate from the University of Salford for her services to music to a standing ovation. This was its first such award outside the UK. A career that started in 1943 at the tender age of 13, the Queen of Indipop has recorded more than 12,000 songs for more than 1,000 films. She graciously accepted the award in Hindi claiming to speak very little English. She has recorded in more than 20 languages and holds a Guinness World Record for the most recorded artist in history.

The delegation continued to Bangalore, Hyderabad and Delhi for more impactful interaction. BBG members interested in learning more about the potential of setting up in Manchester should get in touch with Ghanshyam Nabar, head of business development at Manchester India Partnership on Ghanshyam.Nabar@Manchesterindiapartnership.com.

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