

CHRIS PARSONS: CYCLING FOR WIDOWS 2020

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As chairman of the firm's India practice, partner Chris Parsons spends most of his time in India. Chris met Lord Raj Loomba CBE a number of years ago when he agreed to cycle from London to Gibraltar to raise money for the Loomba Foundation to support widows in India.

On that occasion, back in 2011, Chris was able to raise \$200,000 and has had the pleasure of visiting schools in Delhi where the children of widows are being educated with the monies he helped raise. Not content with a fund-raising effort in Europe, Chris was keen to do something in India so came up with the slightly crazy idea of walking 30 marathons in 30 days to celebrate his 30 years at HSF. This took him, at the beginning of 2015, from Mumbai down the coast of Maharashtra and Goa to Mangalore in Karnataka before turning east to cross the Western Ghats into Bangalore – some 1260kms.

This time he was able to raise \$300,000 for the Loomba Foundation. All of the money has been used to support 5,000 widows in Varanasi – and Chris was fortunate to visit Varanasi with Raj to see the work of the Loomba Foundation in action. Now he is focused on a new challenge for 2020 when he plans to cycle the length of India from Kanyakumari in the south to Kashmir in the north a distance of some 4,500 km which he hopes to complete in about 45 days and he is keen to support the Loomba Foundation again.

CYCLING FOR WIDOWS 2020

Chris Parsons, a lawyer with international law firm Herbert Smith Freehills, spends most of his time in India as chairman of the firm's India practice. Chris met Lord Raj Loomba CBE a number of years ago when he agreed to cycle from London to Gibraltar to raise money for the Loomba Foundation to support widows in India.

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Chris said: "India has become a very special place for me and feels like my second home. Over the last 15 years I have visited the country over 150 times spending time with clients, teaching at law schools and engaging with various social initiatives. If I can combine my passion for India with supporting widows and their children, I will be a happy man. With one eye on 2020, I have started to train in earnest and I am very excited to be working with my friend Raj again to support the Loomba Foundation and its wonderful work for widows in India."

Raj said: "Chris has been an amazing ambassador for the Loomba Foundation and the cause of widows in India but how he comes up with his mad ideas for fund-raising I will never know. Cycling from London to Gibraltar was one thing, 30 marathons across India from Mumbai to Bangalore quite another but now the thought of him cycling 4,500 kilometres from Kanyakumari to Kashmir in 2020 leaves me breathless. But if that means he can try and raise \$450,000 for widows in India I am right behind him (in spirit at least)."

KEY FACTS

Dates: February to April 2020
Duration: 45 days
Distance: 4,500km
Start: Kanyakumari
Finish: Srinagar

LOOMBA FOUNDATION INVISIBLE, FORGOTTEN SUFFERERS: PLIGHT OF WIDOWS

The Loomba Foundation works hard to raise awareness of the plight of widows and their children worldwide.

The Foundation successfully lobbied the UN and governments in order to establish 23 June as "International Widows Day" to bring to light the 100 million widows worldwide, their struggles with poverty and violations of their human rights.

The core work of the Loomba Foundation started with the education of the children of widows. Amongst other things, the Foundation provides a monthly scholarship to each child for education purposes, healthcare and support for his or her mother.



Cherie Blair, HE Ban Ki Moon and Raj Loomba at the Widows Research Study presentation - United Nations, New York, 2010

"Chris has been a great ambassador for the Loomba Foundation. I first met him when he agreed to cycle from London to Gibraltar to raise money for the Foundation, this time he has gone one step further"
LORD RAJ LOOMBA

THE RIDE

During his 4,500 km journey, Chris will be writing a daily blog via the Loomba Foundation website.

**\$450,000
4,500 km
45 days**

THE LOOMBA FOUNDATION.
ORG/CATEGORY/CHRIS-PARSONS

Route to be confirmed

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If you would like to support Chris on this incredible venture and help him to reach his fundraising target please visit www.justgiving.com/Chris-Parsons40.

