

Cherie Blair, Sarah Brown dazzle at Indian events

The spouses of two British prime ministers launched charity events organised by two prominent Indian-origin industrialists in London - each for causes close to their hearts.

Cherie Blair, wife of former premier Tony Blair, starred in an event held at Trafalgar Square in central London Monday to campaign for the United Nations to recognise June 23 as world widow's day.

The event was organised by Raj Loomba, founder of the textiles and fashion company Rinku Group, whose mother had to overcome social stigma after her husband died June 23, 1954.

Separately, Sarah Brown, wife of Prime Minister Gordon Brown, opened a vast art exhibition space at the University of Westminster that was dedicated by Caparo Group founder Swraj Paul in memory of his daughter Ambika, who died at the age of four in 1968.

At the Loomba Trust event, Cherie Blair told a large crowd of tourists and invitees that recognising a widow's day was 'a really important way to draw attention to a really important issue'.

'I am a human rights lawyer, and the prejudice and abuse suffered by widows is a human rights issue. Their rights are ignored around the world,' she said.

Less than five miles away in Baker Street, Sarah Brown made a pitch for creative industries and education, in which she said Britain was a world leader.

The Ambika-P3 gallery was 'dedicated to innovation, experimentation and learning,' said Brown, who in 2001 lost her first-born baby daughter who was only 10 days old.

In 2002 she founded the charity Piggy Bank Kids, which began as a research fund to tackle complications in pregnancy, and has now expanded into a range of projects helping disadvantaged children.

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