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GLC'S 400 INDIAN TAKEAWAYS

Shepherd's Bush restaurateur Mushtak Qureshi faces the challenge of producing 400 extra takeaway meals on Thursday and Friday (August 15 and 16) - for the lunchtime diners at County Hall.

Thursday is Indian Independence Day and the Greater London Council is marking the anniversary by offering staff a range of authentic Indian dishes in addition to the usual menu.

The food will be prepared at Mr Qureshi's top-class restaurant, the Shireen, in Uxbridge Road, Shepherd's Bush, and transported to County Hall in time for lunch. The dishes, chiefly North Indian and Bengali cuisine, are specialities of the Shireen, which frequently appears in good food guides - such as chicken tandoori and vegetable samosa.

Mr Frank Forino, Head of Central Services at the GLC, said: "We successfully introduced a speciality counter in the main cafeteria 18 months ago, serving many different types of ethnic food - Afro-Caribbean, Italian, Indian, Chinese. The idea of using an outside supplier is so that we can increase our own expertise and cultural awareness and also give the GLC staff a fresh approach to the kind of specialities offered."

Mr Qureshi and his chef will be on hand at the serving counter to explain the origins and cooking methods of the various dishes. Catering staff numbers at County Hall will not be affected.

To complete the Indian theme, there will be lunchtime screenings of tourist and general interest films about India in the Conference Hall on both days. If successful, other types of authentic ethnic food from external caterers will become regular features on County Hall menus. 3,000 meals are served in staff and member cafeterias and restaurants every day.

END

NOTE TO EDITORS: Shireen dishes on the menu will be vegetable cutlet, onion bhaji, vegetable samosa, chicken tandoori, rogan josh, plain and pilau basmati rice, mixed vegetable curry and nan bread.

Press contact: Marion Bowman (01) 633 2061