

British court mulls Hindu funeral pyres

by UPI

LONDON -- A Hindu leader in Britain says he wants the country's Royal Courts of Justice to allow him to have an open-air cremation when he dies.

Davender Kumar Ghai, 70, founder of the Anglo-Asian Friendship Society, was in court Tuesday asking the judges to change a 1902 law banning outdoor cremations to allow traditional Hindu funeral pyres in Britain, The Times of London reported.

The Newcastle City Council had turned down a request by Ghai for the funeral pyre. Now his lawyer, Andrew Singh Bogan, says a successful challenge to the law would create a precedent for all local authorities to grant such funeral pyres.

Bogan and his team were to argue their case during a three-day hearing before Justice Ross Cranston, contending that the law doesn't prohibit religious cremations outside a crematorium, The Times said.

Ghai, whom prosecutors declined to cite after he organized a funeral pyre in Northumberland for an Indian man three years ago, told The Times: "I have lived my entire life by the Hindu scriptures. I now yearn to die by them and I do not believe that natural cremation grounds ... would offend public decency."

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