

Inside the new issue of asianlink:



Peppers restaurant at Five Ways leads the renaissance of Indian cuisine in Birmingham.

- 1 **Restaurant renaissance**
Three restaurants are at the front of a new wave of Indian eateries opening in Birmingham
- 2 **Inland Revenue Investigations**
An expert from Grant Thornton looks at how the spotlight can fall on Asian businesses
- 3 **Date at the Palace**
Former IAB chairman Sarindar Singh Sahota receives his OBE
- 4 **Networking and events**
How an IAB event brought two businesses together
- 5 **IAB Annual Dinner**
It's coming soon and you can book your tickets now

and *much, much* more inside!

"Where will you be on Saturday, 19th November 2005 . . ."

see page 2 for details

Gurjeet is first lady of IAB

Birmingham's Institute of Asian Businesses has appointed Gurjeet Bains to chair the organisation – the first time a woman has become head of a UK Asian business organisation.

She replaces Sarindar Singh Sahota, who has been chairman for the past two years. The new vice-chairman will be Mohammed Zulfiquar.

The IAB is the largest Asian business support organisation in the country, with a membership of almost 400 companies across the region.

Mrs Bains, who is also editor of the English section of the influential Sikh Times, said: "It is a huge honour to take over the leadership of such an important business organisation.

"I'm passionate about the progression Asian businesses should make in Birmingham and I hope that my being a

woman will encourage other women to not only get more involved in business but also take the initiative and start up on their own.

"When I started out it was very difficult to make an impact but the landscape has changed and I hope other women will be inspired."

She added: "There are changes happening within the IAB. I plan to set up a services improvement sub-committee that will develop new programmes to cater for the needs of micro and small businesses in Birmingham. This is a sector where most of the Asian businesses fall at the moment.

"The 21st century is very much the Asian century and with the demographics of Birmingham changing over the next few years this is an opportunity for even more growth and progression of Asian businesses.

"The Fairer Cities Project earmarked for Birmingham will also gain in importance and both myself and the IAB will be throwing our support behind it."



NEW LEADER: New IAB chairman Gurjeet Bains with vice-chairman Mohammed Zulfiquar, left, and IAB general manager Masood Butt.



EXPERT: Gary Ashford, senior tax investigation manager at Grant Thornton.

Asian traditions can attract revenue investigation

In his second article, Gary Ashford, senior tax investigation manager at Grant Thornton LLP in Birmingham, highlights how the Inland Revenue spotlight can fall on the Asian community.

When several hard-working Asian business families continue the tradition of living under one roof, this can easily confuse tax inspectors and lead to an investigation.

As previously stated, the Inland Revenue identifies cases for investigation by applying a risk-based approach, part of which is analysing personal lifestyles. I have often seen cases where inspectors are surprised when Asian families confirm that the costs of the household are met by contributions from family members rather than solely by the father or husband and wife.

This matters, because when considering personal lifestyle, the Revenue undertakes a very basic comparison

model of income, including savings, versus expenditure.

But surely when the family circumstances are explained, the Revenue will just conclude its enquiry? Unfortunately not, because once an investigation has been started Revenue inspectors will automatically review the family's business records and private bank statements and seek to hold meetings with the sole trader, partners or directors. This naturally comes inherent with costs, both in distraction from managing the business and professional costs.

Where enquiries have been started, Revenue inspectors need to establish additional tax liabilities before they can settle the case.

It is absolutely vital to maintain robust personal and business records. Only when faced with hard evidence — usually in the form of receipts — will the Revenue accept the level of expenditure, or the lack of it, being put forward.

This also applies to personal loans made to friends or family members. It is essential that records are maintained when loans are made, either for business or personal purposes. Ideally loans should be made out of bank accounts so that statements can provide some form of audit trail.

Whether there is some element of “the politics of envy” or not, it is a fact that Revenue inspectors find it very hard to comprehend the concept of personal loans, particularly where reduced or no interest rates apply. Without full records, the Revenue may contend that such sums amount to untaxed profits extracted from the business and seek to tax them.

Where the name and address of the family member or friend receiving the loan is provided as evidence, the Revenue has also been known to investigate that person.

What may be honourable and traditional practices within the community can easily give the Revenue cause for concern and if anyone feels they could be subject to an investigation, they should seek advice from an experienced specialist.

Dinner date

The Institute of Asian Businesses Annual Dinner will this year take place on Saturday, 19 November at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham.

The main speaker this year will be Mike Jatania, the chief executive of Lornamead.

He began working for the company in 1984, performing a number of roles in a variety of countries before assuming the top job in 1990.

Since then Mr Jatania has shaped Lornamead into a brand owner across markets and categories by driving acquisitions of well-known names from companies such as Unilever, Sara Lee, Bristol Myer Squibb and Henkel.

Away from work he is a keen follower of sport, particularly football and cricket and even represented Leicestershire at county level in his youth. He is also an opera and theatre lover and enjoys eating out in London where he now lives. Travel is also one of Mike's passions and this allows him to indulge in his most recently discovered interest, scuba diving.

Mr Jatania is also active in many not for profit organisations, and is on the boards of the Asian Business Association for the London Chamber of Commerce, the Indus Entrepreneurs, the Advisory Board of the Association of MBAs and the Tamasha Theatre Production House supported by the Royal Society of Arts, as well as being on the advisory committee of the Lord Mayor of London.

He was recently awarded the Lloyds TSB Asian Jewel Award for Business and Commerce Excellence.

IAB chairwoman Gurjeet Bains said: “Mr Jatania is one of the most influential Asian businessmen in the country and we look forward to welcoming him to our annual dinner this year.

“The event will have a new feel this year and I am sure it will be the most spectacular one yet.”

For more information and booking details visit the website at www.birmingham-chamber.com/events.

Stand out from the crowd

As one of Birmingham Chamber's most prestigious occasions and one of the region's primary Asian business events, the IAB Annual Dinner provides the ideal opportunity for you to showcase your business to up to 1,000 key contacts from the West Midlands' Asian and wider business community.

To find out more about sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities contact the Events Team on 0121 607 1884 or e-mail events@birminghamchamber.org.uk



SPEAKER: Mike Jatania, the chief executive of Lornamead, who will be the main guest at the 2005 IAB Annual Dinner.

Brum named curry capital

Three IAB member restaurants have been praised following the city being named Curry Capital of Britain 2005.

Birmingham beat off competition from 16 cities across the UK for the coveted accolade, with judges praising the considerable growth in the Asian sector in Birmingham over the past year.

Peppers, Lasan and Rajdoot restaurants were singled out for particular praise, with each of them working towards Marketing Birmingham's 'Quality in Birmingham' mark.

Cllr Ken Hardeman, cabinet member for regeneration at Birmingham City Council, said: "I'm delighted that Birmingham has received this prestigious honour. We all know that the



GOOD FOOD: One of the superb dishes at Peppers.

range and quality of Asian restaurants in the city is tremendous and it's great to have that confirmed by a national award.

"The city is lucky to have such a thriving Asian restaurant sector."

The words were echoed by Abdul Hoque, co-

owner of Peppers Restaurant at Five Ways. He said: "Indian restaurants have changed so much over the past decade. When we opened, we wanted to be different from the traditional style restaurants where people come in after closing time, ordering lager and the hottest curry on the menu.

"We pride ourselves on the quality of our food and our chef, Shubojit Chakravarty, is now so well respected that he teaches lessons in Pan-Asian cooking at City College Birmingham.

"It is a crime that a city the size of Birmingham only has two Michelin-starred restaurants. We will be working hard to achieve that status and become the first Indian restaurant in the city to get a Michelin star."

He added: "Part of our success comes down to the way we constantly update our menus, while other Indian restaurants haven't changed in 20 years. Our chef has even produced curried crab, which even though it is a traditional dish in India is still very rare over here."



EATERIES: The award winning Peppers Restaurant in Birmingham.

New patrons provide heaven sent support

Advantage Business Angels has become the latest company to become IAB patrons.

The company helps new start-up businesses and young, growing companies to develop. This can include the sourcing, financing and readying of businesses for the day they start trading

Advantage Business Angels recognises that while most early stage businesses need money they also need support to fill gaps in the management team. The money without the support is often not sufficient to enable a business to thrive and grow so they have set up a process for providing these specialist services to many of our

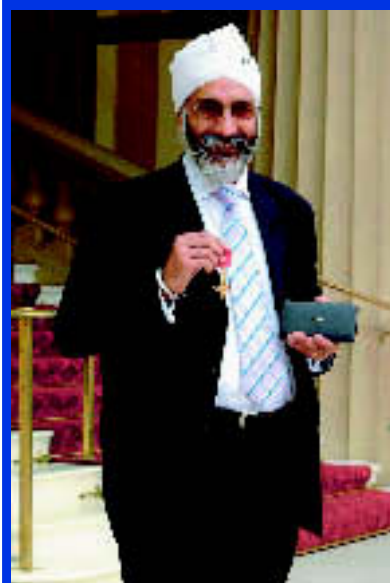
businesses, both before and after they are funded for a defined period of time.

Masood Butt, general manager of the IAB, said: "The vast majority of our members are SMEs and a large number of those have been with us since the day they first started up in business.

"Having an organisation like Advantage Business Angels on board will supplement the advice and support already provided by the Chamber and Business Link and enable our companies to grow and flourish, which in turn will help the West Midlands economy to grow."

For more information visit the website at www.advantagebusinessangels.com

Queen honours former chairman



AWARD: Sarindar Singh Sahota, former chairman of the IAB and current chairman of the SRB6 board, has received his OBE from HRH the Prince of Wales at a ceremony at Buckingham Palace.

He received the gong for his contribution towards the regeneration of North West Birmingham.

IAB networking helps form business

Proof that networking does work comes from a pair of insurance brokers who met at an Institute of Asian Businesses event and have been in business together for 16 years.

Top Insurance Services was formed in 1989 when Vasant J Parikh (VJ) and Souheil Abou-Diwan met. Since then it has grown and last year reached a turnover of £2 million.

From its beginnings in the West Midlands, it now has clients all over the country.

Mr Diwan, who was new to the insurance industry when the partnership was formed, said: "We met up and just gelled. The company is now going from strength to strength.

"We've worked hard to make it work and the success has come from word of mouth recommendations. As long as we keep doing the right thing, people will come back to us."

The company began by working on life insurance policies but it soon became clear that it was difficult to make money from it as people would rather invest in property. So the company diversified into other general insurance areas.

"We found that people bought life insurance for periods of up to 25 years at a time but they bought house and car insurance every year, so it made sense to move into this area as we could get repeat business every year."

VJ added: "We now have eight people working at the company. We started back in the hard times of 1989 in the middle of a recession so it was difficult at first, but we've got through that and have steadily built up a client base that now spreads all over the country."

Dipak Shelat, operations manager at the IAB, said: "It is always good to hear success stories after people have met at our events. These two gentlemen came from different backgrounds and really hit it off and we hope other members can learn from their example."

Asian flavour at Friday Networking Club

The Friday Networking Club had an Asian theme in June with dancers and Indian food brought in especially for the occasion.

It was all part of promoting not only the upcoming Institute of Asian Businesses Annual Dinner, but also the range of Chamber events and services that are open to IAB members.



MEMBERS: Gail Smirthwaite (Coaching2Excel), Lesley Wood (Maxfly), Dipak Shelat (IAB), S Chall (Superior Care) and Darren Billinge (Bank of Scotland).



VIP: IAB chairperson Gurjeet Bains greets John Ling, sales director at IDN Telecom.



DANCING QUEENS: The entertainment at the Asian themed Friday Networking Club.



LUNCH: Masood Butt (IAB), Abdul Hoque (Peppers Restaurant), Manjeet Kumari-Lal (City College) and Ajay Prabhakar (Ajay & Associates).

For more information about IAB and Birmingham Chamber events visit the website at www.birmingham-chamber.com/events

The Patrons



Advantage
Business
Angels

Birmingham Women's Health Care **NHS**
HOLDING

CityCollege
BIRMINGHAM

Grant Thornton

itv
CENTRAL



The Business Partners

Aj Ajay & Associates
TAX ACCOUNTANTS

BASIC TRAINING CENTRE LTD