

Inside the new issue of **asianlink**:



Sue Battle in Pakistan — see page 3.

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and *much, much* more inside!

# Ethnic majority Birmingham by 2010, says new survey

**The date for when Birmingham will become the country's first ethnic majority city has been brought forward to 2010. This is ten years earlier than was previously stated in a Learning and Skills Council report.**

The race is now on to ensure Birmingham is ready for this landmark.

A Birmingham Chamber spokesman said: "This is something we have been aware of for some time and have advised our members to be aware of employment and training needs that incorporate this."

Organisations such as Birmingham Professional DiverCity, which has 100-plus companies pledged to support its work, are actively working to remove barriers that may be preventing ethnic minorities from working within the professional sector.

Another project is the Fairer Cities project, an employer-driven initiative to design custom-built skills solutions to meet employment needs in Birmingham's expanding industry sectors. It targets the city's most disadvantaged areas, delivering job ready candidates to employers. It is one of three pilot projects established by the Department

for Work and Pensions and aims to fill 18,500 jobs by 2010.

Despite these efforts, many feel enough is still not being done to deal with the massive inequality in employment figures between the city's white and minority communities.

Delegates at the Cause for Concern: Employment and Equality in Birmingham conference, held at Joseph Chamberlain College, were told how the city continues to import overseas talent to plug the skills

gaps, overlooking the qualified minority workforce already here.

'A combination of employer prejudice and uncertainty plus minorities' underestimation of their own abilities came through as factors in the city racking up the highest disparity in employment figures between whites and non-whites in Britain; 73 per cent and 46 per cent respectively.

Sir Digby Jones, CBI director-general and a former Birmingham lawyer, also called continued on page 2



City of the Future: Birmingham will become the first ethnic majority city in 2010

*The Patrons*



*IAB Premier+*



## An event not to be missed!

If you haven't done so already, make a note in your diary and keep Friday, 10 March 2006 free.

Birmingham Chamber's Annual Conference, Exhibition and Banquet takes place on that date at the International Convention Centre, Birmingham and is an event not to be missed. It will attract up to 2,000 of the region's key business contacts and it's the ideal opportunity for you to showcase your company, obtain expert advice and specialist support, and network.

But if networking and meeting new people is what you are after then why not join us at the Friday Networking club at the Conference.

As one of the Chamber's most popular events, the Friday Networking Club regularly attracts over 200 delegates. There are no speeches and no presentations, just a couple of hours of uninterrupted networking and the chance to catch up with like-minded people from the city's business community.

Make sure you don't miss out on the chance to attend one of the region's premier business events. For further details and to book online visit our website [www.birmingham-chamber.com/events](http://www.birmingham-chamber.com/events).

## Bhangra duo hit Gotham

The Nachural Music Group continues to race away from the opposition with new deals, including a tie-up with Microsoft's X Box console.

For the first time ever, Bhangra music will feature on the soundtrack to a game. Project Gotham Racing 3 will include tracks from Nachural artists Achanak and Tigerstyle.

Meanwhile, the event production side of the business, Sound Logistics, which was involved with the IAB Annual Dinner, has had a successful 12 months after working on events for for Birmingham Chamber, Black Country Chamber, the NHS, Dreams plc, the Arena Events Group, the Cauldwell Group and singer Pato Banton.

Managing director Ninder Johal said: "In today's market, corporate events need to be polished and well delivered. Companies do not have the time or the expertise to bring major events together. We offer a unique service in that we can combine both the corporate nature of the event and bring in our expertise in putting major music events together."



The IAB and PricewaterhouseCoopers have worked together to raise funds for the Pakistan earthquake appeal. Pictured are Mandip Dulay (PWC marketing) and Sue Hatton (Midlands head of Asian Business at PWC) with Dipak Shelat (IAB operations manager) and Ivan Bird (BCI senior operations manager).

## Ethnic majority Birmingham by 2010

for the government to help and not hinder bosses who may fear employing refugees and minorities. "Historically Birmingham has become a great city by accepting overseas trade and workers but it could do better. I understand employers who worry about being prosecuted for breaking employment law by taking on refugees. Bosses need support. Why not give SMEs a tax break for taking them on rather than threaten them with a fine?"

He also said that instances such as the riots last year in France were more to do with economic problems than cultural. "People burnt cars not because they were Muslim but because they didn't have a job," he said. "With full employment, we will build a better and safer nation. If you have no job, you have no hope and some will seek hope in a bag of white powder. If I can't appeal to bosses' better nature, I will appeal to their business sense — if Birmingham wants global success we need to take urgent action now."

# Property advice for Asian families

Asian families often pool resources to invest in homes and other property. This may seem advantageous at the time but can be more of a hindrance than a help if a family dispute arises. Here Zahra Pabani, head of family law at Birmingham law firm Shakespeares, explains more.

There are situations where families may purchase a property but the person whose name the property is placed in may not have actually contributed to the purchase price, for example the eldest son, whose parents reside there — but he may, or may not. This presents a problem because in the eyes of the law the person who owns the property should benefit from all the equity in it.

If the eldest son then marries and decides to reside at the property with his new wife but has still not made any contribution to the property and then the marriage breaks down, the parents would of course want to argue that the asset is theirs in its entirety. They would struggle to do so if there is no proof that they financed the purchase of the property.

Things get more complicated if the wife also tries to stake a claim, as the property became her matrimonial home. The wife could argue that the value of the property forms part of the matrimonial assets and the court would therefore include the property in their assessment when considering financial settlements or payments. In certain cases the court can force the sale of the property in order to make payments to any party in accordance with a settlement reached or judgment made. This can then therefore lead to an incredibly difficult and expensive court case where the court must get to the root of who owns what percentage and what claim is valid.

A different scenario is when a property is in a



family member's name and he or she is going through divorce proceedings and tries to reduce his or her assets by transferring the property to another family member. The rationale being to dispose of the financial asset and avoid it being considered in any settlement. The Court can counteract this action and transfer the property back into the original name.

This all may seem very complicated, but in fact there is a very easy solution to the problem and that is a Declaration of Trust. This is an agreement that can set out exactly who owns what interest in the property and gifts such as money donated by parents could be protected under this document.

For more information e-mail [zahra.pabani@shakespeares.co.uk](mailto:zahra.pabani@shakespeares.co.uk)

## Business Builder

Whether you are just starting a business or if your business is already up and running, one of the biggest headaches is employing people.

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**Business Builder** includes six essential packages in one: Employing staff; health and safety; HR and records; business planner; administration; and sales and marketing.

Paul Rice of Rice Media has already seen the benefits of the package. He said: "Business Builder has been a fantastic tool. We saved approximately £1,500 in solicitors' fees for things like terms and conditions and contracts. We are delighted with the progress so far and I am very excited about plans for 2006."

The service is secure and tailored to your specific needs — and is now available to all Chamber members **free** of charge (RRP £180 + VAT per annum). Call your membership account manager on **0121 450 4210**.

## Chamber mission improves Pakistan trade links

A delegation from Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and Industry has returned from Pakistan where it was working to improve trade links between the EU and south Asia.

Among the delegates were 17 companies that were looking to increase business in Pakistan, as well as BCI chief executive Sue Battle and Gurjeet Kaur Bains, chair of the Institute of Asian Businesses.

The ten-day mission was also part of the EU Asia Invest Project 'TRIPAK' between Karachi, Birmingham, Naples and Coventry.

The project is a three-way initiative between Birmingham and Coventry Chambers in the UK, Naples Chamber in Italy and Karachi Chamber of Commerce. The aim is to develop the business infrastructure in Pakistan by assisting with business intermediaries, creating a partner database and setting up sector-specific cluster groups to share international experiences and opportunities.

Sue Battle said: "Pakistan has a very buoyant economy that is growing at an incredible rate. Along with India and China, it is one of the emerging markets and over the next few years will become an increasingly important part of the global economy.

"This trade mission was important in building links between Pakistan and the EU countries, especially the UK and West Midlands. This will be done by direct trade between the two regions but also by us helping them develop an infrastructure and capacity that will enable inter-trading in a businesslike environment."

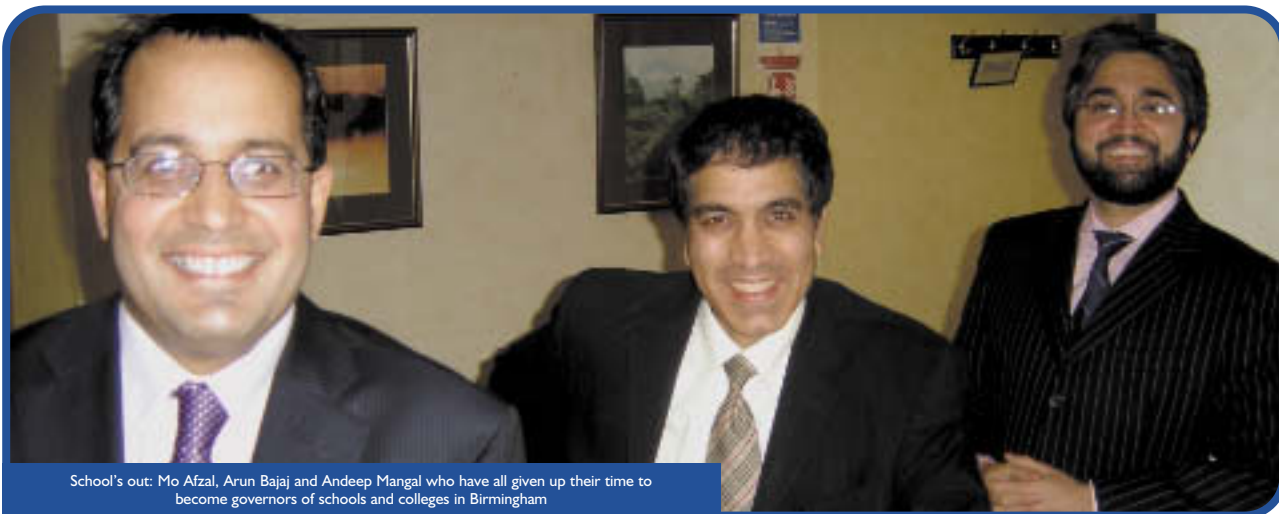
She added: "The TRIPAK programme is likely to attract substantial attention in the coming years and hopefully will be replicated by other countries and regions.

"There was huge interest at the Pakistani end as this is only the second EU Asia Invest project which has been successfully launched in the country.

"Because it is between Chambers of Commerce there is a common aim that is shared, with duties and obligations to members and the wider community. It is us, the Chambers and similar organisations, that guide, nurture and develop the economies of today, the entrepreneurs of tomorrow and the prosperity of all our futures."

While in Karachi, Mrs Battle signed a pre-project agreement which was to celebrate the fact that the bid had been successful and that the two Chambers would now be working together.

# Back to School



School's out: Mo Afzal, Arun Bajaj and Andeep Mangal who have all given up their time to become governors of schools and colleges in Birmingham

**The Institute of Asian Businesses completed a hat-trick when another committee member became a governor of a local college.**

Mo Afzal of HMA Law has become a governor of City College Birmingham. He follows in the footsteps of Andeep Mangal of Thapers Accountants, who is a governor at Sutton Coldfield College, and former IAB vice-chairman Arun Bajaj who is at Matthew Boulton College.

“City College is one of the leading educational establishments in the region and I am looking forward to helping it to build on its excellent reputation,” Mo said.

“The IAB and Birmingham Chamber have always been heavily involved in community work and it is no coincidence that many IAB and Chamber council members are governors of schools and colleges. It is very rewarding and allows us to put something back into the community and use our experience and expertise to help them develop.”

Andeep Mangal and Arun Bajaj became governors about two years ago and had got a lot out of it. Knowing that Mo was also interested on taking on a similar role, when the information about City College came in from the Birmingham Chamber Virtual Committee network — which allows the BCI policy team to get messages out to the organisation’s members as well getting instant feedback on the latest lobbying issues — Andeep knew exactly who to ask.

He added: “Becoming a governor was something I had been looking to do for some time and when the call went out I immediately responded.

“It’s important to show that the business community cares about the people in city. Schools and colleges are increasingly being run like businesses so it is vital that people in our position give up our own time to share our experience.”

## Promotional opportunities with the IAB

As part of one of the largest and most established Chambers in the UK, the IAB offers a number of opportunities for you to work with us to strengthen your brand.

From Patronage and IAB Premier+ membership to exhibitor and sponsorship opportunities at our social calendar events and high profile Annual Dinner, as well as advertising opportunities in Asian Link, there’s something to suit all business types and budgets.

To find out more about promotional opportunities with the IAB, call us on 0121 607 1884 to discuss your individual requirements.

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