



ENTERPRISING INDIVIDUALS SCOOP TOP HONOURS AT THE ASIAN BUSINESS AWARDS 2003

Eastern Eye, Britain's biggest-selling Asian newspaper, announces the winners of this year's prestigious Asian Business Awards, which honour the contribution and remarkable achievements of Asian entrepreneurs in Britain.

Asian businesses in this country have a considerable impact on economic, social and cultural development. The annual awards presented by Eastern Eye, acknowledge the significant role of Asians in shaping British society today.

The awards will be presented at a star studded gala dinner at the **Natural History Museum on 25th March 2003**, with well-known personalities from the world of entertainment and the social elite making special appearances. The winners of the awards are as follows:

Entrepreneur of the Year – Firoz Kassam

Firoz Kassam is one of this year's most exciting success stories. He owns the London Park Hotel and is the franchise holder for the Holiday Inn in the capital. His ventures also include Firoka (King's Cross and City), which operate different hotels in the London area. In the last 18 months the Group has expanded, acquiring the 350-acre Beadlow Manor Golf Club and conference centre. He has also commissioned a 12,500-seater football stadium for Oxford United Football Club. Despite a difficult year in the hospitality industry due to falling tourist numbers, Kassam has sustained and achieved growth through expansion in his Oxford leisure complex. The turnover of his business is in excess of £40 million with profits of £10 million. Together with his freehold assets this makes his overall wealth an estimated £150 million.

Business of the Year – Karan Bilimoria

A graduate of Cambridge University and a qualified chartered accountant, Karan Bilimoria is the founder of Cobra Beer, one of the fastest growing beer brands in the UK. Ranked in the *Sunday Times Virgin Atlantic Fast Track 100*, the product is now sold in over 5000 Indian restaurants and leading multiples throughout the UK. Twice gold medal winner at the Monde Selection World Quality Awards, Cobra is now exported to 30 countries worldwide.

In 1999, Karan launched the General Bilimoria Wine brand, which is now the house wine of hundreds of Indian restaurants. This year a range of South African wines are being added to the General Bilimoria portfolio. Cobra Beer has gone from strength to strength and now has an annual turnover approaching £15 million. Karan is also founder and Publishing Director of Tandoori Magazine, Chairman of CobrabYTE Technologies Ltd and is breaking into the online world with Tandoorimagazine.com and curryzone.com. His wealth is estimated at £21million.

Newcomer of the Year – Dr Sunny Luthra

Delhi-born Sunny Luthra is known by the celebrity A-list as the 'tooth-whitening king' and has become one of the UK's leading cosmetic dental surgeons. His client list includes film stars, pop stars, supermodels and sports personalities. Although still in his early thirties, Luthra's successful career spans over a decade.

Within two years of graduating as a Bachelor of Dental Surgery he travelled with the Indian cricket team during the 1992 World Cup. He has also worked as the official dentist for the Chelsea Football Club. Sunny soon realised the potential of cosmetic dentistry and since then he has been researching and studying the various techniques used all over the world. He established Capital Dental Care in London's fashionable Chelsea in 1997, and soon after he became one of the pioneers of tooth-whitening treatments in the UK. In 2001 he founded the Capital Dental Teeth Whitening Centres. Now Luthra is a leading specialist and regularly gives talks at dental seminars all over Europe.

He currently has 15 tooth whitening centres across the country and has just signed an exclusive contract with Saks, the hair and beauty chain, which gives him access to the David Lloyd Health clubs. He has 80 sites nationwide and is soon to expand in Brussels. He is valued at £30 million.

Community Award – Zuffar Haq

Zuffar Haq, 36, was so shocked by a visit to a hospital during a trip to Pakistan in 2000 that he was spurred on to do something to help. Realising that patients in Pakistan didn't have the means to pay for their own medicine and medical equipment, he decided to act immediately to help save lives.

After writing to over 100 hospitals throughout the UK, the Leicester-based businessman has rescued outdated medical equipment worth £1million, from the scrap yard and shipped the much-needed supplies to Pakistan. This is the second shipment Zuffar has arranged previously he shipped a consignment worth £300,000. The outdated, decommissioned equipment could not have been used in the UK so Zuffar's initiative has even saved the hospitals the cost of scrapping the materials. The last consignment was put to use on the very day it was delivered saving many lives each day. "People in remote districts lose their lives just travelling to the cities in the hope of treatment. We are bringing hope to thousands of individuals," he says. Zuffar has since set up a charity, the International Hospital Relief Trust to aid his humanitarian efforts.

Young Achiever of the Year: Minal Vohra

Coming from a marketing and tourism background Minal wanted to do something that would make a real difference to people's lives. With a genuine interest in holistic living, she discovered a way to help others. Studying healthy living and Ayurveda she realised its principles could be combined in a tangible way. Vohra's brand, 'Higher Living' offers food products based on the science of Ayurveda, a science, which addresses ailments in the body. Through her research, she found that most people were focusing on medicine and make-up, rather than diet and nutrition to improve their health and appearance.

Higher Living has only been trading for two years, and in this short time the products are sold in health food stores nationwide, including Selfridges, Harvey Nichols, Waitrose and Tesco. In the future, Minal hopes to create a comprehensive range of Ayurvedic health products to give people an insight into the science. She is currently studying for her degree in Ayurvedic medicine at the College of Ayurvedic Medicine.

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