

3rd Asian Curry Awards 2013 Spectacular



Double Asian Curry Award winner Sabir Karim with wife Aneela, Rt Hon Tom Brake MP, Deputy Leader of the House of Commons, and Cllr Thomas Chan, Co-Chair Asian Catering Federation

Rani Singh

It's unusual to attend an Asian awards ceremony that ends early enough to get home by 10.30pm but the 3rd Asian Curry Awards that took place in The Great Room at the Grosvenor House on Sunday 17 November 2013 started at 6pm and swept along at a fairly cracking rate despite a few nominees being held up in "traffic" etc.

Sky News's **Lukwesa Burak** presented a high volume of awards fairly briskly with little hesitation and the ceremony contained a number of entertainment slots, one of which, from Bangladesh, started the show. British **PM David Cameron** and **Deputy PM Nick Clegg** sent impressive video messages recorded ahead of the Commonwealth leaders' CHOGM summit in Sri Lanka this week and Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government the **Rt. Hon. Eric Pickles** represented the British Government, co-presenting many of the awards.

Shadow Lord Chancellor and Shadow Secretary of State for Justice, The **Rt. Hon. Sadiq Khan MP**, raised his voice effectively above the almost constant buzz of low conversation in the room to tell the audience that the UK tally of over 10,000 Asian restaurants was larger than the com-

bined numbers of Asian restaurants in Mumbai and Delhi alone. He told us that the UK Asian restaurant industry employed 80,000 people and had a turnover of £4.5 billion.

The scale and geographical spread of the restaurants and eateries nominated for various awards at this event demonstrated that the word "Asian" was being used in the American sense, that is, to encompass Chinese, Malaysian, Thai and Indonesian, as well as Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani. It made for a varied gathering of mainly men in black tie and dinner suits that included diplomats from Bangladesh, Sweden, Pakistan and Indonesia. Acts included traditional Chinese dancing and a young Chinese singing girl trio.

Rising star Sabir Karim runs two successful restaurants in London, Namaaste Kitchen and Salaam Namaste

European Asian cuisine was represented in the form of an array of dazzling offerings from Sweden; with Pan Buffet winning the Best Asian and Oriental International Restaurant of 2013, and Waipo, the Best Chinese Restaurant award. Both venues can be found in Stockholm.

The Federation of Bangladeshi Caterers and the Asian Catering Federation jointly organised the event.

Of all the individual winners, rising star **Sabir Karim** –unusual for being a chef patron as well as a purser (cabin crew) for British Airways- who runs two successful restaurants in London, Namaaste Kitchen and Salaam Namaste, was nominated in three categories, one of which was Best South Asian Restaurant in London. As if being nominated in such distinguished company was not enough, Sabir was awarded the top trophies in two categories; Best Asian and Oriental Innovative Chef of the Year and Best Newcomer of the Year. His restaurant Salaam Namaste was the prizewinner for both sectors.

Sabir collected the awards but took his lovely wife on stage with him, unlike many other recipients. On one of his tables were his Salaam Namaste chef **Jayanta**, who originally hails from Delhi, some of his staff and Camden councillors who are also his clients. I found him quite passionate about his innovative cuisine. He enthusiastically showed me images of mouth-watering dishes like Lahori Tower Lamb held in his mobile that he had prepared for his competition "cook-off".

charity and the work it does and has done to help integrate traumatised ex-military soldiers into society.

Four special individuals were honoured with the Pride of Punjab Award for bringing honour to their community and country through their lives.

The first award went to **Mr Atul Pathak**, Managing Director of APPT Corporation Ltd., who has through his Philanthropic Activities helped so many lives. Mr Pathak has raised over £250,000 for various charities and also donates a percentage of his annual sales.

The second award was given to **Mr Kuljit Singh Gulati** who has been a long serving member of the PSBI and has devoted a considerable amount of his

time for the benefit of others through his distinguished and dedicated community services.

The third award was given to **Mr Bhupinder Singh**, Managing Director of Punjab National Bank (Intl.) Ltd. who has immensely contributed to the Banking industry with his out of the box thinking and innovative ideas.

The fourth award went to Ms Seema Malhotra MP, Member of Parliament for Feltham & Heston, Opposition Whip & Chair of the Parliamentary Labour Party Business Group for her selfless service to her constituents and public.

On the night more than £10,000 was raised for the charity, Combat Stress.

The vote of thanks was given by **Mr N.S. Rai**, Treasurer of the Society.