

Ethnic Businessmen Among Britain's Richest

Britain's ethnic millionaires

£ Ninety million pounds
Jasminder Singh

£ Eighty million pounds
Nazmu Virani

£ Seventy five million pounds
Ali Jalali Farhan

£ Fifty million pounds
Nudin Jivraj

A Sunday paper recently spotlighted the 200 people it believed to be the wealthiest in Britain. Among them were four Asians whose fortunes ranged between £1 billion and £50 million.

The business interests from which they created their vast financial empires are more complex than the corner shop enterprises that popular belief knows Asians to operate so successfully.

The achievements of these businessmen validate the common perception of ethnic minority entrepreneurs as hard-working, self-effacing, quietly efficient, and imbued with a dogged determination

started by his grandfather some 60 years ago.

Their inclusion in the 200 super rich people's league, whose total wealth of £47.3 billion is equal to 9.3 per cent of Britain's gross national product, is a commendable achievement and an inspiration to the minority communities.

Other names featured on this annual review of the very rich, also reveal a fascinating mix of sources of their wealth. These include land, art treasures and buildings several centuries old. A number of the younger nouveau riche discovered they had a midas touch in manufacturing, trading and

the scarcity of such super-success among other ethnic minorities and raise questions as to why this is should be so. The fact is, when it comes to social and economic backgrounds, Britain's ethnic minorities have little in common.

The road to millionaire status is littered with failures and fascinating stores of intrigue and maximisation of available opportunities at the right time.

Black businessmen in general have faced disadvantages which slowed down their economic development process.

However, although none have made it into the annual top 200 list, over the years some have succeeded in breaking new ground in property development, import and export, manufacturing, banking and publishing.

A remarkable example is the Dyke and Dryden firm.

It's a far cry from the little merchant toiling away at the corner store. On the list of Britain's 200 richest people are a number of businessmen from ethnic minorities. With fortunes ranging up to £1 billion, their achievements prove the truth of immigrants as hard-working and determined to succeed against all odds. And as Gemini News Services reports, the trend seems set to continue. by Kofi Akumanyi

to succeed against all odds. While the four Asians among the top 200 also shared these characteristics, three of them have a common background of being immigrants from wealthy families with wide-ranging business interests in property, commodity trading, steel shipping and hotels.

In 10th position of the list with £1.1 billion are the Indian brothers Gopi and Sri Hinduja. Their business, which is one of the largest trading companies in the world, was started by their grandfather at the beginning of the century in the far east.

Kenyan immigrant Jasminder Singh and property dealer Nazmu Virani from Uganda, who both came to Britain in the 1970s, are tied in 143rd position with £60 million each. Another Asian, Garesh Patel, estimated to be worth £50 million, also operates a commodities business

entertainment. Top of the list was the richest monarch in the world, Queen Elizabeth II, with a mind-boggling £7 billion in personal and national assets.

Others are the Duke of Westminster (£3.7 billion), Swedish brothers Gad and Hans Rausing (£1.94 billion), Lord Sainsbury's family grocery business (£1.85 billion), publishing magnate Robert Maxwell (£1.2 billion), and the music and airline owner Richard Branson (£60 million).

British pop music and theatre contribution to Britain's national wealth is also evident by the inclusion of the highly successful composer Andrew Lloyd Webber, and pop musicians Mick Jagger, Elton John, Paul McCartney and Cliff Richard.

Asian successes in business tend to highlight the compar-

which manufactures hair-care and beauty products. It is owned by Len Dyke, Dudley Dryden and Tony Wade who received an MBE award in 1987 for their contribution to business and community development.

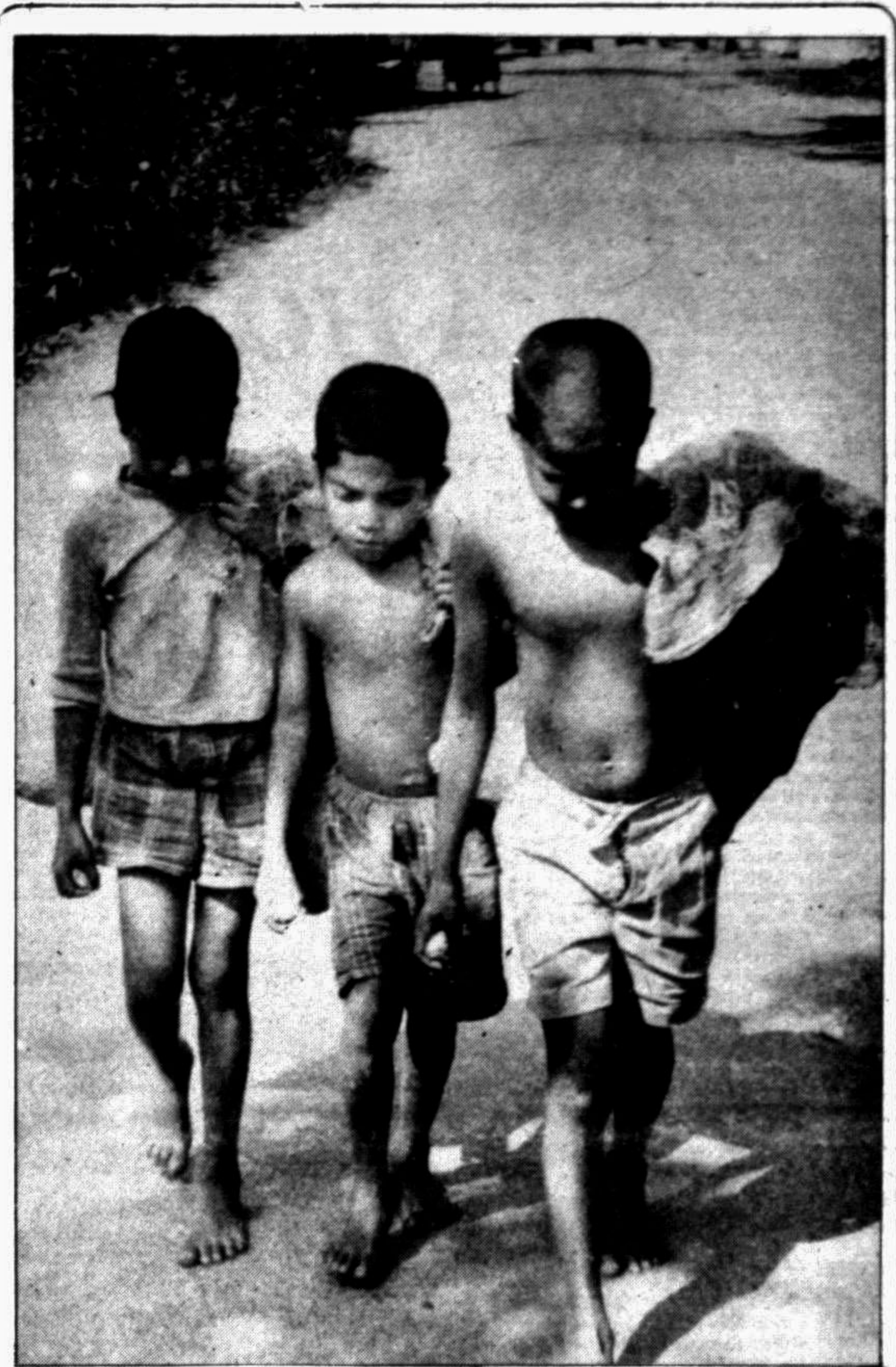
Efforts being made to help black entrepreneurs move into the mainstream economy have been exemplified by two major initiatives in the past six years.

They are the Prince's Youth Business Trust (PYBT), a voluntary organisation initiated by the Prince of Wales to help young people start up in business; and the Ethnic Minorities Business Initiative (EMBI).

The PYBT's effectiveness is demonstrated by the fact that of the 10,000 young entrepreneurs it has helped so far with various loans and grants, the majority are still trading.

The organisation recently said that another young Kenyan-born Asian who runs a garage in Peterborough, eastern England, would soon be among its first millionaires.

A PYBT supporter and advisory council member Nazmu Virani says of the organisation's finance and professional



THEY'RE THE HUNTERS, WASTE PAPER IS THEIR QUARRY: Another day starts for these hapless 'Tokai' (street urchin) trio. —Star Photo by Enamul Haque.

An unusual book appeared on the shelves of French bookshops last spring. It is a work 800 pages long, called "La Bibliothèque Ideale" (The Ideal Book Collection), published by Albin Michel, and consisting of a selection of works in prose and poetry from all over the world, an "ideal" selection, in fact, whose ambition can be compared to that of the Library of Babel, imagined by Borges (but, of course, never actually created) which would contain all the possible combinations of twenty or so orthographic symbols... That is to say, everything that can be expressed in every language.

THE IDEAL BOOK COLLECTION

more open categories such as adventure novels, literary fragments, and distortions (literary play). The third part is called "History and Knowledge".

Inside each chapter, 49 works are presented, listed at the beginning of the chapter in a big light grey frame, inside which a dark grey frame isolates the 25 major works, inside which a very dark grey frame finally separates the ten

above all, a literary game, in which the critic/reader is invited to take part.

As for any game, indispensable rules controlled the way this catalogue of preferences was assembled. They are presented in the preface. First of all, an author can only be named once in each chapter. Secondly a particular title can only be used in one chapter.

This leads to some surprises. The works of Italo Calvino, one of the most widely read contemporary authors, does not appear among the ten main works in any chapter at all. His major work, "Le Baron Perche", aimed at children as well as adults, appears in the chapter for "Children's Literature" only among the first twenty-five works because of competition from classical authors such as Verne, Twain and Dickens, whereas, if he had been included in the chapter on "Italian Literature", there would have been much less competition. But then it would have been necessary to move "Le Chevalier Inexistant", another of his novels which is less good and which figures among the twenty-five best works of Italian literature.

Where could it have been placed? Calvino's fans would find fault with this classification. This would not be their "ideal book collection."

The reductive and subjective nature of this complex and ambitious game is attenuated by the abundance of works cited: 2,401.

It would take a maniac to rival such an undertaking, and yet, consulting this huge volume of a totally new kind arouses the curiosity of the player/reader as well as his vocation to search in his own literary memory in order to create his own ideal book collection. —T.D.

A book collection is, first of all, something very intimate. Each book collection is unlike any other, bearing the stamp of its owner's personality. It is the mirror and source of an inner life which many people hide from prying eyes. It is significant that Henry Miller, the writer who, in his time, gave true and crude expression to his erotic life in his works of fiction, is also the person who, in "Book of my Life" unashamedly gave the reader the keys to his book collection. In "La Bibliothèque Ideale," Pierre Boncompagni, a knowledgeable journalist and chief editor of the review "Lire," imitates Miller. Turning the pages of his book is like going through his book collection.

What gave him the idea? The reader might imagine that one day he felt like sorting out his books, putting them in order and indexing them and that this gave him the idea of creating a catalogue book.

This rigorous repertoire has three parts. The first, in 15 chapters, deals with novels from all over the world. The second presents well-defined genres such as travel books, detective stories, science-fiction, short stories, etc., or



VIDEO SCENE

The moment Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated and the pre and post-scenes of the tragic incident which were recorded in a video cassette named Newstrack is now available in Dhaka's video libraries. The cassette also contains the Rajiv's last interview and some of his election campaigns.

Three new Hindi cassettes were released last week. 100 days, last week's release, starring Jackie Shroff and Madhuri Dixit, climbed to the top of the chart. Korban, another new release, is a romantic movie in which Salman Khan and Ayesha in the cast. Purana Andaaz, is a cassette in which one can watch the stars of yesterday singing new hit Hindi songs in a new accent. A new video magazine, Star Buzz 9, has just arrived in the market.

Walt Disney movies, Darby Ogill and the little Peopie, and

- S. M. Mamoon**
- White Fang can be enjoyed by senior and junior family members together.
- Two new Bengali movies are also available in the market.
- Hindi Top Ten**
- 100 days (social) Jackie Shroff, Madhuri Dixit.
- Korban (romantic) Salman Khan, Ayesha.
- Qurbani Rang Layegi (romantic) Sanjay Dutt, Poonam, Kholapuri.
- Joomma Chumma in London (stage programme).
- Do Matwale (action) Sanjay Dutt, Chunky Pandey, Sonam, Shilpa Shirodar.
- Star Buzz-9 (video magazine).
- Purana Andaaz (musical).
- Afsana Pyar Ka (romantic) Amir Khan, Neelam.
- Rafi Ki Yaad (Vol-4) (musical).
- Lehron -19 (video magazine).
- Bengali Top Five**
- Palataka (romantic) Prasanjeet, Shatapi Di Ray.
- Maha Prithibi — Victor Banerjee, Aparna Sen, Sumitra.
- Nilimaye Nil (romantic) Tapash Pal, Indrani.
- Banhi Shikha — Uttam, Supriya, Ranjeet Mallick, Olviya.
- Raj Nartaki (romantic) Tapash Pal, Sudha Chandaran.
- English Top Ten**
- Death Run (action) Rob Barlett.
- Waiting for the Light (action).
- Two Mules for Sister Sara (western) Clint Eastwood, Shirley Maclaine.
- Too Much Sun (drama) News Track (news documentary).
- Kungfu Executioners (action) Gordon Mitchell.
- Bronx War (thriller).
- W. Disney's Darby Ogill and the little people (fantasy) Sean Connery.
- W. Disney's White Fang (comedy) Ethan Hawke.
- The Field (drama) Richard Harris Dhon Hart.
- Sources : Filmfair, Dhamm-ndi, Steily Video, Nazrul Islam Road Mohanmadpur.

WRITE TO MITA

Dear Mita,
My son who is 8 causes me lots of problems. He does not study and does not even care that he is doing badly in school. I am frustrated and tired of teaching him. What can I do?
Nasreen, Dhamondi, Dhaka

Dear Nasreen,
It is very frustrating to teach a child who refuses to learn. But don't lose heart, he is only 8 and will probably change when he is older. You will have to think of new and innovative ways of teaching. Try to find out what his interests are and use that language to teach him, for example if he likes playing football then arithmetic could be taught by using those symbols. Creating an atmosphere where the child understands the value of doing well in school is also important. Use the holidays to coach him in subjects he is weak in. Remember, disinterest in studies not inborn; given the right environment most children can reach a certain level of achievement.

Dear Mita,
Sometimes you are too harsh on men who seek your advice. You like women more and blame men for most of the problems in marriage. But remember it takes two to make a marriage work. A non-cooperative wife can bring much misery and trouble to a family and if the husband protests he is blamed by family and friends as being cruel. I have a similar problem at home. My wife neglects me, the children and the house, she just likes visiting her sisters, but if I say anything she gets furious. What can I do?
M Rahman, Dhaka

Dear Mr Khan,
I try not to take sides and agree that it takes two to make a marriage work. If your wife is neglecting everyone then there is serious problem in the family and in her personal life. You have not written how long this has been going or what steps you have taken to look for solutions. You will have to go back to where it all started. Perhaps some resentment has built up over the years of which you were not aware. Her actions might be in reaction to some frustration she is harbouring. I strongly advise you to break the silence and open communications immediately before it is too late.

Dear Mita,
It's been two years since I got married. It was a love marriage. So there was problems from the family of my husbands side. Though my husband's family gave me hard time, yet I am living with them as they welcomed me. But they don't seem to recognise my family. I wanted to live separately so that mine and my husband's family could visit us. My mother wanted me to take care of my in laws as a daughter-in-law. Moreover, since my husband is the only one who always lived with the family I couldn't walk out. My family can't come thinking that my in laws will insult them. Please Mita, give me a solution to my problem. I have talked it over with my husband. He also doesn't know what to do. Please help me.
Baby, Dhaka

Dear Baby,
Some people do not respect their daughter-in-law or her family because they have a false sense of superiority. They do not appreciate the invaluable role of the daughter-in-law and look upon her as a burden or as someone who has to be tolerated. Tell them how painful their behaviour is to you and

what a negative effect this is having in your relationship with your husband. If this does not work then it is time for you to be firm. Explain to them that you will not tolerate your family being insulted and both families deserve the same respect, attention and devotion from you and your husband. Ultimately if they don't change their attitude then you will have to move out with your husband.

Dear Mita
My mother-in-law is very interfering and dislikes me. My husband is blindly loyal to her and refuses look for a job abroad because of her. I have tried to be nice to her but it does not work. We don't live together, but she rings up my husband to say bad things about me. I want my husband to leave this place so that we can live somewhere far away in peace.
Suraiya, Armanitola, Dhaka.

Dear Suraiya,
I did not understand what kind of advise you are seeking. Is it on how to make your husband leave the country? Or how he should leave his mother? If it is the above than I am sorry but my expertise does not extend to that level. Problems between in-laws are common in our society. Most of us have learnt to live with it if it does not exceed a certain limit. Since you don't live with your mother-in-law then the problems are probably not to an extent where you have to leave the country. Looking after our parents in their old age is a part of our culture, and something you will expect from your children someday.
Try to understand why your mother-in-law dislikes you, try to be objective when you analyse the reasons. If the situation is hopeless then do your duty and stay away. Taking your husband away will not solve anything.

WRITE TO MITA

Run by a trained and experienced Family and Marriage counsellor, assisted by a professional team of doctor, psychologist and lawyer, this column will answer questions relating to family, marriage, health, family laws, and social and interpersonal relationships. Please address letters to Mita, The Daily Star, GPO Box 3257 or to 28/1, Toyneebe Circular Road, Motijheel, Dhaka-1000.