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Contact: Imtaz Khaliq
Tel: 0207 683 7022
Email: imtaz@imtaz.com

A TAILOR FIT FOR THE QUEEN

One of the first women tailors in London will be awarded an MBE by the Queen on the 16th February 2010.

Being of Pakistani origin, Imtaz Khaliq went against the norms of Asian women when she became a tailor. In an industry that is difficult to break through for anyone, let alone someone who's Asian and female, Imtaz managed to break down the barriers.

Imtaz came to London from Bradford and began business 19 years ago by going door to door to London boutiques with her garments. Imtaz couldn't have had a more impressive first customer as she launched herself into the cut-throat world of fashion when she sold her first suit to Hollywood A-lister, Michelle Pfeiffer.

Pfeiffer 's suit was sold to a Sunday Times fashion editor who found Imtaz's business card in one of the pockets. Imtaz ended up in a Sunday Times 'Next Big Thing' feature. On the back of this positive exposure, Imtaz began tailoring hand-made suits for more actresses, models, Saudi princesses and business highfliers. Last year, she designed BBC weathergirl Sian Lloyd's wedding dress, which made the cover of Hello! Magazine. On the 28th February 2010, BBC News presenter, Mishal Husain will be wearing a suit, hand-crafted by Imtaz while she presents the 10 O' Clock news.

During her career in the male-dominated world of Saville Row, Imtaz's talent, strength and determination has not gone unnoticed. In 2009 Imtaz was nominated as one of Britain's most powerful Muslim women, and named as one of the top four tailors in London by Cosmopolitan magazine.

In recognition of her struggle to become an established and known tailor, for the last 10 years Imtaz has been campaigning for equal opportunities for women and minorities in fashion. She also volunteers her time to teach for free in various universities, with an aim to inspire young women to make their mark in fashion.

"Girls have told me they went into tailoring because of me," Imtaz says. "I broke the mould of what's traditionally expected of an Asian woman, setting up a successful creative business in a male-dominated industry. I try to show what you can achieve through determination and hard work. I'm not an overnight sensation; I got here through a hard slog. I've never allowed myself to be limited by people's perceptions."

On the 16th February, when Imtaz is awarded her MBE by the Queen she will know that the "hard slog" has been worthwhile. This award will be the ultimate recognition of her contribution to the fashion industry.

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Notes to editors:

For more information please contact Imtaz Khaliq for an interview: 0207 683 7022, imtaz@imtaz.com www.imtaz.com

For exclusive photographs, please contact Harriet Armstrong: 07801 521864, harriet@harrietarmstrong.com