

# Community Link

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## Pakistan Independence Day Commemorated in California State Assembly



In the California Assembly, the framed document was presented to the leaders of the American Muslim Voice Foundation, a group recognized in Northern California (and beyond) for not only developing better understanding between all faiths, between Islam and America, but going beyond that step like feeding the homeless on Christmas Eve in Sacramento

■ By Ras H. Siddiqui

In a historic first, the Independence Day of Pakistan (celebrated on August 14th) was heralded in the chambers of the California State Assembly Chambers on Monday, August 17, 2015 to the delight of invited guests of Pakistani heritage and Deputy Consul at the Consulate General of Pakistan, Los Angeles Mr Malik Qamar Abbas Khokhar.

Member Resolution 1626 Dated August 14th was introduced by Assemblymember Kansen Chu (California's 25th District) in the Assembly on August 17th, the first day of their return from summer recess,

an understandably busy day for all legislators at the Capitol. After another historic first earlier this year when Pakistan Day (March 23rd) was celebrated with a resolution in the California State Senate presented by Senator Tony Mendoza, the Pakistani-American community in our Golden State could not be happier.

In the California Assembly, the framed document was presented to the leaders of the American Muslim Voice Foundation, a group recognized in Northern California (and beyond) for not only developing better understanding between all faiths, between Islam and America, but going beyond that step like feeding the homeless on Christmas Eve right here in Sacramento. They have also

been encouraging Muslims around our great county to get to know their neighbors with a simple people to people approach, by inviting them to their homes to share a meal. And lest we forget Americans of all religious and ethnic persuasions are receptive to honesty, good food, family and cultural interaction.

Proof of that American openness could be found right here where Taiwan-born Kansen Chu is elected to the California Assembly from an area around Silicon Valley where he meets a Pakistani-American Samina Sundas, the Executive Director and Founder of American Muslim Voice (AMV), whose social work and community activism inspires him to commemorate Pakistan's In-

dependence Day at the state Capitol. The credit for all of this goes not only Assemblymember Chu and officials of AMV but to America itself, for giving us all an opportunity to showcase our cultural and ethnic pride no matter where we come from!

The events for the day occurred in three parts. The introduction of Pakistan's Independence Day and presentation of the Member Resolution to AMV officials present on the State Assembly Floor, a follow-up reception by the honorable Assemblymember in conjunction with AMV (samosas, cookies and other light snacks) and last but not least a large dinner gathering at the Citrus Heights Community Center, where a dinner reception was held for the

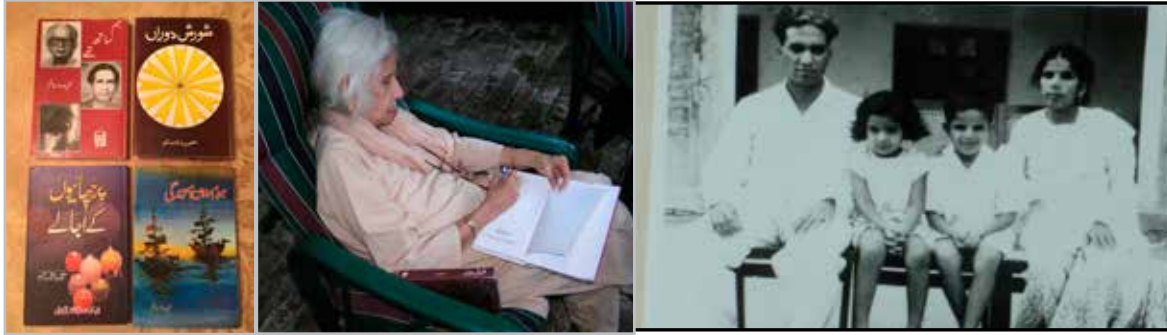
wider community, which included many guests from the Bay Area and families from right here in Sacramento. Also present were some local officials and many leaders of the local Muslim groups including CAIR, SALAM, Downtown Mosque and from Woodland.

And against all norms dinner was served first (thank you Farrukh Hashmi Sahib). Sister Firdos who hails from across the border was in Pakistani green and white "camouflage" and she was event emcee. On the American Muslim Voice she elaborated that it was both the people and the idea that were inspiring and a vehicle for networking and promoting our voice.

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## We Will Miss You, Hamida Apa



Cover of "Shorish-e-Dauran" Hamida Salim signing her book L-R : Abu Salim, Sumbul Salim, Irfan Salim and Hamida Salim



L-R: Abu Salim, Hamida Salim and Shaheer Khan Standing L-R: Hamida Salim and Abu Salim

■ By Shaheer Khan, PhD  
Foster City, CA

Eminent Urdu writer Hamida Salim passed away on Sunday, August 16th at the age of 93 in Delhi. She was laid to rest in the Jamia Millia Islamia graveyard on Monday. She is survived by her husband Abu Salim, son Irfan Salim who lives in San Francisco Bay area, and daughter Sumbul Salim.

Born in 1922 in a Zamindar family of Rudauli in Barabanki district of Uttar Pradesh, she did her BA from I T College, Lucknow, and MA in Economics from the Aligarh Muslim University in 1947. She took her diploma and Master's in Economics from the University of London. She taught both in the Women's College and Economics Department at the Aligarh Muslim University in the early 1960s before moving to Delhi where she taught at Jamia Millia Islamia.

My interactions with Hamid Apa began about 10 years ago during one of her annual summer visits to the Bay area to see her son, Irfan Salim. After our first meeting, she called me on her subsequent summer visit and left a message in her very sweet voice, "Shaheer Mian, Mai Bay Area May AaGai Hun. AapSay Aur Humaira Say Mulaqat Kub Hogi?" We tried to visit her couple of times at her son's house, depending on her availability, on every visit. During our last meeting some three years ago she mentioned

that she may not come back here due to old age and poor health (hers as well as Salim Sahab). She always appreciated that her son made sure that his parents travel in comfort by business class with a stopover in Europe for several days but still the long journey to San Francisco was too much for the couple at their age.

It's hard to explain our feelings every time when we met her. An amazing human being, she was more than just Majaz's sister. Highly sophisticated, extremely hospitable and a very loving person. We enjoyed every minute of her company and always learned something new about Aligarh, Lucknow and of course, Rudauli (her home town and birth place) of her days. It was an honor to be with her. Our conversations would always include Ararul Haq Majaz (renowned Urdu poet), Safia Akhtar (Urdu litterateur, wife of Jan Nisar Akhtar and Javed Akhtar's mother) and Ansar Harvani (veteran freedom fighter, parliamentarian and Congressman).

She had an amazing memory. Her autobiography "Shorish-e-Dauran" (Turbulent Times) published in 1995 covers her Aligarh days. Her second book "Ham Saath The" (We were Together) consists of her write-ups about her siblings, and did not receive the attention it deserved as noted by Naved Masood Sahab. Several people whose opinion is respected in Urdu literary circles, feel that Hamida Apa's ar-

ticle on Majaz titled "Jaggan Bhaia" is possibility the best tribute from a sister to her brother that they had seen. Majaz was known within the family as Jaggan because he would go to sleep very late. Her other two books, "Hardam Rawan Hai Zindagi" (Life is constantly on the move) and "Parchhaiyon Ke Ujale" (Lights of Shadows) are novels. I am privileged to have all four book signed by her. She gave us the latter two as a gift. According to published reports she was working on two other books 'Ab aur Tab' (Now and Then, collection of short stories and a few articles) and 'Beeti Huee Yaaden' (Remembrance of the Things Past, Memoir).

Over the years I convinced her to write articles for our Aligarh Magazine. Despite her old age and poor health she agreed to comply to my request. At the end she would say, "Shaheer Mian Aap Ki Zid Nay Majboor Kar Dia LikhNay Kay Liye". I also requested her to read one of her articles on Majaz, that she wrote at my request, for video recording.

She was an accomplished author in her own right, had her own identity, and enjoyed her own place in Urdu literature but for us, the Aligarians, who are so passionate about 'Tarana-e-Aligarh' and our love for Majaz, she was our link to Majaz and source of firsthand information about his life and work. With her death, that link is broken and snapped forever. We will miss you, Hamida Apa.

## Man Who Posed as 'ISI Terrorist' Charged for Hoax New York Bomb Threat

New York: A 42-year-old American was arrested in Texas on Wednesday and charged with making a hoax bomb threat at the Statue of Liberty that forced the evacuation of 3,230 people, officials said.

Jason Smith from West Virginia allegedly called emergency services identifying himself as "Abdul Yasin" and as an "ISI terrorist" saying that "we" are preparing to blow up the statue.

It was not clear what group he was referring to. The ISI is most commonly understood as the acronym for Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, the country's premier spy agency.

Court papers indicate that Smith attended a school for the blind and deaf. He used a telephone service tailored for those with hearing impediments and has past convictions for making threats.

The statue and its surrounding island, one of the most visited monuments in the United States, was evacuated on April 24 and closed for the rest of the day after the bomb threat was made.

Park police and canine units swept the scene and bomb disposal officers were scrambled in after a possible suspicious package was located in a visitor locker.

The threat was later deemed to

have been a hoax.

US prosecutors say Smith called the emergency 911 hotline on April 24 from his iPad, using a service that assists hearing-impaired people with making and receiving calls.

Two follow-up calls threatening to attack Times Square and kill police officers at the Brooklyn Bridge were made from the same iPad by a user identified as "Isis allah Bomb maker" in May.

ISIS is most commonly used in the United States to refer to the Islamic State extremist group in Iraq and Syria.

Prosecutors said Smith was THREAT, P28

## Dr M. Shahid Yousuf Awarded APPNA Gold Medal



L-R) US Ambassador to Pakistan Richard Olson, APPNA President 2015 Dr Mubasher Rana, Gold Medal Recipient Dr M. Shahid Yousuf and Dr Shahid Usmani Convention Chairman (Photo courtesy Aisha Laiq Photography)

Dr M. Shahid Yousuf, a life member of APPNA since 1983, was awarded the most prestigious and highest award, APPNA Gold Medal, at the recently concluded 38th Annual APPNA Summer Convention at Gaylord Resort, Kissimmee, FL.

The ceremony held on August 15th 2015 was attended by over 3000 attendees and included the US Ambassador to Pakistan Richard Olson and also Pakistani Ambassador to USA Jalil Jilani.

Dr Shahid Yousuf was recognized for his services to APPNA which have included several committees which he headed and was member of including the committees for communications and publications which are responsible for the website and electronic and paper publications. Mostly, he has served in areas for which there is no formal position either elected or appointed e.g. archivist, photo journalist and historian. He has captured many memorable moments of APPNA in photos which are periodically used in publications.

Dr Arif Toor, former APPNA President and also Gold Medal winner himself, announced the citation for which he has historically been chosen. The presenting of this award to Dr Shahid Yousuf also marks a milestone in that not only high elected office holders such as Presidents but that rank and file members and foot soldiers of this organization are held in high honor. Dr Mubasher Rana (CA), APPNA President 2015, presented the Gold Medal to Dr Yousuf who is also a current member of Dr Rana's current cabinet being

the Chair of the Communications Committee. Overcome by emotion, Dr Yousuf was unable to address the audience but for a brief moment in which he thanked APPNA.

Dr Shahid Yousuf has periodically written for Pakistan Link over the years. He remains active within his Michigan Chapter of APPNA where he was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2014. He is a Dow Medical College Karachi graduate of 1975 and a practicing psychiatrist relocating to Miami, FL this year.



APPNA is a 501C3 professional and charitable organization with contributions and services over several decades and has included events such as the 2004 Tsunami, 2005 Pakistan earthquake, Katrina, Haiti earthquake, 2010 Pakistani floods, Karachi 2015 Heat Wave as well as Nepal earthquake of 2015. Dr Yousuf currently serves on the SWDRRC (Social Welfare and Disaster Relief Committee 2015) chaired by Dr Aisha Zafar (IN).

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Woodland Imam Aamir Hussain started the formalities with a recitation from the Holy Qur'an and its translation. The National Anthem of the United States was played first and led by a little girl from the Bay Area. And to follow up an enthusiastic group of community women sang Pakistan's National Anthem on stage. Brother Asif Sattar, President of the AMV Chapter in Sacramento, next thanked all attending including heads of organizations and his wife and children for their continued support. He also introduced the AMV Sacramento Board members on stage.

In this writer's humble opinion, the most inspiring delivery of the evening was by our community youth Representative Rameesha Asif Sattar who proceeded to counter all stereotypes about Pakistan and Pakistanis trending currently in the media. With a displayed backdrop of a picture of

the Quaid-i-Azam, Rameesha shared the accomplishments of Pakistan's founder, that of Pakistani women, and some of the leading personalities from Pakistan in the world of sports. She included Pakistan's two Nobel Prize winners, its Oscar winners (if you include special effects) and many others who have made the country proud.

Khalid Saeed, National President of AMV Foundation, next in his speech described his journey in America, arriving as a proud Pakistani, becoming a Pakistani-American and a proud American Muslim. He described AMV's main goal and the quest to contribute to the American "Salad Bowl" (as opposed to a melting pot!).

Assemblymember Kansen Chu thanked everyone for being here. He said that he had known Samina for more than 10 years and that he ASSEMBLY, P21

## Pakistani Student Wins Bronze in Microsoft Office Championship



(Left): Waqas Ali receiving his medal. (Right): Waqas Ali unfurls the green and white at the Microsoft Championship. Photos courtesy of CERTIPORT

**Dallas:** Waqas Ali, a student from Mirpur Mathelo in Ghotki District, has bagged a bronze medal for PowerPoint 2013 at the Microsoft Office Specialist World Championship (MOSWC) 2015 held in Dallas, Texas recently.

Ali, who paid for the trip himself, was the only participant from Pakistan at the 14th MOSWC, which attracted 600,000 participants this year, all competing to demonstrate their mastery of various Microsoft Office products.

The final round saw 145 students from 47 countries battling it out for the top slots.

"I am feeling so many things right now, but most of all, I am proud that I have won," said Ali, who studies at the FFC Grammar School.

"This was the first time for Pakistan, I was the only one, and I've won it. In fact, no – this is not my win; this is the win of my family, TEC Education Foundation, my friends, for all their massive support."

Certiport, the test delivery solution provider that organized the event, awarded Ali with a scholarship worth \$1,500, a medal, a trophy and Microsoft products.

"These winners are part of an elite group that know how to use Microsoft PowerPoint efficiently and to its full potential," Certiport executive Aaron Osmond said. "We are proud to support this competition as a vehicle to promote what the world needs most – young people who possess in-demand workforce skills."

"More than 1.2 billion people use Office worldwide, and these students have taken the time to set themselves apart as the best of the best," said Alison Cunard, general manager of Learning Experiences at Microsoft.

## Pakistani Athletes Participating in Los Angeles Special Olympics Honored



Council of Pakistan American Affairs President Nasir Javed, Memon Organization of North America President Mohammed Ashraf Kamdar, and COPAA Past

President Adnan Khan presented backpacks filled with goodies to Pakistani athletes who participated in the Special Olympics held recently in Los Angeles.

"We salute the spirit of these athletes who give so much and inspire us all. They won 13 gold medals, 11 silver medals and 10 bronze medals," says a COPAA message.

## SCE Rewards Customers with Home Energy Efficiency Rebates, Incentives

**Rosemead, CA:** As hot temperatures and summer continue, Southern California Edison (SCE) reminds customers it offers a variety of energy-efficiency programs that reward customers with rebates, bill credits and other incentives designed to help reduce energy and lower electricity bills, says a press release. It adds:

"There are so many ways to stay cool and comfortable this summer – while keeping electricity costs in check," said Mark Wallenrod, SCE's director of Demand Side Management Program Operations. "Now more than ever, people are interested in saving money and helping the environment. We're proud to be able to help our customers do that."

For example, customers with a swimming pool at their single-family residence may qualify for a \$200 rebate if they replace a single-speed or two-speed pool pump with a qualified Variable Speed Pool Pump and Motor model. The difference could save up to 60 percent of a pool's energy consumption and maximize savings.

Through SCE's Refrigerator and Freezer Recycling Program, customers with an old, inefficient working refrigerator or freezer can receive a \$50 incentive by disposing of their aging appliance in an environmentally responsible way. SCE will pick it up free of charge and dismantle it using Responsible Appliance Disposal standards. By disposing of a spare unit, customers could save up to \$180\* a year in electricity costs.

To schedule a pick up appointment by phone for the Refrigerator and Freezer Recycling Program, or if you have a question, please call SCE Customer Service at 1-800-234-9722, (TTY 1-800-352-8580). Assistance is available Monday through Friday, 7 am-6 pm, or Saturday from 7 am-3:30 pm.

Additionally, you can receive a \$35 rebate when you buy an ENERGY STAR® certified refrigerator, or get a \$75 rebate when you buy an ENERGY STAR® Most Efficient refrigerator. Upgrading to a more efficient refrigerator could reduce your electricity bill by up to \$105\* yearly. (\*Estimated electricity cost savings are based on an average consumer usage and are not a guarantee of actual savings). Visit [sce.com/summer](http://sce.com/summer) for details.

Central air conditioners are one of the busiest electrical appliances when temperatures rise. Updating and maintaining air conditioners can mean big savings on electricity bills over time. When feasible, it is best to use ceiling fans, standing fans, whole house fans or other more energy-efficient technology to stay cool, while also lowering your electricity bill.

Cool down your home with a Window Evaporative Cooler, an efficient alternative to a traditional air conditioner. Purchase and install a qualifying model and get up to \$200 in rebates from SCE.

To learn more about these and other energy-efficiency programs, go to [sce.com/summer](http://sce.com/summer).

## Pakistani Student Wins Second Prize in NASA Contest

A Pakistani boy secured second prize at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Ames Space Settlement Design Contest 2015.

Shah Mir Aizaz, a student of O' Levels, participated in the annual design competition for students from grade 7 to grade 12, sponsored by the NASA Ames Research Center and the National Space Society NSS. He won second prize for his design titled, 'Beyond Infinity – Eros Outer Atmosphere Settlement'.

Every year, individuals, small teams of two to five, and large teams of six or more are invited from all over the world to submit space settlement designs to NASA Ames for



judgment. The contest has been taking place since 1994. This year there were 994 submissions from 3,007 students taught by 380 teachers. Entries came from 21 nations worldwide and 14 different states from USA. – The Express Tribune

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had been inspired by her. He said that as an immigrant himself, he was honored to have had the opportunity to commemorate Pakistan's Independence Day in the California Assembly. He encouraged Pakistani-Americans to run for office and to participate in the political process. During his speech he shared how he himself started at the School Board level and progressed from there to where he is today. He also took the opportunity to hand out Certificates of Recognition to officials of AMV, to Consul Khokhar Sahib and a member of the media.

Consul Malik Qamar Abbas Khokhar next delivered a short speech during which he made three points. 1) He asked for a big hand for Assemblymember Kansen Chu for his efforts. 2) He thanked the

American Muslim Voice Foundation for doing wonderful work for Pakistani, Muslim and Mainstream Americans and asked for a big hand for them and 3) He explained changes brought recently at the Consulate in Los Angeles for the added convenience of the community. Khokhar also presented tokens of official recognition to Assemblymember Chu (including a book on Pakistan) and AMV Executive Director Samina Sundas, who herself delivered the final speech of the day with a request for Muslims in America to be proud of who they are and to share their beautiful faith with fellow Americans. She also invited all to attend the American Muslim Voice Peace Convention to be held in Sacramento on September 12th. Readers are invited to visit [www.amuslimvoice.org](http://www.amuslimvoice.org) for details.