

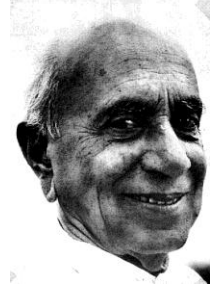


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Sindhi-Americans Gathered in Houston to Pay Tribute to Their National Leader

Two Sindhi Luminaries were Awarded for their Contribution to Sindhi Society and Culture

Pictures of the event can be viewed and downloaded at

<http://picasaweb.google.com/worldsindhicongress/GMSyedAnniversaryInHouston2010?feat=directlink>

HOUSTON, TX, USA. Hundreds of Sindhi-Americans gathered in Houston on Saturday, January 16, 2010 to commemorate the 106th birthday of Mr. G. M. Syed, a national leader of the Sindhi people who waged a nonviolent struggle against Islamic fundamentalism and for Sindhi freedom. Sindh is home to the ancient Indus Valley civilization and is now a province in Pakistan. A vibrant Sindhi-American community numbering in the tens of thousands lives in various U.S. cities.

More than 30 million Sindhis live in Sindh today. Sindhis are supportive of democracy and secularism and have been marginalized by Pakistan's military establishment and its Islamist ideology. Mr Umed Ali Laghari of World Sindhi Congress and the G. M. Syed Memorial Committee presided over the event. Several scholars and community leaders spoke at the event.

Mr. Abdul Haq Chang, a Fulbright Doctoral Candidate from the University of Texas at Austin said, "Sayed's concept of Sindh and *Sindhayat* like Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai was not only for the well being of Sindh but it was also for the well being and riches of all human beings of the world and for the peace and security for the all."

Fayaz Shaikh, from the Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, in his multi-media presentation explored how to amalgamate the rich and profound aspects of Sindhi culture with Global culture. "The new generation and Sindhi youth in America will be more likely to embrace Sindhi language, literature and heritage if their link to Global culture is highlighted." said Mr. Shaikh.



Dr. Cook spoke on the historical dimensions of Sufi aspects of Islam in Sindh and India and said that this heritage must be retained in order to deal with the Islamic radicalization in the region. He praised Syed's role in promoting religious tolerance in the region.

Ms. Natasha Raheja of the University of Texas at Austin said "In the spirit of GM Syed whom we are honoring today I hope that the Sindhi community can come together for the common goal of the preservation of Sindhi culture and language irrespective of constructed and politicized religious differences...As we continue to negotiate our Sindhi identities individually, let us celebrate the diversity in our community as one of our strengths and move forward together."

Ms. Humaira Rehman of World Sindhi Institute (WSI) said the salvation of Sindhi people lies in the inclusion of the women in the struggle for emancipation.

Ahmar Mastikhan of American Friends of Balochistan (AFB), condemned the targeted killing of Baloch leaders and ongoing militarization of Balochistan and he said "Baloch Nation is demanding the independence from Pakistan." Mr. Mastikhan also paid tribute to Sindhi leader G M Syed, who promoted the freedom for all oppressed nations in Pakistan. "Syed believed in books more than any person," said Mr Mastikhan.

This annual event is organized to create a global awareness about the plight of Sindh and Sindhis around the world. "We must follow Syed's legacy of non-violent struggle and support the legitimate struggle of the peoples of Sindh," said Mr. Umed Laghari, in his concluding remarks.

"Mr. Syed's message of non-violence, tolerance, and peace has universal appeal, and the core principles of non-violence and conflict resolution are applicable to all the struggles for self-determination at individual, communal, or national levels," added Mr. Laghari.

Many prominent community members attended the event including: Zeb Agha, Abdul Hussain Narejo, Sarfaraz Abassi, and Zafar Agha of the Sindhi Association of North America as well as Noornisa Ghangro, Nusrat malik, Shabir Jatoi, Asif Shah, Paras Shah, Mansoor Samoon, Sikandar Baloch, Manzoor Shah, and Basheer Shahani of WSC, and Mr Malik Baoch of AFB.

Conference delegates observed one minute silence for the recent deaths of two community members Mr Mehboob Lashari and Mr Ali Asar Abassi.

During this event, G M Syed Memorial Awards for 2009 were also announced. Two Sindhi political leaders Mr Khamiso Khan (Khaki Joyo) of Nawabshah, Sindh and Professor Baldev Matlani of Mumbai, India, were conferred with the prestigious 'G. M. Syed Memorial Awards 2009 in recognition of their contributions to *Sindhi society, culture and the Sindhi rights movement*.

These awards are jointly sponsored by the World Sindhi Congress and the G. M. Syed Memorial Committee. Awards were presented by Abdul Rehman Kakepoto of the G M Syed Memorial Committee. Mr Bashir Shahani and Mr Manzoor Shah received awards on behalf the awardees.

The birth anniversary ceremony included the recital of the Sindhi National Anthem by Zubair Bhambro and a cake cutting ceremony.

The meeting concluded that the Pakistani government has been systematically violating the human rights of the secular-minded people of Sindh and Balochistan. It categorically condemned the recent killings of indigenous Balochs and Sindhis in Karachi by MQM sponsored agents and demanded the legal actions against the terrorists. The current government has completely failed in yielding any sort of equity,



fairness, parity for the Sindhi and other oppressed nations of Pakistan. Military still remains the de-facto ruler of Pakistan and policies of systematic demographic changes and gerrymandering, discrimination of Sindhi language, unfair allocation of the national financial award, illegal construction of projects on River Indus and in Gawader, forced disappearances of democracy and human right activists and the persecution of Sindhi Hindus and Christians is still continued.

Dr. Saghir Shaikh, Organizer of WSC distributed the Appreciation Certificates to all the volunteers who made the event successful. A delicious dinner concluded the meeting.

The G. M. Syed Memorial Committee is a Houston, TX-based educational group organized to promote G. M. Syed's message of non-violence, democracy, secularism, and the right to self-determination for Sindhis and other oppressed nations within the international community. For more information, visit <http://www.gmsyed.org>.

The World Sindhi Congress (WSC) is one of the most prominent human rights advocacy organizations for Sindh and Sindhis. The main objective of WSC is to create a better understanding among the international community about the persecuted status of Sindhis in Pakistan and about the Sindhi people's struggles for their human rights, including the right to self-determination. WSC is a registered company in England and Wales, and Louisiana, USA, organized to carry out non-profit activities only. For more information, visit <http://www.worldsindhicongress.org>