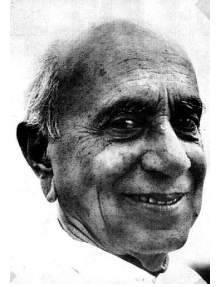


G M Syed Memorial Committee

1717 Briar Lane, # 410
Wharton, TX 77488 USA

Phone: 979-543-9405
Fax: 866-366-9603
Email: info@gmsyed.org
Website: <http://gmsyed.org>

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: A R KAKEPOTO
Email: info@gmsyed.org
Phone: +1-818-917-6910

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

Condemned the religious intolerance and human rights violations in Pakistan

HOUSTON, TX, USA. Several hundreds of Sindhi-Americans gathered in Houston on Saturday, January 15, 2011 to commemorate the 107th 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.

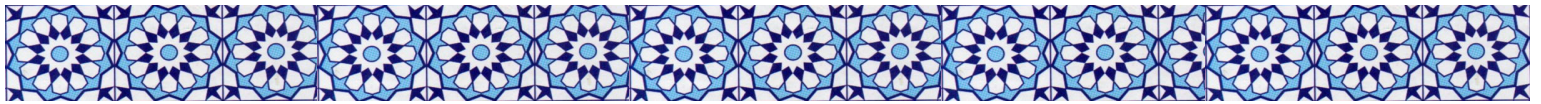
Sindh is home to the ancient Indus Valley civilization and is now a province in Pakistan. A vibrant Sindhi-American community numbering in the tens of thousands lives in various U.S. cities. More than 30 million Sindhis live in Sindh today. Sindhis are supportive of democracy and secularism and have been marginalized by Pakistan's military establishment and its Islamist ideology.

Dr. Hidayat Bhutto, Chairman of World Sindhi Congress and Dr Zia Shah of G. M. Syed Memorial Committee presided over the event. Several scholars and community leaders spoke at the event. An estimated 350 delegates from different parts of Texas, USA came to attend this event.

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.

Mr. Abdul Haq Chang, a Fulbright Doctoral Candidate from the University of Texas at Austin said, "Syed'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."

Dr. Snehal Shingavi, the Assistant Professor at the Department of English and in South Asian Institute at the University of Texas at Austin praised Syed's brave and prominent role in highlighting the rise of Islamism in Pakistan and his advocacy for the separation of state and religion and rights of nations in Pakistan.



Mr. Malik Baloch , the presiding council member of the pro-independence American Friends of Balochistan, condemned the Pakistan military atrocities in Balochistan. Mr Baloch said, “Mr G M Syed remains a great inspiration to Baloch struggle for freedom.”

Dr. Valeed Shaikh, President of Sindhi Association of North America emphasized the need of unity amongst Sindhis.

Dr Yvette Rosser, a research scholar from Autsin also said Syed message of non-violence and peace is much more pertinent today in Pakistan and all over the world.

Ms Noonnisa Ghanghro, Vice President of Sindhi Association of North America presented her field research on Gender and Development in the ‘Kacho’ region of Sindh.

Albert L Chang, Deputy Regional Director for Senator K Bailey Hutchison of Texas, came to thank the Sindhi community of Houston for their civic participation. He pointed that one of the most important part of American democracy is a citizen’s right to petition to US government. He said Sindhi-American can petition for their legitimate concerns.

Dr. Hidayat Bhutto, the Chairman of World Sindhi Congress who travelled from UK to attend this event said that this annual event is organized to create a global awareness about the plight of Sindh and Sindhis around the world. "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. Bhutto.

Syed Zia Shah is the Executive Director of G M Syed Memorial Committee thanked all the delegates and announced the new Executive body of G M Syed Memorial Committee. The new body includes Mr Abdul Rehman Kakepoto (President), Dr. Yvette Rosser (Vice President), Mansoor Samoo (Secretary), Zubair Bhambro (Secretary), and Bashir Shahani (Treasurer).

During this event, G M Syed Memorial Award for 2010 was also announced. Mr. Usman Memon (aka Naz Sanai) of Sann, Sindh was conferred with the prestigious 'G. M. Syed Memorial Awards 2010' in recognition of his contributions in *promoting the message of Syed through his writings and publications*. This award is jointly sponsored by the World Sindhi Congress and the G. M. Syed Memorial Committee.

An auction of Sindhi handicrafts and textile was arranged to support the flood relief work in Sindh. Through the generous participation of the community, approx \$1340 were raised.

Mr Farhan Kaghzi, the Organizer of WSC (USA) presented the gifts to all speakers and awarded appreciation certificates for the volunteers and other various active community members for their services to the community.

The proceedings of the event were conducted by Mr Sikandar Baloch.

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

A Sindhi Sufi music session followed the dinner and speeches. A famous Sindhi singer Mr. Sunny Dewan performed numerous famous Sindhi Kalams. A few local talented community members also presented dance and singing performances.



Prominent community members who attended the event including: Sarfarz Abbassi, Aziz Narejo, Imdad Seehar, Zeb Agha, Abdul Hussain Narejo, Jamil Daudi, Shabir Jatoi, Asif Shah, Abhiman, Maryam Shah, Teerthdas K, M Dahri, Raees Patoli, Mumtaz Memon, Malik Dino Shaikh, Akhter Shah, Umed Ali Laghari, Amber Laghari, Sabir Jatoi, Mazhar Jatoi, Qasim Jatoi, Manzoor Shah, Ashfaq Seehar, Khan Thebo, Tashfeen Brohi, G M Morai, Bhurgri, Mazhar Khowja, Nizamani, Bachal Kalhor, Nizam Jatoi, and Khushak Kalani.

The meeting concluded that the Pakistani government has been systematically violating the human rights of the secular-minded people of Sindh and Balochistan. 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. Delegates asked the international community to do more for the relief and rehabilitation of flood victims in Sindh and Pakistan.

***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>*