



SANGAT

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Elections in Pakistan: Will they lead to democracy?



Some of the players in elections: l to r: Benazir Bhutto, Raja Zafarul Haq, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, Mohammad Amin Fahim, MMA leaders and Musharraf

After a dark rule of almost three years, the present military regime in Pakistan has called for elections in the country to ostensibly satisfy a requirement by the Supreme Court in Zafar Ali Shah case. Notwithstanding the elections, a new Legal Framework Order has been promulgated that amends the constitution of the country 29 times in one go. Formation of a so-called National Security Council has also been announced. All this to continue armed forces' intervention in the civilian affairs and to perpetuate the dictatorial rule of General Pervez Musharraf, who has already got himself 'elected' in a sham referendum. Who cares if there is no mention of such a referendum in the constitution and when it is held, less than 5% of the registered voters take part in it despite mobilization of all the government resources? Who cares if removal of an elected government is considered high treason in the constitution?

All indications point towards heavily rigged elections as favored politicians are being nurtured and leaders of the two most popular parties are thrown out of the electoral process. The government is making all out efforts to

get acceptable politicians elected to install them in the federal and provincial seats of power. Many political parties have accused the government of forming 'Election Cells' in the Federal and the provincial capitals to achieve 'positive' results. Does any body remember ISI-IJI connection?

These government efforts have seen a great setback as two popular parties, Pakistan Peoples Party and Pakistan Muslim League (N) have shown signs of an emerging co-operation. Some other political parties/alliances, such as Muttahida Majlis-e- Amal and Awami National Party are also seen as having shunned the government. It looks as major political parties/groups are joining hands to thwart the government machinations. This creates a big headache for the Establishment and gives life to the rumor factories that churn out stories by the heap, spreading stories that the elections may be postponed at the eleventh hour. This may also be a government ploy to create uncertainty about elections so the campaign doesn't get much steam and get out of hand of the authorities.

This also points to a possible major conflict in the country. As political forces

don't see any chance to return to a genuine democratic rule, they may step up pressure on the vulnerable government, which has already isolated itself from the masses with its dictatorial and pro-west, pro-American policies. The armed forces have already lost their proxy war in Afghanistan as Taliban, propped up by Pakistani super intelligence agency, ISI, were bombed out of the power. The long boots are now under heavy USA and international pressure to halt intervention in Kashmir, the other major proxy war they have been fighting. They also saw a major debacle in Kargil. Now is the time for them to lose their war on the people of Pakistan, the only war that they have been winning continuously, time after time. Most of the political forces are seen gearing up towards a major showdown with the dictatorial regime in near future. It is sad but Pakistani society is moving fast towards a great collision between the armed forces and the civilians. It surely will not bode well for any body bringing in huge miseries for every body. All because generals want to cling to power at any cost even if the cost is the destruction of the country.

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Musharraf amendments:

Epitaph to Constitution and the Federation

Despite strong opposition from almost all the political parties and leaders of the public opinion, except of course a few opportunists, the military dictator, with one stroke of a pen, has amended the 'Constitution' of Pakistan, not one, two or three but 29 times in just one go! These amendments have fatally wounded the constitution and rendered it anything else but a document that can hold together a republic. It has effectively killed the federation.

It also shows how easy it is for a military dictator to molest a nation and mutilate its constitution. Pakistan truly is an example of a country wronged by none other than the ones who were supposed to safeguard it from all dangers.

It is now up to the people of Pakistan to stand up to the junta and throw it out pronto, for ever, lest it brings a catastrophe to the country even more devastating than the events of 1971.

The situation can only be saved if:

-Country gets rid of the armed forces intervention in the civilian affairs forever;

-Army is made subservient to the civilian rule;

-ISI and other agencies interfering in the civil society are disbanded;

-Expenditure on military is drastically cut and it is truly made a federal army, representing all the provinces, not just one or two provinces. People from all the provinces are given equal representation in all the ranks of the army;

-Finances thus saved should be spent on education, health and other social sectors;

-Peoples of all the provinces are given equal share in all the employment, economic and other opportunities;

-Concurrent list is done away with and provinces are given complete autonomy and are able to make laws for their good; Senate is made more powerful;

-Democracy is allowed and encouraged to work; and

-Independent judiciary and press freedoms are guaranteed. (A.N.)

The views expressed herein are not necessarily those of SANA.

SANA Elections

This is a year of elections for SANA too. As the present leadership of the Sindhi Association of North America, SANA, nears the end of its two-year term, elections have been announced to elect new office bearers, central executive council and members of the regional committees.

Mr. Zafar Agha of Houston, TX has been appointed Election Commissioner. He has announced the election schedule and has invited the nomination papers. The list of paid SANA members has already been published on sanalist by the Treasurer, SANA, Dr. Shoukat Ansari. Only paid members are entitled to participate in the election. The new executive council will be effective from 2nd January 2003 till 31st December 2004.

The election schedule, as announced by the Election Commissioner, is as follows:

- Last Date for mailing nomination papers:

September 16, 2002
(previously announced date September 15 is changed as it is Sunday)

- Election Commission to forward list of eligible voters to contesting candidates: October 21, 2002
- Distribution of election ballots to the voters (eligible members) November 07, 2002
- Last day of receiving ballots at Election Commission from voters December 10, 2002

Announcement of results by Election Commission: 15 December 2002

In a statement the Election Commissioner says: "Though it is my intention to make this election process simple, unbiased, and interesting for SANA members, the success of SANA to meet the expectations of its members simply lies in hands of its own members. So far SANA has played a significant role in keeping Sindhis of North America together and on one platform. In order to maintain and enhance this process we have to volunteer some of our time to work for our own organization. Please come forward to volunteer yourself for SANA and elect the ones that can revive the interest and enthusiasm that is must for the survival and success of SANA as our own organization.

18th SANA Convention in Cherry Hill, NJ

Sindhi Association of North America, SANA, held its 18th annual convention in Cherry Hill, NJ, July 4-7 this year. Hundreds of Sindhis from USA, Canada and other countries attended the convention.

Main events this year included the general body meeting, guest speakers session, medical seminar, adabi session, business forum meeting, youth related

functions, an art and culture exhibition, meeting of the minds session, an excellent presentation by an American anthropologist, Dr. Louis Flam on his research and excavations work at Ghazi Shah in Sindh, annual banquet and two nights of enthralling Sindhi music.

Guest speakers this year included: Dr. A. N. G Abbasi (former Irrigation Minister of Sindh), Dr. Hafeez Shaikh (current Finance Minister of Sindh), Dr. Louis Flam (an American anthropologist of Indus Civilization), and other intellectuals, academicians, specialists, writers and scientists.

The reports on the convention by Mr. Khalid Hashmani and Mr. Nadeem Jamali are respectively presented here:

Cherry Hill, NJ, July 4-7, 2002: The town of Cherry Hill and its favorite Hilton Hotel suddenly became cheerful with the arrival of hundreds of Sindhis. The aroma of Sindhiat was everywhere and Sindhi language appeared to have become the main language of the Hilton hotel and nearby restaurants. The organizers had done such a great job that the 18th SANA Annual Convention will be remembered as one of the great conventions.

The three-day conference started on Thursday, July 4 and ended on Sunday, July 7, 2002. It was attended by more than 325 guests coming from many states of USA, Canada, and other countries. The keynote speakers and presenters included Dr. A. N. G Abbasi (former Irrigation Minister of Sindh), Dr. Hafeez Shaikh (current Finance Minister of Sindh), Dr. Louis Flam (an American anthropologist of Indus Civilization), and other intellectuals, academicians, specialists, writers and scientists.

Each adult delegate was required to register. The registration fee of \$ 60 (\$ 50 if booked in advance) covered three meals and entry to the two "music and songs" shows on Friday and Saturday. The daily breakfasts came with the hotel room. The day-by-day proceedings of the conference are summarized below.

Thursday, July 4

The delegates started arriving early in the day. The main highlights of the day were informal gatherings (called Sindhi katchahries) among old and new friends. The economic plight of Sindhis, adverse impact of Thal Canal and what Sindhis should do to alleviate these man-made disasters were some of the topics discussed in these informal chit-chats. The only formal segment of Thursday evening consisted of the meetings of the Convention Organizing Committee and the Executive Council members.

Friday, July 5

SANA Medical Seminar (9:30 am – 12 noon)

The "SANA Medical Seminar" originally scheduled to start at 9:00 am actually began late by about 30 minutes to allow delegates to finish their breakfasts. Dr. Iqbal Jafri moderated the session.

Dr. Ashfaq Turk's paper was on the topic of "Cardiology – How to Prevent Heart Attack". This presentation was particularly popular with Sindhi senior citizens.

Dr. Iqbal Jafri spoke on "Chronic Plain Management" that briefed audience on new breakthroughs in medicine for controlling acute pain.

Dr. Aijaz Turk made a presentation on some of the common gastro-enterology diseases. The last panelist was Dr. Shehla Siddiqui, who read a paper on "Neonatology – Screening Children". Several pharmaceutical companies (Pharmacia, Merick, Pfizer and Purdue) sponsored the seminar.

Sindhi Exhibit (All Day)

Concurrent to the Medical Seminar, there was a Sindhi Exhibit in an adjacent hall. The exhibit included Sindhi dresses and other symbols of Sindhi culture and heritage.

Jumai-ji Nimaz (1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.)

For Muslim delegates, the organizers had made an arrangement for JUMAI-JI NIMAZ. Dr. Shoukat Ansari led the

prayer and gave an inspiring "Khutba". The main theme of his Sindhi Khutba was that in order to be a good Muslim, a person must first become a good human being. He said, "A true Muslim must shun bigotry and all forms of discrimination against all persons whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims".

General Body Session (3:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.)

The General Body Meeting started after lunch. It was well attended. The SANA President, Sani Panhwar presided over the meeting. First, the SANA Executive Council members presented their reports.

Mr. Mohammad Ali Mahar, General Secretary, SANA, mentioned several accomplishments of SANA during last year, including Alan Fakir Fund, "Sobho Gianchandani's Son" Fund, Thar Earth Quake Fund, Sindhi Language Day, and SANA Directory. His inspiring presentation spoke of the resolve of SANA members and other Sindhis to do their best to safeguard the rights of Sindh and Sindhis.

Mr. Zia Memon, Vice President, spoke of the difficulties that the Convention Organizing Committee faced in securing hotel arrangements in New York in the aftermath of 9/11 terrorist attack. He hoped that the mainstream American society would overcome all forms of discrimination against fellow citizens to ensure that all citizens continue to enjoy equal rights.

Dr. Badar Shaikh, Regional Secretary of Eastern region, briefed about various SANA activities that were organized in the region including two Sindhi cultural evenings in Philadelphia and Washington DC areas, and a picnic in New Jersey/New York area.

Dr. Shoukat Ansari presented Treasurer's report. He stated that the financial health of SANA was not as strong as he may have left the impression in the last General Body meeting. After paying all expenses for last year's convention, SANA has about 35,000 in assets. Of this, \$ 30,000 are in

the Life Membership Reserve Fund. As SANA constitution requires that all Life Membership fees be kept aside for permanent office, this reserve fund cannot be used for any other purposes. According to him the root cause for this weak financial position is that many members have not paid their membership dues. The dues of only about 108 members including Life Members have been paid so far for this year.

The president of SANA was the last presenter from EC to give his report. He highlighted various projects. Among these, one project that he took personal pride was the massive upgrading of SANA Web site (www.sanalist.org). All SANA newsletters and other publications since its inception have been scanned and are now available on this site. He urged the audience to visit this site at their earliest convenience, as they too will feel as proud as he was of the site. He also spoke of SANA's discussion with government about 60 schools in Sindh's rural area that although constructed are not operational due to lack of funding. He said SANA plans to sponsor day to day running budget of at least one of these schools. He thanked the local Organizing Committee for their hard work and financial donations that resulted in the superb convention arrangements.

After the Executive Council reports, a lively and candid Question-Question (Q&A) session followed. There was both praise and criticism. The praises included gratitude of members to EC for volunteering their time and undertaking an impressive array of social and charitable projects. The criticism was mostly on inadequacy of lobbying work by SANA on behalf of Sindhis. Another issue that surfaced was the lack of response from the moderator of sanalist (the Internet groups list of SANA) to requests of SANA members to add new members. One item that attracted consensus was to approach those North American Sindhis, who once very active in SANA, are keeping away due to differences that flared up a few years ago. The General Body nominated Khalid Hashmani to help initiate a

dialogue between the key individuals to overcome this divide.

Adabi Session (6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.)

Immediately after the General Body session, the Adabi Session followed. Aziz Narejo moderated the session. Two books were launched at the session. One of them was the "Melody of Clouds", a translation of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai's 'sur Sarang' in Urdu and English by a well-known Sindhi writer, Agha Saleem. Karachi Rotary Club has published the book. Foremost Sindhi intellectual, writer and advocate, Mr. Nooruddin Sarki spoke on the book and poetry of Shah Latif, comparing his work with other great poets.

Another book, titled "Dharti Mata" by Mr. Ishtiaq Ansari was also launched at the session. The book describes the travels by the author to ancient and historically important places of Sindh. These travels helped him explore the similarities of love and respect that a person has for his/her mother and the land of his/her heritage (land).

Jiji Zareena Baloch was invited to read one of her short stories while Dr. Ms Qamar Wahid spoke on literature and present conditions in Sindh. Mr. Mohammad Ali Mahar recited his poetry and Dr. Saghir Shaikh read a page from the book by Kirat Babani, "Kujh Budhayam, Kujh Likayam". The extracts read by him pertained to the struggle of Indian Sindhis in getting Sindhi language approved as one of the national languages of India.

Business Connection Session (7:00 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.)

This was the first time that a session aimed at facilitating business connections among Sindhis was introduced at SANA conventions. At this session, some of the successful Sindhi businesspersons shared their ideas, success stories and lessons-learned points with those who were interested in pursuing business opportunities. Dr. Roshan Shaikh moderated the session and panelists included Mr. Khalid Channa, Mr. Suhail Ansari, Mrs. Saba Ansari, Mr. Iqbal

Tareen, Mr. Sani Panhwar, and Mr. Shaikh. There was a lot of interest from audience in this area and many were keen to discuss more about several business ideas that were mentioned by the panelists. However, because of the pre-scheduled dinner that could not be delayed, the session had to be ended early.

Dinner (8:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.)

The dinner became a hurried affair due to the accumulated delay in the day's activities because of the late start.

An Evening of Sindhi Music and Songs (9:30 p.m. – 12:30 am)

This was the third visit of Jiji Zarina Baloch to SANA convention. This time, she graciously waived her usual fees to entertain North American Sindhi, to whom she calls "my extended family". As usual, she thrilled every one with her wonderful singing that included somber melodies without accompanying instruments and cheerful Sindhi folk songs.

Ustad Mazhar Hussain, a great favorite of North American Sindhis, who recently returned from a trip to Sindh, too gave a beautiful performance.

Saturday, July 6

Guest Speaker's Session (10 am – 1 p.m.)

The day started with guest speaker's session moderated by Mr. Mohammad Ali Mahar.

The first speaker of the day was Dr. Louis Flam, an American professor of Anthropology and a past director of Archaeological and Anthropological Research Center at the Institute of Sindhology, Jamshoro, Sindh. He has a collection of 22,000 photographs of Sindhi archaeological and anthropological items. More about his research on Sindh's ancient cultures will be in a separate posting. He shared several slides about his work in Sindh, particularly from his excavation project at Ghazi Shah in Dadu district. He

talked about the nomadic lifestyles of Sindhi tribes in Khirthar Mountains and how the shortage of water in River Indus was playing havoc with the lives of rural Sindhis. He expressed his disappointment at the lack of interest in preservation of Sindh's heritage. He added that Pakistan itself has no respect for local cultures.

Mr. Inam Shaikh, an award winning Sindhi journalist from Sindh, gave a detailed account of how Sindh has been continually losing its due share of Indus River waters. He said in 1750's, Punjab had only 750,000 acres of cultivated land and Sindh had about one million acres. In 1850's both Punjab and Sindh each had approximately the same amount of cultivable land. Today Punjab cultivable land amounts to almost three times that of Sindh (90 million acres in Punjab versus 34 million acres in Sindh). Tracing the history of Thal Canal, he argued that this proposal has been rejected by all previous commissions in pre-partition days as being injurious to the interests of Sindh. It is ironic that Sindh voted for Pakistan because of its belief that "sovereignty" and "autonomy", the two fundamental principles of the Pakistan concept offered a better alternative to safeguard its resources. He added that Thal canal was being build to benefit a very few influential military generals, political leaders, and local landlords. It will help irrigate between 2 to 2.4 million acres. Sindh will suffer a decline of about 4 million acres in agriculture production because of this project.

Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, the current Finance Minister of Sindh was the next speaker. He has a Ph.D. in economics from Boston University and has held several senior level positions with the World Bank. He said he looked forward to an open and serious discussion so that he can return to Sindh with better ideas and new inspiration. He said "let me start with a question: what is that we (Sindh) don't have?" He quickly added that when it comes to "resources", we have a lot. We have coastal areas for tourism and

marine industries. We have oil (Badin, Sanghar and Dadu), we have gas (Sindhri), and we have 7th largest coal deposits in the world. We grow rice, cotton and wheat, we have great Metropolis of Karachi, and above all we have very hard working people. Then the question arises as to why we are suffering? Every 28 minutes, a Sindhi woman dies during child birth and more than 60% of Sindh's population lives on less than \$ 1 a day. He asked, "What is going on?" He quickly added, one reason is that Sindh is being looted. The other is that the growth rate from 1970 to 1990 had averaged about 6% versus an average of 3 % growth rate that Pakistan has been able achieve since 1990. Throughout this decade Sindh has been mismanaged with corruption and looting without any controls. He mentioned that the daily "meal" bill of last Chief Minister's office was about one Lac of rupees. Each provincial minister had 20-25 cars and jeeps. When he took the office there were outstanding bills of 2 billion rupees pending from 1992. Of which 1.1 billion were for the state expenses. There were 1000 development schemes on paper and not one was complete. If the school buildings were complete, there was no electricity. The records showed that 140 tube wells were installed but when he asked for operational reports on those tube wells, he was informed that only 2 were in working order. The whole campus of Khairpur consisting of several buildings disintegrated before even being occupied. He asked "WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS LOOTING? And HOW TO STOP IT FROM HAPPENING THESE LOOTINGS IN FUTURE?" He urged the audience to look for tangible results and the positive changes that the present government has already brought. He said that they have salvaged and completed 600 previous schemes. The education up to matriculation will be free in the province of Sindh. They have increased primary education budget by 100 %. A stipend of Rs 100 will be paid to each girl who attends a school. He recently organized a trip of officials of World Bank and Asian Development Bank to the delta area of River Indus. For the first time, World Bank will give a loan of 18 billion rupees directly to the province of Sindh, without

any interest. This loan will be spent on Sindh's agriculture and health sectors. From this loan, we will return 2 billion rupees in high-interest loans. One billion will be spent to create an endowment fund that will provide scholarships to any Sindhi who gets admission to Pakistan's 8 top universities. In conclusion, he told the audience that they hold privileged status by virtue of having higher education and secure financial status. The onus is on you to pursue three questions: How to make the government to work for larger population and not just for those who are close to it? How to use the available resources that Sindh already has for the greater good of all Sindhis instead of these being looted for personal good of few people? How to guide Sindhi people to ask "right" questions that draw attention of key decision-makers to the plight of Sindhis instead of alienating them?

Mr. A. N. G. Abbasi (former Irrigation Minister of Sindh) made an eloquent presentation titled "RESTORATION OF SINDH'S PRIMARY RIGHTS OVER RIVER INDUS". His presentation was supported by a set of slides that covered historical perspectives, current issues and possible solutions for restoring Sindh's primary water rights. The first barrage on the 1900-mile Long River Indus was constructed at Sukkur in 1932. At present time, there are 19 barrages and 43 canal systems on the Indus River System. Out of these six barrages are on Indus main. At the time of partition in 1947, about 60 MAF of water from Indus was utilized and about 80 MAF water used to flow into sea. Under the 1960 Indus Water Treaty, the World Bank financed the Indus Basin Works consisting of dams, barrages and link canals to overcome the effects of allocation of Eastern rivers to India. The three storage reservoirs namely Mangla, Tarbella and Chashma were constructed with a total capacity of 15 MAF. In addition 12 link canals were constructed to transfer water from western rivers to eastern rivers. The flows of the three western rivers of Indus River System allocated to Pakistan are highly erratic. It shows a maximum flow of 187 MAF in 1959-60 to a minimum of 97 MAF in

1974-75 with an average flow of about 139 MAF. The average flow of River main is approximately 90 MAF. According to the 1991 Indus Water Accord, 117.35 MAF of water was allocated as follows: Punjab – 55.94 MAF, Sindh – 48.76 MAF, North West Frontier Province – 8.78 MAF, and Balochistan – 3.87 MAF. The accord contained provisions for sharing the shortages and surplus and how much will flow into sea. According to a study carried out by the Water Management and Distribution Committee has revealed that water is not being distributed according to the provisions of the 1991 Accord and the regions located in the lower riparian are suffering. Water is being stored during shortage periods when it is needed in Sindh for early Kharif sowing of crops. The same study states that no water is available for construction of any additional reservoirs or irrigation schemes. Due to continuous increase in water withdrawals, the outflow to sea has reduced considerably that has resulted in the erosion of 1.2 million acres. The quantity of 10 MAF provisionally earmarked for outflow to sea under 1991 Accord has been made available only 33 % of the time. The IUCN considers 10 MAF to be inadequate as outflow to sea and recommends 27 MAF. There is no water in River Indus for Thal canal and its construction would only mean still lesser water for Sindh. The canal will bring economic difficulties to the people of Sindh and will in all likelihood lead to serious political unrest in Sindh.

Sindhi Youth Session 10 am – 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.)

The introduction of Sindhi Youth session was another great addition to the SANA convention programming this year. Mr. Zafar Agha moderated this session. His own presentation was on the topic of "My Home Town in Sindh". It consisted of an interactive discussion about Sindh's cities and towns by talking to youth about their ancestral hometown. The next presentation was titled "History of Sindh" by Dr. Gul Agha and Nadeem

Jamali. As Gul Agha could not attend the convention due to personal reasons, Nadeem made the presentation. The pre-historic period was covered through information on Mohen-jo-daro, Rohri Flint Quarries, and other like sites. This was followed by information on the Hindu and Buddhist dynasties that ruled Sindh. The Arab invasion, Mughal and Pathan onslaughts and English conquest were reviewed. The presenters shared evolution of cultural traditions including music, literature and Sindhi spirit for religious tolerance. In addition to the pictorial visit to shrines of holy saints, beautiful pictures of Sindh's landscape and lifestyle captivated the audience throughout the session. The last segment of the presentation talked about some of the present day prominent Sindhi leaders, academicians and scientists.

In the afternoon session, a Sindhi feature film with English translation was shown.

Evening Presentation/Discussion Segment 3 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.)

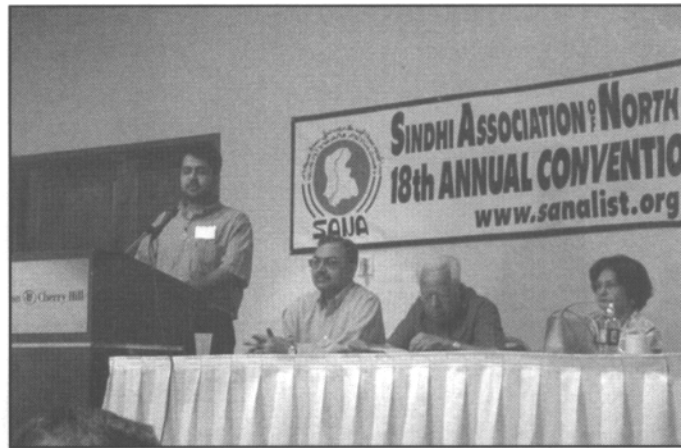
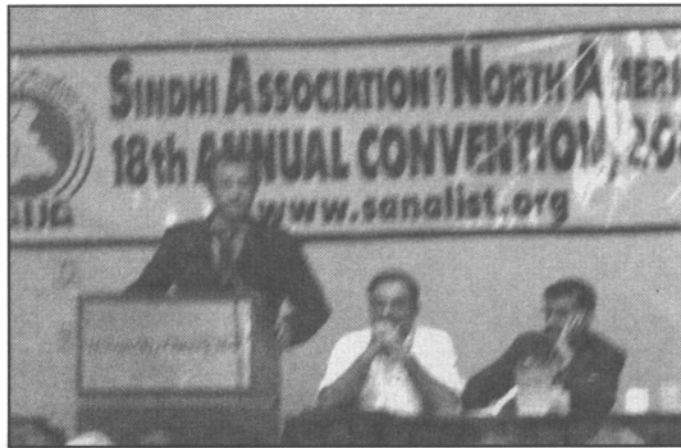
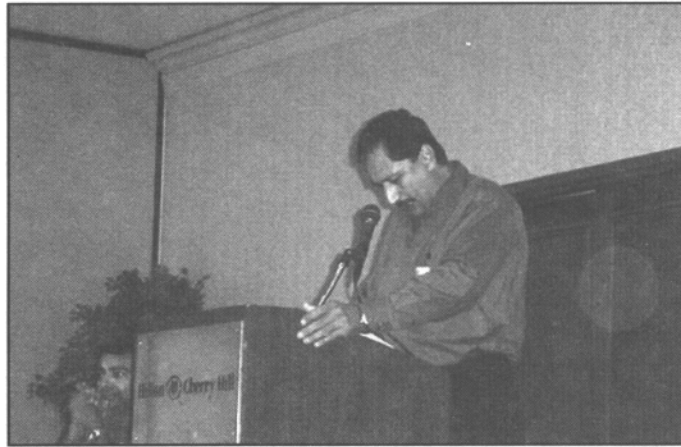
The evening segment consisted of several sessions. The first session involved QUESTION-ANSWER (Q&A) with the guest speakers. Mostly pointed and candid, a majority of questions were directed at Dr. Hafeez Shaikh and Mr. A. N. G. Abbasi. At times, the two gentlemen disagreed with each other on the matters of root causes for water shortage and as to who was responsible. There were some tough questions asked from Dr. Shaikh about the record of the present government. He defended the government and said that they will end the corruption that denies Sindh's population its due share of resources. Mr. Abbasi talked about reasons as to why he resigned as Minister of Irrigation. He emphasized that he did not see any light at the end of tunnel for Sindhis unless the government of the day listened to concerns of Sindhis and acted honestly to alleviate them.

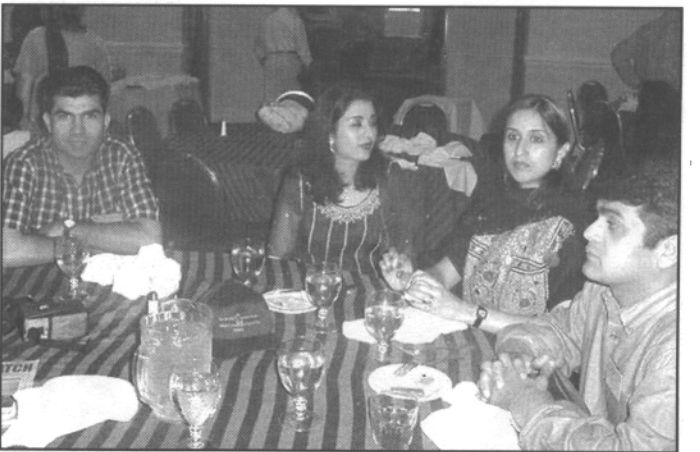
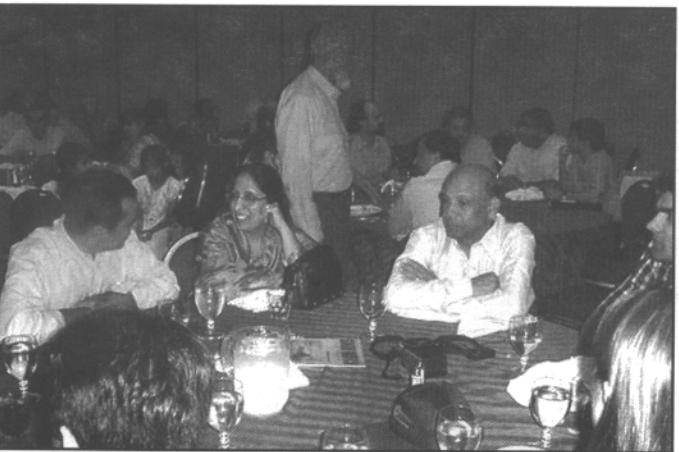
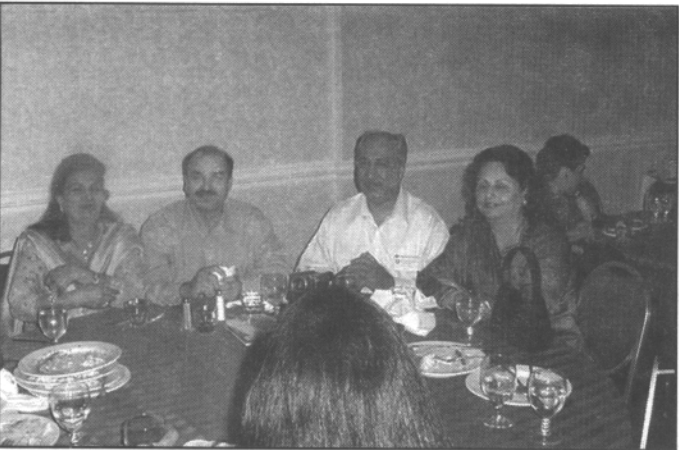
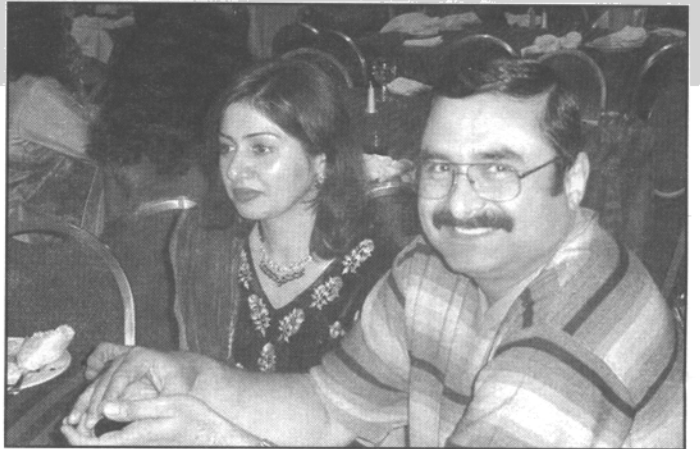
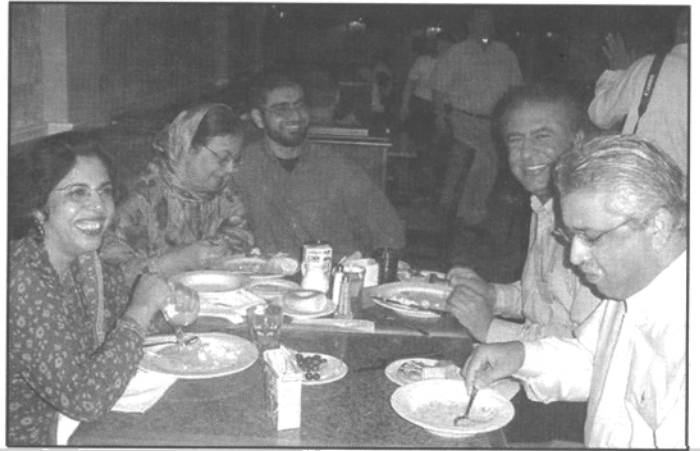
The second session was termed as "SINDH THROUGH CENTURIES" and was moderated by Mr. Nuruddin Saraki. First, Dr. Syed Mir Mohammad Shah talked about education and the role of Information Technology (IT) in reducing

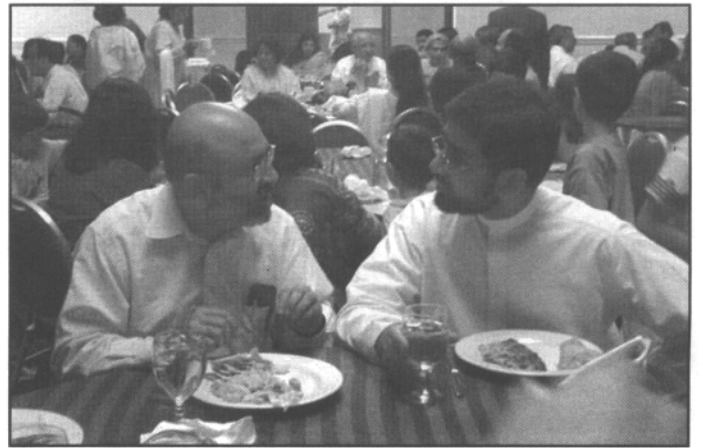
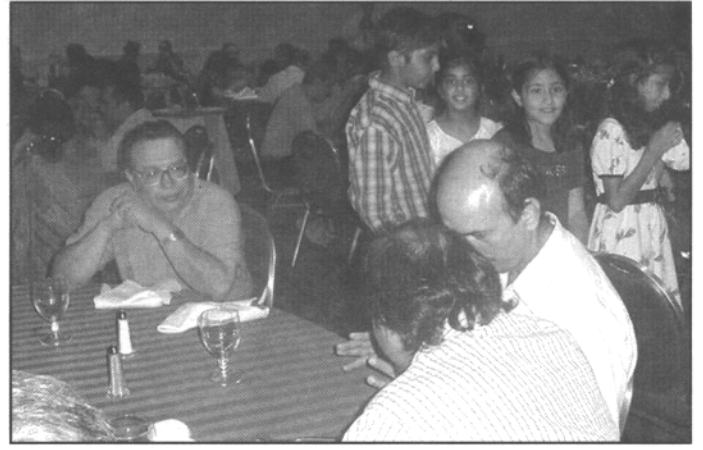
poverty in Sindh. He shared his assessment about the terrible conditions that discourage Sindhis from learning the state-of-art technologies. He made several recommendations on improving education system and improving cooperation between universities and industries in the IT sector. The second presenter was Dr. Louis Flam, who shared his story about how he discovered and carried out the excavation at Ghazi Shah. He revealed that material excavated at this site is 4,000 B. C. (6,000 years ago) old. At the top of the site are remains of Mughal period. The site covers about five (5) acres and is 35 feet high. Buried inside the mound are the remains of people's houses and their culture over the past 6000 years. He added that the Sindh Archaeological project and Ghazi Shah Excavations have received funding to conduct research from Fulbright, Smithsonian, National Science Foundation, American Council of Learned Societies, American Institute of Pakistan Studies, and Research Foundation of the City University of New York. He criticized the recent decision (not abrogated) of Pakistan government to move Head Office of Archeological department from Karachi to Lahore. He said that he feels that instead of relying solely on government's mercy to protect Sindhi heritage, Sindhi philanthropists and organizations such as SANA should take initiatives to protect Sindh's heritage. He advised that instead of individual one-of-kind projects, they should encourage and support institutions such as the Archeology department at the Khairpur University to undertake heritage preservation projects. He suggested that a Sindhi Heritage Foundation under SANA would be a good start for North American Sindhis. Following closing remarks by Mr. Nuruddin Saraki and a Q&A session with Dr. Flam, the audience gave a 2-minute standing ovation to Dr. Louis Flam.

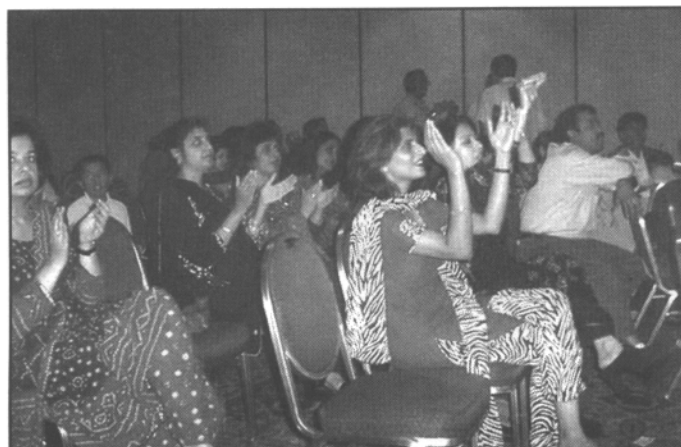
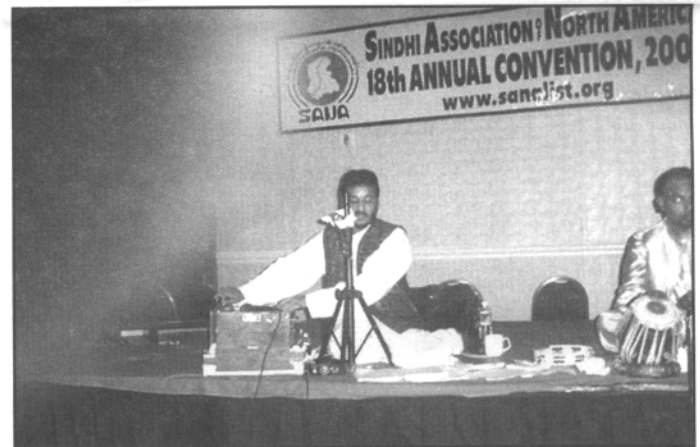
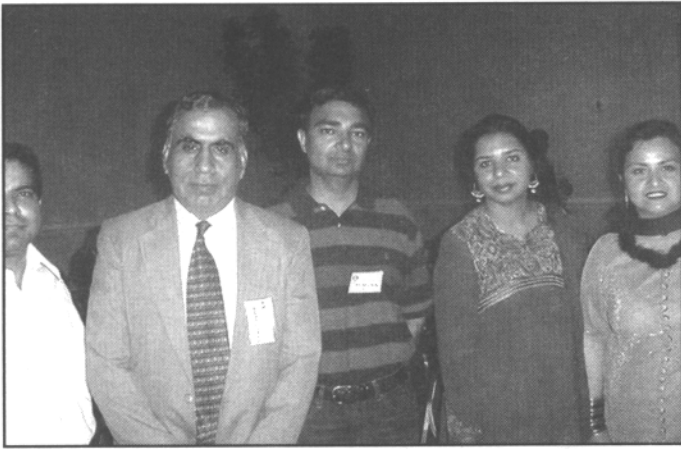
The last session of this segment was titled "DISCUSSION ON SINDHI RIGHTS ". Mr. Khalid Hashmani moderated the session. The theme of the session was "THE ROLE OF North

Were you there? Snaps of the SANA Convention 2002









American SINDHIS IN BETTERMENT OF SINDH". The objective of the session was to review the current situation of economic, cultural, human, and political rights of Sindhis in Sindh and to come up with a program of specific and tangible steps. The session was divided into four sub-topics: "Water Rights of Sindhis", "Alleviating Poverty in Sindh", "Restoration of Democratic Rule in Sindh", and "How to synchronize efforts and aspirations of Sindhis".

First, Dr. Altaf Memon summarized the environmental consequences of the shortage of water in River Indus. This was followed by open discussion that recommended that overseas Sindhis should publicize water issue at international forums. They should write letters to their congress members. Yet another participant said that people throughout Pakistan be encouraged to conserve water.

Mr. Iqbal Tareen summarized the situation regarding growing poverty in Sindh and suggested that overseas Sindhis should pursue large donor agencies for help and to improve education. Many members of audience participated in the follow-up discussion. The suggestions included adopting schools using the model of US-based Pakistani organization called Pakistan Human Development Foundation; sponsoring village education programs. A participant said former Presidents Carter and Clinton be approached to initiate and support poverty alleviation projects in Sindh. It was felt that such efforts would draw world's attention to the plight of Sindhis. On the point of creating a "Sindhi Ghariban-ji Bank", some participants expressed concern that in the past some Sindh-organizations started such projects to provide low cost loans in Sindh's rural area. Many North American Sindhis provided financial support but unfortunately all such initiatives did not go anywhere and no progress was ever reported on those initiatives. No one knows what happened to those share purchases and donations.

Mr. Aziz Narejo introduced the third topic about the restoration of democratic rule in Pakistan. This was immediately followed up by introduction on the fourth sub-topic by Dr. Saghir Shaikh on the synchronization of activities by various overseas Sindhi organizations.

In the follow-up open discussion, suggestions were made to create a medical web site to help Sindhis in health related issues. A member of audience emphasized that literacy rate need to be improved if democracy is to thrive in Pakistan. Suggestions to prioritize Sindh's problem through a committee deliberation, working in a focused manner on a selected sub-set of projects were another suggestion that attracted interest. Finally audience were urged to write letter to the members of Congress to show their support to Senator Torecile's resolution on the restoration of democracy in Pakistan that he plans to introduce in Congress soon. A crowd of more than 50 delegates were very interested to continue the discussion, the session had to be ended as dinner could not be held up.

Dinner and musical show (8 p.m. - 1 am)

The dinner consisted of a 6-course Sindhi cuisine that was loved by every one. The SANA Executive Council expressed gratitude to the members of the Convention Organizing Committee and presented them wards (Sajjad Siddiqui, Falaksher Ahmed, Kohsher Ahmed, Zia Memon, Nadeem Junejo, Naveed Soomro, Noor Rajpar, Mrs. Koonj and her husband Atif, Saeeda and Ali Abro, Khalid Channa, and Imtiaz Memon). As was the case Friday night, both Jiji Zarina Baloch and Ustad Mazhar Hussain once again thrilled attendees with their beautiful renderings from Latif, Ayaz, Ustad Bukhari and other Sindhi poets. In keeping with the annual tradition, Dr. Aijaz Turk did a great job in inspiring the crowd to make generous donations. A sum of \$ 20,000 was pledged during the session.

Sunday, July 7 (8 am - 11am)

This breakfast gathering on the last day of convention was like a "GOODBYE PARTY". Most did not believe that three

days had gone by so fast. Although most were sad, many were already talking about the next year's convention in San Diego.

The SANA Conventions are a modern version of Sindhi 'mella' (fairs), where people come to meet and make friends; families and individuals come to share their dreams. Generally no one goes disappointed in all areas. True, like anything else, there is always room to improve and SANA Members are always eager in their resolve to still do better next year.

Report by Mr. Nadeem Jamali

I decided to attend this year's SANA convention pretty late this year. Dr. Agha had been asked to make a presentation on Sindh's history for the youth, and considering his hectic summer travel schedule, we thought it might be a good idea for me to plan on being there just in case he can't make it. Good thing I did:

My flight got there on Friday afternoon. The convention had formally begun the previous evening. The 20-minute shuttle drive from the airport to the hotel was not particularly scenic. I arrived at the hotel about the same time as some friends from Washington did. None had eaten lunch, so we headed out together. We found a nice - though a little pricey - Italian restaurant nearby. By the time we returned, the general body meeting was coming to an end and the Adabi Session was about to start. The session included a very interesting talk by a prominent author about his travels to holy places in Sindh, particularly Hinglaj Mata, and his observations about why the often-amorphous stone structures are worshipped as mothers. After the nice literary session, there was dinner followed by music. I was happy to see Mr. A N G Abbasi in the audience; he has been at the forefront of the Sindhi Water Rights movement. Jiji Zarina sang some beautiful songs without any accompanying instruments. Ustad Mazhar Hussain sang afterwards.

Around midnight I called it a day. I needed to give some final touches to my 2-3 hours talk to the youth.

I woke up around 7am, finished the talk and headed down for breakfast. We had postponed the youth session by about half-hour to give them a chance to have breakfast comfortably. We expected to begin another half-hour late at about 10. We started at 10. Saiin Zafar Agha had already had some good sessions with the youth telling them about Sindhi culture. There was one session in which the youth identified their ancestral hometowns and talked about them. My session was intended to put things in a historical context. We began with pre-history (Mohen-jodaro, Rohri Flint Quarries, etc.), went through Hindu and Buddhist empires, the Arab invasion, followed by native rules interrupted by foreign invasions. We talked about evolution of cultural traditions including music, literature and religious thought, and Sindh's tradition of tolerance. We discussed the holy people of Sindh and their contributions. We looked at the beautiful shrines lovingly made by Sindhis to remember their saints and gods, from Bhit Shah to Sadh Belo. We looked at Sindhi architecture and arts and crafts. We examined similarities between various groups of Sindhis who make up the Sindhi Diaspora, beginning with the Gypsies and ending with the victims of political and economic oppression leaving Sindh today.

We saw pictures of the Sindhi landscape: the beaches of Karachi, the river Indus and the many towns it flows through, the lakes, the sand dunes of Thar, and the Khirthar mountain range. We saw pictures depicting lifestyles of various Sindhi communities, as well as the wide variety of birds, mammals and reptiles that call Sindh their home. Towards the end, we looked at where Sindh and Sindhis are today. I introduced our youth to some prominent Sindhi personalities around the world, from political leaders to prominent scientists and popular icons. We looked at the major Sindhi

struggles for self-determination through the last century: separation from Bombay presidency, anti-One Unit struggle, struggle for Sindhi language and language riots, MRD and the on-going movement for Sindh's water rights. We talked about the various threats faced by Sindh and Sindhis today. We saw a map of the Indus and how various dams have been built on the river as well as its tributaries upstream to divert Sindh's water elsewhere. We ended the session with a brief discussion about the challenges of diasporic existence, and the importance of learning lessons from others who have gone through similar experiences before us, most notably the Hindu Sindhis.

This session was the most important part of the SANA convention for me this time around. Over the years, I have come to see the SANA convention as the Sindhi equivalent of American Super Bowl. It tends to be an event centered around Sindhi men and their obsession with political chitchat. Despite all claims to seriousness, the event seems to be purely for entertainment purposes, and little if anything meaningful ever comes out of it. Each day ends with small groups getting together to have a few too many drinks or to gamble. Women and children are left to fend for themselves. That there was a serious effort made this year to organize special events for the youth was an encouraging sign.

By the time I finished my session, it was lunchtime. I should mention another thing that made this convention unique: a good variety of vegetarian dishes at each meal.

I heard the youth saw a Sindhi film after lunch.

On the adult side, there were talks in the morning by invited guests, including very informative presentations on Sindh's water crisis and recent archeological finds. These were followed by a questions and answers session after lunch. Here we saw a Sindh government minister playing the establishment's tune supported by meaningless facts and figures, which received occasional claps from the few sycophants and the

unusually naive. Veteran engineer, Mr. Abbasi offered straight talk, which was much better, received. The American archeologist made a more detailed presentation after the Q/A session in which he alluded to a malicious conspiracy by some Punjabi academicians to have the Indus Civilization renamed as Harappa Civilization.

There was a parallel session going on for women, but it wasn't clear to me what it was. Things were a bit chaotic after lunch.

Finally it was time for the annual banquet. The vegetarian food was great, though I heard some complaints from the meat eaters. Jiji Zarina started the musical program with some characteristically powerful performance. After the usual fundraiser accompanied with the ever so distasteful harassment of attendees, Ustad Mazhar Hussain made another excellent performance that was a perfect end to the convention. I declined a gracious invitation to have some drinks and headed to my room. Nothing particularly unpleasant had happened at this SANA convention and I didn't want to take any risks.

Overall, it was a good opportunity to meet old friends and listen to some good music. If I'm not mistaken, the next SANA convention will be in San Diego.

Address by SANA G.S.

President SANA, honorable guests, and fellow Sindhis

On behalf of the Executive Council of Sindhi Association of North America, I welcome you all at our 18th Annual Convention.

I would like to begin this speech by expressing SANA's profound grief at the incidents of extreme terrorism and inhumanity that started on 9/11 and are still going on around the world and especially in our motherland, Sindh. We also want to express our solidarity with and share the anguish of families of the victims of terrorism. May I propose one-

minute silence in the memory of those innocent people who lost their lives for no sin of theirs.

Fellow Sindhis,

During the 18 years that SANA has been in existence, how much it has been able to live up to the expectations of the founding fathers of SANA is something that needs to be judged by everyone who has been associated with the association.

Honestly speaking, despite some intra-association differences and minor setbacks, the performance of the organization has been something to be proud of. Even though there is always a room for improvement, in my humble opinion, SANA has done, or at least tried to do, all that was achievable under the circumstances SANA has been operating.

People ask what SANA has done so far. Some even go to the extent of asking me what SANA has done for them. In return, I ask my friends what is it that they think SANA has failed to do for them. And my next question to those friends has always been: what has your part been in helping SANA achieve that you think SANA should have achieved but failed to achieve?

What have SANA's achievements been? Well, the biggest of SANA's achievements is that we are here at Cherry Hill, NJ, today, as we were together at Chicago, last year, or, at St. Louis a year before, thousands of miles away from home to enjoy our common, language, heritage and culture. Apart from other tasks that SANA has been undertaking from time to time, does anyone consider it a mean achievement that SANA brings together Sindhis from every corner of North America under one roof every year for the last 18 years?

In judging SANA's performance, we must realize that SANA is not the Rockefeller Foundation. SANA has limited resources. Only source of income for SANA is what its members voluntarily donate to it. Believe me, we

want to do a lot. We want to do all that any one sitting in an 'Autaq' in Sindh or in a basement in Bronx expects us to do for him and even more. But we are in the phase of making. To do everything that we want to do may not seem possible now but that's our goal and towards that end we are moving.

I know that not all dreams come true but to struggle to realize our dreams is what we live for. We are determined to change our destiny and that's what counts. What is important is that we are determined to leave a better future. If not for us then for our children. And, if not for our children, then for our children's children.

Here are some of the current Executive Council's achievements during last 1½ years of its tenure:

- Allan Fakeer Fund
- Earthquake Fund
- Sobho Gianchandani Fund
- PAKDAC
- Sindhi Encyclopedia
- Adopt-A-School
- New Web site
- Two Annual Conventions
- SANA Directory
- SANA Headquarters
- Sindhi Language Day

May you all have very bright present and even brighter future. May Sindh live long and prosper.

New Dams, Canals: Piracy of Sindh water

Resolutions passed at the Convention

Sindhi Association of North America (SANA) held its General Body meeting during its 18th Annual Convention at Cherry Hill, New Jersey on July 5, 2002. Hundreds of families traveled from various parts of North America, Europe, Pacific Rim and Asia to join this traditional event. Following resolutions were passed with unanimous consent of Executive Council:

1. SANA declared building of dams and new canals a piracy of Sindh's primary

right over River Indus. SANA expressed its outrage over the repeated breaches of covenant that binds various provinces of Pakistan together. SANA warned that by denying Sindh its due share in Pakistan's natural and economic resources, it would cause painful economic, social, and psychological calamities for the common man in Sindh. Thus giving way to an irreversible loss of faith in the State of Pakistan.

2. SANA urges government of Pakistan to abide by Sindh-Punjab Indus water agreement of 1945 and reimburse the province of Sindh for economic damage caused by its violations. SANA pledged to pursue United Nations' agencies to appoint a permanent water commission to monitor inter-provincial water distribution and mitigate issues arising from the obstruction of free flow of River Indus by government of Punjab.

3. Having no representation in Pakistan armed forces or bureaucracy, SANA declared Sindh's strong vested interest in restoration of true democracy in Pakistan. SANA called upon the Election Commission, international community, the superior judiciary, the human rights groups, intellectuals and the free press to take note of the interference by military officials and agencies to raise their voice against pre-election rigging. SANA reminded the world community of the massive rigging in the so called referendum and appealed former US President Jimmy Carter to lead and establish a committee to monitor and assure the fairness and transparency of upcoming elections in Pakistan.

4. SANA expressed its concern over the usurpation of economic and political rights of small provinces and called for a maximum and meaningful autonomy for the federating units of the country in accordance with the spirit of 1940 Pakistan Resolution. SANA also demanded that the Sindh province

be granted its rightful ownership over its natural and economic resources. SANA reminded Pakistan government of a universal and civil practice where the ownership of state or provincial sales tax is given to the source states or provinces. SANA demands Sindh province should be granted an unconditional power to levy, collect and allocate its entire provincial sales tax as mandated by its national interest.

SANA also urged the United Nations to take note of 'the selective, perverted and politically motivated process of accountability' and 'ask the military junta to stop witch-hunt of the credible opposition in the name of accountability'. SANA warned that isolating and excluding progressive and democratic forces, Islamabad was engaged in strengthening forces of hate and bigotry in the country. SANA expressed its outrage over the state of human rights of women, children, religious and ethnic minorities in Pakistan. SANA demanded that the international community and free world must concentrate on institution building in Pakistan thus assuring a lasting peace and progress in the region.

SANA demanded for re-alignment of priorities in Pakistani governance. The real cause behind the poor law & order situation was lack of social justice and equal economic opportunities for various population segments. The rising costs of living, growing rural-urban gap, lack of skill development programs has put the population under unbearable stress. Massive unemployment and poverty has taken toll on rural sectors especially vast population living in rural Sindh. SANA demands aggressive allocation of resources, redirection of investments into rural areas, employment creation programs in private sector and investing into people and skill-centered education,

communications infrastructure, and rural electrification.

7. SANA expressed its outrage at the transfer of Sindh's archeological artifacts to other provinces. Such acts speak of very insecure governing minds with little or no respect for rightful ownership of others assets. Pakistan government's decision to shift these artifacts to Lahore or Islamabad is seen as a shameful act of theft under the umbrella of legal pretext. SANA demands an immediate reversal of this decision.

Community News

Picnic in Piscataway, NJ

It was so wonderful to see you all at the PICNIC. Lot of families came from different places around New Jersey as well as New York. PA folks were excused this time because they already have some other commitments locally.

Even though we had some light showers, it didn't diminish the spirits. We played two matches cricket one after another with new cricket bats brought by Falaksher from Pakistan this summer.

Food was very delicious and well prepared by individuals and families. Everyone enjoyed specially the marinated BBQ Chicken Tikka prepared by Khalid Channa and his younger brother.

Thanks again for joining us and sharing your thoughts and stories about Pakistan (who recently visited Pakistan this summer).

Give you some HEADS UP: there will be EID MILAN PARTY at a local restaurant in Edison, New Jersey or around. Information on this will be posted later

Posted by Mr. Kohsher Ahmed

Picnic in Houston, TX

Annual picnic was held at Bear Creek Park, in Houston, TX on 8th of September. A large number of Sindhis,

individuals, families, young and old braved the pouring rain and the best of the situation.

Anwar Shaikh Passes Away

Anwar Shaikh, an attorney in USA and son of late Shaikh Abdul Majeed Sindhi, passed away in the Staten Island, NY, on 15th August. His funeral services were held at the Casey Funeral Home, Staten Island, NY. A number of friends and family attended the funeral.

Posted by Abdul Razak Sheikh

Anwer Memon's father dies

Father of Mr. Anwer Memon passed away recently. Members of Sindhi community have condoled with the bereaved family.

World Sindhi Congress has New EC

World Sindhi Congress (WSC), a UK/USA based human rights advocacy group has announced its new Executive Committee and Officers for the Years 2002-2004.

The new EC members are: Ms. Ambreen Hisbani, Mr. Farhan Kaghzi, Dr. Haleem Bhatti, Dr. Hidayat Bhutto, Dr. Lakhu Luhano, Mr. Rafique Tunio, Dr. Rubina Shaikh, Dr. Safdar Sarki, Dr. Saghir Shaikh, Mr. Sultan Mahar, Ms. Suriya Makhdoom, Mr. Umed Laghari and Dr. Ashfaque Qureshi.

The Executive committee has appointed following officers for the day to day working of WSC: Dr. Saghir Shaikh (Chair), Dr. Lakhu Luhano (Secretary General), Dr. Haleem Bhatti (Senior Vice Chair), Dr. Rubina Shaikh (Vice Chair), Dr. Hidayat Bhutto (Deputy Secretary General), Mr. Farhan Kaghzi (Information Secretary), Dr. Jamil Shaikh (Finance Secretary), and Mr. Sultan Mahar (Cultural Secretary).

The Executive committee also appointed following organizers for its US, Sindh, UK, and Canada chapters: Mr. Umed

Laghari (Organizer USA), Mr. Rehman Kakepoto (Deputy Organizer USA), Mr. Siraj Makhdoom (Secretary USA), Mr. Rafique Tunio (Organizer Sindh), Mr. Sattar Zangejo (Secretary Sindh), Ms. Ambreen Hisbani (Organizer Europe and UK), and Mr. Jamil Shaikh (Organizer Canada).

These new officers and EC members will formally take oath in coming WSC Annual General Body Meeting to be held on September 21st, 2002 in Central London.

WSI to hold conference in Washington, DC

World Sindhi Institute will hold a conference in Washington, DC on November 9, 2002. The theme of the conference will be 'Sindh, the Water Issue and the Future of Pakistan.'

The conference will be the first of a two-part program spread over a four-day period, November 9-12. Speakers at the conference will include Dr. Selig Harrison, Dr. Harold Gould, Dr. Louis Flam, Advocate Hussain Bux Thebo, Imtiaz Alam, Afrasiab Khattak, Hamid Hussain, Malavika Vardak, Dr. Hassan Gardezi, and former Senator Qamar Zaman Shah.

Thal Canal to benefit civil, military bureaucracy

By Rauf Klasra

MULTAN: The Rs. 30 billion controversial Greater Thal Canal is being constructed exclusively for the civil and military bureaucracy which has bought about 0.5 million acres of land in the vast productive region at the throwaway price of Rs 350 per acre and is now in the process of imposing a new kind of colonialism on the marginalised people of southern Punjab who have no voice at the top level.

This troubling analysis was made by various speakers at the media seminar on Greater Thal Canal arranged by Pakistan Network on Rivers, Dams and People, here on Sunday. A large number of Seraiki and Sindhi nationalists and intellectuals participated in the heated debate. The

seminar which was held to hear the views of all the stakeholders of this project, specially those who would be directly and indirectly affected, turned out to be a forum for Punjabi-Seraiki and Punjabi-Sindhi differences on various issues.

The speakers from the Seraiki region, specially Mazhar Nawaz and Ustad Ejaz, were of the view that the Greater Thal Canal was being constructed for the retired and serving army officers, bureaucrats and judges who were allotted lands in the command area against only Rs 350 per acre.

They pointed out that the canal would bring a flood of immigrants to the region when the civil-military officials would sell their lands at very high prices after construction of the canal. With that purpose in mind the bureaucracy was pressing the government for early completion of the canal despite serious reservations from all concerned quarters, they alleged.

However, the speakers said the purpose was just to enable the mighty civil-military bureaucracy to sell their lands at very high prices. Since announcement of the project the price of land in the area had already gone up by 100 per cent and would register further increase in the coming days, they added.

They claimed that a kind of new colonialism was being introduced in the name of development and prosperity. They said the influx of new immigrants into the Seraiki region would not only result in more socio-economic problems but would also fuel ethnic strife in the region. They also feared emergence of a serious law and order situation in the coming years when the prosperity of the immigrants would start affecting the locals as it happened in the case of other cities of southern Punjab.

They asked why the Seraiki region had to suffer every time the consequences of such illogical and politically motivated mega projects that had no remote link with the socio-economic development of the people of Thal.

They also presented official land revenue record to establish their claims that the land was allotted to the military and civil bureaucracy at very nominal price and now they would earn billions of rupees out of this mega project being executed from the tax payers money to benefit some individuals.

They pointed out that the government's intention could be gauged from the fact that President General Pervez Musharraf, during

his referendum campaign, announced the project in his Lahore rally but there was no mention of the canal in his speeches made in Multan and Sindh.

They made it clear that the project was not going to make any difference in their lives and demanded that it should be abandoned. However, they said, if the locals were given lands as their basic right then the project was acceptable to them. But they would first have to consult their Sindhi brothers who had certain objections against the project, they said.

The Sindhi speakers, specially Awami Tehrik leader Qazi Abrar and GN Mughul, severely criticized the project saying the Indus was lifeline for Sindhis and they should not be made to starve by constructing any dams or canals.

Mughul also denounced the Water Accord of 1991, saying the then government that had signed it, did not represent Sindhis so the people were not ready to accept the agreement. He said the highhandedness of the authorities could be judged from the fact that the president twice issued directive to the Indus River System Authority to restore the water accord of 1991 but every time the Irsa chief from the Punjab refused to implement the orders. Ironically, no action was taken against the Irsa chief for violation of orders coming from the very top, he added.

He said that it was a pre-planned move to deprive Sindhis of their due rights who were already suffering from several serious problems. Mughul said that those labeling the agitating Sindhis as anti-Pakistan needed to understand that Sindh province gave birth to Pakistan - first by getting independence from Bombay and later on its assembly passed a resolution in 1946. He demanded that this wrong attitude about Sindhis should be changed and they should be given their due rights.

Abrar Qazi also defended the case of his province on the Indus saying the entire Sindh depended upon the water of the river and it should not be taken away from Sindh by constructing dams and canals on its flow.

He regretted the attitude of the people of the Punjab and the media who were propagating the notion about the people of Sindh that they were wasting river water by throwing it into the sea. He said the people, flora and fauna living downstream needed the river water to survive and that it was wrong to say that the water was being wasted.



Children at SANA Convention, 2002

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