



SANGAT

SINDHI ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA

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Rains, breaches play havoc in Sindh

Rains and breaches in irrigation and drainage canals have caused an immense catastrophe in Sindh with thousands of casualties and material losses running into billions of rupees. According to the news reports, hundreds of thousands of people have been rendered homeless; many of them stranded in high waters for weeks without any help reaching them. Crops on hundreds of thousands of acres have been lost and electricity and telephone lines, roads, other means of communication and infrastructure have been devastated. It is a huge disaster and there seems to be no coordinated effort to mitigate the sufferings of the people, to provide shelter to the affected people or their rehabilitation. There is not enough food or the medicines for the people, who are in urgent need of assistance.

The situation is extremely pathetic and the seriousness of the higher government functionaries is evident from the fact that besides a few photo sessions by some, none is on the ground to supervise any help to the victims. The Governor, the Irrigation Minister and the Health Advisor had been reported visiting/vacationing abroad and when the president found some time to visit the area, he had



nothing much to offer to help/console the affected people except adding some insults to injury. He considered it appropriate to admonish people of Sindh for their opposition to Kala Bagh Dam and Greater Thal Canal and instructed the Sindh officials to launch a campaign for the mega water projects.

Sindhi Association of North America, SANA, in a press release has condemned the callous attitude of the government and called for taking emergency measures to help the people. SANA demanded that:

- an appropriate special relief package be announced for immediate assistance and rehabilitation. The initial amount should be at least 20-25 billion rupees as demanded by farmers and growers associations

- whole Sindh be declared calamity hit area and all the revenue collections, aabiyaana, agriculture tax, loans and other

recoveries be written off or postponed

- the opposition parties should be included in all the relief committees from union council to provincial levels

- an immediate inquiry should be initiated into the allegations of the causes of the breaches in the canals and failure of the government machinery in providing immediate assistance to the people and keeping the losses to the minimum

- efforts should be taken to formulate and implement plans to meet any such future challenges.

SANA has also established a relief fund to help the affected people in Sindh. All the SANA members and other concerned people are requested to make donations to the fund. Please read the details about the fund inside.

20th SANA Convention in Houston, TX

20th SANA Convention will be held in Houston, TX on July 4th weekend next year.

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90260

Editor: Aziz Narejo

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Musharraf's war on Sindh and Pakistan

Dictator Musharraf, who faced humiliating defeat at Kargil and whose wrong decisions and policies have created more disharmony in the country than ever before, is continuing his war on the unarmed people of Sindh and Pakistan. While his refusal to end military rule in the country is a rebuke to the popular demands to that effect, his declaration to build Bhasha and Kalabagh dams and the Greater Thal Canal tantamount to be a war on the people of Sindh and on Pakistan itself.

It is the height of irresponsibility, to say the least, to completely disregard the wishes of a major federating unit and giving a go ahead to the most controversial projects, which have been declared by many as detrimental to the integrity of the country.

It is time all the people of Sindh (and Pakistan) take things more seriously and mount a united struggle against this regime, which is taking the country to civil strife and a major upheaval with its biased and unjust policies. It has already polarized the country and hoisted unpopular and incompetent governments in the center and the provinces, which can't tell a head from a tail.

Annual SANA Convention:

A miracle that happens once a year!

Finally the day was here. The day that some of us hold so close to our hearts. The day that has a permanent place in our thoughts. We almost always look forward to it - and whatever comes with it - with so many expectations some practical, some not so practical!

This time it was sunny (or was it Sani's?) California. And the 'City of Angeles' was the host. It was noticed this year that people started arriving three to four days ahead of 4th July, the day the Convention was scheduled to officially open. This showed the interest the people had in the event and also how it has become part of their calendar. It was also noted that many people stayed in the city 2 - 3 days after the Convention. Goes without saying that these conventions provide an opportunity to North American Sindhis to combine family vacations with the annual gala.

The people, who arrived few days prior to the start of the Convention, visited some of the attractions in greater Los Angeles area while some of them enjoyed the hospitality of their friends in the city.

As 4th July, the day the Convention was to be declared open drew closer, the hotel lobby started to give the look of a big Sindhi party 'with sounds of Sindhi language all around in the air. The lobby (and the parking lot) had given an empty look only 2 days ago but today it suddenly

looked so full' so full of life! With so many smiling faces all around greeting each other with hugs and hand shakes. Men, women, children - every one so ecstatic, so glad, so fortunate and so thrilled. They came from all over USA and some from Canada. Three cheers for Houstonians, who almost came by a planeload! 50 or so in the same plane! Some more separately! And the Dallas people, who drove all the way from that cowboys' country. Others came from the East Coast, West Coast, Midwest, from the north and the south and from the deserts of Arizona.

Has any one ever given it a thought what compels all these people from all over North America to eagerly await and then participate SANA Conventions? Isn't it 'the' love of Sindh, the motherland? Love of 'Sindhia', the 'spirit of Sindh'? Love of one's own culture? Who needs special invitations to attend such gatherings? 'Hee taa sikk-a jo sadd-u aahey. Sikk-a jo safar-u aahey. Sabhnee laa-i aam aahey. Her ko paann-a qurb-a jaa peir-a bharey eendo aa!'

'Halann-u tinn piyo naalo neenhan^gginnan jey': Shah

'Halo halo Kaak tarein jittey neenhan^uchhall-a

nakaa jhall-a nakkaa pall-a, her kaa passey pireen^a khey': Shah

On 3rd July, the members of the 'Registration Committee' were the first to occupy their positions at the venue, the Hilton Torrance/South Bay. The SANA President Sani Panhwar, the Convention Committee Chairman Ali Shaikh, active member of the committee Jaffar Shah and others were there to receive the guests and facilitate their stay. One felt so happy and so elated among one's own.

The day one:

Uncustomary, the people started filling the breakfast room early in the morning. May be they didn't want to be late and miss out any of the events. The organizers had arranged three days_ breakfasts for all the Convention guests. Fresh fruits, fruit juices, eggs, bread, pancakes, cereals, tea and coffee being the part of the menu among other things.

Medical Seminar:

The first event of the day was the medical seminar. This is almost a permanent feature at all the conventions as it is a revenue-generating segment. Dr. Valeed Shaikh moderated the seminar. Dr. Rafat Ansari talked about screening and prevention of breast cancer. Dr. Aijaz Turk spoke on the screening for colon cancer. Dr. Ashfaq Turk on preventive measures against heart attack. Dr. Sattar Shaikh spoke on screening and the treatment of depression.

Lunch and then the Guest Speakers Session:

Mr. Mohammad Ali Mahar, General Secretary, SANA, moderated the session. He invited all the guest speakers to the stage. They were: Renowned journalist, Hasan Mujtaba, Former diplomat, Najamuddin Shaikh, NGO Consultant and environmentalist, Ms Noorunnissa Ghanghro, journalist and women rights activist, Ms Nafissa Hoodbhoy, author and research scholar Khadim Hussain Soomro, political activist Dodo Maheri and veteran writer, intellectual and lawyer Nooruddin Sarki.

Ms Noorunnissa Ghanghro, an NGO Consultant and environmentalist was the first to come to dais. She made quite an emotional speech. She spoke of injustices against the people of Sindh including the denial of due share in water and other resources. She shared her experiences of working with different NGOs at grass roots level. She provided examples how international donor funds were being illegally transferred to Punjab and how the people of Sindh were being hoodwinked.

She stressed that Sindhis should prepare their case on water and other issues on international standards. 'We should collect all necessary data on water and other issues. We should put forward our claim for all the losses that we have suffered in the fields of economy, politics, democratic rights and the social sectors. Overseas Sindhis can immensely help in this. Such a case should be properly publicized. It should be presented in different forums world over', she said.

She also presented a slide show, which highlighted the impact of water scarcity on different aspects of life in Sindh. How hundreds of thousands of acres have been rendered barren and millions of people have lost their livelihood. She also pointed out the problems of water logging and salinity, poor physical infrastructure, need for water management projects and measures aimed at conservation of water.

Hasan Mujtaba, an award winning journalist and an equally good poet, has been contributing to different publications including Newslines from Karachi and Himal South Asian magazine from Nepal.

He currently writes for BBC London. He made a superb speech. At times it brought one to tears. He started with a poem, most probably his own:

'Ggaalh aahey Sindh jee
ain unhee jey jazban jee
Shah ho darya jo, qaid aa kayo viyo
Ain unn-a jee mauj mauj
Fauj aa fanaa ka'ee'

He asked the audience point blankly: 'what is Sindh?' Is it a metaphor? A symbol, a simile? A condition? An ode, a music? Is it the 'aalaap' of Ustad Manzoor Ali Khan, sounds of Dhol Faqir or Zaibunnissa? Is it the 'raga' of 'faqirs'? Is it the deserts, the mountains? Is it the hug that Haider Bux Jatoi gave to Shaikh Ayaz at the time of his (H B Jatoi's) arrest? Is Sindh an image of one's beloved, which always remains in one's heart and mind? All his speech was interspersed with poetry from Shah and others.

I never knew Hasan could play such magic with words. But then one almost always underestimates friends! He was so poetic! One had to listen to him to believe it.

He talked of 'Sindhu Darya', the dying river as he put it or the river, which is being 'butchered'! He condemned the antics of the oppressors and the tin pot dictator, who are using the Greater Thal Canal as a 'weapon of mass destruction' to ruin whole Sindh. These people, suffering from nuclear xenophobia are killers of their own people and thieves of the water resources of Sindh. He said the son of that 'Foot Constable' Zahoor Ilahi, (who might have been killed in the fight over ISI funds allocated for training Indian Sikhs in Punjab by agencies'

thugs), Choudhry Shujaat is the de-facto Chief minister of Sindh. He is ruling the province with the help of a Brigadier and two Colonels while the population of Sindh is being denied their basic human rights.

He said the rulers are destroying Pakistan by starting controversial plans like 'Greater Thal Canal' and Kalabagh Dam. They are constructing the Canal to irrigate the lands allotted to army officials, bureaucrats and other people of influence.

He concluded that Sindh can only prosper when feudalism and feudal culture is put to an end, an urban and rural middle class is created, tribal feuds are stopped and 'karo kari' is done away with. He said it was difficult to think of Sindhi civil society without liberation of Sindhi women. He emphasized on social reforms and urged the overseas Sindhi community to form a watchdog committee to raise voice against violations of Sindhis' fundamental rights.

Nafisa Hoodbhoy, a renowned journalist, who has worked with daily 'Dawn' for 14 years, has been teaching at Amherst College in Massachusetts since last 2 and a half years and is writing a book on Pakistan at present, was third speaker of the day. She presented a documentary on the issues concerning women in Pakistan and Sindh and other social and legal issues like the much abhorred blasphemy law and others. Her documentary was greatly applauded.

Next speaker of the day was political activist and leader of Sindh National Party, **Mr. Dodo**

Maheri. He recounted the history of water issue starting from the British Raj. He mentioned the Rao Commission, the resultant 1945 Water Agreement signed by the Punjab and Sindh and the unilateral sale of Pakistan waters to India. He said no representative from Sindh was involved in the negotiations prior to 'Indus Basin Treaty'. Later on the Pakistan government constructed Mangla Dam, Tarbela Dam and other major irrigation projects without keeping the interests of Sindh in view.

He said later on the WAPDA, bending to the pressure from the Punjab government, built Chashma-Jhelum Link Canal with a promise that it will be a flood canal and will only be operated for 40 days a year when there would be surplus water in Indus system. He said now it has been turned into a perennial canal. The same is being said of the under construction Greater Thal Canal but how do they expect the people of Sindh to believe it?

He also mentioned some figures how Sindh agriculture has lost in past few years while the production has increased in the neighboring province of Punjab.

Mr. Dodo Maheri said Sindh has been suffering since last 50 years. It is time justice is done to the people of Sindh. He said the rulers have to decide now what they want? Do they want a strong Pakistan where all the federating units have equal rights or a fractured and weakened Pakistan marred by civil strife, hatred, divisions and rampant ill-will between the provinces. He cautioned that the experience tells us that the second choice may lead

to further fragmentation of the country.

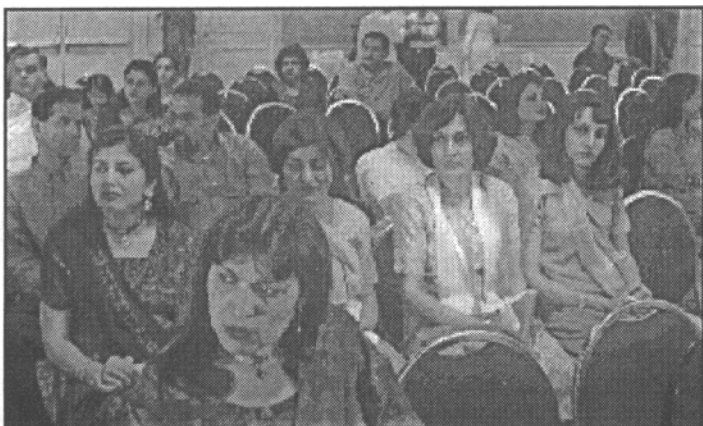
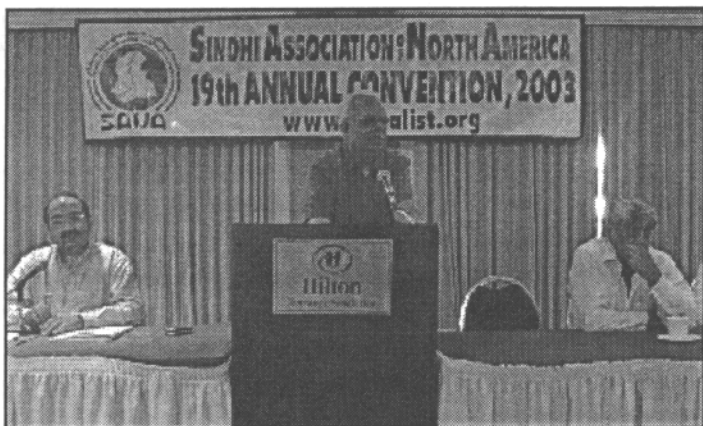
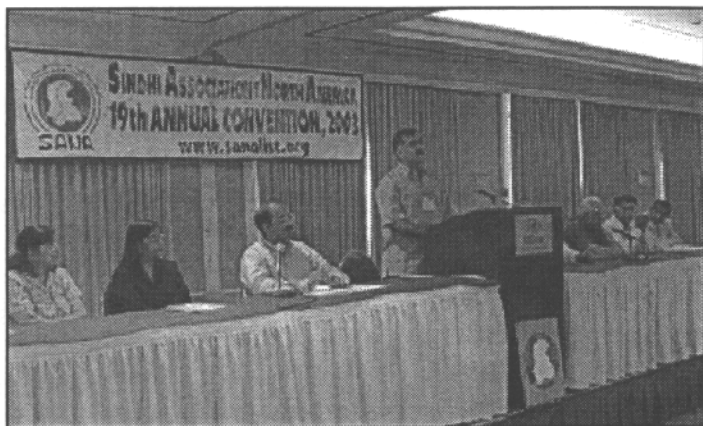
Next to speak was the former career diplomat, **Mr. Najamuddin Shaikh**, who retired as Pakistan's Foreign Secretary and had remained Ambassador to the United States, Canada and Iran. Main thrust of his speech was that the people of Sindh were capable of producing talent but they were not being allowed to do so. He emphasized that Sindhis had excelled whenever they were given a chance.

He said Pakistan was a flawed model of development in the third world as it had wrong priorities. **Mr. Shaikh** said due to the ill planning and incompetence of the government functionaries, there were almost 8 billion dollars in foreign assistance that lay unutilized.

Mr. Khadim Hussain Soomro, Executive Director of Sindh Sufi Institute and author of six books, narrated the history of the nagging water problem. He also mentioned how outsiders grabbed Sindh lands after the construction of the Ghulam Mohammad Barrage. He said as the barrage was completed and lands were prepared in the command areas, they were advertised in Punjab first and Sindhis didn't even know about it before much of the lands were already allotted.

Mr. Soomro said the situation in Sindh was much worse than it was being acknowledged. He stressed that a lot needs to be done in social sectors including the education and health sectors and overseas Sindhi organizations can play a vital role in those sectors.

The last speaker of the day was the veteran writer, intellectual, political activist and lawyer, **Mr. Nooruddin**



Sarki. He dwelt upon the question of democracy in Pakistan. He stressed that all the people of Pakistan must endeavor for restoration of democracy. He said the Parliament should be the supreme body in the country and the LFO and other undemocratic amendments must be rejected. He was of the view that the judiciary and bureaucracy can't work without proper democracy. He emphasized that at present there was no better system of government than democracy. 'We should all struggle for restoration of true democracy in the country where all the people should have equal rights', he said.

Mr. Sarki said that there is a need to stop talking about the bigger brother and the smaller brothers. He said all the federating units in Pakistan must be treated equally.

He said that all Sindhis should start dialogue among themselves to come to a common agenda and all the people should stand for the rights of the province. He said efforts should be made to end the occupation of Sindh's natural resources by outsiders.

As the speakers session had started late and it went beyond its slot, the General Body meeting was postponed for the next day. That brought the proceedings of the day to a close and people started to get ready for an evening of beautiful Sindhi music.

Ladies Corner:

Ladies session expanded to two days this time. As Mrs. Nasreen Tareen couldn't attend the Convention due to illness, Mrs. Khalid Memon conducted the session. Mrs. Zeb Agha of Houston, TX assisted her. According to her: a large number

of ladies attended the meetings both the days. They made introductions to each other and discussed a host of issues including the upbringing of children and the problems faced by them in adjustment to new environment here. They shared with each other their experiences on different things.

During those sessions, variety programs were held and music was played where youngsters danced to the exquisite tunes.

Youth Corner:

Continuing the tradition set last year, Mr. Zafar Agha, an active member of SANA, conducted the Youth Session. He arranged a debate among the children on the topic of 'my home town'. Mr. Tufail Memon and Mrs. Nasreen Aijaz were the judges. The debate was enthusiastically participated. Following children were awarded prizes:

Aisha Shaikh, first prize
Shahzad Shaikh, second prize
Marvi Panhwar, third prize
Umaid Shaikh, fourth prize
Parisa Memon, fifth prize.

Two kids, Bahadur Panhwar and Rizwan Leghari were awarded special prizes.

Mr. Zafar Agha, using a map of Sindh, provided information to the children about different districts of Sindh, about Sindhu Darya, about Manchhar Lake and about the means of production and industries in Sindh.

During the session, Sehrish Agha spoke on the history of Sindh and Amal Agha spoke on "great Talpurs of Sindh".

Children liked this program immensely.

The day two:

(With apologies to all, I must mention here on a personal note that during our press conference and rally in Washington, DC, last month, I met old timer, Zahid Makhdoom after about quarter a century. A long time, isn't it? We had a wonderful time in DC. There he made a solemn promise to attend the (upcoming) SANA Convention. And for once, he kept his promise! He flew from Vancouver, Canada just for this event. It just humbled me).

Breakfast and "Meeting of Minds" session:

Well, the music had gone past midnight and then there were of course "katchahries" which continued until early morning. Still the people, full of energy and excitement woke up not being too late and joined each other in the breakfast room. The "Meeting of Minds" was slated for 9:00 am and then buses were to leave for a city tour and picnic. We finished our breakfast in quite a hurry and gathered in the hall for our long awaited 'meeting of minds' to discuss issues facing our community in North America and our people back home.

During the discussion, there was a consensus that a lot needs to be done for our community in North America, especially for our next generation and to help our brethren settle here. To help them in employment, abode and providing them information about starting a business. We discussed the prevalent situation in Sindh too and

considered ways how overseas community could be of any help.

Zahid Makhdoom, who is currently Chairman of World Sindhi Institute, spoke of problems our next generation may face in North America. He said they might be alienated from Sindhi culture, as there were no institutions here, which could help them, have strong bond with Sindhi language and culture. He gave examples how other migrant communities are addressing that problem like establishing mosques, other places of worship and community halls where they teach their children their way of life. He was of the view that our community should work on such lines too.

I talked of reaching consensus on short term and long term goals. We must make efforts for our community here as well as helping our brethren in Sindh, who are facing tremendous problems.

Dr. Saghir Shaikh spoke of unity among three Sindhi organizations and stressed that we should have a written charter to that effect.

It was unanimously decided to reactivate the Sindh Rights Committee, which already enjoyed support of all three organizations. Dr. Valeed Shaikh of Minnesota graciously volunteered to head the committee. It was welcomed by all. He is going to write on this separately.

City tour and picnic:

The organizing committee and specially SANA stalwart, Irshad Kazi must be praised for making

excellent arrangement for this segment. They had arranged four air-conditioned coaches for guests. They had named the coaches as Hyderabad, Sukkur, Larkano and Daddu. (Though many people complained about ignoring their districts of origins:). And it sounded so familiar when they were chanting "halo" Daddu, Daddu or Sukkur, Sukkur!!! As if we really were going to those cities!!! But our destination here was a park in Long Beach, CA. They took us through some parts of Los Angeles, Queen Mary Pier, through the town of Long Beach and finally the grand park. It was a huge park with beautiful grass, trees, lakes, landscaping and picnic facilities.

The organizing committee had arranged for a chef from a local restaurant to make fresh Bar-B-Q. Bread, 'pulao', Kabab, Tikka and drinks were also served. They had reserved a large area for our picnic and the weather was beautiful too. Everybody enjoyed to the max. Finally passengers were called to board their 'home town' buses and we headed back to the hotel.

Business Seminar:

As soon as we got back to the hotel, the organizers called for the business seminar. Mr. Nadim Mughal, Jamil Daudi, Sani Panhwar, and others spoke of different business opportunities available to all of us. They provided folders to all the participants full with lots of information on starting one's own business. They also answered questions on many aspects.

General Body meeting:

The General Body meeting was held as soon as the business seminar concluded. It was a well-attended session. Mr. Mohammad Ali Mahar,

G.S. SANA conducted the session. He called the members of EC to be seated by the dais. He then read the annual report highlighting the activities of SANA. Sani Panhwar, President of SANA, welcomed the guests. He also spoke briefly on the working of the organization and the efforts it was making by itself and with the cooperation of other Sindhi organizations for the cause of Sindh.

Mr. Mahar called Mr. Sajjad Siddiqui, V.P. SANA and Chairman, Sindhi Language committee to apprise the audience of his committee's performance and then secretaries of local chapters, Mr. Khalid Channa, Mr. Sarfraz Abbasi and Mr. Jaffar Shah to present reports on the activities of their respective chapters.

Mr. Shoukat Ansari distributed the fact sheet on the financial status of the organization. It was announced at the meeting that Mr. Zafar Agha of Houston, TX had accepted the responsibility to chair the FAME (a fund created in the memory of Dr. Feroz Ahmed to help Sindhi students). Mr. Manzoor Shah, former Chairman of the Fund, also briefly spoke on the occasion.

Later the session was opened for questions and answers. It was a lively segment and all the concerned members of the organization raised pertinent questions, which were diligently answered by respective office bearers, EC members and one by this scribe (regarding the publication of "Sangat").

Some of the questions were related to:

- the financial statement and some perceived discrepancies in it
- have the funds grown or have they shrunk?

- if there were any funds for emergency loans to community members?

- have earlier loans been recovered?

- could "Sangat" be put on web instead of printing in hard copy?

- what measures SANA was taking to win back estranged members?

- what efforts were being taken to increase membership?

Annual Banquet and the "sounds of Sindh", the "sangeet mehfil":

The day was wearing out by now but not the spirits of the exuberant participants of the Convention. As the General Body session concluded, every body rushed to get ready for the grand Annual Banquet and the "mehfil-e-mauseequi". As usual this event saw the whole large hall full with some standing in the corners looking for a space. The meal was delicious. The organizing committee should once again be complimented to have taken in view all the minor details.

Rajab Ali was the star of the night for "mehfil-e-mauseequi". He belongs to famous Gwaliar School of singing. Other singers on the occasion were Iqbal Qasim from New York and Kishan Alamchandani from Canada.

July 6, the day to say good-byes:

As a wise man once upon a time said something to the effect that the meetings were the beginning of the partings, the day had come

to say goodbye to each other. One couldn't imagine time would fly so fast.

Greater than the speed of light!!! It was the end of our sojourn before we even realized!!! Looked like we just had greeted each other and now we were parting with heavy hearts. This weekend could have been the shortest in our lives!

But we were departing with a hope that we would meet AGAIN. And this time in the great city of Houston, which is almost like a second home to me. I just hope this year passes as soon as this past weekend did!!!

SANA Convention, a miracle?

And now why I have described SANA Convention as a "miracle"? During last few years my involvement with SANA and being active member of some Internet lists, I have witnessed widespread apathy among Sindhis here in USA about anything related to Sindh. If one has to put it in the mildest words, it could be easily said that most of Sindhis here just don't care! They have grown indifferent, insensitive and unconcerned.

There could be a thousand and one reasons for it. It could be the busy life here; could be their hurt egos on one account or the other; could be their disenchantment or disappointment with any one or all or may be something else. It is really bad. Very Bad! People refuse even to become members of any of the organizations here, leave aside being active and participate in any events or rallies or protests. And then there is so much ill will among Sindhis for each other. Some don't even want to hear the name of the people they don't like.

In these circumstances, organization of such an annual event on such a large scale with such participation is not less than a MIRACLE!!!

Report by Aziz Narejo

SANA Resolutions

Sindhi Association of North America (SANA) held its 19th Annual Convention in Los Angeles, CA, July 3-6, 2003. The SANA EC, taking in view the situation in Sindh, passed the following resolutions:

Water Issue:

SANA resolves that the people of Sindh are facing a great injustice as they are being denied their due share of water from the Indus River system due to mismanagement of the water resources by the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) and other agencies of the Pakistan government and the intransigence of the Punjab province.

All of the decisions with respect to water have been made without any regard whatsoever given to the interests of Sindh and her people. All inter-provincial water accords have been unabashedly violated and internationally accepted lower riparian rights of Sindh callously flouted. As a result, Sindh is facing tremendous impacts in terms of economic losses, rampant poverty, environmental degradation, public health threats, and ecological devastation.

People of Sindh, especially in the rural and coastal areas, have suffered tremendously in the last

few years and there appears to be no end in sight.

This water assault against the people of Sindh continues unabated in the form of daylight piracy of Sindh share of Indus waters and its diversion to Punjab; Kalabagh dam and other such infamous projects being kept alive despite opposition from Sindh and other provinces; and construction of the 'Greater Thal Canal' or 'GTC'. The infamous GTC is being constructed by WAPDA illegally without proper approvals and despite passage of two resolutions against it by the Sindh Assembly and protests in every nook and corner of Sindh. The GTC is destined to desertify large tracts of cultivated lands in Sindh while irrigating desert lands in Southern Punjab that have been allotted to army officials, bureaucrats and influentials.

SANA, considering all these facts demands that the work on the GTC project should be stopped forthwith. SANA also demands that water between the provinces should be distributed according to the 1945 Sindh-Punjab Agreement and no water projects and dams on the Indus River system be contemplated without approval from the people of Sindh and the government of Sindh. Also, an impartial study should be conducted immediately to establish the water needs below Kotri Barrage and at least 10 MAF water below the Kotri Barrage must be released as agreed to under the 1991 Water Accord.

SANA further demands that the government and people of Sindh should be compensated for the diversion of Sindh share of water to Punjab and the losses suffered by the people of Sindh due to the water shortage.

Share in NFC and other resources:

SANA resolves that the people of Sindh have been denied their share in NFC award, economic resources, development, employment, education and other sectors. While other provinces get 82-92% of whatever they contribute to the national divisible pool, Sindh gets only 16-23% out of the finances that it contributes to the national exchequer despite the fact that Sindh contributes close to 65% of the divisible pool. This is totally discriminatory. Therefore, SANA demands that Sindh be given its due share in the NFC pool. Also, SANA demands that the people of Sindh should be given their due share in all the economic resources, economic development, employment, education and other sectors, especially when Sindh is the major contributor towards the national exchequer.

SANA condemns the federal government's decision to take control of oil, coal and other resources and deprive Sindh the opportunity to utilize these resources for the uplift of the people. SANA demands that the people of Sindh should be considered owners of all the natural and mineral resources of the province and the local population of Sindh should be given employment in projects for development of oil, coal and other resources. Also, the royalties for the use of oil, gas, and other mineral resources of Sindh should be immediately granted to Sindh.

Military must reform:

SANA EC resolves that the federal government of Pakistan spends disproportionate part of the

national exchequer on maintaining huge military and development of the weapons of mass destruction as compared almost nothing on the betterment of the people. Also, Pakistani military is dominated by Punjab. The people of Sindh and other provinces do not view military intervention in the body politics of Pakistan favorably as well. These are some of the causes for alienation and discontent of the people of Sindh and the other provinces and have created a widely held feeling among them that they are not getting the fair deal under Pakistan.

SANA demands that the government should divert funds from the unnecessary defense expenditure to the social sectors for the programs aimed at poverty alleviation and uplift of the people. Also, the armed forces should be made truly federal, making sure that all the provinces are given equal representation in all branches and all ranks of the military. Furthermore, the army should go back to the barracks and true democracy should be restored in the country.

Restoration of the Constitution:

SANA supports the calls for rejection of LFO and strengthening of civil society. SANA supports the efforts to establish a just and egalitarian system in the country. It rejects blasphemy and other discriminatory laws and joins the calls for taking strong measures to end the honor killing and crimes against women, children, and the minorities.

It calls for empowerment of all the people including weaker sections of the society; establishment of the rule of law and independence of

judiciary; and restoration of the 1973 constitution in its original state with complete provincial autonomy as envisaged in the Pakistan resolution of 1940, enhanced role for the senate based on the principle of provincial parity, and more representation of the women in the parliament.

Basic human rights for indigenous population:

SANA takes a serious view of the situation that the Sindhi population of Sindh has been denied their basic human right to self-rule. Since long the establishment has rigged/engineered the elections and the political system and denied the true representatives of the people of Sindh to form governments in the province. Case in point is that at this time the Sindhi-speaking people make up 65% of the population, whereas their share in the present provincial government is only 35%. Similar is the case in the federal government and all the decision-making forums where the Sindhi speaking population doesn't have due representation. SANA demands that this injustice must end forthwith.

Liberties, freedom and political prisoners/exiles:

SANA supports civil liberties and freedom of expression. It demands to lift all the curbs on press and political activities. It demands release of all politicians involved in false and cooked up cases of so called corruption and return to the country of popular political leaders living in exile.

Cultural preservation:

SANA resolves that Sindhi language has been denied its

rightful place in Sindh and Pakistan. SANA demands that Sindhi language be made one of the national languages of Pakistan and the official language of Sindh. SANA also demands that adequate resources be allocated for the Sindhi Adabi Board, Sindhi Language Authority, Institute of Sindhology, and other Sindhi educational, cultural, literary, and art institutions. Also, the government must take steps to protect and preserve archeological, historical, architectural, and cultural heritage of Sindh.

Furthermore, SANA demands that Sindhi language be made compulsory for all students in Sindh. Sindhi media resources, print or electronic, are denied adequate allocation of government advertisements and that must end forthwith. Also, the Sindhi language must be given 70% time on all TV and radio stations in Sindh and 25% share in the national and international PTV and Pak Radio programs. 8. Sindhi population: SANA resolves that all illegal aliens residing in Sindh since 1954, should be registered and returned back to their home countries. All government agencies and private businesses must be required to employ at least 70% Sindhis in Sindh. Strict controls over issuance of domiciles should be instituted to curb fraudulent issuance of the domiciles.

International Sindhi brotherhood:

SANA encourages international brotherhood of Sindhis and strongly condemns any curbs placed by the government of Pakistan on Diaspora Sindhis visiting Sindh for religious

ceremonies, cultural exchanges, and family unions. SANA considers such practices discriminatory, especially when visitors of other ethnic backgrounds are not subjected to similar restrictions.

SANA demands the lifting of these restrictions immediately and allowing Sindhis living outside of Sindh to visit their motherland. 10. Religious Tolerance SANA is concerned that religious fundamentalism is on the rise in Pakistan due to suppression of Sindhi Sufi traditions, denial of political participation in the country to the liberal forces, and encouragement of fundamentalists on the official media and within the political system. SANA demands that Sindhi Sufi traditions be given exposure to cultivate an environment of religious tolerance and deny fundamentalist terrorist forces a fertile recruitment ground. Also, liberal parties should be given equal opportunity to participate in the political system.

World Peace:

SANA believes in peaceful coexistence and nuclear free world. SANA resolves that Pakistan should give up its nuclear arsenal and sign the nuclear nonproliferation treaty. SANA also supports resolution of all conflicts with the neighbors of Pakistan through peaceful negotiations and without resorting to wars. The peace created in this fashion will enable governments in the region to divert funds from military outlays to the uplift of their people. SANA also demands all developed countries to abandon policies of wars and use nuclear energy for peace and prosperity of the people.

Community News

Press Conference and Rally in Washington, DC

Washington, DC: Sindhis from North America gathered in the United States' Capital June 24 to protest the construction of Greater Thal Canal. Three major Sindhi organizations operating in North America, SANA, WSC and WSI jointly held the rally and a press conference.

They called for an immediate halt to the work on the Canal as the people of Sindh have declared it a death warrant for the province. They also called for an end to the military rule and the restoration of true democracy in the country.

The three organizations held a well-attended press conference in the morning at the prestigious National Press Club. The top leadership of SANA, WSC and WSI attended it. These events coincided with President Gen. Pervez Musharraf's visit to Washington D.C. for a meeting with U.S. president George Bush.

Mr. Zahid Makhdoom, President WSI spoke on the dreadful project called the Greater Thal Canal

(GTC) and noted the colossal damage it is going to bring for the people of Sindh. He also elaborated on the sufferings of the people in Sindh at the hands of the present dictatorial regime.

Talking on the water issue, he said any diversion of water from lower riparian amounts to a crime against humanity because the welfare of the lower riparian, the whole province



was being scarified for of the benefit of a few hundred mostly military officers, who hold lands in the GTC area. He appealed to the media to publicize the plight of Sindh and Sindhis.

He urged the USA government and the people to bring about pressure on Musharraf to stop Greater Thal canal and divert excessive amount of resources (that are currently being spent on the military and to sustain the nuclear program) to education, health and welfare of the people of Pakistan. He added that the General and his military should return to their barracks. He characterized the present regime as running a country where there is no law and the fairness is in the short supply. A regime that has created an abundance of poverty and exploitation.

Dr. Saghir Shaikh, President WSC, condemned General Musharraf and his dictatorial regime and past rulers for their help in increasing the domination of Sindhis by other ethnic groups. He stated that economic conditions in Sindh, particularly, in rural areas, are fast going from bad to worse. He said official economic apartheid is largely responsible for the immense increase in poverty levels in Sindh and Balochistan. He cited a study

done by the Asian Development Bank, that shows that poverty in Sindh and Balochistan is around 54 %, which is almost twice as much as in Punjab and in North West Frontier provinces.

He said people of Sindh are shocked that the 600-million dollar GTC project will only bring benefit to 1.53 million acres of area but destroy the livelihood of millions of the people in Sindh. He added that callous nature of the government is quite evident as the General Musharraf inaugurated the project without consultation with the people and representatives of the Sindh province. In spite of the fact that the Sindh Provincial Assembly has twice passed unanimous resolutions against the Greater Thal Canal and the large demonstrations that are currently underway in the towns and villages of Sindh, the government of Pakistan is determined to carryout this project of economic apartheid.

He appealed to the American government and media to conduct their own investigations as there was no doubt in his mind that the Indus Water system can no longer sustain any new major project such as GTC without causing immense damage to Sindh and it's people.

Representing SANA at the joint Press Conference, Mr. Aziz Narejo said the people of Sindh and

Pakistan have long been suffering under military regimes. He briefly went over the history of the military regimes in Pakistan and how "totalitarian" and "Unitarian" systems imposed by the military have destroyed the democratic and judicial institutions in Pakistan.

These regimes have denied provincial autonomy and the basic human rights.

He was very critical of the Pakistan's "Inter-Services Intelligence" (ISI) agency. He added that it was not answerable to any civilian authority and has been instrumental in carrying out the plots to harm the interests of smaller provinces of Pakistan. The ISI has also been responsible for covert measures to deny any role to popular, democratic and secular forces in the affairs of the society. It created and supported the religious forces in the country and now the regime was using them to blackmail America and other western countries to secure their support for prolongation of their rule.

Touching on the subject of press restrictions in Pakistan, he cited many recent cases of brutality by the Pakistan government against the Pakistani press and media that have resulted in the firing, resignation and departure many leading journalists. He added that according to Pakistan constitution, by overthrowing the democratically elected government, General Musharraf and other his crony generals have committed a crime of high treason. He continued that his regime has created divisions among the provinces and is unwittingly laying the foundation for the disintegration of Pakistan. "How can such an unstable and fraudulent government be a friend of the people of Pakistan and serve the

interests of peace?" he asked. This could only destabilize the region, he added

He concluded his presentation with a remark that people of Sindh and many other parts of Pakistan do not want a big military force, they don't want chemical and nuclear weapons and they certainly don't want the military rule. They just want to live in peace with rights that are taken for granted in the civilized, democratic world. They want a rightful, dignified place in the comity of nations.

Dr. Inye Gorfek from "Doctors Against Torture" organization also addressed the press conference. She has visited Pakistan to investigate the cases of government-sponsored torture in the country. She said the security forces in Pakistan and some other countries predominantly torture two groups of people. The first group generally consists of people who struggle for democratic, economic and cultural rights and the other group is that of criminals, who are subjected to torture to extract confessions.

While talking about her organization, she said that they had more than 250 rehabilitation centers world-wide and about 33 of these centers are located in the USA. Providing figures on the prevalence of torture, she said, there are 3 billion people in the countries, where torture is practiced at the government level.

Commenting on the Pakistan situation, she said that according to the US State department, three forms of torture are currently common in Pakistan. These are "beatings", "electric shock", and "denying food and drink" to the victims. She urged the people of Pakistan to provide help to heal the mental and physical

abuses of these torture victims in their communities.

Question and Answers Session:

A 30-minute Q&A session followed the briefings by the four representatives. The questions by media and other attendees touched upon many aspects of the issues faced by Sindhis and the root causes for such problems.

The following are some of the key points made at this session:

1. The hegemony of military in Pakistan is the root cause of many of the problems faced by Pakistan in general and Sindhis in particular.
2. A loose co-federation of the Pakistani provinces offers the best alternative for restoring peace, justice, and fairness in Pakistan.
3. The three Sindhi organizations (SANA, WSC, and WSI) must expand their cooperation further and must continue to joint sponsorship of other events after the great of success of today's event.
4. Sindhis must not under-estimate the power of torture that would be leashed against them as they come out in streets to protest the economic apartheid policies.
5. The US government holds a lot of clout and influence over the Pakistan government. The US Government must use this power to pursue the Pakistani government to end the economic apartheid and restore full democracy.
6. The World Bank and IMF organizations should include conditions in their loan agreements that require the Pakistan government to shift resources from the wasteful military to the civilian sectors.

7. Sindhis should approach private sector in USA and other developed countries to invest in Sindh.

8. Re-organization of Pakistani military by reducing its size and making sure that it becomes a representative organization of all provinces. This is essential if Pakistan is become a progressive, secular, and respected country in the world.

Protest March and vigil

Following the press conference a protest march and vigil was organized at the McPherson Square in Washington, DC. Scores of people carrying several placards participated in the march.

After several rounds of walks around the square, the demonstrators gathered around a stage where several speakers denounced the Greater Thal Canal and demanded that the Pakistan government should cancel this project immediately. The session was moderated by Mr. Khalid Hashmani. The speakers urged the American government and the people of Pakistan and USA to press Musharraf to restore democracy, press freedom, and human rights.

Here is a brief overview of the speakers and the main points made in their speeches:

Sani Panhwar: The current President of Sindhi Association of North America (SANA) congratulated the participants on the success of the day's events. He was sure that the Pakistan and US governments will hear our message and hoped that something good will come out of it. He assured that the three Sindhi organizations (SANA, WSC, and WSI) would continue to

work together and will not rest until the rights of Sindhis are restored. He said that Sindhis of Los Angeles are organizing another protest and vigil on June 27th to drive the point once again that Greater Thal Canal is not acceptable to Sindhis.

Rev. Cleveland Sparrow, who is a member of DC Mayor's interfaith council, was happy to have met so many wonderful and peaceful Sindhis. He admired the values of Sindhis that encourage respect, tolerance, and justice for all.

Dr. Walter Landry, who is a Director of "Think-Tank for National Self-determination" (TNS) spoke about the economic, human, political, and cultural rights of indigenous people in various parts of the world. He added the right of self-determination is an inalienable right of all people.

Dodo Maheri, who is a leader of the Sindh National Party (SNP), gave an eloquent speech in Sindhi language. A translator provided translation of his speech in real-time for the benefit of those who did not understand Sindhi.

Mr. Maheri traced the history of the water issue between Sindh and Punjab that has originated from the days when the British ruled India. He cited a trail of broken promises and violations that Punjab had committed to misuse the canals that were previously built to only be used in the times of flood.

He added that the central government spent millions of dollars that were provided to it in the form of loans and grants by the World Bank and IMF after Pakistan and India signed the Indus Water Treaty in 1960. He said that the root cause for building the Greater Thal Canal is that the military officials are being allotted more and more land in the

non-cultivable areas. This gives incentive to the military government to conspire to divert more water to irrigate their lands at the expense of the poor people of Sindh. The Sindhis are being pushed into unbearable poverty with each passing day.

Mr. Edwin, a delegate of Anbazonia in the USA. (His organization is fighting for the right of self-determination in Cameroon for Anbazonia). He talked about the similarity between the issues faced by the people of Anbazonia and Sindh. He wished Sindhis well in their struggle to stop the Thal canal and to gain their dignity and their rights.

Last but not the least, Mr. Munawar Laghari, who was the key organizer of the day's events thanked every one who had made this day a historic day for the North American Sindhis. He expressed gratitude to the leaders of SANA, WSC and other non-affiliated volunteers who participated and helped in various ways.

Sindhis in Los Angeles Protest against Thal Canal

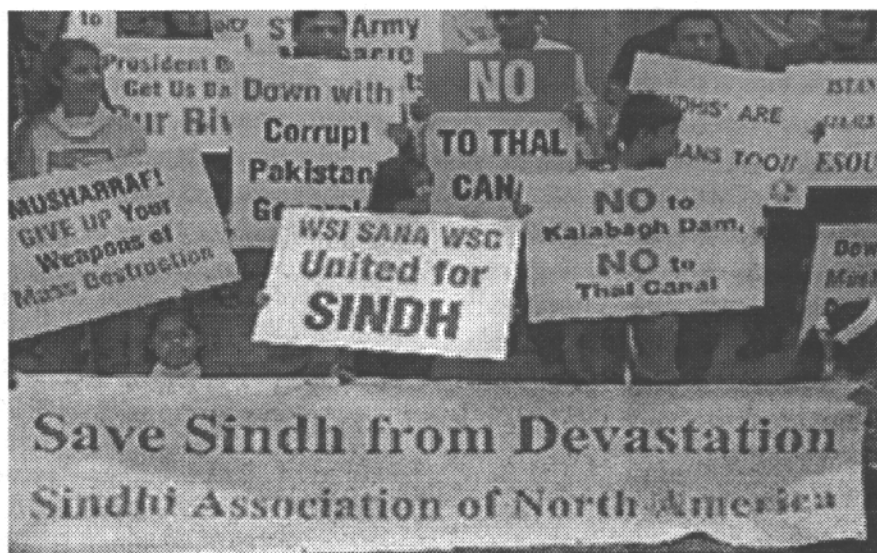
Los Angeles, CA: Sindhi Americans gathered in Los Angeles, CA on June 27 to protest against the construction of Greater Thal Canal. Three major Sindhi organizations in North America "Sindhi Association of North America (SANA), World Sindhi Congress (WSC), and World Sindhi Institute" jointly held the rally. Sindh, a southeastern province of Pakistan, has long been the victim of Islamabad's unfair policies on water distribution.

The province is threatened with an additional setback as the government decides to construct illegal canals and dams upstream. These projects benefit military generals and tribal landlords, strongest supporters of the government, as they own lands in the command areas. On the other hand these projects will result in the desertification of large tracts of cultivated land in the province of Sindh, affecting the lives of millions of people there.

Several Sindhis and other local activists from all over California traveled to protest in front of

Beverly Hills Hilton hotel, where General Musharraf was invited to speak.

The protestors called for an end to the construction of the Greater Thal Canal, restoration of Sindhi national rights, an end to the Defamation Ordinance and Blasphemy Law, and the restoration of press freedom. They also held placards demanding the end of military rule and restoration of true democracy in Pakistan. Mr. Sani Panhwar, President of SANA, demanded that Pakistani Government 'optimize water allocation at the national level,' and 'to compensate Sindh' for the last many years' water theft. He further described the planned construction of Greater Thal Canal as "a conspiracy against Sindh" and demanded immediate withdrawal of the plan. He also said that the planned construction of Thal Canal was in contravention to the 1991 Water Accord as well as the



constitution of the country. The plan should first be presented before the Council of Common Interest.

Dr. Saghir Shaikh, Chairman of WSC, asked for an international intervention: "Without the help of the international community and neutral international monitoring organizations, competition over water in Pakistan could eventually lead to a serious, possibly violent conflict."

SANA picnics/gatherings

Keeping up with the tradition, during the last quarter, SANA picnics/gatherings were held by different chapters including Houston, TX., Toronto, Canada, Washington, DC and Philadelphia, PA.

Shah Jo Melo in Newark, NJ

A group of Sindhi activists organized a two-day 'Shah jo Melo' in Newark, NJ on August 30-31. The event included a picnic/lunch and a dinner/music on Saturday, (8/30) and a video

conference, symposium and a presentation of arts and entertainment on Sunday (8/31).

Dr. Mazhar's father in law passes away

Father in law of Dr. Mazhar Lakho, ex-SANA President, passed away in Sindh. A large number of sanalist members expressed condolences with Dr. Mazhar.

Dr. Badar Afghan passes away

Reported by Iqbal Tareen

Dr. Badar Afghan passed away on June 21st. He was settled in Canada for almost 30 years.

He was an accomplished scientist and a great environmentalist. Those who knew Badar from Sindh University during sixties, will vouch for his love for mother Sindh and humanity.

He was the founding Secretary General of Sindhi Students Federation, which set the pioneering stage for Sindhi youth movements under leadership of Kazi Fazal Haq.

SANA appeals for funds to help rain affected people

As all of us know, in this monsoon season, catastrophic rains playing havoc with human lives, agriculture, economy and environment have hit Sindh. The worst affected areas have been the districts of Badin, Thatta, Mirpurkhas, Tharparkar and Hyderabad. Besides heavy death toll, crops over hundreds of thousands of acres of land and thousands of villages have been submerged and its populace rendered homeless. A large number of people were stranded midst flooding waters infested with snakes and other poisonous creatures and substances.

Yet, there appears to be a total apathy on the part of the government agencies, who are seen totally crippled to outreach the victims of this catastrophe that has never been witnessed in the past half a century. Many years will be needed to bring these parts of Sindh back to normalcy. For all of us Sindhi expatriates, specially living in North America, the need of the hour is to come forward and extend financial help to heal the wounds of the rain affected people.

In a humble effort, it has been decided to establish the "SANA Fund for Sindh's Rain Affectees".

SANA president has appealed to all the concerned and resourceful people in North America to come forward and generously contribute to the fund.

In a press release the SANA president said this could really make a difference. All the assistance that we could provide would be of some help to the suffering humanity. He said the newly established 'Fund for the Sindh's Rain Affectees' would be channeled through any of the internationally credible non-governmental agencies. One suggestion that has been put forward is that the funds could be disbursed through renowned social worker Abides Sattar Edhi whose foundation was the first to reach in the area to help the ill-fated Sindhi rain affectees. Your checks can be made out to 'SANA FUND FOR SINDH'S RAIN AFFECTEES' and mailed to:

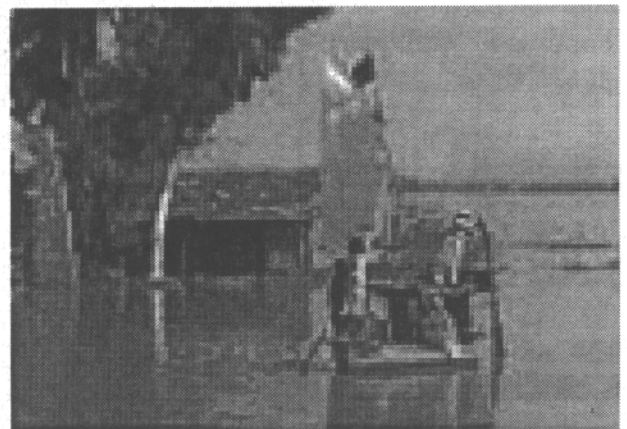
SANA FUND FOR SINDH'S RAIN AFFECTEES
4128 W. 163rd Street
Lawndale, CA 90260 USA



Near Badin, courtesy daily Ibrat



Near Badin, courtesy daily Ibrat



Near Sukkur, courtesy daily Ibrat



Near Tando Bago, courtesy daily Kawish



For comments, inquiries, subscription, news and matter for publication,
please write to:

Sangat

Sindhi Association of North America
4128 W. 163rd Street
Lawndale, CA 90260

Phone: 310-370-5099

Fax: 310-868-2958

e-mail: sindh@juno.com

web site: www.sanalist.org

Editor's e-mail: anarejo@yahoo.com

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