A Publication of Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta (AAAA)

ALIGATLANTA

2025

Carrying Forward the **Aligarh Movement** for the Betterment of Our Communities





AMU VC's Visit to Atlanta
My US Journey
From Aligarh to the Arctic

A Century of Educational Book House
Growing Up Muslim in Atlanta
AAAA Proclamation by GA State



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From Editor's Desk

This issue brings together a rich tapestry of journeys, memories, reflections, and community milestones, capturing personal narratives alongside collective achievements that span continents and generations.

A Memorable Trip to the US by Adiba: A heartfelt account of first impressions, cultural encounters, and lasting memories from a visit to the United States.

From Aligarh to the Arctic by Mohammad Ful Hossain Seikh: An extraordinary journey tracing the author's path from the historic lanes of Aligarh to the far reaches of the Arctic.

A Journey Inspired by a Chance Encounter by Asad Ahmed Siddiquee: A reflective piece highlighting how an unexpected meeting led to a meaningful journey, made possible through community support.

Celebrating a Century of Educational Book House: An insightful tribute to the Educational Book House in Aligarh, marking 100 years of its enduring contribution to literature, learning, and intellectual life.

My Journey from India to USA by Dr. Farooq Ahmed Khan: A personal narrative detailing challenges, aspirations, and experiences that shaped the author's transition from India to the United States.

Remarks by AMU Vice Chancellor Professor Naima Khatoon: Highlights from the Vice Chancellor's address at AAAA reception, emphasizing education, alumni engagement, and global connections.

Atlanta Mushaira Memories by Dr. Rasheed Ahmad: A nostalgic recollection of poetic gatherings in Atlanta, celebrating Urdu poetry and cultural camaraderie.

Growing Up Muslim in Atlanta: The Challenges and the Journey by Samia Taufiq: A thoughtful exploration of identity, resilience, and belonging while growing up Muslim in a multicultural American city.

A Journey of Pride, Purpose, and Profound Connection by Omar Peerzada: Reflections on AMU's transformative visit to the United States, underscoring shared heritage, pride, and renewed purpose among alumni.

Two compelling Urdu contributions that blend thoughtful expression with literary depth:
"*Sadarati Khutba*" by Mushir Siddiqui and "*Dil se Qalam tak*" by Sadaf Farooqui

Special inclusion: a copy of the official 2025 Proclamation by the State of Georgia, commending the Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta (AAAA) for its outstanding contributions to community service and education.

Don't miss our regular features, where we bring you official messages, event photos, key profile, etc.

We extend our sincere thanks to Shahid Ali, Syed Waseem, Dr. Naushad Ghilzai, and Aziz Ajaney for their contributions to the articles and photos. We are deeply grateful to all contributors, authors, and sponsors for their timely submissions and support. Special thanks also to S. Nasir Hussain for his assistance with Urdu typing. We would like to thank our families—especially our wives and kids—for all the patience and support.

The views and opinions expressed in these articles and advertisements are those of the authors and sponsors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of AAAA.

Sincerely,

Rasheed Ahmad, Ph.D.
Shoeb Ahmad, Ph.D.
Honorary Editors

rasheedahmad@hotmail.com
Cover Photo (Top to Bottom): Sir Syed House, AMU—the historic residence of Sir Syed—and a conference room located within the premises.



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ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY

Aligarh - 202 002, UP., India.

A Central University (NAAC ACCREDITED "A+" GRADE)

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23rd September 2025

Message



It gives me immense pleasure to learn that the Aligs in Atlanta are bringing out *ALIGAtlanta* magazine 2025 edition. This publication has, for more than two decades, served as a bridge between the University and its distinguished alumni across North America. I wish all the Aligs in Atlanta a very Happy Sir Syed Day.

The Aligarh movement, founded by our most revered founder, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, in the 19th century, was not only an educational reform but also a cultural and moral awakening. Today, as we mark yet another Sir Syed Day, we are reminded of his farsighted belief that education is the actual engine of social transformation. The Atlanta chapter, through its publications and activities, carries forward this noble mission by sustaining intellectual engagement and preserving the cultural heritage of AMU.

The 21st century brings with it challenges of unprecedented scale: technological disruptions, climate change, ethical dilemmas in science and society, and widening inequalities. For higher education institutions like AMU, this demands rethinking curricula, building interdisciplinary research, and producing graduates who are not just employable but also morally anchored and socially responsible. Here, our alumni play a pivotal role. By mentoring students, offering internships, and sharing expertise, you remain vital partners in strengthening the University's global standing.

I commend the editorial team of *ALIGAtlanta* for producing a magazine that celebrates the intellectual and cultural contributions of the Aligarh fraternity. Each issue testifies to the resilience of the Aligarh spirit, transcending geographical boundaries.

I am confident that this year's edition will also inspire alumni, students, and well-wishers alike to renew their commitment to Sir Syed's vision of education as the cornerstone of reform, service, and nation-building.

With warm regards and best wishes,

Naima Khatoon

Prof. Naima Khatoon

OFFICE OF ALUMNI AFFAIRS

ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY

ALIGARH-202002, UP.INDIA

Prof. Sartaj Tabassum

Chairman

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Dated:15/09/2025



Message

It gives me immense pleasure to connect with your esteemed association and to extend my heartfelt appreciation for the excellent work you are doing in strengthening the Aligarian network and promoting Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's mission of education and service.

On the occasion of Sir Syed Day 2025, I congratulate you on celebrating this historic day with such dedication. Your efforts to keep alive the values of enlightenment, brotherhood, and social upliftment among the community are truly commendable.

I also extend my warm congratulations on the upcoming ALIG Atlanta Magazine 2025, which continues to be a wonderful platform to showcase the achievements and spirit of Aligs worldwide.

With best wishes for the success of your programmes and for the continued growth of the association.

(Prof. Sartaj Tabassum)

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AAAA provides educational assistance to the needy students, helps our Alma Mater/other institutions to modernize, facilitates faculty student exchange and collaboration with institutions of higher learning, promotes Urdu language and its art forms.

AAAA is a non-profit organization with a tax-exempt status, 501(c) (3)



President's Message

Dear members of the AAAA community,

I would like to begin this year's message with a verse of Allama Iqbal:

دل سوز سے خالی ہے نگاہ پاک نہیں ہے
پھر کیا عجب ہے کہ تو بے باک نہیں ہے

Compassion — a rare attribute in today's world — seems to be disappearing from our community and our collective character. Yet compassion is an essential part of being human.

We proudly call ourselves "Ashraf-ul-Makhlooqat", the best of God's creations. But have we ever paused to truly question whether we are living up to that honor? I cannot speak for others, but whenever I ask myself this question, my honest answer remains No. I am not.

We also take pride in following the best religion in the world — Islam — and in calling ourselves Muslims. But again, have we ever truly asked ourselves whether we understand the meaning of being a Muslim? Many of us are Muslims simply because we were born into Muslim families. We seldom reflect on what it actually means.

Islam is a religion of peace, compassion, and generosity. Yet, unfortunately, we often pick and choose teachings based on our convenience. We blame scholars and leaders for dividing the community, for misleading people, and for creating confusion. But rarely do we look in the mirror and analyze our own actions.

No one stops us from being compassionate. No one stops us from being peaceful. No one stops us from being generous to those in need. These qualities do not require a position, a title, or permission — only sincerity.

It is time we begin working on ourselves instead of blaming others. Our actions should speak louder than our words. Our character should set an example so compelling that others naturally feel inspired to follow.

We must teach our younger generation about love, respect, and compassion. We must raise them not only to be good Muslims, but good human beings. They are our future, and leaving behind a better world is our responsibility.

So let us begin — one step at a time — and show the world that we are a peace-loving community, committed to the welfare of the societies we live in and to humanity at large.

میرا پیغام محبت ہے جہاں تک پہنچے۔

Sincerely,
Shahid Ali, President, AAAA

Remarks by **AMU Vice Chancellor Professor Naima Khatoon** at the Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta (AAAA) Reception, October 29, 2025, Al-Noor Banquet Hall, 6010 Singleton Rd, Norcross, GA 30093, USA



Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim
Assalamualaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.

President Mr. Shahid Ali,
Secretary and members of the Executive Committee, Distinguished guests,
My dear Aligs gathered here in Atlanta
Good evening to all of you.

I stand before you with immense joy and gratitude. It is sheer joy to be in Atlanta, the city that symbolises movement, innovation, and resilience, mirrors the very temperament of Aligarh. Here, you all, my brothers and sisters, have created a home away from home, a chapter of warmth, purpose, and community pride that carries forward the legacy of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan with grace and conviction.

This evening, as we commemorate the 208th birth anniversary of our founder, we remember that Sir Syed's mission was not confined to the boundaries of a college; it was a movement of the mind.
He wanted education to awaken conscience, science to serve humanity, and culture to cultivate courtesy.
His life reminds us that genuine progress is not a race for wealth but a journey towards enlightenment.

In the twenty-first century, the questions have changed, but the moral compass he gave us remains the same.

Sir Syed taught that education must harmonise heart and intellect, faith and reason, tradition and transformation.

He would have asked us today to use artificial intelligence with moral intelligence,
To pursue innovation without losing empathy,
And to see the modern world as a space not of conflict but of cooperation.

His guiding principle, "Acquire knowledge, for ignorance is the root of all poverty", is our call to action.

In a time of technological leaps and global uncertainties, his words remind us that progress without character is emptiness.

Dear Atlanta Aligs, I must share with you all that from the historic city of Aligarh, a renewed AMU speaks to the world with quiet confidence.

The University ranks among India's top ten in the National Institutional Ranking Framework, third among government universities in the *India Today* survey, and within the 188th band in the *Times Higher Education Asia Rankings*. These distinctions are more than statistics; they are signs of intellectual continuity.

A series of initiatives mark AMU's new chapter. Our collaboration with **IN-SPACE** for the **AMU CubeSat Project** has opened the skies to our students' imagination. It is not merely a technological venture; it is a reaffirmation that Aligarh's dream of scientific temper is timeless.

When that small satellite orbits the Earth, it will carry within it the memory of Sir Syed's lantern glowing higher, glowing farther.

Through environmental drives, gender-inclusive reforms, and academic outreach, AMU is steadily aligning itself with the Sustainable Development Goals and the vision of *Viksit Bharat @ 2047*.

My dear Aligs, the Atlanta chapter has exemplified how a diaspora can combine heritage with horizon. Your association's recognition by the Georgia General Assembly for its contributions to education and social service stands as an honour not only to you but to every Alig across the world. It proves that our values are universal.

Our values travel well because they are built on respect, humility, and hard work.

Your successful hosting of the **23rd Federation of Aligarh Alumni Associations Convention** made Atlanta the capital of the Alig spirit. You turned nostalgia into action, dialogue into design, and friendship into fellowship.

The convention was a microcosm of AMU itself.
A space where poetry met policy,
youth met experience,
And history met possibility.

Through mentorship initiatives, scholarships, and community events, you have sustained what Sir Syed once called the "moral economy of gratitude." You have made Aligarh not a memory but a living movement.

We now live in a dynamic geopolitical order shaped by artificial intelligence, data governance, sustainability, and global competition. In this shifting terrain, the partnership between alumni and alma mater becomes vital.

At AMU, our young scholars are exploring Artificial Intelligence, Health Humanities, and Environmental Humanities, studying how technology and ethics can coexist. Our medical faculty collaborates with engineers to design low-cost health devices; our environmental scientists work with social scientists to address climate adaptation in vulnerable communities. We are learning to think beyond silos, and we need alumni voices to strengthen this interdisciplinary culture.

When you guide a student, you are not merely helping a career; you are nurturing a worldview. When you speak at a seminar or mentor an innovator, you remind our youth that Aligarh's greatness lies not in wealth or fame but in wisdom and service.

What makes the Atlanta chapter remarkable is the way you weave culture into community life. Your Eid gatherings, youth events, and Urdu literary evenings bring together generations in a city that thrives on diversity. Each celebration becomes an affirmation that *tahzeeb* is not a relic but a living rhythm.

Ladies and gentlemen, I often reflect that AMU's journey is not the story of a single campus but a network of conscience. The Alumni associations across the world, from New York to Washington to Atlanta, make our extended classrooms.

Our university is entering a decisive decade. The coming years will see an expansion in international collaborations, more women in leadership, and stronger integration of research with entrepreneurship. We envision innovation grounded in values; global exposure balanced by local relevance.

In this shared pursuit, your support and your wisdom matter. Let us strengthen our bonds through the exchange of ideas, collaborative research, and mentorship that transcends distance.

The strength of Aligarh lies not merely in its heritage but in its harmony. It unites faith and reason, literature and science, culture and citizenship.
Each alumnus and alumna carries that harmony into their professional world.
Together, we can ensure that AMU continues to be a university that not only teaches knowledge but also embodies ethics.

Let us remind ourselves. We are Aligs, the seekers of truth, guardians of culture, and builders of bridges. We are inheritors of a legacy of courtesy and courage. We are custodians of a light that must never fade.

Atlanta stands today as an emblem of how diaspora energy can illuminate education. You have preserved the essence of Aligarh while embracing the efficiency of the modern world. That synthesis is what Sir Syed would have celebrated most.

Thank you for your generosity, your faith, and your unbroken bond with Aligarh Muslim University.

Thank you very much for inviting me and making me part of your celebration of Sir Syed Day, the birth anniversary of the man in whose glory we continue to shine.

Khuda Hafiz, Thank you

A Journey of Pride, Purpose, and Profound Connection: Reflections on AMU's Transformative Visit to the United States



Omar Peerzada*, AMU, Aligarh

My recent visit to the United States, accompanying the First Lady Vice Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, Prof. Naima Khatoon , has been one of the most humbling, inspiring, and emotionally enriching experiences of my professional life. What began as a courtesy visit soon transformed into a powerful reminder of the unbreakable bond that thousands of Aligs across continents continue to share with their alma mater. As Public Relations Officer of AMU, I have witnessed the strength of this bond on numerous occasions, but seeing it unfold across cities like Washington DC, New York, Atlanta, Chicago, and beyond; expressed with love, loyalty, generosity, and an undying commitment to Sir Syed's mission—was something truly extraordinary.

Our journey began with the 24th Annual Convention of the Federation of Aligarh Alumni Associations (FAAA) and the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Washington DC Alumni Association (AAADC), held at The Rockville Hotel, Maryland DC. The theme "Celebrating Aligarh Spirit, Legacy, Leadership, and the Power of Inclusivity", resonated deeply with the ethos of AMU and set the tone for a gathering that was as scholarly as it was sentimental. The hall, filled with alumni from Houston to Chicago, Boston to Toronto, reverberated with the unmistakable spirit of "Being an Alig"; a blend of refinement, affection, and intellectual depth.

I extend special admiration to the distinguished alumni whose spirited efforts made these engagements profoundly meaningful. Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Mr. Hasan Kamal, Mr. Afzal Usmani , Dr. Syed Rafat Husain, Dr. Fazal Khan, Mr. Syed Ali Rizvi, Dr. Naushad Khan Ghilzai, Dr. Raziuddin, Mr. Tariq Farooqi, Ms. Naila Saeed, Abdul Jabbar Khan and Nausha Asrar along with many more passionate Aligs demonstrated exemplary leadership, commitment, and affection for AMU. Their tireless dedication to advancing AMU's global standing, nurturing alumni unity, and supporting institutional initiatives left an unforgettable impression on us. Their sincerity reflected in every interaction, gesture, and deliberation, stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of being "An Alig."

As the Vice Chancellor delivered a mesmerizing keynote address, proudly announcing AMU's place among the top ten universities of India, thundering applause filled the auditorium. It was a defining moment not just for AMU, but for every Alig who has carried the university's name with dignity across the world. Her message of inclusive education, intercultural harmony, and sustained academic excellence struck a deep emotional chord.

The convention honored exemplary alumni such as Dr. Frank Islam, Prof. Narender Goel, and Dr. Salman Akhtar with the Sir Syed Lifetime Achievement Awards. The cultural segment, "Woh Shahr-e-Tarab-Rumano Ka," along with the soulful rendition of the AMU Tarana, created moments of pure nostalgia and unity.

In New York, the Aligarh Alumni Association of New York (AAANY) hosted an unforgettable gathering at the residence of Prof. Tazeen Beg and Prof. Mirza Irfan Beg. Alumni from New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut came together with warmth and pride. The Vice Chancellor's address as AMU's first woman leader evoked admiration and renewed commitment from all present. The early childhood intervention program with the City University of New York (CUNY), supported by AAANY, emerged as a shining example of Aligs promoting social impact globally.

Our engagements with the Aligarh Medical Alumni Association of North America (AMAANA) highlighted once again the deep-rooted commitment of JNMC alumni to the growth of AMU. AMAANA's flagship Cancer Centre Initiative stands today as a beacon of hope for Aligarh and Western Uttar Pradesh. Presentations by Dr. Mohammad Akram, Dr. Hina Khan, and Dr. Samina Salim showcased the immense potential of this transformative endeavor. As a gesture of goodwill and recognition, a senior Alig and eminent oncological surgeon, Dr. Mohsin Raza, was conferred the Lifetime Achievement Award for his contributions to the field.

The visit to Stony Brook Medicine Cancer Center in New York opened promising avenues for collaboration. Prof. Khatoon was engaged meaningfully with Dr. Aaron Sasson, Director of the Pancreatic Cancer Center and Co-Director of the Gastrointestinal Oncology Team, exploring areas of shared interest and future partnership. It was inspiring to witness a strong alignment of values of innovation, excellence, and patient-centered care.

Upon her arrival in Atlanta, the Vice-Chancellor was warmly received by the Aligarh Alumni Association of

Atlanta (AAAA). The visit held special significance as the Association sought to provide her with insights into the administrative and academic frameworks of leading public universities in the United States, particularly Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech), which is ranked among the top 15 universities globally in the QS World University Rankings.

With the support of Dr. Rasheed Ahmad (Alig) and Prof. Mustaque Ahamad, a comprehensive demonstration was arranged at the Georgia Tech campus. Presented by Prof. Siva Theja Maguluri, the session highlighted Georgia Tech's robust ecosystem that promotes research and innovation into start-ups and commercial ventures.

At the invitation of Mr. Syed Hasan Kamal, Prof. Anil Pradhan of The Ohio State University (OSU) visited Atlanta and his discussions with the Vice-Chancellor focused on further strengthening the ABK STEMer Center at AMU, along with exploring the commercial and translational models practiced at OSU, which hold potential relevance for AMU.

A significant highlight of the visit was the honour conferred upon the Vice-Chancellor by the Georgia State Senate, presented by Senator Sheikh Rahman, highlighting AMU's growing global stature. The engagements also included visits to myGenomics Laboratory, as well as a meeting with the Consul General of Atlanta, Mr. Ramesh Babu Lakshmanan, all of which contributed to deepening institutional ties and promoting future collaborations.

The visit concluded with an alumni meet organized by AAAA. The presentation of a plaque of appreciation to the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor was a deeply moving gesture, reflecting the alumni's admiration for her leadership and their enduring commitment to their alma mater.

Every city we visited, every hand we shook, and every conversation we shared highlighted one unmistakable truth: 16 AMU alumni associations in the USA are serving as a vital bridge between India and the United States. They are advancing academic cooperation, promoting cultural understanding, encouraging scientific dialogue, and strengthening ties between two great democracies. Their role in nurturing intellectual partnerships and meaningful people-to-people connections is invaluable and essential in building deeper mutual understanding between both nations.

As the PRO of AMU, I returned to India with a profound sense of pride and renewed purpose. Witnessing the missionary zeal of our alumni—emotional, intellectual, and philanthropic—was truly inspiring. Their achievements echo Aligarian values, their memories remain rooted in its historic campus and their hearts continue to beat for the institution that shaped them.

AMU now stands ready to strengthen this bond further, walking alongside its global alumni community, especially those who have expressed trust in the university's progress under empowered female leadership. Together, hand in hand and heart to heart, we advance toward a future worthy of our shared legacy, aspirations, and collective dreams.
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** The Public Relations Officer (PRO), AMU, Aligarh, who accompanied the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Naima Khatoon, is the first sitting PRO of AMU to have ever visited the USA*



A Memorable Trip to US

Adiba*, Ph.D. Scholar, AMU, Aligarh

This year, I had the wonderful opportunity to present my research at the APS Global Physics Summit 2025 in California. As my first international conference in the United States, I was both excited and nervous. The news of being awarded the APS travel grant brought me a great sense of encouragement, helping to ease some of my concerns. Since the conference coincided with the month of Ramadan, I was a bit more apprehensive about how things would go; otherwise simple things like managing local commute, ensuring halal food, etc., were making me anxious.

I found my duas answered, as I was blessed to meet some of the most warm-hearted and affectionate individuals who left a lasting impression on me. I was extremely touched by the warmth I received right from the moment I arrived at the LA airport.

To be a part of the largest physics conference in the world, was truly a wonderful opportunity. What made it more special for me was being honoured at the conference with the *Distinguished Student Award* by the American Physical Society. There are moments of raw happiness that one remembers for a lifetime. For me, it was the genuineness with which everyone celebrated my award, making my achievement even more meaningful. What moved me most was that although they didn't share the common connection of being associated with my alma mater, their kindness and genuine care resonated the same spirit and value.

I enjoyed a lot in CA. Some experiences became especially memorable, like praying Taraweeh in congregation among people from all corners of the world and sharing 3 am Sehri at a 24/7 open diner. Even miles away from home, I felt embraced with such affection that it truly felt as if I were among family in CA.

The Atlanta Experience

Rescheduling my return flight to visit Atlanta turned out to be the highlight of my trip. From being hosted with such cordiality to being shown the city's beautiful landmarks, my experience was truly enriched by the warm and thoughtful engagement of everyone I met. Pleasant weather, cherry blossoms in full bloom, and wonderful company made the sightseeing in Atlanta truly refreshing.

At the AMU campus, we often discuss about the alumni network, their mentorship, compassion, and commitment towards nurturing younger Aligs. Throughout my trip, I was fortunate to get a glimpse of that spirit and learn from their wisdom. Meeting AAAA members at the iftar gathering was both humbling and inspiring. I was welcomed wholeheartedly with sincere excitement. These were individuals I had only heard about before, yet they took out time from their busy schedules. In those moments, I felt a renewed sense of pride and gratitude for AMU and all those associated with Sir Syed Tehreek.

The alumni associations across the world contribute in concrete yet often unrecognized ways, supporting students, providing resources, and helping the idara grow. Unfortunately, most of the current students are unaware of these efforts. Improvements are often assumed to be only government provisions, when in truth, alumni contributions play such a huge part. I sincerely hope that these contributions can be more visibly acknowledged on campus, so that students can learn the true value of giving back and continue this beautiful tradition when it is their turn to serve.

It is deeply inspiring for us younger students to see how accomplished alumni, despite their demanding lives and responsibilities, remain so deeply connected to their alma mater and invest in its growth. Their guidance and support exemplify the strength of the AMU spirit that continues to unite generations.

As a current student of AMU, I hold deep respect for the valuable contributions that senior alumni have made over the years. I sincerely thank the Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta for their unwavering commitment to the betterment of our institution and for nurturing a supportive fraternity for all Aligs. For many of us, their acts of dedication serve as reminders of the values of service, community, and togetherness that lie at the heart of AMU.

An insightful takeaway from this trip was that "there are many ways of things to be done, of tasks to be completed. It is the humility with which things are done, and the intricacies with which they are handled, that leave a lasting mark."

**Adiba is a PhD scholar in the Department of Physics at Aligarh Muslim University, India, specializing in next generation memory devices, and currently serves as the President of International Society for Muslim Women in Sciences. She recently received the Distinguished Student Award by American Physical Society.*

Dr. Asif Taufiq, DDS, MBA

Citizen Surgeon, Educator, Community Leader

Dr. Asif Taufiq was born in 1955 in Karachi, Pakistan, into a family deeply rooted in education and social progress. His father, Taufiq M. Khan, was a Ph.D. graduate of the Wharton School in the 1950s, and his mother, Naim Falima Taufiq, an Aligarh University alumna, was a pioneering educator who championed girls' education in her community.

Dr. Taufiq began his early education in Karachi, Pakistan, and completed his high school studies at St. Mary's International School in Tokyo, Japan. After completing high school, Dr. Asif Taufiq was encouraged by his father to pursue higher education in the United States. Following his father's advice, Dr. Taufiq arrived in the U.S.A. in 1976 to study engineering.

Upon earning his college degrees with BS in Mechanical Engineering and BA in Business Management from Washington State University, Pullman, WA, Dr. Taufiq began his professional career in Montana, working as an engineer for the Montana Power Company for two years. As the youngest engineer in the company, he was entrusted with preparing budgets for ongoing projects. However, he soon realized that advancement to Senior Project Manager would take considerable time, as his immediate supervisor had been with the company for two decades. Life in the small town also offered few social activities, though Dr. Asif Taufiq became an avid trout fisherman and often spent his evenings fishing with friends.

Seeking new opportunities and broader horizons, Dr. Taufiq decided to pursue an M.B.A. and was accepted to Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. After graduating from Emory Business School, he received several lucrative job offers and accepted a position as a stockbroker in New York City. However, before leaving for New York, a friend invited him to volunteer at an Emory retirement home—an experience that profoundly changed his perspective on money and material pursuits, inspiring him to dedicate his career to helping others.

This new sense of purpose led Dr. Taufiq back to Emory University, where he was awarded a scholarship to attend the School of Dentistry. After earning his D.D.S., he realized that general dentistry was not his true calling. He subsequently pursued a Residency in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at Emory University's Department of Surgery, completing six years of advanced surgical training.

Following his residency, Dr. Taufiq established a successful private practice and served as Chief of Facial Trauma at Gwinnett Medical Center (GMC) in Lawrenceville, Georgia, from 2019 to 2023. He currently serves as a Clinical Assistant Professor at the Emory University Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, where he teaches and mentors surgical residents.

Dr. Taufiq's mother, Naim Fatima Taufiq, was a pre-Partition graduate of Aligarh University and an exceptionally progressive educator. As a school principal, she passionately encouraged families in her community to send their daughters to school. His cousin continues this educational legacy at Aligarh University, and Dr. Taufiq often remarks that "Aligarh is in my blood."

Dr. Taufiq's association with the Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta (AAAA) began when he attended a Mushaira sponsored by the organization with his parents. His father, *Sahib-e-Diwan*, accompanied him, and there they met distinguished personalities such as Hasan Kamal Sahib, Dr. Wasi Siddiqui, Rasheed Ahmed Bhai, Yasir Noumani, and Waseem Bhai. That event marked the beginning of Dr. Taufiq's lifelong connection to the Aligarh community.

From 2014 to 2019, Dr. Taufiq served as President of the Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta. One of his most memorable moments came when his mother—then in her eighties—presided over a Mushaira and shared her thoughts on education before a standing-room-only audience that included Ajit Kumar, the Consul General of India.

Among his proudest achievements as President was establishing a faculty and student exchange program between Mercer University's School of Theology and Aligarh University's Department of Islamiat. This collaboration led to the publication of a book chronicling the experience of an Aligarh professor teaching Islam to Mercer theology students—an initiative that bridged cultures and deepened academic ties.

Dr. Taufiq often describes Aligarh not just as an institution, but as a living *Tahzeeb*—a cultural and intellectual tradition born in the Indo-Pak subcontinent and carried forward by Aligarians around the world. He emphasizes that Aligarians remain committed to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's mission of "Education for the Masses," demonstrated through scholarships, early childhood education initiatives, cultural programs like Mushaira, and postgraduate mentorship for aspiring scholars.

An active member of several local and national organizations, Dr. Taufiq notes that Aligarians stand out for their openness to constructive criticism and their ability to

adapt to changing times—while never losing sight of Sir Syed's educational ideals.

Among his fondest memories is a visit from Mr. Zakir Khan, President of Sir Syed Engineering University in Karachi, who stayed at Dr. Asif Taufiq's lake house in Atlanta. Due to his advanced age, Zakir sahib initially had difficulty climbing the stairs. With the help of Hasan Kamal Sahib pulling from the front and Dr. Taufiq gently assisting from behind, they managed to get him inside. Over the next few days, with encouragement and exercise guided by Dr. Taufiq, Hasan Sahib, and Yasir Sahib, Zakir Sahib regained his strength and was soon able to climb the stairs on his own—a story Dr. Taufiq recalls with warmth and humor.

Dr. Taufiq advises younger leaders to always have a clear plan, to generate and manage funds with transparency, and to foster meaningful intellectual discussions. He reminds them that success takes time—just as a tree must mature before it bears fruit—and that leadership is not about wealth alone, but about service to humanity.

He often says, "People may forget the names of wrestlers, movie stars, or singers, but they never forget the names of their teachers."

In closing, Dr. Asif Taufiq expresses immense pride in being part of the Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta. His journey with AAAA has taught him humility, kindness, and the true meaning of service. From his first visit to Aligarh Muslim University with his mother to his years as President, Dr. Taufiq continues to carry the *Aligarh Tehzeeb* within him—with deep gratitude and pride. ……*Editor*

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L to R (Top): Dr. Asif Taufiq's Family. Sarosh Taufiq, Maliha Taufiq, Himself, Ann Taufiq, Samia Taufiq, Rafia Taufiq. **Bottom (Left):** Dr. Asif Taufiq with Atlanta Consul-General India, Mr. Ajit Kumar (Second from Right). **Bottom (Right**): With his mother, Naim Fatima Taufiq



My journey

Farooq Ahmed Khan*, Ph.D., Carrollton, GA

Preamble. My first stint as a teacher lasted all of 15 minutes. I was then 16 and in high school, and immensely enjoyed the experience of working out a mathematics problem on the blackboard. It took me another 16 years to start my career as a college-level instructor, at West Georgia College, now the University of West Georgia (UWG), in 1994. Now in my 32nd year at UWG, I reflect upon my journey.

Education. My older brother introduced me to the Joint Entrance Examination for the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT). I studied really hard for it and got the rank 1232. I was on the fence between Chemistry and Chemical Engineering. I did not get into a Chemical Engineering B.Tech., and chose the 5-year Integrated Chemistry at IIT, Kanpur. I struggled in the first two years in a pool of some of the smartest and best-prepared students in the nation. Thereafter, I did well. I obtained admission to Columbia University for my Ph.D. – the stellar reputation of IIT Kanpur and my performance in Years 3-5 outweighed the first two mediocre years!

About IIT, Kanpur, Columbia University and the University of Utah (where I pursued a teaching post-doctoral fellowship that allowed me to teach one course a year) I rubbed shoulders with some of the finest students. It did give me a sense of humility as well! I saw firsthand the brilliance, as well as the nice human nature of the faculty members, in particular in my advisors Professors Flynn and Armentrout, at Columbia and Utah, respectively. There was absolutely no doubt in my mind in 1992 (mid-way through my post-doctoral work) that I wanted to pursue a career as a faculty member.

Experimental Chemistry is really expensive. I made the decision to pursue a career in the United States, with its abundance of resources, as opposed to an institution in India.

Early years at West Georgia. In my early years, it was essential to find balance and to fight the temptation to do too much while introducing topics in Chemistry that were abstract or mathematical or both. I emulated my former professors and wrote extensively on the blackboard at a pace at which students could take notes, and in my upper-level courses, gave verbatim copies of my notes so that a greater level of discussion could take place. Classroom technology (PowerPoint, when it was not provided by publishers) and web-based instruction followed, thanks to faculty development offered by the University System of Georgia. These have become integral to my practice of teaching, and my repertoire now includes fully online courses, including the novel offerings of college-level Chemistry courses with laboratories, that I helped develop as a part of a team of faculty members under the auspices of *eCore*.

Creating a novel "studio" classroom. With Professor Andrew Leavitt as the principal designer, I was an active participant in the creation of the "studio" classroom for teaching introductory chemistry, when the Department of Chemistry moved to a new building in 2001. This approach represents a radical departure from the traditional "blackboard-style" lecture format and focuses, instead, on a more interactive learning environment that integrates the laboratory and lecture experience into one seamless class. The focus of this approach is interactive learning, with a web page serving as the medium that integrates various components, and models the style of "learning by doing", which is used by practicing scientists.

Undergraduate research as an apprenticeship. For many chemistry majors desiring research careers in an academic or industrial setting, a bachelor's degree is a stepping stone to graduate programs. While prescribed courses provide a valuable background, it is also important for an undergraduate to learn to recognize and define problems, and to design theoretical or experimental strategies to solve them. To this end, undergraduate research is an ideal way of learning by doing. To pursue this, it was essential to acquire state-of-the-art instrumentation. Given the prohibitive costs, a colleague (Professor Andrew Leavitt) and I pursued external resources as a team. In an effort that we termed "spinning gold from straw" we set up a laboratory with lasers and an ultra-high vacuum apparatus that are really unique in an undergraduate department (pictured below). Students who pursued work in this setting attended prestigious graduate programs, including Cal Tech, UC Berkeley, UCLA, to name a few, and several now hold positions as faculty members or industrial scientists.

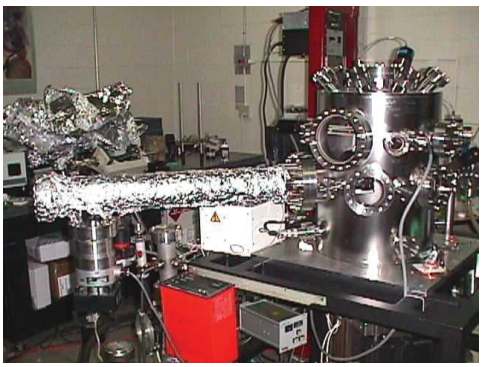


Photo: *An ultra-high vacuum chamber with capabilities for surface science, one of the most photographed instruments at West Georgia. Designed by Professor Andrew Leavitt, the assembly was done by a large number of undergraduate students in a collaborative effort.*

This endeavor has continued, with the addition of a mass spectrometer (funded by NSF) shared with the Department of Biology, and continues to provide students invaluable opportunities to grow as scientists, and to disseminate their work via presentations at conferences and peer-reviewed articles in journals.

Center of Teaching and Learning: Conversations that transcend boundaries. In my capacity as the Director of the Center of Teaching and Learning (2004-2009), I focused on organizing discussions on a wide range of issues related to teaching as well as facilitation of grant writing. I have thus gained a valuable perspective on common themes that transcend disciplinary boundaries across the Colleges at UWG.

The Dean as a facilitator. Two paradigms guided me in my role as the Dean of the College of Science and Mathematics (COSM) during 2012-2015. One was *Complete College Georgia*, with its emphasis on student success, which I personally regard as both an ethical obligation, as well as an important factor in resource allocation for USG institutions. The second is the importance of STEM disciplines for state and national economies, as evidenced by the publication *Rising Above the Gathering Storm* (a report requested by the United States Congress) which ties education in STEM disciplines with the competitiveness of the United States in the global market. Interestingly, the STEM II Initiative was housed throughout my stint as the Dean in the COSM Dean's office, and its focus on student success overlapped with the mission of the COSM itself! Thus, the Dean's office was actively engaged in a set of activities that focused simultaneously on faculty development and student success, to include teaching innovations, faculty-directed undergraduate research and pursuit of external funds. Indeed, for 2013-2014, the STEM II Initiative (which goes by UWise, University of West Georgia Institutional Stem Excellence) was recognized as the best academic program on campus and nominated for the Board of Regents Teaching Excellence Award in 2014. The same year, UWise was also a finalist for TAG (Technology Association of Georgia) STEM awards.

The last quarter of my career. A Dean must think "big picture". As a full-time faculty member as a "civilian" (2015 – present), one does not shut off that mode of thought! The mission that I wish to accomplish in what is, Insha 'Allah, one more decade of work, is unequivocally the preparation of the next generation of professionals in the natural sciences, healthcare and engineering. One hopes that these professionals will work on consequential universal problems such as affordable healthcare and plentiful energy, made possible by advances in materials science and artificial intelligence. I also serve as the advisor for a student organization of pre-healthcare professional students on my campus, *Emerging Healthcare Leaders*. Club activities include opportunities for community service, and visits by admission officers from professional schools, healthcare professionals, and alumni attending professional schools.

The quest for instrumentation that defined my early years continues! One success story: **West Georgia was the only undergraduate institution that received a DURIP grant in 2023**, entitled *Sub-Nanosecond Time-Resolved Emission Spectrometer for Investigating Nanomaterials, Soft Materials and Self-Assembled Systems*" Defense University Research Instrumentation Program (**DURIP**); Hansen (PI); **Khan,** McPhail DeSilva and Swamy-Mruthinti (co-PI), $413,619. Please see:

https://www.westga.edu/news/academics/cmcs/department-of-defense-grant.php

The role of alumni. My wife, Dr. Ghazia Asif, is an alumna of AMU, and my late father-in-law was an alumnus as well, making me a *damaad* of this wonderful institution! Over two decades plus, I have observed firsthand the impact of AMU alumni – the organization of cultural events, visits by the VC's of AMU, and the support provided to visiting students and alumni. The contributions by alumni to the Alma Mater via financial support are also invaluable. Equally important is the networking – specially connecting alumni with current students. The latter provides priceless connections for current students, *de facto* mentoring, that is an ongoing chain reaction. Please keep up this good work!

As to words of advice, I quote my late father, a life-long scholar of the Qur'an, who strongly encouraged me (with quotes from the scriptures that I sadly don't recall exactly) "to do justice to one's profession". That, in my opinion, also includes preparing the next generation of professionals, regardless of their fields.

And, for long, daunting journeys, including many projects by AMU Federations and Alumni Associations, I quote the poet Majrooh Sultanpuri:

میں اکیلا ہی چلا تھا جانب منزل مگر
لوگ ساتھ آتے گئے اور کارواں بنتا گیا
مجروح سلطانپوری –

Acknowledgements. Looking back, my late mother (who did not have the opportunity to attend college) and my late father spent a disproportionately large portion of a modest family income on their children's education; all five of us completed college degrees and pursued teaching for at least some part of our careers.

**Farooq Ahmed Khan, married to AMU alumna Ghazia Asif (M.Sc. and Ph.D.), is a professor of Chemistry at the University of West Georgia, where he is now serving in his 32nd year.*



From left to right: Ghazia Asif, Sarah Khan, Farooq Khan and Alisha Khan. Both Sarah and Alisha are alumni of the IB Program at Douglas County High School. Sarah (Georgetown University, class of 2024) is currently a Fulbright Scholar in India, and Alisha is currently a freshman at UGA.

FOTOFREAKS

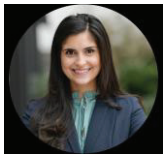
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Growing Up Muslim in Atlanta: The Challenges and the Journey



Samia Taufiq*, Atlanta, GA

Growing up Muslim in America has always meant learning to live between worlds. As a half-Pakistani, half-white girl growing up in Atlanta, I've often felt like I'm balancing two identities, trying to honor my roots while navigating the culture around me. At home, the aroma of my mom's Italian cooking filled the kitchen while GEO TV played on the television in the living room. It was a mix of Urdu qawwalis and Dean Martin. I remember the early Ramadan mornings eating sehri with my family. My dad would drag us out of bed and me, and my three siblings would begrudgingly make our way down to the kitchen and eat whatever was in front of us. Praying together created a sanctuary, a space where we could all come together, leave our worries on the prayer mat and find peace in our shared faith.

Our home was a tapestry of Pakistani and American culture and tradition. We were lucky enough to grow up with our Dadi, who spent countless hours teaching us not just Islamic values, but life lessons that shaped who I am today. I spent endless nights sitting at her bedside discussing every aspect of life, from Pakistani politics to how much I hated having to go to school. Her quiet strength and unwavering commitment to our values became a foundation for my own resilience.

Outside of the home, it wasn't always easy growing up as a mixed Muslim girl. Middle school was especially hard because all you want to do is fit in. I went to a private catholic school as a Muslim girl, so all I did was stand out. While everyone was going to mass, I was staying behind in home room. I often found myself explaining what being Muslim meant, correcting stereotypes and dispelling misconceptions. As a kid, this was uncomfortable and frustrating. Sometimes I wished I could be like everyone else and blend in. I wanted to be "fully white" or "fully American" so that I wouldn't stand out so much. Yet, those uncomfortable moments became catalysts for growth. It taught me to be proud of who I am and to speak up for when people get it wrong.

Living in Atlanta, I'm lucky to be in a diverse city. I have found strength in my community, both in my friends and in my family. Not all my friends are Muslim, and that is a wonderful thing. They accept me for who I am and are respectful and curious about my culture and religion. My family keeps me grounded and loved. Being Muslim in America isn't always easy, but it has made me more resilient. It's taught me to hold on to my faith while still being open to the world around me. I have learned that my identity isn't a limitation or a burden, it's a bridge to the world around me.

**Samia Taufiq is a corporate lawyer in KPMG firm, Atlanta. She holds her law degree from Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio*

Mushaira Memories

Rasheed Ahmad*, Ph.D., P.E., Atlanta, GA

This October (2025) month marks the 50th anniversary of the Aligarh Alumni Association (AAA) of Washington DC, a milestone achievement not only for its founding members but also for the broader South Asian community in North America. Established in 1975 by a small group of passionate alumni and well-wishers, the Association is likely the oldest Aligarh alumni group outside of India, following only the Aligarh Old Boys' Association in Aligarh and its counterpart in the UK.
Over the decades, the Washington DC chapter has fostered deep ties with sister organization, most notably the Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta (AAAA), which was founded in 1984—nine years later. For a long time, AAAA functioned as a chapter of the DC association until the formation of the Federation of Aligarh Alumni Associations (FAAA) in 2000. At that point, AAAA became an independent entity, marking a new chapter in its journey.

The Mushaira Tradition: A Cultural Legacy
Atlanta's signature event, the Annual International Mushaira, began in 1985 and quickly became a cherished tradition. For many years—particularly from 1985 to the early 2000s—the event was held during the Thanksgiving weekend, mostly at Emory University's White Hall. Following the creation of the FAAA, mushaira dates began to rotate across cities to allow for broader participation. Atlanta's mushaira dates then varied from Oct to Nov and many times tied with Birmingham, AL mushaira date, and the venue varied over the years, including local restaurants, university auditoriums (Mercer, Georgia Perimeter College), Hilton hotel, and even house basement and event halls.

Key host families—Syed and Rukhsana Waseem, Musheer and Bushra Siddiqui, Waheed Khan Bhai and Talat Aapa, Siraj (late) and Shaheen Karatela, Khursheed Ahmad (late), Hasan Kamal, Dr. Yusuf Ji, Dr. Wasi Siddiqui, Akbar and Tehmina Zaidi, M. Inamullah and Zareen, Dr. Farzana Bharmal, Sadaf and Asif Farooqui, Dr. Asif Taufiq, Shahid Ali and Dr. Moiz Mumtaz, among others—played pivotal roles in welcoming poets and hosting them at their residences. Their "mezbani," became legendary, along with the countless stories and shared memories that live on today.

Poets, Passports, and Peculiarities
Hosting poets from the subcontinent brought joy—and occasionally, challenges. Some poets with a fondness for alcohol found the dry laws and family-oriented setups of American households a bit too sobering. One well-known poet from Pakistan reportedly had a nervous breakdown, which was resolved only after a local doctor advised "a good dose of *angoor ki beti*." Miraculously, he recovered immediately. Another Delhi poet would secretly carry alcohol in a thermos, baffling his hosts who assumed it held tea or coffee—until the truth was revealed.

There were logistical hurdles too. On one occasion, after dropping poets off at the Atlanta airport for their next leg of travel, flights were cancelled due to snowstorms. The stranded poets, unable to make local calls, struggled to contact their hosts. The incident led to a practical innovation—FAAA began providing visiting poets with local SIM cards for easier communication.
In another instance, a poet lost his passport, triggering panic and last-minute coordination with the Indian Consulate to issue an emergency ID. Language barriers also posed challenges: a famous Bollywood poet-couple struggled at the airport with English signage until a kind-hearted fellow passenger—referred to as their "angel"—guided them not only to their gate but also to their host family's home.

Mushaira Management: Art, Drama, and Diplomacy
Running a mushaira was no small feat. Sequencing the poets for recitations often sparked disputes, especially among senior poets. Tensions sometimes escalated to walkouts, only to be diffused after careful diplomacy and, at times, the timely intervention of figures like Dr. A. Abdullah of Washington DC (who would often travel with visiting poets as an invited participating poet as well as the main mushaira coordinator). The "nazrana" (honorarium) was another frequent bone of contention. Poets would compare the modest US honorariums to the significantly higher payouts from India, Pakistan, and Gulf countries, where they could earn a

substantial amount in a single night versus weeks of travel and performances in the US. Poets often speculated on why certain individuals received higher honorariums, but the organizers handled the matter with great care, avoiding any sense of impropriety.

Beyond the Stage: Hosting with Heart

Because US mushairas are typically weekend events, host families often looked after poets for several days before and after the performances. This included sightseeing, dining, and accommodating diverse food preferences. While some poets stuck to traditional South Asian fare, others were more adventurous, asking for burgers, pasta, or sandwiches—requests always met with cheerful hospitality. Yet, not all surprises were pleasant. At one dinner outing, poets avoided sitting near a fellow poet without explanation. It was later discovered that he had been wearing the same clothes for several days and was likely neglecting basic hygiene—a situation handled with as much grace as possible.

Lasting Legacy: Laughter, Lessons, and Love

In preparing this reflection, I spoke to a couple host families who fondly remembered the ups and downs of their mushaira experiences. Their homes were graced with poetic brilliance and eccentric personalities, and their stories—from forgotten medications to host house dress code reminder to kitchen tidiness to misplaced sherwanis—are still shared with warmth and laughter.

Despite the challenges, the spirit of community, culture, and camaraderie has kept the Aligarh Alumni Association thriving for these many decades. We commend to the hosts, the poets, and all the unsung heroes who made it possible.

*Editor

From Aligarh to the Arctic: Carrying the Spirit of Sir Syed to Greenland's Summit

Mohammad Ful Hossain Seikh*, University of Kansas



Somewhere high above the Arctic Circle, inside a roaring C-130 Hercules aircraft of the U.S. Air National Guard slicing through a snowstorm, I was reading "The Sealed Nectar" and thinking of Aligarh. Outside, the world was a blur of white and wind. Inside, my thoughts drifted back to the red-brick corridors of Aligarh Muslim University, to the place that built my courage to dream beyond the imaginable. I was the only Indian scientist on board, heading toward Summit Station, Greenland, a speck on the planet where air thins at three kilometers above sea level and the ice below is three-and-a-half kilometers thick. I did not know what awaited me there, only that the journey that began in Murshidabad, passed through Aligarh, had brought me here, to the edge of the Earth.

When I finally stood on that vast expanse of eternal snow, the wind biting through my layers, I unfurled three flags: India's tricolor, the AMU banner, and the University of Kansas flag. The saffron blazed against the midnight sun, the white melted into the untouched snow, the greens whispered through the name Greenland, the crimson of KU and AMU gleamed with pride, and the blue of Kansas stretched endlessly into the Arctic sky; each color alive upon the world's whitest canvas. People may call it a small gesture, but to me, it was everything, a moment where my alma mater met the pole, where a student's gratitude met the sky.

Few know what it takes to work at the top of the world. The cold can freeze your eyelashes within minutes, and any open skin is instantly at risk of frostbite. The sun never sets, and a snowstorm can turn the world invisible in seconds. I drove snowmobiles alone through blizzards, sometimes fearing polar bears, there had been sightings the year before, and often questioning the limits of endurance. Yet amid the silence and the snow, memories of Aligarh kept me company.

At the core of my journey was the Radio Neutrino Observatory in Greenland (RNO-G), a pioneering experiment searching for ultra-high energy neutrinos, ghostly messengers that may help us understand the universe's most violent and energetic events. And even in these unforgiving conditions, science continues to push forward. RNO-G stands as a reminder of what collaboration and persistence

can achieve, and it quietly tells young people everywhere that curiosity can carry them to places they never imagined.

I remembered Saif Sheikh bhai, a senior whose resilience has always inspired me, and prayed for his recovery. I thought of Wasikul Islam bhai, my SSGSA mentor, whose firm but caring advice stopped me from rushing into a master's program in Germany and instead guided me toward a PhD in the United States, a decision that changed my life. I smiled thinking of Sachin Gupta bhai, who, without ever meeting me, paid from his pocket to send my test scores when I could not afford it. I thought of Rehan Baqri bhai's calm wisdom and Ali Rizvi bhai's help in arranging the AMU flag that would one day flutter on the Greenlandic plateau. And beyond them all, I thought of my wife, who would surely be prouder than I can ever be, and my parents, who still do not quite understand where Greenland is, but whose prayers have carried me farther than any aircraft ever could.

What bound all these memories together was AMU, my alma mater, the cultivator of my grey matter, the community that guided me long before I ever believed I belonged there, nurturing me quietly and patiently. SSGSA was its extension across oceans, a living reminder of what Sir Syed envisioned more than a century ago, a fellowship of minds connected not by geography but by purpose. Without AMU and SSGSA, I might have had ideas but not the direction, ambition but not the opportunity.

At Summit Station, where the temperature dipped to minus fifty five degrees Celsius and even breathing felt earned, I realized how much of me was shaped in Aligarh, the curiosity to ask, the resilience to persist, and the humility to stay grounded no matter how far I go. In those long hours when the wind pressed against the windows and the horizon faded into white, I remembered my teachers' words, my friends' laughter, and the countless evenings under the AMU sky and in the 'chai dhaba' filled with debate, hope, and dreams.

So yes, I am proud. Proud to be the first Alig to reach Greenland's Summit Station, carrying the spirit of Sir Syed's movement into a land where life barely exists but science still flourishes. But more than pride, it is gratitude that fills my heart, gratitude to those who believed in a boy from Murshidabad and taught him that the truest measure of success is not where you reach, but how many people's hopes you carry along the way.

From Saktipur to Summit, the journey has been improbable, humbling, and full of meaning. The ice taught me endurance, science taught me precision, but Aligarh taught me grace, to stay human amid the extremes.

As I planted those flags into the polar wind, I felt something eternal pass through me, the continuity of Sir Syed's dream, still alive, still rising, still inspiring.

"From Aligarh to the Arctic, the journey continues, and it will always begin at Aligarh."



***Mohammad Ful Hossain Seikh, AMU alumnus and Physics doctoral researcher at the University of Kansas, unfurls the Indian, AMU, and KU flags at Summit Station, Greenland.*

A Journey Inspired by a Chance Encounter Supported by AAAA



Asad Ahmed Siddiquee*, Pune, India

I began my journey toward United World College (UWC) in August 2022, not realizing that a simple encounter would quietly redirect the course of my life. I met Mr. Affan from Shopian Kashmir in Aligarh, he had just visited the German Embassy in Delhi and was preparing to leave for UWC Robert Bosch College in Freiburg, Germany. At that time, I was a CBSE student in Abha, Saudi Arabia, following a predictable academic routine. The UWC world felt unfamiliar and distant, yet something about it immediately drew me in. Even then, I sensed that this was a path I wanted to follow.

What followed was a long, demanding preparation that stretched nearly two years. Writing seven essays pushed me into deeper self-reflection than I had ever experienced in school. When I was shortlisted, I believed I was ready, but the real challenge had only just begun. My parents arranged four online mock-interviews with different panels, each exposing new weaknesses and building new strengths. Still, nothing could fully prepare me for the actual three-hour interview. It was intense, full of unexpected questions, including debates on India's evolving language policies.

Looking back, I realize it wasn't just knowledge that helped me through; it was the quiet confidence I had built over months of practice. Perhaps luck played its part too.

After the results, I was offered Mahindra United World College, India (MUWCI). It is part of the 18-campus global UWC movement, brings together students from around the world to pursue the IB Diploma and learn through diversity. I arrived in Pune at Mahindra United World College India, believing that the very next day would mark a new chapter of my life. I expected everything I experienced thereafter to broaden my perspective and reflecting on these past few months, I see that in many ways I was right. Yet, I was also mistaken it has not been grand events alone that have changed me, but rather the small, everyday details. The kindness strangers have shown, the way the school community at MUWCI operates, and the freedom to simply be myself stand out far more than any singular moment.

In the starting weeks, I quickly noticed that nobody cared if you walked into class in pyjamas or mismatched clothes. There is a refreshing lack of judgment about appearances or titles, instead people pay attention to who you are. This culture of acceptance and empathy set the tone for everything that followed.

I like to call this shared mindset the "MUWCI way of thinking," an emphasis on empathy and bold ideas. Initially, I lacked this perspective, coming from a more conventional background. At lunch I would listen to friends discuss campus issues like how relying on English as a lingua franca can disadvantage students from non-English speaking backgrounds, even in a universal subject such as mathematics. They talked about solutions that sounded radical at first, making mathematics an optional course, or offering the math curriculum in multiple languages Spanish, French, Hindi or Urdu so that no student would be hindered by language barriers.

The MUWCI way of thinking means questioning how things normally work and imagining unconventional fixes. At first, I kept my distance from these ideas, uneasy with their strangeness. However, it soon became clear to me that sometimes only unconventional solutions can solve complex, real-life problems. As someone who grew up believing mathematics had to be taught in English, I began to see things differently. Why must English always dominate the classroom? Why not allow a student to study calculus in their native language?

Over the weeks, I slowly adopted this mindset. Yesterday, I even found myself actively participating in an informal discussion with the head of the Student Assembly, brainstorming ways to promote diversity and encourage non-native English speakers to contribute more confidently to campus conversations. Experiences like this have transformed me in ways I never anticipated.

I carry a quiet, steady gratitude for the Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta, whose support opened the door for me to be here. Their scholarship did more than fund my education. It allowed me to grow in a community where openness, curiosity, and kindness shape everyday life. I came hoping for change, but I never expected how gently and deeply it would unfold. MUWCI has reshaped not only the way I think, but also the way I understand people and the world around me.

Their support became even more meaningful when my father lost his job. At a time when uncertainty could have closed this path entirely, the additional scholarship they provided kept my dream from slipping away. Knowing that an entire community stood behind me is something I will carry for the rest of my life. For that, and for everything this opportunity has given me, I will remain sincerely grateful.

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**Asad Ahmed Siddiquee is a first-year student of IB Diploma at MUWC,Pune, India*

Georgia Senate

A RESOLUTION

Recognizing and commending the Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta (AAAA) and its contributions to education, community service, and Atlanta's largest Muslim community gathering on Eid-ul-Fitr; and for other purposes.

WHEREAS, the Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta (AAAA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting education, social welfare, cultural heritage, and interfaith understanding, inspired by the vision of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Aligarh, India; and

WHEREAS, the AAAA has made significant contributions to educational advancement by providing scholarships, mentorship, and career counseling for underprivileged and deserving students, thereby equipping youth with knowledge and opportunities for a better future; and

WHEREAS, the AAAA actively promotes literary and cultural initiatives, including the preservation and promotion of the Urdu language, literary events, and educational and social seminars, enriching the intellectual and cultural landscape of the community; and

WHEREAS, the AAAA has consistently engaged in social welfare and humanitarian efforts, including support for charity organizations, food distribution programs, and disaster relief initiatives, improving the quality of life for many individuals and families in need; and

WHEREAS, the AAAA plays an instrumental role in organizing and supporting Atlanta's largest Muslim community gathering on Eid-ul-Fitr, an event that fosters interfaith understanding, cultural unity, and social cohesion by bringing together hundreds of community members in the spirit of peace and togetherness; and

WHEREAS, this annual Eid-ul-Fitr celebration serves as a platform for cultural exchange, philanthropy, and strengthening bonds among diverse communities, furthering the values of inclusivity, mutual respect, and harmony; and

WHEREAS, the AAAA's commitment to education, cultural preservation, and social service has left a lasting impact on the local, national, and international levels, making it a beacon of community service and empowerment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body recognize and commend the Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta (AAAA) for its outstanding contributions to education, community service, and cultural heritage as well as acknowledge and celebrate the significance of Atlanta's largest Muslim community gathering on Eid-ul-Fitr, recognizing its role in fostering unity and cultural appreciation among diverse populations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to the Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta (AAAA).

Senate Resolution 472
By: Senators Rahman of the 5th, Kemp of the 38th, Mallow of the 2nd, Wicks of the 34th, Harbison of the 15th and others

Adopted in the Senate March 27, 2025

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

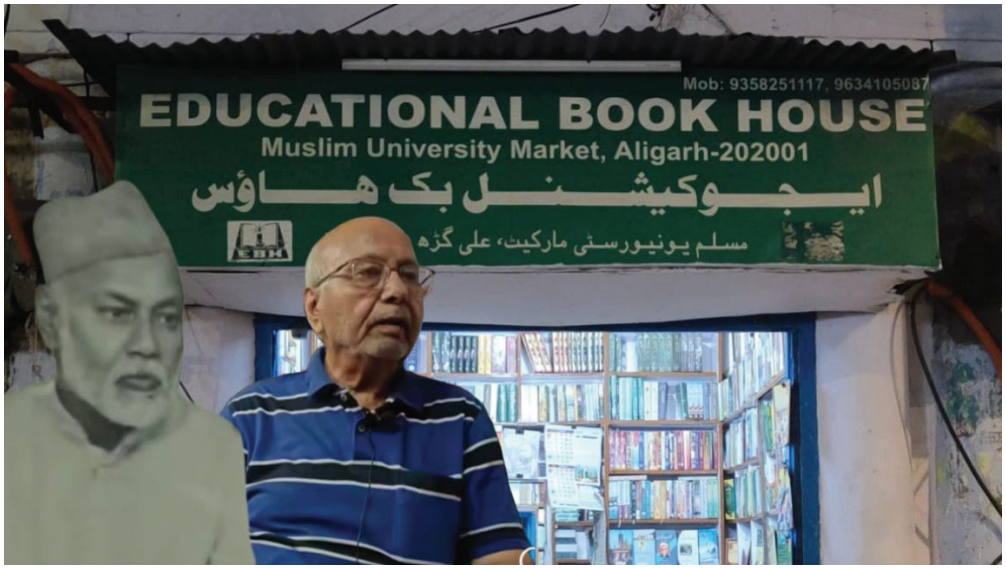
SECRETARY OF THE SENATE

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

SENATOR, DISTRICT 5th

Celebrating a Century of Educational Book House: An Enduring Legacy of Literature and Learning in Aligarh

Abridged from https://www.heritagetimes.in/celebrating-a-century-of-educational-book-house-an-enduring-legacy-of-literature-and-learning-in-aligarh
Posted on July 27, 2025 by Dr. Asad Faisal Farooqui



Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), renowned as a beacon of knowledge and service to the nation, has nurtured multiple institutions dedicated to education and culture since its inception. Among these, the Educational Book House (EBH) stands out as a distinguished establishment, symbolizing a century of dedication to the dissemination of literature and learning.

Established in 1925, EBH is more than an ordinary bookstore; it holds a revered position among bibliophiles, scholars, and literary circles both nationally and internationally. Over the past hundred years, EBH has played a pivotal role in spreading the literary and academic works of Aligarh across a broad audience, ensuring its legacy endures today. Its contribution to the development and promotion of Urdu language and literature is of profound importance in the history of book publishing

Historical Roots of Book House at Aligarh:
The story of Book house in Aligarh is intertwined with the visionary efforts of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) and his pioneering movement to elevate Muslim education in India. As early as 1888, Sir Syed aimed to establish a bookstore in Aligarh to serve the students and teachers of his educational institutions. He launched a campaign to establish a bookstore in Aligarh and even raised funds for this purpose. An advertisement in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* dated 7th July 1888 announced the opening of a bookshop: **"Aik Tijarti Dukan Kitabon aur Stationary yani Saman Nosht wa Khwand Kay Farokht Ke Aligarh Mein"** – a commercial shop for books and stationery in Aligarh. (see *AIG,* 7th July 1888)

This initial venture was called the **"College Book Depot"** which quickly became a vital hub for literature, academic materials, and stationary. It functioned as a bridge connecting scholars, students, and the wider community, fostering a culture of learning and intellectual curiosity in Aligarh. The original depot thrived under the stewardship of Mir Wilayat Hussain (1862-1949) but faced decline after his retirement in 1920, eventually closing down. (see *Aap Beeti ya MAO College Ke Kahani, Mir Wilayat Hussain Ki Zubani*, Sir Syed Academy, Aligarh, 2024, p.126).

The Birth of EBH
The establishment of **Aligarh Muslim University** in 1920 created a renewed demand for a dedicated bookstore that could cater to the needs of students and faculty alike. Responding to this need, Abdul Shaheed Khan (1898-1968), an alumnus of MAO College Aligarh from Meerut, opened a small stationery shop in 1925 near Fuller Road, close to Tasweer Mahal. He named this establishment **"Educational Book House"**, marking the beginning of a new chapter in Aligarh's literary landscape. His vision

was to provide affordable and accessible academic books and stationery, supporting the educational aspirations of students and teachers.

Moving to Shamshad Market:
In 1928, Sahibzada Shamshad Ahmed Khan (1888-1954), son of eminent educationist and vice-chancellor of AMU, Sahibzada Aftab Ahmed Khan (1867-1930), built a bustling commercial complex known as **"Shamshad Building"** in civil line Aligarh near AMU. This market was designed to serve the needs of the university community and local residents, housing shops for tailoring, groceries, milk, bread, bicycle repairs, and more. A mosque was also constructed within the complex, serving as a spiritual and community center.
Recognizing the importance of proximity and accessibility, Sahibzada Shamshad Ahmed Khan requested Abdul Shaheed Khan to relocate EBH to this new marketplace. The bookstore shifted there in 1929, anchoring itself within a vibrant hub of activity. This move significantly increased EBH's visibility and accessibility, making it a central point for students and scholars seeking academic and literary materials.

The **Aligarh Magazine** (1929-30) praised Shamshad Market as a vital institution, emphasizing how it simplified the lives of students by providing essential books and stationery close to their place of study. In an editorial note, editor write:
"The Shamshad building has undoubtedly rendered an invaluable service to the student community of the University, for all the requirements of the students are to be found in the shops contained in the building and they have no more to worry themselves by running down to the city to fetch even the most ordinary things of everyday use. Sahibzada Shamshad Ahmad Khan deserves the thanks of all those whose life has been made easy and pleasant by the erection of this splendid building and we most cordially congratulate him on this." (see Editorial Notes, *Aligarh Magazine*, 1929-30, p.11)

According to renowned historian Prof. Iftikhar Alam Khan, in his authoritative work *"Muslim University Ki Kahani, Imarton Ke Zubani 1920 to 1947"*, the Shamshad Building was constructed in 1929 at a cost of Rs. 30,000, financed by Sahibzada Shamshad Ahmed Khan's mother. The building housed 18 shops, including EBH, and was a bustling center of commercial and cultural activity.

EBH's shop within this complex charged the highest rent—Rs. 31—indicating its prominence and importance in the market. Its strategic location made it an essential resource for students, teachers, and literary enthusiasts, solidifying its reputation as a hub of education and culture. (See *"Muslim University Ki Kahani, Imarton Ke Zubani 1920 to 1947"*, EBH, Aligarh, 2006, pp. 161-165)

Early Contributions to Literature and Publishing:
Even before India's independence, EBH distinguished itself as a publisher committed to a broad spectrum of subjects. Unlike many publishers focused solely on literature or religion, EBH ventured into publishing works on children's psychology, social sciences, philosophy, history, linguistics, and sciences. Its publications catered to the academic community and the general public, fostering a culture of knowledge dissemination. Notable early publications included: **"Kainat Adab"** by M. A. Hameed Alig (1935) editor Nazara Meerut, **"Ahsan-ul-Intikhab''** by Ahsan Marehrawi, **"Makhzan Adab"** by M. A. Shahid, "**Sukhna Nau"**, **"Husn-e-Intikhab''** by Abdul Jaleel Kidwai, **"Delhi Ka Ek Madar Akhiri Mushaira"** by Mirza Farhatullah Beg, **"Dastan Rani Ketki Aur Kanwar Uday Bhan Ki"** by Syed Inshallah Khan Insha, **"Bachhon Ki Tarbiyyah"** by Musarrat Zamani, **"Al-Aqeedah Al-Hasna"** by Molvi Sham and Maulana Abdussalam etc. These works reflected EBH's commitment to educational and literary growth, providing resources that supported scholarly pursuits and cultural development.

Post-Independence Challenges and Resilience:
The partition of India in 1947 was a tumultuous period that resulted in massive migrations and upheavals. Many families left their ancestral homes, but Abdul Shaheed Khan chose to remain in Aligarh. His son Asad Yar Khan says that just after independence many of his father's relatives and friends asked him, he also migrate to Pakistan, but Professor Rashid Ahmed Siddiqui and Dr. Aale Ahmad Suroor advised him to continue his work from here, thus his father put this idea out of his mind. His dedication ensured that EBH continued serving the community, moving from Shamshad Market to the Conference Market in 1951 to accommodate expanding operations.

In this period, EBH expanded its publishing activities further. It published influential titles on Indian politics and governance, including **Dr. Hashim Kidwai's** *"Jhamooriya Hind"* (1951), which analyzed India's political system and constitution. Apart from Jhamooriya Hind, some of his titles are: *Mubadiat Ilm Madniat* (1951), *Duniya Ke Hukoomatain*(1961), *Mubadi Siyasiyat* (1971), *Tareekh-e-Afkar siyasi* (1982), *Usool-e-Tammaddun, Usool-e-Siyasiyat* (1988).

An Advertisements of book highlighted the importance of such works for students, scholars, and policymakers appeared in Weekly ***Jhamoor*** Aligarh dated 26th December 1955 states:

"In the book under consideration, the author has described the modern constitution of the Republic of India, all the essential things related to the constitution have been included in it. This book has done a great job not only for students but also for those interested in Indian political science. *Sadq, Maarif, Jamiyat, Tanveer* and *Jamhur* in their reviews congratulated the author for publishing this useful book. Dr. Syed Mahmood, Minister for Development, Government of Bihar, and Professor Haroon Khan Sherwani, Head of the Department of Political Science, Osmania University, have liked it very much."

Supporting Urdu Education and Literature:
A vital aspect of EBH's mission was promoting Urdu language and education. The bookstore provided textbooks for institutions such as **Jamia Osmania, Hyderabad, Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia Urdu, Aligarh** and collaborated with teachers from Aligarh Muslim University to develop curricula that emphasized Urdu literature and linguistics. This support helped to sustain and foster Urdu's growth as a language of scholarship and culture across the region.

Asad Yar Khan
Following the death of Abdul Shaheed Khan in 1968, his sons, **Asad Yar Khan** (b. 1941, famously known as Kaptan Sb. as he served the Captain of Horse Riding in AMU several years) and **Ahmed Saeed Khan** (b.1948, affectionately Bhayya of all known people), inherited the legacy. Under their leadership, EBH grew into one of the most respected Urdu publishing houses in the subcontinent. They enhanced the quality of printing, expanded their catalog to include works of eminent poets, scholars, and political thinkers.

Works of Prominent literary figures such as **Iqbal, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Khalifa Abdul Hakeem**, and **Ghulam Sarwar** published and promoted through EBH, significantly contributing to the Urdu literary renaissance. It also published works of Wazir Agha, Abu Lais Siddiqui, Hassan Askari, Masood Hussain Khan, Akhtar Ansari, Syed Abdullah, Khaliq Ahmed Nizami, Muhammad Hashim Kidwai, Vaqar Azeem, Majnoon Gorakhpur, Ateeq Ahmad Siddiqui, Ibadat Barelvi, Raza Ali Abidi, Qurratul ain Haidar, Aal-e-Ahmad Suroor, Khurshid-ul-Islam, Abdul Qadir Sarwari, Waheed Quraishi, Athar Parvez, Zaheer Ahmad Siddiqui, Khadeeja Mastoor, Ziauddin Alvi, Abdul Mughni, A.A. Hashmi, Rasheed Hasan Khan, Masood Hasan Khan, Masood Hassan Rizvi, Shaharyar, Manzar Abbass Naqvi, Mirza Khalil Beg, Abul Kalam Qasmi, Iftikhar Alam Khan, Asghar Abbas, Surraya Hussain, Sagheer Afrahim etc.

The Literary Magazine *"Alfaaz"*: A Cultural Milestone:
In 1975, Asad Yar Khan launched ***"Alfaaz"***, a literary magazine dedicated to Urdu literature. Edited initially by **Abul Kalam Qasmi**, *Alfaaz* became a vital platform for poetry, literary criticism, and cultural dialogue. It provided a space for emerging writers and established intellectuals to exchange ideas, debate, and showcase their work.
The magazine's editorial board included notable scholars such as Khurshid-ul-Islam, Khalil-ur-Rehman Azmi, and Naseem Qureshi. Over nearly two decades, *Alfaaz* played an essential role in nurturing Urdu literature, fostering new talent, and preserving the cultural heritage of Urdu language and thought.

Personal Reflections:
The author's personal association with EBH began in 1995, when as a seventh-grade student, he first visited the bookstore to buy storybooks and magazines. Over the years, this relationship deepened, leading to interactions with notable scholars, poets, and literary figures, including Professor Hashim Kidwai, Professor Mushir-ul-Hasan, Professor Qazi Abdul Sattar, Manzoor Hashmi, Professor Abul Kalam Qasmi, Qurban Ali (BBC Hindi), Tariq Hasan (Prominent Journalist), Mirza Masood Beg (Prominent Linguists) and many others. In 2016, EBH published the author's book on Aligarh's journalism, *"Aligarh Ke Urdu Sahafat"*, a testament to their ongoing support for young writers and scholars.

Celebrating a Century of Service:
Today, as EBH celebrates its hundred years of existence, it stands as an integral part of Aligarh's intellectual and cultural heritage. The dedication and honesty of Late Abdul Shaheed Khan and later his sons have made EBH a symbol of Urdu literature's resilience and growth. Their efforts to promote Urdu, support education, and foster literary excellence have left an indelible mark on the Urdu circle.

A Legacy for the Future:
It is hoped that EBH continues to serve as a beacon of literary and educational excellence, nurturing new talents, publishing significant works, and promoting the Urdu language. As it celebrates a century of remarkable service, the entire community extends heartfelt congratulations and best wishes for its future endeavours. The Educational Book House's journey over the past hundred years stands as a shining example of dedication to knowledge, culture, and language. Its legacy is a reflection of the enduring power of literature to unite, educate, and inspire. May EBH continue to flourish and illuminate the path of learning for many more generations to come.











Top to Bottom (L to R): VC Prof. Naima Khatoon (fourth from left) receiving AAAA distinguished service award from Dr. Wasi Siddiqui (senior most Atlanta Alig).

-VC with the reception attendees in a group photo

-Special guests (India Consul Kandhaswamy Raju –third from right), Prof. Anil Pradhan—fourth right), Al-Noor Banquet Hall, Norcross, GA.

-VC making her remarks. Welcome speech by AAAA President Shahid Ali.







The Vice Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Prof. Naima Khatoon, was honored by the Georgia State Senate during her official visit to Atlanta, Georgia, USA, in recognition of her outstanding service, academic leadership, and contributions to higher education.

As part of her international outreach to strengthen AMU's academic partnerships, Prof. Khatoon, accompanied by Prof. Anil Pradhan, Director, Indo-US OSU–AMU Centre for STEM Education and Research, Ohio State University, and Aligarh Alumni members Mr. Syed Hasan Kamal and Dr. Fazal Khan, visited the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech). The visit was hosted by Prof. Mustaque Ahamad, Interim Chair, School of Cybersecurity and Privacy, and included discussions with Prof. Raghupathy Sivakumar, Vice President of Commercialization, Georgia Tech, on potential collaborations in innovation, technology integration, and higher education exchange. Prof. Khatoon also toured myGenomics Laboratory, a state-of-the-art facility specializing in next-generation sequencing and molecular genetic testing, managed by Dr. Shoeb Ahmad, an AMU alumnus. During her visit to the Indian Consulate in Atlanta, Prof. Khatoon was received by Mr. Ramesh Babu Lakshmanan **(Top photo, third from right),** Consul General of India, who appreciated AMU's legacy of inclusive education and discussed opportunities for institutional collaborations between Indian and American universities. He highlighted the Government of India's initiatives aimed at fostering global academic linkages and quality enhancement in higher education.

Prof. Khatoon later visited the Georgia State Capitol, where she was hosted by Georgia State Senator Sheikh Rahman **(Right bottom photo).** On this occasion, Senator Rahman presented Prof. Khatoon with a Georgia State Senate Appreciation Letter, formally recognizing her academic leadership and her distinction as the first woman Vice Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University.

In honour of her visit, the Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta (AAAA) hosted a special alumni meet and dinner, graced by the presence of Mr. Kandhaswamy Raju, Consul (Community Affairs), IACA members, distinguished community figures, and AMU alumni. During the event, Prof. Khatoon was presented with a special plaque by Dr.Wasi Siddiqui acknowledging her significant contributions to AMU and her inspiring leadership. The evening concluded with a poetic recitation by Mr. Jaleel Nizami from Hyderabad (Telangana).

Mr. Omar Peerzada **(Second from right in top photo. In bottom photo, Mr. Peerzada is receiving mementos & ALIGAtlanta magazine issues from AAAA members),** AMU Public Relations Officer, attended all the events. Mr. Peerzada holds the unique distinction of being the first PRO to visit the United States.











Top to Bottom (L to R): AAAA and Community Members with Visiting Journalists from India

-AAAA Members at 2025 Festival of India (FOI) Celebrations– Chief Guest, Brad Raffensperger, Georgia Secretary of State (**ninth from right**)

-**Bottom (Left):** Visiting Indian journalists at Martin Luther King's Mausoleum, Atlanta, GA

-**Bottom (Middle & Right):** AAAA Booth at 2025 FOI. Members with prominent visitors including Chief Guest, Brad Raffensperger

AAAA 2025 Eid Milan Picnic







2025 Jashn-e-Urdu and International Mushaira





Top to Bottom:

-2025 Jashne-Urdu & Mushaira attendees
At Maison Event Hall, Duluth, GA

Participating Poets (L to R)
-Naina Aadil (Pakistan)
-Madan Mohan Danish (India)
-Mehshar Afridi (India)
-Dr. Zaki Kakorvi (Atlanta), Sadr-e-Mushaira
-Basir Kazmi (Pakistan)
-Abbas Tabish (Pakistan)
-Nurul Ain (Nazim-e-Mushaira)

-Qawwali Performance by Jugno Fareedi and his team







Top to Bottom (L to R): AAAA was recognized by Georgia Senate on March 27, 2025 for its services. AAAA President Shahid Ali is receiving the Proclamation. Senator Shiekh Rahman (third from right) was the main sponsor of this Bill. A copy of Proclamation is included with this edition.

Top right and Bottom: AAAA members participated in Muslim American Heritage Month recognized by the City of Atlanta and the Georgia Senate in July 2025.









Top to Bottom: AAAA Reception for Visiting Retired AMU Professor Farahim Khan (fourth from right in sherwani) of Geology. Adiba, a PhD scholar in the Department of Physics at AMU, visited Atlanta at the invitation of AAAA (first from left facing the camera). AAAA members along with other actors on the stage of Ramzan and Jannat (Romeo and Juliet) Urdu Drama.









Top: AAAA Members at AMU VC Reception.

Middle (L): Prof. O. R. Hashmi of JMI receiving memento. **(R)** AAAA members at 24th FAAA Convention in DC

Bottom: AAAA members at IACA Diwali Celebrations

ڈھونڈو گے اگر ملکوں ملکوں

ملنے کے نہیں نایاب ہیں ہم

خوشی کی بات یہ ہے کہ آج بھی یہ دونوں تنظیمیں اُسی جوش و خروش سے سرگرمِ عمل ہیں۔ 2020 کے بعد جب نئے لوگوں نے قیادت سنبھالی تو اٹلانٹا کی کمیونٹی میں ایک مثبت تبدیلی دکھائی دینے لگی۔ بہت سے نئے چہرے، نئے ادب شناس، اور ادب‌دوست لوگ اس شہر کا حصہ بن گئے۔

عرصہ دراز سے ہماری یہ خواہش تھی کہ اس شہر میں ایک ایسی مستقل جگہ ہو جو اہلِ ادب کا دائمی مسکن بنے — جہاں چائے کی چاہت کے ساتھ منٹو، فیض، اور فراز پر بات ہو، جہاں میر و غالب کے ساتھ نئے لکھنے والوں کی بھی حوصلہ افزائی ہو۔ اور اسی خواب کی تعبیر "رائٹرز فورم اور اردو لائبریری" کی صورت میں سامنے آئی۔

رائٹرز فورم نے جہاں قدیم شاعروں اور ادیبوں کو عزت و پذیرائی دی، وہیں نئے لکھنے والوں کو بھی کھلے دل سے خوش آمدید کہا۔ اس نے نئے اہلِ قلم کے لیے ایک مستقل ادبی ٹھکانہ فراہم کیا اور ان کی تربیت و رہنمائی کے لیے باقاعدہ نشستوں کا اہتمام کیا۔

یہی چراغ جلیں گے تو روشنی ہو گی

یہ وہ قافلہ ہے جسے محترم حسن کمال صاحب، ڈاکٹر وصی صدیقی، وسیم احمد، رخُسانہ وسیم، مشیر صدیقی، تحمینہ باجی، اکبر زیدی، طلعت آپا، واحد بھائی، ڈاکٹر رشید احمد، ڈاکٹر فرزانہ بھرمل، محمد انعام اللہ، ڈاکٹر شاہد رفیق ڈاکٹر آصف توفیق دُرشی آپا مسرت بھائ ناصر فاروقی اور یاسر نومانی جیسے مخلص لوگوں نے شروع کیا تھا۔

اور خوشی اس بات کی ہے کہ برسوں بعد بھی یہ سفر محمد فاروق، اظہر فاروقی، امین سندیلو، کامران کھیمانی، قیصر مختار، ارسلان ارسی، عثمان اور اس ناچیز کے ساتھ اسی لگن اور جذبے سے جاری ہے۔

بدلتے وقت کے ساتھ جہاں لوگوں کی مصروفیات اور ترجیحات میں تبدیلی آئی ہے، وہاں "رائٹرز فورم اور اردو لائبریری" کا وجود واقعی غنیمت ہے جو پوری محنت اور خلوص سے مشاعروں اور ادبی نشستوں کے ساتھ ساتھ بیت بازی کسوٹی مباحثوں ذہنی آذمائش کی اُس خوبصورت روایت کو زندہ رکھنے میں مصروفِ عمل ہیں۔ یہ جذبہ محض ادبی وابستگی نہیں بلکہ کتابوں سے عشق کی ایک خوبصورت علامت بھی ہے۔ جیسا کہ سعود عثمانی نے کہا ہے:

کاغذ کی یہ مہک، یہ نشہ روٹھنے کو ہے

یہ آخری صدی ہے کتابوں سے عشق کی۔

آخر میں گُلزار صاحب کی اس نظم کے ساتھ اجازت **کتابیں جھانکتی ہیں بند الماری کے شیشوں سے بڑی حسرت سے تکتی ہیں**

مہینوں اب ملاقاتیں نہیں ہوتیں جو شامیں ان کی صحبت میں کٹا کرتی تھیں' اب اکثر گزر جاتی ہیں کمپیوٹر کے پردوں پر بڑی بے چین رہتی ہیں کتابیں انہیں اب نیند میں چلنے کی عادت ہو گئی ہے بڑی حسرت سے تکتی ہیں رائٹرز فورم کی مہربانی سے ہماری اردو لائبریری کی کتابیں آج بھی الماریوں کے شیشوں سے جھانک کر مسکراتی ہیں، اور وقتاً فوقتاً ہمیں اپنے دوستوں سے ملنے کا خوبصورت بہانہ دے دیتی ہیں۔

رائٹرز فورم کی سب سے بڑی کامیابی سہ روزہ فیسٹیول **"الف 2025"** رہا۔ یہ اسی سلسلے کی ایک اور خوبصورت کڑی تھی، جس میں **اظہار، ترنگ** اور **آزمائش** کے عنوانات کے تحت تینوں دن متنوع اور پُرمغز پروگرام پیش کیے گئے۔

کمیونٹی کے بھرپور تعاون سے یہ فیسٹیول کامیابی سے ہمکنار ہوا، اور ہر عمر کے شرکاء نے دل سے اس میں شرکت کی۔ یہ فیسٹیول صرف ایک تقریب نہیں بلکہ ایک فکری سفر کی تجدید تھا، جو ہر دل میں حرف و خیال کا شوق تازہ کر گیا۔

بقول عقیل نعمانی

ہم کاروبار دل کو کہیں کس طرح غلط

ہوں گے بہت سے لوگ خسارے میں ہم نہیں

صدف فاروقی، سابق صدر(11-2010)، علی گڑھ المنائی ایسوسی ایشن آف اٹلانٹا



صدف فاروقی

دل سے قلم تک

ڈاکٹر رشید احمد کا فون یا پیغام آنا کوئی معمولی بات نہیں۔ نہ جانے کیوں، لاکھ کوششوں کے باوجود اُن کی درخواست کو ٹالنا ہمیشہ سب سے مشکل کام رہا ہے۔ 25 اکتوبر 2025، بروز ہفتہ، دوپہر ایک بج کر چالیس منٹ پر اُن کا پیغام موصول ہوا — ‘‘سالانہ مجلے کے لیے کچھ لکھیے۔’’ اور ہم نے، اپنی بے شمار مصروفیات کے باوجود، وعدہ کر لیا۔

ایک ہفتے تک یہی سوچتی رہی کہ آخر لکھوں کیا؟ پھر اپنی ہی ایک نظم کا مصرع ذہن میں گونجنے لگا

آج قلم پھر اٹھا ہے، پھر سوچ نے کروٹ بدلی ہے۔

یوں میرا 2001 سے 2025 تک کا ادبی سفر ایک فلم کی طرح نگاہوں کے سامنے چلنے لگا۔

یہ زیادہ پرانی بات نہیں، بس کچھ دہائیوں کی داستان ہے — جب فکرِ معاش کے سبب کچھ اہلِ وطن نے امریکہ کی جانب ہجرت کی۔ اس دیارِ غیر نے اگرچہ اُنہیں معاشی تنگی سے آزاد کر دیا، مگر دل کے ایک گوشے میں ایک انجانی بے چینی نے ڈیرہ ڈال لیا ۔اور بے اختیار منیر نیازی یاد آ گئے

آج تو بے سبب اداس ہے جی

عشق ہوتا تو کوئی بات بھی تھی

یہ بے چینی اپنی تہذیب، اپنی زبان، اور اپنے ادب سے دوری کی تھی۔ اسی اضطراب نے ذہنوں میں ایک نئی حرکت پیدا کی، اور کچھ ادب کے دیوانوں نے یہاں اردو ادب کی نئی بستیاں بسانے کا بیڑا اٹھایا۔

اسی جذبے کے نتیجے میں **علیگڑھ ایسوسی ایشن آف اٹلانٹا** کا جنم ہوا

1984میں چند مخلص علیگڑھی فارغ‌التحصیل افراد نے عزم کیا کہ وہ سر سید احمد خان کے مشن خدمتِ خلق، تعلیم، اور ثقافتی و ادبی ہم آہنگی کو امریکہ میں بھی جاری رکھیں گے۔ یہ وہ مشن تھا جس نے نہ صرف علیگڑھ کے وابستگان کو متحد کیا بلکہ ہندوستان اور پاکستان کے باشعور طبقے کو بھی اس کارِ خیر سے جوڑ دیا۔

2001میں جب اٹلانٹا کو اپنا مسکن بنایا، تو ادبی سرگرمیوں کا سلسلہ ازسرِنو شروع ہوا۔ بزمِ ادب کے ساتھ ساتھ علیگڑھ ایسوسی ایشن میں بھی بھرپور حصہ لیا۔ محترم حسن کمال صاحب، ڈاکٹر وصی اور سارہ صدیقی، وسیم احمد اور رخُسانہ وسیم، ڈاکٹر رشید احمد، ڈاکٹر فرزانہ بھرمل، محمد انعام اللہ اور ڈاکٹر شاہد رفیق جیسے اہلِ دل افراد کی محبت و پذیرائی نے اس سفر کو مزید خوشگوار بنا دیا۔تقریباً دس برس تک یہ قافلہ انہی کی سرپرستی میں رواں رہا۔

ایک کارکن سے علیگڑھ ایسوسی ایشن کے صدر بننے تک کا سفر نہایت دلچسپ اور یادگار رہا۔یہ وہ زمانہ تھا جب 2006 کا فیڈریشن کنونشن، عالمی مشاعرے، سٹیج ڈرامے، سالانہ پکنک اور نوجوانوں کے لیے یوتھ پروگرام سب مل کر نہ صرف اٹلانٹا بلکہ پورے امریکہ میں ادبی و ثقافتی زندگی کو ایک نئی روح بخش رہے تھے۔

واقعی یہ کہنا بے جا نہ ہوگا کہ انہی تنظیموں نے امریکہ میں اردو بولنے والی کمیونٹی میں نہ صرف ادبی شعور بیدار کیا بلکہ ثقافتی ہم آہنگی اور باہمی احترام کی فضا بھی قائم کی۔

وقت کے ساتھ سب کچھ بدلتا گیا۔ دن بدلے، سال گزرے، اور اٹلانٹا کا ادبی منظرنامہ بھی بدل گیا۔ نئے لوگ آئے، اور آہستہ آہستہ ان تنظیموں کی باگ ڈور نئی نسل کے ہاتھوں میں منتقل ہو گئی۔

بہت سے پرانے ساتھی اب ہمارے درمیان نہیں، مگر اُن کی یادیں، اُن کے ساتھ گزرا ہوا وقت، میٹنگز میں کی گئی باتیں، ہمارا روٹھنا اور ایک دوسرے کو منانا — سب ایک خوبصورت داستان بن کر دل میں زندہ ہے۔

ہم سے نہ پوچھو کیا گزری

جب تم سے بچھڑ کر آئے ہم

برصغیر کی علمی اور معاشرتی زندگی میں آج علم کا جو وقار ہے برصغیر کے مسلمانوں میں تہذیب علم اور فن کی جو تابانی ہے، وہ سب علی گڑھ تحریک کا حصہ ہے۔ اس تحریک سے استفادہ کرنے والے آج پور ی دنیا میں پھیلے ہوئے ہیں اورہندوپاکستان کے علمی وقار کی علامت ہیں۔ دنیا کے کسی بڑے ملک میں جائیے وہاں آپ کو علی گڑھ تحریک کے اولڈ بوائز نظر آئیں گے گزشتہ دنوں میرے ایک بھائی ساؤتھ افریقہ گئے اُنھوں نے بتایا کہ وہاں اُس دور دراز علاقے میں بھی علی گڑھ اولڈ بوائز ایسوسی ایشن موجود ہے۔ ڈربن شہر کی اُس ایسوسی ایشن کے کُل تین ممبر ہیں۔ جس میں صدر کی عمر اسی سال سے تجاوز کر چُکی ہے۔ ساری دُنیا آج سرسید کے نام سے تابندہ ہے اور اُن کا فیضان پوری انسانیت کے لیے نعمت اور رحمت بن چُکا ہے۔ سرسید صحیح معنی میں علامہ اقبال کے اس شعر کی تفسیر تھے

نگہہ بُلند سُخن دلنواز جاں پُر سوز

یہی ہے رخت سفر میر کارواں کے لیے

سرسید ایک ایسی علمی اور تہذیبی تحریک کے میر کارواں تھے جس نے پوری نسل انسانی کو منور کیا ہے اور برصغیر کے ممالک سے جہالت کی تاریکی کو مٹا یا ہے۔

وطن عزیز سے دور ان اجنبی دیاروں میں جب ہم علی گڑھ کا نام لیتے ہیں تو ہماری بیسویں صدی کی تمام تر ذہنی نشوونما ہماری دانشواری کی روایت جدید دنیا کے ساتھ قدم ملا کر چلنے کی روِش ، سب کچھ نمایاں ہو جاتا ہے۔ اگر اس تناظر کو پیش نظر رکھا جائے تو ہمیں احساس ہوگا کہ اولڈ بوائز انجمن پر بڑی ذمہ داریاں عائد ہوتی ہیں۔ ایک تو مشرقی ذہن کی روایات کا احترام او ر پھرعہد جدید کی تازہ کار فکر سے ہم رشتگی، اس کے علاوہ مشرق اور برصغیر کی ذہنی بیداری اور اُس کی نمائندگی ایک ایسے عہد میں جب مغرب میں اقدار ٹوٹ پھوٹ رہی ہیں، بہترین انسانی اقدار کا تحفظ اور مثالی ذہن کی نمائندگی یہ تمام ذمہ داریاں اولڈ بوائز پر عائد ہوتی ہیں۔

ظاہر ہے کہ ذمہ داریوں کا یہ احساس ہمیں باور کراتا ہے کہ اولڈ بوائز کی تنظیم زیادہ سے زیادہ مستحکم ہو اس کےپاس مناسب مقدار میں فنڈ موجود ہیں۔ اس کے ممبران انجمن کے لیے زیادہ سے زیادہ وقت دے سکیں اور اس وقت انجمن جن مالی دُشواریوں سے دوچار ہے اُن کا تدارک ہو۔

یہ اور ایسے ہی بہت سے مسائل ہیں جنکو میں آپ کے سامنے پیش کرنا چاہتا ہوں۔ اس لیے کہ اجنبی ممالک میں ہمیں اپنی تہذیبی علمی اور تخلیقی روایات کے تحفظ کے لیے انجمن کو زیادہ سے زیادہ سرگرم بنانے کی ضرورت ہے۔ ضرورت ہے کہ ہم زیادہ سے زیادہ ممالک میں زیادہ سے زیادہ شہروں میں انجمن کو مُستحکم بنائیں اور اس انجمن کو برصغیر کی تہذیبی روایت کا بہترین اور مثالی نمونہ بنا کر پیش کریں۔ اس کے ساتھ ہی دیار غیر میں ہم ایک دوسرے کے رفیق و حبیب بن کر خود اپنی زندگی میں اعتماد کی فضا تخلیق کرسکیں۔ اپنی تنہائی کو مٹا سکیں اپنی تخلیقی سرگرمیوں کو جاری رکھ سکیں۔

ان تمام اُمور کے لیے انجمن (ایسوسی ایشن) کا مُستحکم کا ہونا بیحد ضروری ہے۔ یاد رکھیے یہ انجمن خود ہماری ذہنی ہم آہنگی کے لیے اور ہماری تہذیبی بقاء کے لیے انتہائی ضروری ہے اس لیے میں آپ سب سے درخواست کرنا چاہتا ہوں کہ اپنے باہمی تعاون سے ہم اولڈ بوائز انجمن کو اپنے عہد کی ایسی مثالی انجمن بنائیں جس پر ہمیں بھی فخر ہو اور ہماری تاریخ بھی ہماری سرگرمیوں کو اس دیار غیر میں فراموش نہ کرسکے۔

ایک بار پھر آپ سب کا شکریہ

مشیر صدیقی، سابق صدر(1988)، علی گڑھ المنائی ایسوسی ایشن آف اٹلانٹا



مشیر صدیقی

صدارتی خطبہ

معزز قراع

یہ مختصر مگر بھرپور تحریری کاوش کافی عرصہ پہلے اپنی علیگرڑھ اولڈ بوائز ایسوسیشن- اٹلانٹا شاخ سے وابستگی (تنظیمی عہدہ کانام) کے دوران پائے تکمیل کو پہنچی تھی- اس بین الاقوامی تعلیمی درسگاہ سے میری عقیدت محبت اور انسئیت کا اندازہ قاری اس تحریر کے ہر جملے سے باخوبی کر سکتا ہے

آپکی دعاؤں کا ملتمس

عاجز - مشیر صدیقی (میرٹھی)

محترم حاضرین !

سب سے پہلے تو میں آپ کا شکریہ ادا کرنا چاہتا ہوں کہ مجھے ایک ایسے عہدے پر فائز کیا گیا ہے ۔ جس کا میں اہل تو نہیں۔ لیکن آپ کی محبت اور آپکے جذبات ہیں جن کے باعث مجھے علی گڑھ اولڈبوائزانجمن کے صدر کا رتبہ عطا ہوا ہے ۔

اصل میں شروع میں جب اس سلسلے کی بات چلی تومیں نے چاہا کہ حسب روائت کسر نفسی کا اظہار کرتے ہوئے آنا کانی کروں ۔ مگر فوراً اُردو کے ممتاز ترین مزاج نگار پطرس بخاری کی بات یاد آگئی ۔ اُنھوں نے ایک جگہ یہ لکھا ہے کہ ایک بار جب اُن سے کسی جلسے کی صدارت کرنے کی درخواست کی گئی۔ انھوں نے کسر نفسی سے کام لیتے ہوئے کہا کہ ارے صاحب میں کہاں اس لائق ہوں، میں کیا ہوں، میں کچھ بھی نہیں ۔ وغیرہ وغیرہ – اس کے بعد بخاری صاحب لکھتے ہیں کہ درخواست لیکرآنے والوں کو خاموش دیکھ کر مجھے ڈرلگا کہ کہیں یہ اپنا ارادہ بدل نہ دیں چنانچہ فوراً ہا ں کر دی۔

بہرحال یہ عہدہ ایک اعزز ہے نہ صرف میرا بلکہ ایک تحریک کا، ایک عہد کا، ایک دوربیداری کا، جس کا میں اہل بن سکوں یہی میری دعا ہے، تمناہے، اور یہی میری کوشش ہوگی۔

علی گڑھ مسلم یونیورسٹی صرف ایک یونیورسٹی نہیں ہے۔ یہ ایک خواب ہے اور خواب کی تعبیر کا گہوارہ ہے جسکو تخلیق کرنے میں سرسید نے اور اُن کے رفقائ نے اپنا ذہن اور اپنی زندگی وقف کی۔ چنانچہ بیسویں صدی کا ہر وہ فرد جسکا تعلق ہندوستان یا پاکستان سے ہے، اور جس نے علم و ادب کی وادی میں قدم رکھا ہے، اور جس نے شعور حاصل کیا ہے، اُس کا رشتہ علی گڑھ سے ہے۔ اس لیے میں کہہ سکتا ہوں کہ علی گڑھ مسلم یونیورسٹی کا طالب علم نہ ہوتے ہوئے بھی میں نے اپنے شعور اور اپنے ذہن کے نہاں خانوں میں علی گڑھ تحریک کے منور چراغوں کی تابانی محسوس کی ہے اور سرسید احمد خان کی تحریک سے علم و فن کے گلستان کو مہکتا ہوا محسوس کیا ہے۔ علی گڑھ مسلم یونیورسٹی کی تحریک محض ایک تعلیمی تحریک نہیں ہے۔ یہ ایک مخصوص طرزمعاشرت ہے۔ ایک تہذیبی رویہ ہے۔ سوچنے کا ایک عقلی اور ساسنئی نظریہ ہے۔ زندگی کا ایک اسلوب ہے۔ جو ہمیں مسلم نشاۃ الثانیہ سے وابستہ کرتا ہے۔ علی گڑھ نے ہمیں تخلیقی اور جمالیاتی شعور بخشا- اور ایسی تحریک نے محسن الملک جیسے نثر نگار، آل احمد سرور جیسے تنقید نگار، عصمت چغتائی جیسے ناول نگار ، سردار جعفری، مجاز اور جاں نثار اختر جیسے تخلیق کار عطا کیے۔

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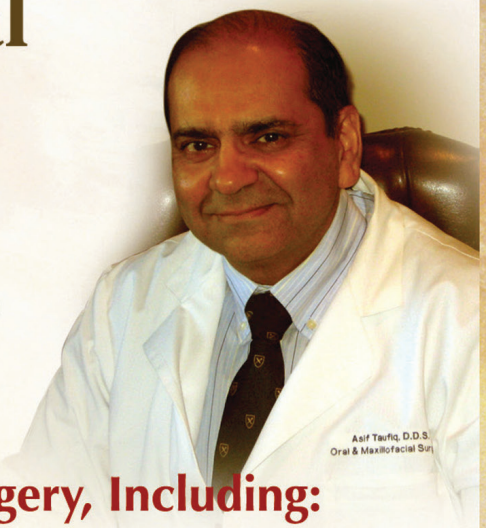
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