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Professor Rafikul Islam Appointed Vice Chancellor of Aliah University



Prof. Rafikul Islam, a distinguished academic from the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), has been appointed as the new Vice Chancellor of Aliah University. Originally from Bengal, Prof. Islam holds an MSc in Applied Mathematics from the University of Calcutta and a PhD in Operations Research from IIT Kharagpur. Known for his extensive contributions to academia, he brings decades of experience and leadership to his new role.

Prof. Islam has been part of IIUM since 1998, following teaching roles in Karnataka and at BITS Pilani. At IIUM, he has served in

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Abdul Bari Masoud

Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind Resolves to Oppose Waqf Amendment Bill at Kadapa Conference

Kadapa: Following massive rallies in New Delhi and Patna against the controversial Waqf Amendment Bill, Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind (JUH), led by Maulana Arshad Madani, held a significant conference in Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh, on December 14. The conference resolutely declared its opposition to the bill and emphasized that any interference in Waqf provisions would not be tolerated. Maulana Madani made it clear that the Muslim



community would fight this issue at all levels of governance. Addressing a gathering of over five lakh people, Maulana Madani

questioned the fairness of the proposed bill, saying, "Is it fair for someone else to take care of what belongs to us?" He criticized the

bill's flaws, stating that it could not be accepted as it violated the spirit of the Waqf's intended purpose. He highlighted that the Jamiat had raised these concerns during discussions with the Joint Parliamentary Committee, and any changes to the Waqf's status or the intentions of the donor (Waqif) were unacceptable. Maulana Madani emphasized that Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind is a non-political body, focused on legal and social justice rather than electoral politics. He reassured the

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Muslim World League Chief Meets Pope Francis to Foster Global Harmony

Arab News

Vatican City: Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, secretary-general of the Muslim World League (MWL), met with Pope Francis in Vatican City to discuss avenues for mutual cooperation and shared global interests.

The high-profile meeting underscored efforts to strengthen interfaith dialogue and foster understanding between Muslim and Catholic communities.

During his visit to Italy, Dr. Al-Issa was awarded an honorary fellowship in post-doctoral law studies from the University of Bologna, recognizing his



Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, secretary-general of the Muslim World League, met Pope Francis, the leader of the Catholic Church, in the Vatican to discuss mutual cooperation and shared interests. (Supplied)

significant contributions to promoting peace, advancing the

goals of the UN Charter, and reducing cultural tensions worldwide.

The prestigious ceremony was attended by the university's president, the law faculty's dean, and prominent academics and religious leaders from Islamic and Catholic communities. Dr. Al-Issa highlighted that the award reflects core Islamic values, which emphasize peace, coexistence, and mutual respect.

In a groundbreaking initiative, Dr. Al-Issa also launched the Islamic Studies and Arabic Language Award at the Catholic University of Milan. High-ranking Vatican

officials attended the event, signaling a new chapter in educational and cultural collaboration.

Islamic leaders hailed the award as a vital step in promoting the Arabic language and Islamic studies across Europe, fostering greater understanding and clarifying Islamic principles within Christian communities.

The categories of the award are designed to showcase the richness of Islamic heritage and the significance of the Arabic language, further bridging cultural divides and encouraging harmonious coexistence. ■

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Nothing has changed for Muslims in last 75 years: Owaisi

Staff Writer

New Delhi: Asaduddin Owaisi, President of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) and Member of Parliament from Hyderabad, criticized successive governments at the Center, stating that despite 75 years of independence, nothing has changed for Muslims in India. In a speech to the Lok Sabha on December 14, Owaisi highlighted the continued marginalization of Muslims and their exclusion from political power.

Speaking during the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Indian Constitution, Owaisi argued that the constitutionally protected rights of minorities are being undermined, with the current government failing to address their concerns. He accused the Narendra Modi administration of attempting to seize Waqf properties and violating fundamental rights.

Owaisi quoted Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's 1947 memorandum on the rights of minorities, where Ambedkar warned of the "Divine Right of the Majority" to rule over minorities, a sentiment Owaisi believes is still relevant today. "What Ambedkar said 75 years ago is absolutely correct. No one wants minorities to share power," Owaisi said.



The MP also pointed to the manner in which parliamentary and assembly constituencies are structured to favor the majority community, making it difficult for Muslims to win elections. He referenced the Sachar Committee's recommendations on rationalizing constituency delimitation to ensure better representation for Muslims but expressed doubts about the implementation of these recommendations after the next census.

Owaisi further emphasized the absence of reservations for Muslims, despite the implementation of such provisions for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other marginalized groups. He also discussed the ongoing challenges faced by Muslims, citing historical and recent riots, including the 2013 Muzaffarnagar

riots, the Gujarat 2002 riots, and the Delhi 2022 riots, asserting that little has changed in terms of protection for Muslim lives.

In his speech, Owaisi criticized the recent bans on wearing the hijab in government institutions and the state laws restricting food choices, calling them a violation of Article 25, which guarantees the right to freely practice religion. He also condemned the growing incidents of mob lynchings and the unlawful empowerment of cow vigilantes. Owaisi raised concerns about the false claims being made about mosques and dargahs, questioning the legitimacy of such claims. He also accused the Modi government of attempting to take over Waqf properties, citing Article 26, which guarantees religious denominations the right to establish and maintain religious and charitable institutions.

The MP further criticized the BJP for promoting Hindutva culture at the expense of India's pluralistic heritage and accused the party of undermining the Urdu language, which holds historical significance in the freedom struggle. "BJP speaks about cultural nationalism. It is the cultural nationalism of upper castes, of Hindutva, which has no connection with Indian culture," Owaisi concluded.

Supreme Court Halts Litigation Against Religious Places, Muslim Bodies Welcome Interim Ruling



Abdul Bari Masoud

New Delhi: On December 12, the Supreme Court of India issued an interim ruling that put a halt to the growing wave of litigation against Muslim religious places. The move was welcomed by several prominent Muslim organizations, who expressed their hope that this decision would deter malicious activities targeting mosques and shrines across the country. While some had hoped the Court would go further and quash a previous ruling that allowed the survey of ancient mosques, the interim order was seen as a step in the right direction.

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) lauded the Supreme Court's decision, which imposed restrictions on registering new suits and ordered a stay on surveys and effective judgments in ongoing cases until further notice. Dr. SQR Ilyas, AIMPLB spokesperson, called for the stay of ongoing cases, which he argued were disrupting communal harmony and undermining the spirit of the Places of Worship Act, 1991. This Act, which aims to preserve the religious character of places of worship as they stood on August 15, 1947, had been challenged in recent years, leading to the filing of numerous petitions in lower courts.

Dr. Ilyas emphasized that the Supreme Court had now effectively stopped any new developments in these cases and clarified that no civil court could

pass judgments that contradicted the decisions of the apex court. The court also directed the Union government to submit its response to the petitions challenging the Act, with the counter-affidavit to be made publicly available.

In addition to AIMPLB, Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind (M) President Maulana Mahmood Madani, who is also a petitioner, echoed similar sentiments, stating that preserving peace and unity was paramount. He criticized those focused on finding temples under mosques, calling them enemies of national unity. He also reminded the audience that it was the relentless efforts of Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind that led to the enactment of the 1991 Act, and the organization remains committed to its effective implementation.

The interim ruling also affects high-profile cases such as the Gyanvapi Masjid, Mathura Shahi Eidgah, and Sambhal Jama Masjid, where no further surveys or interim orders can alter the status of these religious sites. The ruling marks a significant step in the ongoing legal battle over the constitutionality of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991.

While the Supreme Court's decision has been hailed as a victory by many, there remains a desire for a final, clear ruling on the matter, ensuring the Act's full implementation and safeguarding the unity of the country. The case is expected to continue drawing public attention, with further hearings scheduled in the coming months.

Massive Show of Support for Palestine and Condemnation of Israel's Genocidal Actions in Gaza



Staff Writer

New Delhi: A powerful demonstration was held at the Rajendra Bhavan Auditorium on November 30, rallying support for the oppressed people of Gaza and Palestine. Described as the largest expression of solidarity in India against the ongoing 14-month genocide in Gaza, the conference was led by Dr. Zafarul-Islam Khan and the All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (AIMMM). The event featured speeches from prominent human rights advocates and was moderated by senior journalist Suhail Anjum. Former Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal, Upendra Yadav, chaired the event.

Dr. Khan, President of AIMMM, began by emphasizing India's historic ties with Palestine, dating back to the 13th century,

when figures such as Baba Farid and Guru Nanak spent time in Jerusalem. He highlighted India's unwavering support for Palestine throughout history, including its recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization and its support during the Oslo Accords of 1992. Despite dwindling official support in recent years, Dr. Khan reaffirmed the continued strong public and Muslim support for Palestine in India.

Dr. Khan detailed the painful history of Palestine, noting how the British facilitated the settlement of Jews and the eventual partitioning of Palestine. He also spoke about the disproportionate actions of Israel, from the 1948 civil war to the 1967 occupation, and the current destruction of Gaza,

which has left over 150,000 dead, mostly women and children. The ongoing oppression, he noted, has drawn widespread international condemnation.

Professor Achin Vanaik and Dr. Qasim Rasool Ilyas, among others, reinforced this condemnation. Vanaik criticized Israel's illegal occupation, while Ilyas condemned its human rights violations, stating Israel has created two open-air prisons in Gaza and the West Bank. Dr. Ilyas also pointed out India's complicity by sending weapons and workers to Israel during this war.

The conference also drew attention to global responses, with nations severing ties with Israel and supporting Palestine's recognition as an independent state. Renowned activists like Harsh Mander and socialist leader Professor Sandeep Pandey highlighted the need for global solidarity and the comparison to past atrocities, stressing that the world must once again declare "Never Again" to genocide.

The event concluded with a symbolic waving of the Palestinian flag and a renewed commitment to support Palestine's struggle for freedom and to oppose Zionism.

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Professor Rafikul Islam Appointed Vice Chancellor of Aliah University

various leadership positions, including Head of the Department of Business Administration and Deputy Dean (Academic Affairs) at the Kulliyah of Economics and Management Sciences.

An accomplished scholar, Prof. Islam has authored five books and published over 100 research papers in reputed journals. He has received the university's Quality Research Award and supervised ten PhD graduates. Additionally, he has presented more than 50 research papers at international conferences.

Currently, he serves as Chief Editor of the IIUM Journal of Case Studies in Management and

is an Associate Editor for two international journals. He also holds editorial board positions for several other publications.

Prof. Islam is renowned for his expertise in the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) and frequently conducts workshops on the subject globally. His research interests include AHP applications in management, multiple criteria decision-making, quality management, and operations management.

Prof. Islam's appointment marks a significant addition to Aliah University's leadership, promising to strengthen its academic excellence and global standing.

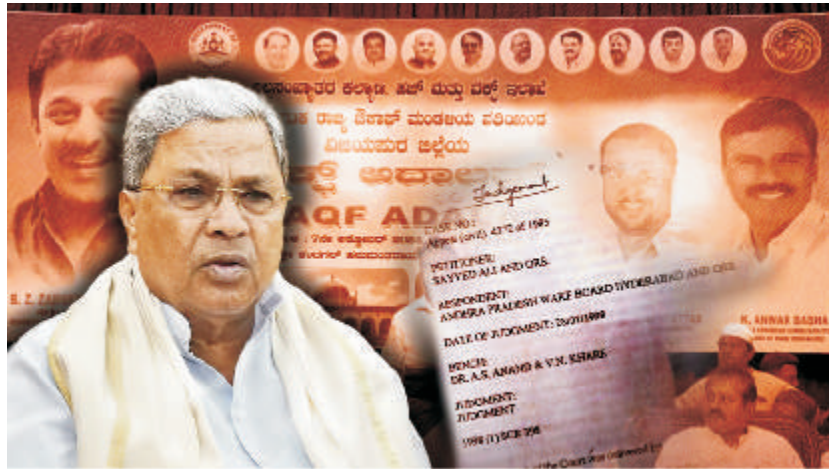
Staff Writer

Karnataka Waqf Scam Sparks Political Battle Between Congress and BJP

Belagavi: Karnataka's political arena is embroiled in a fierce debate over the Waqf scam, with the state's Minister for RDPR, IT, and BT, Priyank Kharge, accusing the BJP of spreading misinformation without evidence. In a press conference on December 16 at the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in Belagavi, Kharge slammed the BJP, claiming they were making unfounded accusations to deceive the public about the Waqf issue.

Kharge specifically targeted BJP leaders, including C.T. Ravi and BJP State President Nalin Kumar Kateel, accusing them of misleading the public about the state's Waqf properties. He also claimed that the BJP's political strategy was to exploit the issue for political gain, citing their failure to act on promises related to Waqf properties from their manifesto, such as conducting GISS mapping and protecting Waqf assets.

The minister also brought up the BJP's inconsistent stance on several issues, including



misleading information about farmer suicides in Haveri. According to Kharge, these examples highlight the BJP's double standards in addressing critical issues in the state.

In response to queries regarding the Waqf issue, Kharge mentioned that the central government had pledged Rs 335 crore for GISS mapping and digitization of Waqf assets to support the community's economy. He further clarified that

neither he nor the Congress party had raised the initial allegations; instead, it was BJP spokesperson Anwar Manipaddy, who had accused BJP leaders of corruption involving Waqf properties. Kharge referred to videos and news reports in which Manipaddy had alleged a massive Rs 2.5 lakh crore scam and claimed that some BJP leaders were involved in suppressing investigations into the issue.

Kharge also recounted Manipaddy's claims that BJP leaders, including B.S. Yediyurappa's son, Vijayendra, had offered a large sum of money to suppress the Waqf scam investigation. Manipaddy, who had served as the former Chairman of the Minority Commission, allegedly received offers to settle the matter but later became vocal about the corruption he uncovered within the BJP.

According to Kharge, Manipaddy had reported the alleged corruption to multiple Chief Ministers and even wrote to the Prime Minister, but no action was taken. He also accused Union Minister Pralhad Joshi of downplaying the scam, despite BJP leaders, including Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, suggesting that the scale of the scam could be much larger than initially reported.

Kharge pointed out that while the BJP was calling for a CBI investigation into the issue, they had failed to act on the matter when the Prime Minister had received the report. He further emphasized that BJP leaders should take responsibility for their own actions and not deflect blame onto others.

In a dramatic turn, Vijayendra, who is accused of attempting to bribe Manipaddy to suppress the Waqf fraud investigation, has called for a CBI inquiry into the Waqf fraud case. However, Anwar Manipaddy later retracted his bribery allegations against Congress leaders, though he maintained that the Waqf scam remained a critical issue.

The ongoing political slugfest between Congress and BJP over the Waqf issue has sparked heated debates, with both sides accusing each other of corruption, political manipulation, and neglecting the welfare of the Muslim community. As the conflict continues to unfold, the future of the Waqf properties and the investigation into the alleged scam remains uncertain. ■

Jamia Hamdard Launches Asian Federation for Alternatives to Animal Experiments



New Delhi: The 4th Asian Congress for Alternatives to Animal Experiments, held at Jamia Hamdard Convention Centre on December 14, marked a significant milestone as the first event of its kind hosted in India. During the congress, founding members and representatives from India, China, Japan, and South Korea signed a joint declaration to establish the *Asian Federation of Societies for Alternatives to Animal Experiments* (AFSAAE). Support for the initiative was expressed by societies working for alternatives from America, Europe, and Sri Lanka.

In his address, Prof. Y.K. Gupta urged scientists to recognize the suffering of animals used in experiments. Prof. Raisuddin presented a detailed report on the three days of deliberations at the conference and announced various awards for outstanding presentations by young scientists. Dr. Christian Pellevoisin, Scientific Director at MatTek &

CEO of Urbilateria, France, sponsored the best poster presentation awards and cash prizes for emerging scientists. Dr. Kristie Sullivan, Vice President of Education and Outreach at the Institute for In Vitro Sciences, USA, and Prof. Winfried Neuhaus, member of the Austrian Commission for Animal Experimentation, both praised the successful organization of the congress.

Prof. (Dr.) M. Afshar Alam, Vice Chancellor of Jamia Hamdard, congratulated the organizing committee for their efforts in making the conference a success. He also commended the patronage of Janab Hammad Ahmed, Chancellor of Jamia Hamdard, and the financial support from the Hamdard National Foundation, alongside other funding agencies, in enabling Jamia Hamdard to develop alternative models to animal experiments. Dr. Akbarsha announced that the next meeting would be held in Hyderabad. ■

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Muslim Board Delegation Visits Ajmer Dargah, Rejects Temple Claim



Staff Writer

Ajmer: A delegation from the All India Muslim Personal Law Board visited the Dargah of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti to express solidarity with the dargah committee and Sajjadgan. On December 12, the delegation held a joint press conference with Anjuman-e-Sayyidgan, firmly rejecting claims that a temple existed on the site before the shrine was built. They urged the courts to dismiss such baseless assertions, warning that continued acceptance of such claims could lead to lawlessness and anarchy in the country, despite the existence of the Places of Worship Act of 1991.

The delegation was led by Maulana Shah Muhammad Fazalur-Rahim Mujaddidi, General Secretary of the Board, and included Dr. Syed Qasim Rasool Ilyas, Board spokesperson, Maulana Abu Talib Rahmani, Executive Member, and

Mohammad Nazimuddin, Ameer Halqa of Jamaat-e-Islami, Rajasthan.

The delegation reassured dargah officials of the Board's unwavering moral and practical support in any legal, political, or constitutional struggle. They expressed surprise and concern over the Ajmer local court's decision to entertain a petition and issue notices despite historical evidence and the legal safeguards provided by the Places of Worship Act.

Expressing their anger, the delegation highlighted a troubling trend of claims targeting mosques and dargahs across India. The case of Sambhal's Jama Masjid remains unresolved, and now a claim suggests Ajmer Dargah sits on the site of the Sankat Mochan Mahadev temple. The petition names the Dargah Committee, the Union Ministry of Minority Affairs, and the Archaeological Department as respondents.

The Board reiterated that such

claims undermine the Places of Worship Act, which maintains that the status of religious sites as of August 15, 1947, cannot be altered or contested. This law was enacted to prevent any further disputes following the Babri Masjid case. However, despite this legal safeguard, ongoing cases involving Gyanvapi Jama Masjid (Varanasi), Shahi Eidgah (Mathura), Bhujshala Masjid (Madhya Pradesh), Teele Wali Masjid (Lucknow), Sambhal Jama Masjid, Jaunpur's mosque, and Ajmer Dargah reflect blatant disregard for the law and Constitution.

The delegation condemned the lower courts' willingness to entertain such claims, citing the Supreme Court's ruling during the Babri Masjid case, which explicitly reinforced the Places of Worship Act. They warned that allowing these cases to proceed opens floodgates for further disputes and tensions.

Highlighting the revered status of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, the delegation emphasized that the Ajmer Dargah holds deep respect and devotion among both Muslims and Hindus.

Maulana Sarwar Chishti, representing the Dargah Committee, expressed gratitude to the All India Muslim Personal Law Board for their solidarity and pledged to collaborate with the Board in addressing these challenges. ■

Arab Spring Blossoms in Syria: A Historic Shift

Zillur Rahman Haider

New Delhi: Dr. Zafarul-Islam Khan, a renowned expert on Middle Eastern affairs, delivered an enlightening lecture at the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind headquarters on the seismic developments in Syria. He detailed the downfall of the Assad regime and the long-awaited culmination of the Arab Spring in the nation.

Syria's Historical Tapestry

Dr. Khan began by tracing Syria's profound historical legacy, a cradle of ancient civilizations such as the Assyrian, Roman, Byzantine, Umayyad, Seljuk, and Ottoman empires. He highlighted the Islamic conquest in 636 CE under Caliph Umar, which established Damascus as the Umayyad Caliphate's seat for 132 years. Despite periods of Crusader and French dominance, Syria remained a cornerstone of Islamic history.

The Sykes-Picot Betrayal

Dr. Khan recounted the infamous Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, where Britain, France, and Russia secretly carved up the Middle



East, betraying Arab aspirations for independence. Syria, promised autonomy, was instead seized by France, disrupting the short-lived Arab national government under Emir Faisal. France's General Gouraud desecrated Salahuddin's grave, symbolizing the West's exploitative policies.

Colonial Legacies

Under French rule, Syria suffered cultural and political fragmentation. Lebanon was created as a Christian-majority state, ensuring Maronite dominance in its governance. This division fueled enduring sectarian tensions in the region.

Post-Independence Instability

After gaining independence in

1946, Syria faced a series of military coups, culminating in the rise of the Ba'ath Party. This regime, rooted in secular Arab nationalism, suppressed Islamic influences and stifled dissent. Dr. Khan highlighted the brutal tactics of Hafez al-Assad and his son Bashar, whose regimes oversaw mass atrocities, including the Hama massacre and widespread political repression.

The Arab Spring and Assad's Downfall

The Arab Spring ignited Syria's civil war in 2011, leading to the regime's collapse in December 2023. The Assads' departure marked the end of a brutal era. Dr. Khan described the triumphant entry of Abu Muhammad al-Jolani into Damascus, symbolizing a new chapter for Syria.

A Vision for Rebuilding

The new leadership has pledged accountability for past crimes while emphasizing unity and reconstruction. Dr. Khan expressed cautious optimism, lauding Jolani's inclusive approach and the commitment to justice. ■

Christian MPs Urge Church Bishops: Support Muslims on Waqf Issue, Not Photo Ops with Modi



Spl Correspondent

New Delhi: Christian MPs have urged the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) to take a firm stand on the Waqf Bill, emphasizing that it impacts the constitutional rights of minorities. During a closed-door meeting with CBCI on December 3, MPs advocated for the church's support on the issue, calling for action in solidarity with Muslims, particularly in the context of the Waqf Amendment Bill.

The CBCI, which is the highest authority for Catholics in India, convened the meeting with around 20 Christian MPs, mostly from opposition parties. The MPs expressed strong objections to the Waqf Amendment Bill and urged church leaders to refrain from participating in "photo ops" with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The bill, currently under review by a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC), proposes significant changes to the Central Waqf Council and Waqf Boards, including provisions that would allow non-Muslim members. Several MPs, including John Brittas (CPI-M), Dean Kuriakose, Anto Antony (Congress), Hibi Eden, and Derek O'Brien (Trinamool Congress), criticized the bill, deeming certain clauses as intrusive.

Notably, two Christian MPs from

the BJP were absent, while BJP Union Minister George Kurian joined the meeting only after most opposition MPs had spoken.

This meeting, the first of its kind in decades, was chaired by CBCI President Archbishop Andrews. Discussions also touched on broader issues such as the removal of reserved Anglo-Indian seats in legislative bodies, the increasing attacks on Christians, and the alleged misuse of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) to target Christian institutions.

A Kerala MP highlighted the difficulties faced by Christian organizations after the revocation of their FCRA licenses, which have hindered their business operations. Another MP stressed the importance of holding leaders accountable for violating constitutional principles, rather than relying on symbolic gestures. Despite the cordial setting, several MPs criticized the church leadership for its perceived "transactional" approach to government relations since 2014. In response, the CBCI assured MPs that they would address the community's concerns.

The growing apprehension among Christian MPs regarding the protection of minority rights reflects the broader challenges posed by changing legislative and administrative dynamics. ■

Interfaith Christmas Program Promotes Harmony in Coimbatore



Coimbatore: The Divyodaya Multi-Religious Center organized an interfaith Christmas program on December 14, aimed at fostering harmony and cooperation among individuals from all religious backgrounds. The event sought to promote the values of peace, solidarity, and fraternity across faiths.

Public Relations Secretary Abdul Hakeem represented Jamaat-e-

Islami Hind Coimbatore at the event, while members of the Knowledge Center delivered insightful speeches on interfaith solidarity. The program highlighted the importance of mutual respect and social peace, with leaders and representatives from various religious communities in attendance, further demonstrating the spirit of unity and harmony. ■



Dr. Muzaffar Hussain Ghazali

On the 75th anniversary of India's Constitution, the Modi government introduced the 'One Nation, One Election' bill in the Lok Sabha following a debate. The bill received 269 votes in favor and 198 against. During the session, Home Minister Amit Shah stated that Prime Minister Modi recommended the bill be sent to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) for further discussion. The opposition criticized the bill, arguing it undermines the Constitution and federal structure of the country. Congress highlighted that the government lacks the necessary majority to pass the bill.

The 129th Amendment Bill proposes synchronized elections for the Lok Sabha, state assemblies, and Union Territories. A committee led by former President Ram Nath Kovind had previously submitted a report on this issue, naming it 'One Nation, One Election.'

The bill amends three sections of the Constitution and introduces a new provision, effectively abolishing the five-year term guarantee for the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. The President will set election dates, aligning state assembly terms with the completion of the Lok Sabha's tenure. This adjustment shortens the assembly terms, which critics argue infringes on the rights of state legislatures and threatens the concept of federalism.

Undermining the Five-Year Tenure

One of the amendments stipulates that if the Lok Sabha or an assembly dissolves before completing its term, elections will be held for the remaining

Why Does BJP Want One Nation, One Election?



Photo Courtesy: theindiaforum.in

duration. For example, if the Lok Sabha dissolves after three years, the next election will elect members for the remaining two years, rather than a full five-year term. This contradicts the core principles of parliamentary democracy and negatively impacts the federal structure by undermining state autonomy.

BJP's Rationale for One Nation, One Election

Elections are held frequently across India, a hallmark of the nation's vibrant democracy. However, the BJP views this as a flaw rather than a strength, arguing that constant elections disrupt development, drain resources, and burden governance. Prime Minister Modi advocates for synchronized elections every five years to

reduce costs and enhance efficiency.

While unified elections may streamline processes, critics argue that local issues drive state elections, making them distinct from national elections. BJP leaders claim that frequent polls lead to administrative standstills due to the Model Code of Conduct, diverting leaders from governance to electioneering.

The Reality of Development

The BJP's argument that staggered elections hinder development is not entirely valid. True development is measured by improvements in living standards, income, education, healthcare, clean water, and nutrition areas often neglected. Instead, governments focus on infrastructure, while diverting

public attention to divisive issues of caste, religion, and regionalism.

Historical Context

India held simultaneous elections until 1967, following the vision of the Constitution's framers. However, the political landscape shifted with the rise of non-Congress governments in the late 1960s, causing premature dissolutions and staggered elections. The Election Commission recommended synchronized elections in 1983, and the Law Ministry echoed this in 1999.

Challenges to Consensus

Despite BJP's push, achieving consensus on this issue remains challenging. The ruling party's authoritarian tendencies and strained relations with opposition parties have eroded trust. Regional parties resist the proposal, fearing

diminished influence and weakened federalism.

The Threat to Democracy

Critics argue that One Nation, One Election consolidates power in the hands of the ruling party, enabling manipulation through propaganda and communal polarization. By aligning parliamentary and state elections, the BJP could secure sweeping victories, silencing dissent and marginalizing regional voices.

Conclusion

One Nation, One Election risks diluting India's democratic essence. Frequent elections serve as a crucial feedback mechanism, allowing citizens to hold governments accountable. Consolidating elections may streamline governance but risks fostering authoritarianism. India must prioritize democratic principles over administrative convenience to preserve its diverse and pluralistic fabric.

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New Delhi: India, a country renowned for its diversity, observes International Minority Rights Day on December 18, marking the day declared by the United Nations in 1992. Empowering minority communities is essential for ensuring equal access to opportunities across social, economic, and educational spheres. Despite the government's numerous initiatives, the situation of minorities, particularly the largest minority group Muslims remains concerning, with a growing sense of insecurity among them.

The Ministry of Minority Affairs, established on January 29, 2006, works to address issues faced by minorities. It aims to develop policies, coordinate efforts, and monitor programs for the welfare of minorities, focusing on six notified communities Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and Zoroastrians (Parsis). To direct resources effectively, 90 Minority Concentration Districts, 710 Blocks, and 66 Towns have been identified for targeted interventions. However, despite these efforts, progress remains limited, and the insecurity felt by some communities is evident.

The government has also set up the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, to safeguard the rights of minorities. Initially covering five communities, Jains were added in 2014. Both the NCM and State Minorities Commissions ensure that the rights of minorities are protected in line with the Constitution and relevant laws.

Additionally, the Waqf Act of 1995 (amended in 2013) is managed by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, with the Central Waqf Council (CWC) overseeing the administration of Waqf properties. Two significant schemes, Qaumi Waqf Board Taraqqiati Scheme (QWBTS) and Shahari Waqf Sampatti Vikas Yojana (SWSVY),

focus on modernizing and automating Waqf Board operations. Despite these efforts, the impact remains limited, and funding for these initiatives over the years has not led to significant change.

A notable example of government support is the Dargah of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer, which undertakes various charitable activities, including providing meals, medical facilities, and stipends for widows and needy students. However, these local initiatives do not address the broader, systemic issues that affect marginalized communities.

On the education front, various scholarship schemes aim to support minority students. The Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship Schemes have sanctioned billions of rupees to support millions of beneficiaries, particularly from Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, and Christian communities. Despite this, the literacy rates for Muslims (68.54%) remain lower than the national average, highlighting a gap in effective educational outreach.

Economic empowerment is also being addressed through initiatives like the PM VIKAS Scheme, aimed at skill development and entrepreneurship. Other schemes such as Seekho Aur Kamao, Nai Manzil, and USTTAD focus on empowering youth through vocational training, while the National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC) supports entrepreneurs. However, challenges remain in translating these efforts into sustainable economic growth for minority communities.

The Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJKV), launched in 2018, aims to create essential infrastructure in 1300 identified areas, bridging socio-economic gaps. This scheme is being expanded to all districts, but its

Minority Rights Day: Where Do India's Minorities Stand?



Photo credit: jagranjosh.com

impact is still limited, with many regions seeing little improvement. Cultural preservation is another

area of focus, with programs like the Jiyo Parsi Scheme, which aims to address the declining Parsi population, and initiatives to promote linguistic diversity, such as recognizing Pali as a Classical Language. However, these efforts seem inadequate to address the overarching challenges faced by minorities in terms of security, representation, and socio-economic upliftment.

Despite the numerous programs in

place, the government's efforts to improve the conditions of marginalized communities remain largely ineffective. Impact evaluation studies, such as those conducted by IIT Delhi and NITI Aayog, show mixed results, further underscoring the gap between policy and real-world outcomes. This irony continues to affect India's minority communities, leaving them with a sense of disillusionment regarding the promises made by successive governments. ■

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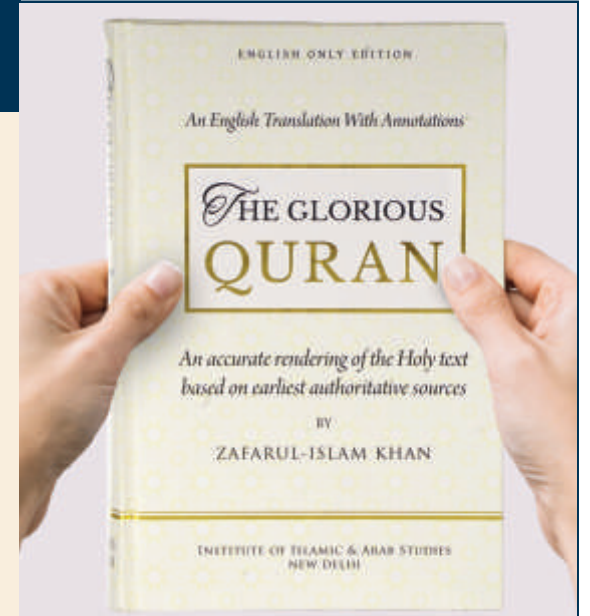
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Bangladesh Seeks Extradition of Ousted PM Sheikh Hasina for 'Crimes Against Humanity'

Shehab Sumon

DHAKA: Bangladesh's interim government announced recently that ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will face multiple charges of crimes against humanity, following an extradition request sent to India.

Hasina fled to New Delhi in August amid student-led protests that culminated in her removal after 15 years in power. The protests, which began peacefully in July, turned violent as security forces cracked down, leaving hundreds dead and triggering a nationwide uprising.

In October, Bangladesh's domestic criminal tribunal issued arrest warrants for Hasina and over 40 others connected to the crackdown.

Foreign affairs adviser Md. Touhid Houssain confirmed that Bangladesh had sent a diplomatic note to India's Foreign Ministry requesting Hasina's return to face



This file photo, taken on January 8, 2024, shows Bangladesh's ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during a press conference in Dhaka. (AFP/File)

trial.

"We expect a prompt response from India," said Azad Majumder, deputy press secretary to interim leader Muhammad Yunus.

Majumder stated that Hasina is accused of orchestrating forced disappearances and ordering lethal force against protesters. "Investigations are ongoing, and she will face multiple charges regarding crimes against

humanity," he added.

India has acknowledged receipt of the request. Bangladesh and India share an extradition treaty, which legal experts say obligates compliance.

Bangladesh previously honored the treaty in 2015 by extraditing Indian separatist leader Anup Chetia, arrested in 1997. However, legal analysts suggest India could invoke treaty clauses suggesting Hasina may face political persecution, potentially delaying or denying extradition.

"There is concern that India may withhold Hasina's return on grounds that she risks political vengeance and may not receive a fair trial," said Jyotirmoy Barua, a Supreme Court lawyer and human rights activist.

Barua emphasized that India's response will depend on diplomatic relations and the discretion of its leadership. (<https://arab.news/catem>)

Azerbaijan and ICESCO Host International Conference on Interfaith Dialogue in Rabat



Baku, AZERTAC : An international conference titled "Interfaith Harmony: Nurturing Peaceful Coexistence" commenced on Tuesday at the headquarters of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) in Rabat, Morocco.

Co-organized by ICESCO, the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations of Azerbaijan, and the Azerbaijani Embassy in Morocco, the conference centered on fostering peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, and religious tolerance among diverse communities.

Focus Areas

The conference addressed several key themes, including:

- Strengthening dialogue and collaboration between religious leaders, policymakers, and scholars.
- Promoting interfaith understanding and combating religious intolerance.
- Sharing best practices to encourage a culture of harmony and mutual respect.

Dignitaries and Participants

The event brought together prominent intellectuals, scientists, and religion experts from Azerbaijan, Morocco, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Italy, England, and other countries.

Speakers emphasized the significance of peaceful coexistence as a cornerstone for creating harmonious and thriving societies. They highlighted the conference as a vital platform for fostering constructive and sustained interactions between followers of different faiths.

Exhibition on Tolerance

As part of the event, an exhibition themed "Common Human Values and Different Religions" showcased photographs reflecting Azerbaijan's traditions of tolerance. It also featured the historical and cultural monuments of Shusha, which ICESCO declared the capital of the Islamic world for 2024.

The conference underscored the shared commitment of diverse cultures and religions to work together in building a more inclusive and understanding world.

Cambodian PM Highlights Full Religious Freedom for Muslims

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet reaffirmed the country's commitment to Islamic religious freedom, emphasizing integration and equal opportunities for the Muslim community.

• **Religious Freedom:** Muslim students can wear traditional clothing, including head coverings and caps, in schools and official documents like passports and ID cards.

• **Facilities:** Worship spaces are



provided in public places, including airports, hospitals, shopping malls, and government buildings like the Peace Palace.

• **Education and Development:** Enhanced opportunities for

Islamic education, technical skills, and global collaboration with foreign investors.

• **Upcoming Event:** An international Islamic conference is scheduled in Phnom Penh next year, showcasing Cambodia's religious harmony.

The PM praised the Muslim community's contributions to society and their role in combating extremism, fostering peace, and integrating Cambodia into the global Islamic economy.

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Educational Reformation in the Islamic World



On Educational Reformation in Islamic World

Towseef Hassan

The state of education in the Muslim world has long been a subject of intense debate in media, intellectual circles, and political forums. Critics often portray Islamic educational systems as relics of a pre-modern era, unable to adapt to contemporary challenges. However, this narrative oversimplifies a complex history, ignoring the broader impact of colonialism and the adoption of Western models of education.

Colonial Legacy and the Secular Shift

Historically, Islamic education played a significant role in shaping intellectual and spiritual development. However, during the colonial era, the Muslim world adopted Western-inspired secular school systems in an attempt to emulate the perceived economic and political superiority of the

West. This shift came at a high cost, eroding traditional Islamic learning, cultural identity, and holistic knowledge systems.

Quoting Ibn Khaldun's insights from *The Muqaddimah*, the colonial experience fostered a mindset of blind emulation among the oppressed, perpetuating intellectual and cultural subjugation. This phenomenon, as Al Zeera noted, has left the Muslim world grappling with an education system disconnected from its spiritual and cultural roots.

Religion and Knowledge: A Unified Vision

Islamic thought emphasizes the unity of knowledge, integrating science, culture, and spirituality. Allama Iqbal's perspective underscores this holistic approach:

"Religion is not a departmental affair; it is neither mere thought,

nor mere feeling, nor mere action; it is an expression of the whole man."

Secular education, by isolating religion from other disciplines, has fragmented this unity, limiting the development of an Islamic world view in educational curricula.

Re-Islamization of Education

The concept of re-Islamization goes beyond reclaiming the intellectual legacy of great Muslim thinkers. It involves creating an Islamic epistemology that unites all branches of knowledge under a cohesive framework. Leading scholars like Syed Hussain Nasr, Al-Attas, and Ismail al-Faruqi have championed this vision, calling for a transformative shift in Muslim educational systems.

The Path Forward

Achieving educational reform in the Muslim world requires robust, visionary institutions capable of integrating Islamic principles with modern disciplines. While this transformation will take generations, it is crucial for reclaiming the intellectual and cultural identity of the Muslim world.

Only by addressing the colonial legacy and reimagining education as a unified pursuit of knowledge and spirituality can the Muslim world overcome the challenges of modernity and chart a path to a brighter future. (Extract from: kashmirobserver.net)

Canada's Growing and Diverse Muslim Population: 2001–2021



Canada's demographic landscape has experienced a significant shift over the past two decades, marked by the remarkable growth of its Muslim population.

Rapid Growth in Numbers

According to Statistics Canada, the proportion of Muslims in Canada's population more than doubled, rising from **2.0% in 2001 to 4.9% in 2021**. This increase reflects not just a rise in numbers but also a dynamic diversification of cultures, languages, and age demographics within the Muslim community.

A Young and Dynamic Demographic

The Muslim population in Canada is notably youthful, with a **median age of 30 years**, compared to the national median of 41. Approximately **65.4% of Canadian Muslims** fall within the 0–64 age group, indicating a vibrant and dynamic community poised to make significant contributions to the nation's social and economic fabric.

Racial and Cultural Diversity

South Asians form the largest racialized subgroup within the Muslim population, reflecting substantial immigration from nations like **Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India**. Other top countries of origin include **Iran, Morocco, Algeria, Syria,**

Afghanistan, and Lebanon, showcasing the global roots of Canada's Muslim community.

Linguistic Richness

The linguistic diversity of Canada's Muslims further highlights their multicultural heritage. The most commonly spoken languages at home include **English, Arabic, French, Urdu, and Persian**, among others, illustrating the rich cultural influences within the community.

Regional Distribution

Muslims are unevenly distributed across Canada, with the majority residing in **Ontario**, which hosts around **579,640 Muslims** (6.7% of the province's total population). **Quebec and British Columbia** also have significant Muslim populations, while provinces like **Newfoundland and Labrador** and **Prince Edward Island** have smaller communities, reflecting regional disparities.

Looking Ahead

As Canada's Muslim population continues to grow and evolve, its contributions to the nation's multicultural mosaic and economic vitality are expected to strengthen. This dynamic demographic represents a crucial element of Canada's future, embodying diversity and youthful potential. (Extract from shiawaves.com)

Iran Among Top 10 Nations in Power-Creating Technologies

Iran is recognized as one of the top 10 nations possessing power-creating technologies, according to Seyyed Ahmad Fazelzadeh, President of the Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC). Speaking during the visit of Peyman Jebeli, Head of Iran's Broadcasting (IRIB) to the ISC, Fazelzadeh highlighted Iran's impressive standing in global scientific advancements.

As of 2024, Iran ranks 17th globally in scientific achievements, while it holds second place among Islamic



countries according to the Scopus citation database. Scopus is a comprehensive citation database that includes bibliographic information on over 60 million documents from around 5,000 publishers worldwide.

Fazelzadeh also announced plans

to launch a dedicated portal for collaboration between the ISC and IRIB, aimed at fostering further cooperation between the two institutions. Jebeli emphasized the importance of this strategic partnership and expressed hope that the operational document for this collaboration would

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Erdogan's 'Leader of the Muslim World' Moment



The recent regime change in Syria has positioned Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan as a key regional influencer, fulfilling his long-standing ambition of asserting Turkey's leadership in the Muslim world. This moment comes after years of complex and shifting policies toward Syria, showcasing both Erdogan's strategic acumen and the challenges ahead.

From Ally to Adversary to Opportunity

Initially, Erdogan fostered close ties with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. However, their relationship soured in 2011 when Assad violently suppressed an uprising, leading Erdogan to support opposition forces, including the Syrian National Army (SNA) and the controversial Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS).

In November 2024, Erdogan approved a limited operation in Aleppo to pressure Assad toward normalization. Unexpectedly, this operation led to Assad's ousting, leaving Erdogan in a commanding position to shape post-Assad Syria.

Challenges in Post-Assad Syria

Despite this geopolitical success, Erdogan faces significant hurdles:

1. Problematic Allies:

- HTS, with links to al-Qaeda and a record of repression in Idlib, remains controversial despite its recent rhetoric of inclusivity.

- The SNA's history of human rights violations against Kurds and minorities complicates Turkey's moral standing.

2. Ideological Contradictions:

Erdogan's vision of Turkey as a democratic state rooted in Muslim values contrasts with HTS's history and ideological ambiguity, creating tensions in the proposed new order for Syria.

3. Eroding Influence:

While Erdogan's leadership

appeals to Arab audiences, Syria's evolving dynamics suggest diminishing reliance on Turkish involvement, potentially weakening Ankara's control over its allies and the region's future.

Turkey's Aspirations and Regional Realities

Erdogan's desire to project Turkey as a leader of the Muslim world is driven by his unique position as a populist leader and critic of Western policies. However, his overestimation of Turkey's ability to manage Arab societies highlighted by missteps in Syria underscores the limits of this ambition.

For now, Erdogan relishes this moment of influence, but sustaining it will require navigating the complexities of Syrian autonomy, HTS's troubling history, and regional resistance to external dominance. His success depends on whether he can balance Turkey's interests with the aspirations of a post-Assad Syria that increasingly seeks independence from foreign control. ■

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Iran's Qur'an Contest: The Largest in the World



Iran's annual International Qur'an Contest has been recognized as the largest Qur'anic event globally, with participants from over 110 countries. According to Hamid Majidimehr, head of the Awqaf and Charity Affairs Organization's Qur'anic Affairs Center, this competition surpasses other international Qur'anic contests, which typically see participation from no more than 70 countries. The 40th edition of

the event, held in Tehran in February 2024, reflects the growing influence of Iran's Qur'anic discourse worldwide. Majidimehr also highlighted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many countries suspended their Qur'an competitions, Iran continued to hold its national and international contests virtually, setting an example for other nations.

In addition to the competition,

Iran is hosting a large-scale Qur'anic initiative, "I Love the Qur'an," which aims to engage one million Iranians in Qur'anic education. This virtual self-study program covers reading, Tajweed, interpretation, memorization, and reflection, and is conducted in collaboration with sacred sites and shrines across the country. Participants, guided by instructors via phone, earn certificates after passing exams. The initiative has received widespread support and is being expanded to include children, teenagers, and government employees.

Seyyed Masoud Miriyan, director of the Qur'anic Affairs Center at the Astan Quds Razavi, reported that over 24 billion rials have been invested in the initiative, which has become one of the country's most successful Qur'anic educational programs. ■



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MWL to Launch Global Platform for Girls' Education in Muslim Societies

Rehan Khan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Muslim World League (MWL) is set to launch a groundbreaking initiative to advance girls' education through its *International Partnerships for Education in Muslim Societies* platform. This initiative will be unveiled at a global conference titled "Girls' Education in Muslim Communities: Challenges and Opportunities", scheduled for January 11-12, 2025, in Islamabad. Under the patronage of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the conference aims to forge global partnerships among governments, Islamic institutions, civil society, and international organizations. Senior religious scholars, intellectuals, media leaders, and activists from across the world will collaborate to advance girls' education within Muslim communities. The MWL initiative is aligned with the principles of the *Charter of*



Makkah particularly Article 25 and the *Charter of Building Bridges Between Islamic Schools of Thought and Sects*. Both were endorsed under the patronage of Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. Additionally, resolutions adopted by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states, along with MoUs between the MWL, OIC, Islamic Fiqh Council, and International Islamic Fiqh Academy, reinforce this

commitment.

The conference aims to dispel misconceptions about Islam's stance on girls' education. The MWL reaffirms that Islam being a religion of knowledge, progress, and moral values unequivocally supports the right of girls to education. Any practices that hinder this fundamental right are contrary to Islamic teachings.

Key discussions will focus on identifying challenges to girls' education, developing actionable strategies to overcome barriers, and leveraging opportunities to empower women. By enhancing educational outcomes, the MWL seeks to enable women to play a vital role in community development across all sectors. This platform marks a significant step toward addressing educational disparities in Muslim societies, fostering inclusive progress, and equipping girls with the tools to build a brighter, more prosperous future for themselves and their communities. ■

Global Halal Economy Worth \$8 Trillion, Expert Says



Turkish Minister of Trade Omer Bolat (C) speaks during Halal Expo 2024 held at the Istanbul Expo Center in Istanbul, Turkiye on November 27, 2024.

[Arif Hüdaverdi Yaman – Anadolu Agency]

The global halal economy has reached a significant milestone, valued at \$8 trillion over the past nine years, according to Aylin Sengul, coordinator of the World Halal Summit. Sengul spoke at the Halal Expo 2024 in Istanbul, where she highlighted the rapid growth of the sector. Organized by the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), in coordination with the Turkish Ministry of Trade, the event

brought attention to the halal industry's expanding reach. While traditionally associated with Muslim consumers, the halal market has attracted increasing interest from non-Muslims, drawn by the sector's reputation for quality and reliability. Sengul noted that when the event first began, the global halal economy was valued at approximately \$1 trillion. With efforts in halal certification and accreditation, the economy is projected to grow to \$12 trillion in the next five years. ■

PM Anwar Calls for Global Unity Against Intolerance and Islamophobia



BERNAMA PIX

Kuala Lumpur: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has urged a unified global response to combat rising intolerance, racism, and Islamophobia. Speaking at the *Strategic Vision Group: Russia-Islamic World* meeting, he emphasized the importance of compassion, justice, and humanity in addressing these global challenges. Anwar highlighted the tragedies unfolding in Gaza and the rise of fascism and racism worldwide as critical issues requiring urgent

attention. He called on the Muslim world to embrace values of *As-Samud* (tolerance), *Rahmah* (compassion), and *Ehsan* (humanity) to lead efforts in promoting global harmony. "This is a period of great tragedies, affecting humanity at large and particularly Muslims from Gaza to other parts of the world," he said. "We must counter hate and intolerance to foster a world where mutual understanding and respect prevail." The meeting, attended by over 200

representatives from 32 countries, serves as a platform for fostering global collaboration and addressing pressing issues in Muslim communities and beyond. Dignitaries included Rustam Minnikhanov, Chairman of the Russia-Islamic World Strategic Vision Group, and Malaysian ministers Datuk Seri Dr. Zambry Abdul Kadir, Datuk Seri Mohamad Sabu, and Dr. Zulkifli Hasan. Anwar also highlighted Malaysia's commitment to religious tolerance, noting the country's swift actions against local incidents of intolerance. He stressed that, while Malaysia is a Muslim-majority nation, it exemplifies respect for all faiths.

"We ensure Muslims adhere to their faith while upholding the dignity and rights of men and women from all religions," Anwar said, calling on other nations to adopt similar consistent and coherent approaches.

The meeting concludes, aiming to advance global collaboration and promote mutual respect and understanding. ■

Iranian Researcher Commended at BRICS Young Scientists Forum



This image taken at a BRICS forum on November 25, 2024 shows Iranian researcher Somayeh Sohrabi, PhD., in the Sirius Federal Territory in Sochi, Russia. (Photo by BRICS)

Dr. Somayeh Sohrabi, an Iranian researcher, received special recognition for her innovative project at the **9th BRICS Young Scientists Forum** held in Sochi, Russia, from November 25 to 29, 2024.

Event Highlights

• **Participation:** Thirty young researchers from BRICS countries Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa and new members, including Iran, UAE, and Egypt, presented cutting-edge projects in

fields like green technologies, artificial intelligence, chemical industries, and agriculture.

• **Iran's Debut:** This marks Iran's first participation since joining the BRICS group last year.

• **Judging Criteria:** A panel of eight judges evaluated the projects based on their **business models, feasibility, and future potential.**

Recognition for Iran

While projects from Brazil, China, and Russia secured top ranks, **Dr. Sohrabi's project** was commended for its **meritorious design**, earning her special recognition among the diverse and competitive entries.

Significance

The BRICS Young Scientists Forum fosters collaboration among researchers to tackle global challenges through innovation. Iran's participation highlights its growing integration into the BRICS framework and its commitment to advancing scientific research and innovation on the global stage. ■

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Iran Successfully Launches First Space Tug



Iran's Simorgh satellite launch vehicle launches a homegrown space tug and two payloads into space from the Imam Khomeini Space Launch Terminal in Semnan on December 6, 2024.

Developed by the Iranian Space Research Center (ISRC), the **Saman-1 system** marks a leap forward in orbital transfer capabilities. It enables efficient satellite positioning and reduces reliance on large, high-fuel vehicles.

The successful multi-payload launch also demonstrates Iran's growing expertise in advanced space technologies, including indigenous development of satellite subsystems.

Expanding Space Ambitions

Despite international sanctions, Iran has solidified its position among the world's top 10 countries capable of developing and launching satellites. Recent achievements include:

- **Super-Resolution Imaging Technology:** Enhancing satellite imaging capabilities.

- **Chamran-1 Launch:** Deployment of a domestically-built research satellite in September 2024.

With the Saman-1 launch, Iran underscores its commitment to innovation and self-reliance in space exploration, setting the stage for further advancements.

were placed in an orbit with a high point (apogee) of 410 km and a low point (perigee) of 300 km.

Key Payloads:

- **Saman-1 Space Tug:** Designed to efficiently transport satellites to higher orbits, reducing costs and fuel usage.

- **Fakhr-1 Nano-Satellite:** A 10-kg communication satellite developed by domestic experts, honoring Dr. Mohsen Fakhrazadeh. It successfully transmitted telemetry and executed commands.

Technological Breakthroughs

Iran has reached a major milestone in its space program with the successful launch of its first domestically-built space tug, Saman-1, accompanied by a CubeSat and a research payload. The mission took place at the Imam Khomeini Space Launch Terminal in Semnan, using the Simorgh satellite launch vehicle (SLV).

Mission Highlights

- **Launch Vehicle:** Simorgh, a two-stage liquid-fueled rocket, set a new record by lifting nearly 300 kilograms of payload into orbit.

- **Orbit Details:** The payloads

Rare Coins from Islamic and Roman History Go to Auction

Two exceptional coins, a **1,000-year-old Madinah gold dinar** and a **Julius Caesar assassination memento**, will be auctioned this week by Numismatica Genevensis SA in Geneva.

Highlights

- **Madinah Gold Dinar (92 AH / 710 CE):** Minted during the reign

of Umayyad Caliph Al-Walid I, this rare coin symbolizes Madinah's significance in Islamic history. Starting bid: 200,000 Swiss francs (\$226,000).

- **Brutus Aureus (43 BC):** Minted after Julius Caesar's assassination,

this ancient Roman gold coin reflects Marcus Brutus's political ambition. Starting bid: 750,000 Swiss francs (\$847,161).



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Archipelago to Operate Hotels in Madinah's Islamic World District



Signing between Archipelago and Knowledge Economic City in Madinah. Credit:

PRNewsfoto / Archipelago. © PRNewsfoto / Archipelago.

Archipelago, Southeast Asia's largest privately-owned hotel management group, has been selected to brand and operate hotels in the Islamic World District (IWD) of Knowledge Economic City (KEC) in Madinah, Saudi Arabia.

Key Highlights

- **IWD Project:** A 6.8 million-square-foot mixed-use development aimed at supporting Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 by increasing pilgrims and tourists to 30 million annually.

- **Hospitality Expansion:** KEC will deliver over 18,000 hospitality rooms, enhancing Madinah's tourism infrastructure and pilgrim experience.

- **Aston Hotel & Residences KEC:** Set to open in 2027,

featuring 519 hotel rooms and 130 serviced apartments.

Strategic Significance

The IWD is located near the Haramain railway station, connecting Madinah to Makkah and Jeddah via high-speed train. It will offer integrated services to pilgrims and visitors from diverse cultures across the Islamic world. Archipelago President & CEO John Flood expressed pride in partnering with KEC, highlighting the project's role in celebrating Madinah's heritage while transforming Saudi Arabia's tourism sector.

Archipelago operates over 55,000 rooms across 200+ locations worldwide, with expansions in Southeast Asia, Oceania, the Middle East, and beyond.

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Syed Tahsin
Ahmed

A WhatsApp message from a very religious cousin of mine took me by surprise. It read: I asked ChatGPT "how do I put Qur'an verse 16:90 in practice in everyday living?" The reply by ChatGPT read: 'Striving for justice (*Adl*), Excellence (*Ihsan*), Caring for relatives, Avoiding immorality and sin, Opposing oppression and Being constantly reminded.' The AI proceeds to elaborate on these. Suddenly it dawned upon me that Artificial intelligence (AI) has indeed penetrated our lives, just like computers made inroads some decades back.

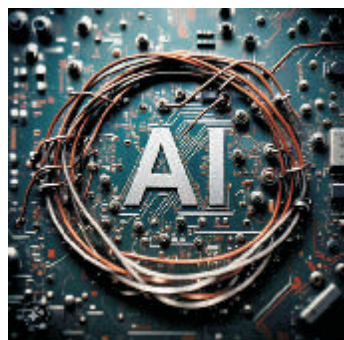
WHAT IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a set of technologies that enable computers to perform various advanced functions, including seeing, understanding, and translating spoken and written language, analysing data, and making recommendations. AI performs complex tasks and solves problems using human-like intelligence gained by analysing historical data and extracting patterns. John McCarthy, an American computer scientist is

considered the father of Artificial Intelligence. The coming together of AI and Blockchain technology is bringing about a revolutionary change in the working of many industries and activities. Blockchain with its decentralized and secure ledger ensures transparent and efficient transactions.

USES OF AI AND BLOCKCHAIN

A combination of AI and Blockchain technology is being increasingly used in the fitness (health) industry, education, finance, restaurant industry, supply chain industry, and driverless car industry. The Government of India has taken initiatives aiming to use AI to address societal needs in areas such as healthcare, education, agriculture, smart cities, and infrastructure. Even while giving credence to ethical concerns, many Muslim countries are showing huge interest in promoting the integration of AI technologies into their societal infrastructure. The Gulf states have invested largely in building smart cities operated by AI. It is reported that in 2017, the Government of Saudi Arabia announced its decision to grant citizenship to the Sophia robot as the world's first robotic citizen.



Sophia is a female social humanoid robot developed in 2016 by the Hong Kong-based company Hanson Robotics. Sophia is known for its human-like appearance and behaviour in contrast to the other robot variants. Sophia imitates human gestures and facial expressions and it can answer certain questions. It can even participate in a simple conversation.

ROLE OF AI IN UNDERSTANDING THE QUR'AN

Farzan Madadzadeh and Sajjad Bahariniya, two Iranian scholars have explored this subject in detail in their research paper "The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Understanding and Interpreting the Quran" (Journal of Community Health Research 2023; 12(2):310-311). The question raised by them

is whether it is possible to help spread the knowledge, wisdom, and law of the Quran with Artificial Intelligence. Their answer is in the affirmative. The use of Artificial Intelligence can increase the understanding, access, and retention of the teachings of the Qur'an and make them more accessible to a global audience. However, they point out that acknowledging the importance of human guidance and ethical considerations, this integration should be approached with caution. By responsibly using the power of Artificial Intelligence, we can open up new dimensions of knowledge and insight into the Qur'an while respecting its sanctity.

WHERE TO ADOPT?

Delving deeper into the details, the authors list the different fields where AI can be advantageously adopted:

- 1) Artificial Intelligence can help researchers in the analysis and interpretation of the text of the Qur'an.
- 2) Machine translation based on Artificial Intelligence can help improve access to the Qur'an by automatically translating it into different languages. However, given the limitations of AI translations, human supervision is essential to preserve the richness and accuracy of the original text.
- 3) AI-based chatbots and voice assistants can provide interactive

platforms for people seeking information and guidance related to the Qur'an. By using accurate and reliable sources, potential misinterpretation or misinformation should be avoided.

4) Artificial Intelligence technologies, such as optical character recognition (OCR), can help preserve and digitize ancient Quranic manuscripts. By automatically transcribing and digitizing these valuable texts, Artificial Intelligence can help preserve them and enable extensive scientific research.

THE AI REVOLUTION

Farzan Madadzadeh and Sajjad Bahariniya have examined this subject without being bogged down by a conventional and rigid approach. The following words of the authors place this subject in the right perspective: "Artificial Intelligence is actually a technology that has the ability to think. Of course, this ability to think is very different from what we know as human thinking, but in fact it tries to imitate it. Artificial Intelligence has revolutionized various aspects of human life. In recent years, researchers and technologists have begun to explore the interesting intersection between Artificial Intelligence and the Qur'an".

(The author is a retired KAS officer and can be reached at tahsin789@yahoo.com)

BOOK REVIEW

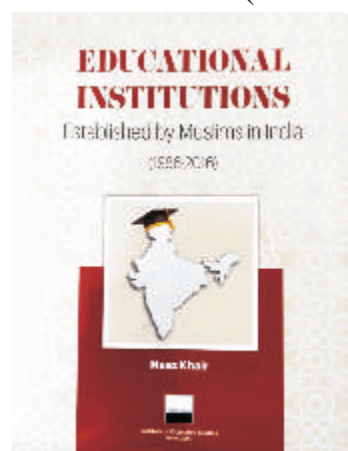
Naaz Khair

"Educational Institutions - Established by Muslims in India (1986-2016)"

The Institute of Objective Studies (IOS) in New Delhi has published an insightful report titled "Educational Institutions - Established by Muslims in India (1986-2016)", offering a comprehensive analysis of the educational institutions founded by Muslims over a period of three decades. This pioneering work sheds light on the state of Muslim education in India, specifically during the period following the Shah Bano case in 1986, a time marked by significant challenges, including the rise of strong fundamentalist influences.

This study is particularly notable as it highlights the substantial contributions made by the Muslim community in the field of education during a challenging socio-political landscape. The book also coincides with the 30th anniversary of the Institute of Objective Studies, founded in 1986, underscoring its longstanding commitment to serving the nation and minority communities.

The study meticulously identifies a total of 21,338 educational institutions established by



Book Details:

Title: Educational Institutions - Established by Muslims in India (1986-2016)

Author: Naaz Khair

ISBN: 978-93-91659-70-7

Pages: 1652

Price: ₹3000

Muslims, including both recognized and unrecognized private schools, madrasas, and other educational setups. It also covers seven UGC-approved private universities, 111 UGC-approved private colleges, 3,660 minority educational institutions,

and 236 private technical institutions.

In comparison, the National Council of Educational Research and Training's (NCERT) eighth All India School Education Survey (AISES) from 2009 revealed that out of 42,548 schools managed by various religious minorities in India, 51% were Muslim-managed. However, the NCERT report lacks detailed community-wise information on schools, a gap that the IOS study effectively fills by providing comprehensive lists of Muslim-founded institutions, including their names and years of establishment.

This book serves as an invaluable resource for those interested in understanding the growth and challenges of Muslim education in India over the past three decades.

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Mr. Aamir Qutub, an award-winning CEO, tech investor, and AI thought leader, exemplifies the transformative power of resilience and innovation. A proud alumnus of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), where he served as Honorary Secretary of the Students' Union in 2011, Aamir's journey from humble beginnings to global recognition is nothing short of inspirational.

From Cleaner to CEO

Hailing from Jamalpur, Aligarh, Aamir started his career in Australia as an airport cleaner. Today, he is the Founder and CEO of Enterprise Monkey, a global software and AI company with four

Aamir Qutub: From Aligarh to Global Tech Visionary

offices worldwide. Under his leadership, the company has driven innovation across industries, empowering businesses to thrive.

Key Achievements

- **Startup Leadership:** Appointed General Manager of ICT Geelong at just 25, strengthening Australia's regional tech ecosystem.

- **Awards and Recognition:** Winner of Australian Young Entrepreneur of the Year, Deakin Young Alumni of the Year, and IABCA Young Professional of the Year (2024).

- **Mentorship and Investments:** Mentored over 80 startups and



invested in eight tech companies valued at \$30 million collectively.

- **Government Advisor:** Serves on the Advisory Board to the Minister for Planning in Australia, fostering

growth and innovation.

- **Global Impact:** Founded *Angel Next Door*, a platform that saved 100,000 lives in Australia and impacted 2 million globally during COVID-19.

Learning from the Best

Aamir honed his expertise under mentors like Steve Wozniak (Apple Co-founder) and Steve Blank (Founder of Lean Startup Methodology), blending their lessons into his entrepreneurial philosophy.

Inspiring Change

With a social media following of 100,000+, Aamir inspires

thousands by sharing insights on AI, entrepreneurship, and leadership. He is a sought-after keynote speaker, known for delivering actionable strategies and fostering innovation.

Vision for the Future

Aamir aims to uplift communities by promoting AI awareness and encouraging entrepreneurship. Actively exploring opportunities in Dubai, he seeks to build strategic partnerships to drive technological and business advancements in the region.

A true trailblazer, Aamir Qutub embodies the spirit of innovation, empowering others to succeed in a rapidly evolving world. ■



Sana Rubiyana

There isn't evidence that screen time causes autism. There are a growing number of studies that link higher daily screen use with more autism-like symptoms in early childhood.

What is autism spectrum disorder?

Autism spectrum disorder is a neurological and developmental disorder that affects how people interact with others, communicate, learn, and behave. Although autism can be diagnosed at any age, it is described as a "developmental disorder" because symptoms generally appear in the first two years of life.

The three main causes of autism-

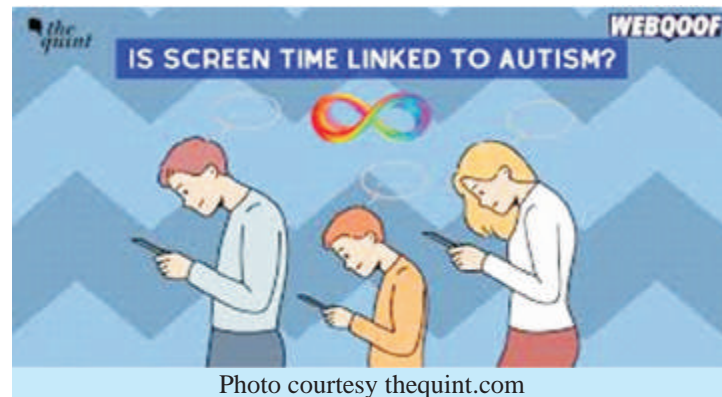


Photo courtesy thequint.com

For now we don't know the exact cause of autism; however, research suggests that it's a combination of developmental, genetic and environmental factors. Genetic factors play a significant role in the development of Autism spectrum disorder. Research suggests that

genetic factors contribute to about 80-90% of the risk for developing ASD, while environmental factors contribute to about 10-20% of the risk. ASD tends to run in families, indicating the importance of genetic factors.

Avoid screentime from birth to

Does screentime cause autism?

18 months. Infants just don't have the cognitive skills to learn from screens at this age because it gets in the way of activities that "build" brains, such as talking, playing, singing or reading together.

Research shows that programs claiming they are able to help babies learn language or regulate emotions do not actually help; increased screentime was associated with developmental delays, particularly in acquisition and communication.

- Until 18 months of age limit screen use to video chatting along with an adult (for example, with a parent who is out of town)

- Between 18 to 24 months screentime should be limited to watching educational programming with a caregiver.

- The American Association of Paediatrics recommends for children 2-5, limit non educational screen time to about 1 hour per weekday and 3 hours on the weekend days.

- For children 6 years and older, encourage healthy habits and limit activities that include screens.

- Turn off all screens during family meals and outings.

- Learn about and use parental controls.

- Avoid using screens pacifiers, babysitters or to stop tantrums.

- Turn off screens and remove them from bedrooms 1-2 hours before bedtime.

The writer is Psychologist & Rational Emotive Cognitive Behavioural Therapist

Email- sanarubiana@gmail.com, IG @Sanarubiana15 & X @SRubiyana ■

WOMEN

The Days of Open Schools and Dreams of a Better Future

Shakiba Ahmadi

I grew up in a family where I never experienced violence firsthand, but I witnessed it in society all around me. These days, this reality deeply troubles me. The stories and struggles of the girls in my community weigh on my heart. There are so many problems that could be solved through dialogue and understanding, yet instead, harassment and abuse have become tools of oppression. In a patriarchal society like Afghanistan, where men dominate, women are stripped of their right to choose, and freedom feels like a distant dream.

Let me share the story of a dear friend. It was the autumn of 2020, during our annual exams. My friend, intelligent and hardworking, was one grade below me. At the time, I was in twelfth grade, immersed in studies and focused on my dreams of pursuing higher education. I didn't get to see her often, but when we did talk, she confided in me about her struggles.



Photo Credit: Ahmed SAHEL ARMAN/AFP

Her father had decided to marry her off to her cousin immediately after the exams, against her will. She longed to take the university entrance exam, to study her chosen field, and to live life on her terms. With tearful eyes, she once said to me, "You can take the exam, but I have no choice. My father is forcing me into marriage."

Her words broke my heart. I tried to console her, saying, "Believe in yourself. Don't let these circumstances defeat you." But she would cry and say, "I wish you could see the bitter days I'm enduring."

My friend had big dreams. During one of our rare conversations, she

told me her hopes for the future: "I want to eradicate violence and create a society where women can support each other, where justice prevails." Her words were filled with longing and strength, reflecting her deeply humane spirit. She believed that if given the chance, she would work to end discrimination and build an equal society for all.

Back then, when schools were open, we dreamed of a brighter future. We were ambitious, full of hope and ideas. But now, we find ourselves surrounded by restrictions and prohibitions. Dreams that once felt within reach now seem blocked by unyielding barriers. My friend's father was her obstacle; now, a whole regime has built walls around us.

Yet, even in the face of despair, we must fight. We must resist and persevere for our freedom and education. If we stop dreaming, we lose everything. This burden is heavy, but we must continue to believe that one day, we will shine again.

(Extract from 8am.media/) ■

Samaira Hullur – India's Youngest Pilot Defies Limits and Soars High

Staff Writer



Bangalore: At just 18, Samaira Hullur has soared into history as India's youngest commercial pilot, turning childhood dreams into reality. This remarkable achievement by a young girl from Vijayapura, Karnataka, is a testament to perseverance, ambition, and unwavering family support.

Samaira's passion for aviation was sparked early. As a child, she admired the respect pilots commanded. Her mother, Nazia Hullur, fascinated by the dignity of the profession, shared her admiration with Samaira, unknowingly planting the seed for her future.

Her journey officially took flight at the Vinod Yadav Aviation Academy (VYAA) in New Delhi, where she began her training. Later, she honed her skills at Carver Aviation Academy in Baramati, Maharashtra. Over the course of one-and-a-half years, Samaira successfully cleared six rigorous examinations and logged over 200 hours of flying experience.

Samaira attributes much of her success to the mentorship of Captain Tapes Kumar and Vinod Yadav. She recalls being inspired by Captain Kumar, who earned his pilot's license at 25. "I always dreamed of becoming a pilot. My parents supported me every step of the way," she shared.

Growing up in Vijayapura, where knowledge about the aviation industry was limited, Samaira and her family faced numerous obstacles. Yet, her determination never faltered. Her father, Ameenuddin Hullur, an interior designer, stood as her strongest pillar of support. Samaira's grandparents, including Noorjahan, a retired postal service

“From Heart to Machine: The Transformation of Education”

In the past, education was deeply rooted in building human character, fostering a connection to the heart, and nurturing a relationship with the Divine. It aimed at creating holistic individuals who balanced intellect with spirituality, ethics, and compassion. Today, however, the educational landscape has shifted dramatically. The focus has veered toward survival and job-oriented learning, producing individuals who function like machines, driven by material success rather than moral and spiritual purpose.

Methods of Early Scholars and Institutions

1. Integration of Knowledge and Spirituality

• Early Islamic education combined *ulum al-din* (religious sciences) and *ulum al-dunya* (worldly sciences) to create a balanced individual.

• Institutions like the **Nizamiyyah** (Baghdad, 11th century) taught logic, philosophy, mathematics, and Quranic studies alongside moral and spiritual development.

2. Character Building Through Role Models

• Scholars like **Imam Al-Ghazali** emphasized *tarbiyyah* (nurturing

the soul) and guided students to internalize virtues like humility, patience, and sincerity.

• Teachers served as mentors, not just instructors, providing spiritual and ethical guidance.

3. Sufi Training (Tazkiyah and Ihsan)

• Institutions emphasized purifying the heart through practices like *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah), *muraqabah* (self-reflection), and service to others.

• The focus was on cultivating *Ihsan* (excellence in worship and character), aiming for a heart-centered connection with Allah.

4. Practical Education with a Moral Compass

• Apprenticeships were common, where students learned trades under masters who instilled not just skills but also ethics, integrity, and responsibility.

• *Adab* (etiquette) and *akhlaq* (morality) were integral parts of education, ensuring students acted with respect and righteousness.

Modern Education: Focus on Survival

1. Job-Oriented Curriculum



Photo Courtesy:
chitkara.edu.in

• The goal of modern schools and colleges is often limited to career success, neglecting the spiritual and moral dimensions of human development.

• Students are trained to achieve financial stability but are rarely taught how to achieve inner peace or a sense of purpose.

2. Individualism and Materialism

• Emphasis on individual achievements fosters a competitive, self-centered mindset, overshadowing the values of community, empathy, and service.

3. Loss of Moral and Spiritual Guidance

• Education has become

secularized, excluding the divine perspective and spiritual principles, which are essential for building character.

• Ethics, when taught, are often theoretical and disconnected from real-life application.

4. Outcomes: Machines, Not Humans

• Students graduate with technical skills but lack emotional intelligence, ethical grounding, and spiritual awareness.

• This creates "efficient" workers but not compassionate, morally upright human beings.

Reclaiming Holistic Education

1. Reintroduce Moral and Spiritual Education

• Integrate *tarbiyyah* (spiritual nurturing) and *tazkiyah* (purification of the heart) into the curriculum.

• Teach students to balance intellect with emotional and spiritual intelligence.

2. Focus on Character Building

• Revive the teaching of *akhlaq* (good character) and *adab* (manners) as essential components of education.

• Educators should serve as role models, guiding students through example.

3. Connect Knowledge to Purpose

• Emphasize the divine purpose of life and how knowledge can be used to serve Allah and humanity.

• Encourage reflection on how one's career can contribute to societal well-being.

4. Incorporate Reflection and Service

• Teach practices like self-reflection, gratitude, and community service to cultivate a sense of responsibility and humility.

• Establish programs where students learn through serving others, fostering empathy and a connection to the community.

The Way Forward

To reclaim the purpose of education, we must shift from producing machines to nurturing humans. This involves balancing technical skills with moral and spiritual growth. By reconnecting education to the heart and the Divine, we can produce individuals who not only succeed in their careers but also live meaningful, ethical, and spiritually aligned lives. ■

“He who knows himself, knows his Lord.”

This well-known saying, though not directly a Hadith, encapsulates a key principle of Islamic spirituality. The Quran and Hadith emphasize self-awareness as a means to deepen faith, live a righteous life, and fulfill our purpose of worshiping Allah (*Ibadah*). Understanding oneself is not separate from obeying Allah; it is integral to it. By knowing oneself, we recognize our weaknesses, strengths, and purpose, which leads us to humility, gratitude, and sincere worship.

Why Is Knowing Oneself Necessary?

1. Fulfillment of Purpose

Allah says:

"And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me." (Quran 51:56)

Self-awareness helps us understand our role as servants of Allah and our purpose on Earth.

2. Path to Tazkiyah (Purification of the Soul)

• Knowing oneself reveals inner flaws like arrogance, envy, or greed that hinder spiritual growth.

• Allah commands purification of the soul:

"He has succeeded who purifies it, and he has failed who instills it with corruption." (Quran 91:9-10)

3. Recognizing Accountability

• By understanding our deeds, intentions, and motivations, we prepare for the Day of Judgment:

"And examine yourself before your actions are examined (on the Day of Judgment)." (Hadith, Tirmidhi)

4. Path to Sincerity (Ikhlās)

• Self-knowledge enables us to

purify our intentions, ensuring that actions are done solely for Allah.

• Allah warns against actions done for show:

"So woe to those who pray but are heedless of their prayer; those who make a show [of their deeds]." (Quran 107:4-6)

5. Knowing Your Creator

• By understanding the limited and dependent nature of our existence, we recognize Allah's absolute and infinite nature.

How to Know Oneself: Steps from the Quran and Sunnah

1. Reflect on Creation and the Self

• Allah encourages reflection: "And on the earth are signs for the certain [in faith], and in yourselves. Then will you not see?" (Quran 51:20-21)

• Regular introspection helps us identify our flaws and potential.

2. Seek Tazkiyah Through Worship

• Prayer, fasting, and remembrance of Allah cleanse the soul and provide clarity.

• The Prophet (SAW) said:

"The difference between the one who remembers Allah and the one who does not is like the living and the dead." (Bukhari)

3. Examine Intentions

• Regularly question the motives behind actions to ensure sincerity (*Ikhlās*).

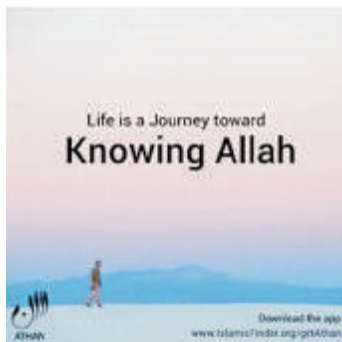
• The Prophet (SAW) taught:

"Actions are judged by intentions." (Bukhari and Muslim)

4. Follow the Sunnah of

Know Thyself:

The Path to Knowing Allah and Attaining Jannah



Accountability

• Umar ibn Al-Khattab said: "Hold yourself accountable before you are held accountable."

• Daily reflection on actions aligns behavior with divine guidance.

5. Understand the Role of Trials

• Trials reveal the true self and help develop patience, humility, and reliance on Allah.

• Allah states:

"We will surely test you with something of fear, hunger, and a loss of wealth, lives, and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient." (Quran 2:155)

6. Seek Knowledge and Guidance

• Knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah illuminates the path to self-discovery.

• The Prophet (SAW) said:

"Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim." (Ibn Majah)

7. Recognize Weakness and Seek Forgiveness

• Allah reminds us:

"And man was created weak."

(Quran 4:28)

• Acknowledging weakness fosters humility and dependence on Allah.

Is It Enough to Follow Commands Without Knowing Oneself?

While obeying Allah's commands is fundamental, self-awareness enhances the sincerity, depth, and consistency of our obedience. Without self-awareness:

• **Worship May Lack Depth:** Actions risk becoming robotic, losing connection and intention.

• **Struggles Are Misunderstood:** Without understanding our inner self, we may misinterpret trials as punishments instead of opportunities for growth.

• **Flaws Remain Hidden:** Without introspection, arrogance, greed, or envy may go unchecked, affecting our relationships and worship.

Allah calls for a deeper engagement with faith, not blind obedience:

"Do they not reflect upon

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Samaira Hullur – India's Youngest Pilot Defies Limits and Soars High

worker, also played a crucial role in encouraging her dreams and advocating for gender equality.

The journey wasn't without sacrifices. Long hours of study, rigorous training, and missed family gatherings marked her path. But Samaira's focus remained unwavering, fueled by her role models and her family's unwavering belief in her.

themselves? Allah created the heavens and the earth and everything between them in truth and for an appointed term. Yet many people deny they will meet their Lord." (Quran 30:8)

The Prophet (SAW) nurtured this understanding in the early Muslims, encouraging reflection and sincerity alongside obedience.

Conclusion: Know Thyself to Know Allah

Knowing oneself is not an alternative to following Allah's commands; it is a means to do so with sincerity, understanding, and love. This self-awareness:

1. Deepens the connection with Allah.

2. Refines character and purifies the soul.

3. Prepares the believer for a meaningful life and ultimate success in the Hereafter.

By combining obedience with self-knowledge, we can embody the Quranic ideal:

"Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you." (Quran 49:13) ■

Allah (SWT) created humans with three essential elements: mind, body, and spirit. Among these, the spirit holds the highest nobility, described in the Qur'an as a secret of Allah: "They question you about the Spirit. Say, 'The Spirit is at my Lord's command, and you have been granted but little knowledge.'" (17:85). Islam addresses all three elements: it governs the body, enlightens the mind with faith, and perfects the spirit through excellence. True alignment and balance among these elements create a complete human being, guiding us along the straight path. Without this balance, misalignment occurs, leading to disorder.

The cornerstone of this alignment is **excellence**, which is deeply rooted in self-purification. This article explores the concept of self-purification, its necessity, and its transformative effects on individuals and society.

The Human Need for Self-Purification

Humans are born with inherent desires, some of which may be immoral or shaped by cultural habits. Self-purification is essential to rid the soul of these impurities, as no faith can flourish in a corrupted heart. The Qur'an emphasizes the priority of self-purification over knowledge in several verses, highlighting its foundational role in shaping a righteous personality.

Without self-purification, knowledge may lead to arrogance and corruption.

Understanding Self-Purification Linguistic Meaning

The Arabic term 'tazkiyah' means cleansing, purifying, increasing, and blessing. Allah says: "He who purifies it will indeed be successful." (91:9).

Imam Al-Ghazali defined self-purification as education, emphasizing that a nation without education holds no goodness.

Idiomatic Meaning

Imam Al-Ghazali explained self-purification as the process of elevating the self by suppressing baser instincts and cultivating noble traits. Ibn Kathir elaborated, stating that self-purification involves purging sins and immoral traits while embodying virtuous manners.

The Process of Self-Purification

Self-purification entails two primary actions:

1. Expelling the Bad: Removing all evil and sinful traits.

2. Embracing the Good: Cultivating noble morals and virtues.

The Qur'an underscores these principles:

• "He has certainly succeeded who purifies himself and mentions the name of his Lord and prays." (87:14-15).

• "By the soul and how He formed it, then inspired it to understand what was true and false for it. He who purifies it will indeed be successful, and he who corrupts it is sure to fail." (91:7-10).

Excellence Through Self-Purification



The Nature of the Self

The Qur'an describes three states of the self:

1. The Reassured Self- Nafs e Mutmainnah: At peace through closeness to Allah and submission to His will.

2. The Self-Reproaching Soul- Nafs e Lawwama: Criticizes its owner for sins and wrongdoings.

3. The Evil-Enticing Soul- Nafs e Ammarah: Incites to evil and follows whims unless disciplined. Scholars debate whether these represent distinct types or phases of the same self. The majority agree that self-purification transitions the self from being evil-enticing to self-reproaching, and ultimately to a state of reassurance.

Why Self-Purification Is Essential

1. Overcoming Modern Challenges: Today's Muslims face unprecedented temptations and tests. Self-purification provides the strength to resist these.

2. Preventing Recidivism: Many Muslims relapse into sin despite initial efforts at reform. Continuous self-purification is necessary to maintain steadfastness.

3. Personal Accountability:

Each soul will answer for its deeds on Judgment Day: "On the Day when every soul will come disputing for itself..." (TMQ, 16:111).

4. Preparing for Trials: Whether facing tribulations or empowerment, self-purification equips believers to remain steadfast.

5. Helping Others: Those who cannot reform themselves are incapable of guiding others.

The Obligation of Self-Purification

Imam Al-Ghazali classified self-purification as an individual duty, asserting that all humans are predisposed to heart ailments. He based this on the Prophet Muhammad's (SAWS) experiences, such as his heart being cleansed of impurities. Scholars agree that every Muslim must strive for self-purification to prevent the soul from inclining toward evil.

Benefits of Self-Purification

1. Achieving Happiness: Purification brings inner peace and contentment in this life and the Hereafter. Allah promises: "If they had followed the right path, We would have provided them with abundant rain." (72:16).

2. Strengthening Faith: The soul's condition directly impacts faith. Continuous purification nurtures faith and aligns the heart with Allah's guidance.

3. Paving the Way to Paradise:

Allah says: "But one who fears to stand before his Lord and restrained himself from base desires, shall dwell in Paradise." (79:40-41).

The Qur'an and Sunnah on Self-Purification

1. Divine Emphasis: Allah swears multiple times in Surah Al-Shams (91:1-10) that self-purification leads to success.

2. Prophetic Mission: All prophets called their people to self-purification. For example, Allah instructed Moses to invite Pharaoh to reform himself (79:18-19). Similarly, the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) was sent to purify the unlettered people (62:2).

3. Path to Success: "He who purifies himself, who remembers the name of his Lord and prays, shall indeed be successful." (87:14-15).

Conclusion

Self-purification is the key to achieving excellence in faith, character, and conduct. It transforms the soul from an evil-enticing state to one of reassurance, enabling believers to fulfill their purpose as Allah's servants. In today's world, where temptations abound, the need for self-purification is more urgent than ever. By committing to this lifelong journey, we not only find happiness and balance but also secure our ultimate success in the Hereafter: "He who purifies it will indeed be successful, and he who corrupts it is sure to fail." (91:9-10). ■

Spanish Student

In a second-year Arabic class at Yarmouk University in Jordan, Professor Fakhry Kattaneh posed a thought-provoking question: "Who among you can explain the divine name 'Allah' from a linguistic and miraculous perspective?"

To everyone's surprise, the only student to raise her hand was Helen, a young Spanish Christian studying a master's degree in

Arabic. Fluent in classical Arabic, Helen offered a unique and insightful explanation that left the class in awe.

The Linguistic Beauty of the Name "Allah"

Helen began:

"The name 'Allah' is the most beautiful word I have encountered in Arabic. Its pronunciation is extraordinary, as it resonates from the back of the throat rather than

requiring lip movement.

When you pronounce 'Allah,' your lips do not move. This unique feature means that anyone can remember and invoke this name silently, without others noticing."

The Miraculous Flexibility of the Name

Helen continued to explain how the name retains its meaning even when letters are removed:

1. Removing the first letter (Alif):

• It becomes *Lillah* (For Allah), as in the verse:

"To Allah belong the most beautiful names. Call upon Him by them."

2. Removing the Alif and the first Lam:

• It becomes *Lahu* (For Him), as in the verse:

"To Him belongs everything in

the heavens and the earth."

3. Removing the Alif and both Lams:

• It becomes *Hu* (He), as in the verse:

"He is the One who has no deity besides Him."

4. Removing the first Lam:

• It becomes *Ilah* (Deity), as in the verse:

"Allah, there is no deity besides

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crowd that Muslims in India, as patriotic citizens, seek to uphold law and order, asserting that the organization's struggle was for the protection of Muslim rights and interests.

The Kadapa conference was notable for its unprecedented turnout, as more than five lakh people attended, reflecting the deep concerns Muslims in the region have about the ongoing political and legal developments. Maulana Madani expressed his satisfaction with the success of the conference, which he said was not only a gathering of people but a powerful statement to the ruling government about the demands and grievances of the Muslim community. The JUH leader also criticized the

government for introducing the Waqf Amendment Bill and for pushing for the Uniform Civil Code, accusing the ruling party of eroding the country's secular foundations. He expressed concern over the increasing threat to the Constitution's secular values, suggesting that the current government, despite celebrating the Constitution's 75 years, was undermining its core principles. Maulana Madani drew attention to the sacrifices made by the founders of the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind in the struggle for India's independence and the creation of the secular Constitution. He vowed that Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind would continue to

defend the Constitution and oppose any policies that threatened its secular framework. Amid strong chants from the crowd, Maulana Madani declared that Muslims would remain in India, contributing to the nation's progress and protecting their faith and identity. He also reiterated that no external forces could extinguish Islam, as history had shown the religion's resilience in the face of adversities.

At the event, Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani, President of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, also spoke, highlighting the critical role of Muslims in the formation of

India's secular Constitution. Various other leaders from different regions, including Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Karnataka, addressed the gathering, further reinforcing the unity of Muslims across India in opposing the bill. A notable feature of the conference was the unity displayed by Muslims from diverse sects, who worked together to organize the event, transcending their differences. Maulana Madani praised the community's spirit of togetherness, which he said was crucial in the current socio-political climate.

The Andhra Pradesh Jamiat Ulama (A) presented Maulana Madani with a draft containing over five lakh signatures, a petition from Muslims in three districts of the state, demanding the government's rejection of the Waqf Amendment Bill. This petition, symbolizing a voice of protest, will be presented to Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. Mufti Ma'soom Saqib, General Secretary of the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, played a pivotal role in organizing the conference, ensuring its historic significance. The event in Kadapa marked a strong stand by the Muslim community against the proposed amendments to the Waqf law, and it set the stage for future protests and legal actions across the country. ■

Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind Resolves to Oppose Waqf Amendment Bill at Kadapa Conference

The Andhra Pradesh Jamiat Ulama (A) presented Maulana Madani with a draft containing over five lakh signatures, a petition from Muslims in three districts of the state, demanding the government's rejection of the Waqf Amendment Bill. This petition, symbolizing a voice of protest, will be presented to Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. Mufti Ma'soom Saqib, General Secretary of the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, played a pivotal role in organizing the conference, ensuring its historic significance. The event in Kadapa marked a strong stand by the Muslim community against the proposed amendments to the Waqf law, and it set the stage for future protests and legal actions across the country. ■

In the Quran and Hadith, Satan (Iblis) is clearly stated as our enemy, whose mission is to lead us astray. Despite knowing that he is our enemy, his whispers and deceptions often cause us to fall into sin and misguidance. This article explores who Satan is, how he operates, how he deceives, and how we can identify and protect ourselves from his attacks.

1. Who Is the Enemy: Satan's Identity

• Satan's Origin and Disobedience

Iblis, originally created as a Jinn, disobeyed Allah's command to prostrate to Adam due to his arrogance.

"And [mention] when We said to the angels, 'Prostrate to Adam,' and they prostrated, except Iblis. He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers." (Quran 2:34)

• Satan's Open and Clear Enmity

Allah warns that Satan is a clear enemy to mankind.

"Indeed, Satan is your enemy; so take him as an enemy." (Quran 35:6)

• Satan's Oath to Lead Us Astray

Iblis vowed to mislead humans after being cast out of Paradise.

"He said, 'Because You have put me in error, I will surely sit in wait for them on Your straight path.'" (Quran 7:16)

2. How Satan Operates Within Us

• Whispers and Doubts

Satan whispers doubts and instills evil thoughts into the hearts of humans.

"Whisperers who whisper in the breasts of mankind, of jinn and of mankind." (Quran 114:5)

He also works on our inner

weaknesses, tempting us to act upon negative emotions like pride, anger, and jealousy.

• Deception Through Desires

Satan often deceives us by appealing to our desires and worldly pleasures.

"Satan promises them and arouses desire in them. But Satan does not promise them except delusion." (Quran 4:120)

• Leading to Arrogance and Pride

He leads individuals to believe they are self-sufficient and do not need Allah's help.

"Do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy." (Quran 2:168)

3. How Satan Attacks Us and Leads Us into Deception

• Instilling Fear and Despair

Satan tries to make people despair of Allah's mercy, especially when they fall into sin.

"Indeed, Satan is an enemy to you, so take him as an enemy. He only invites his party to be among the companions of the Blaze." (Quran 35:6)

• Encouraging Sinful Acts

Satan encourages us to indulge in sinful behavior, leading us away from righteousness.

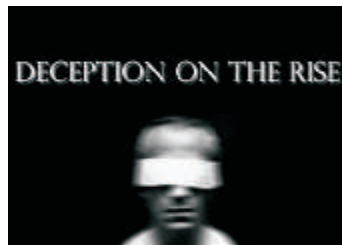
"And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet with a better greeting or return it. Indeed, Allah is over all things accountable." (Quran 4:86)

Satan tempts us towards actions like greed, lying, and envy.

• Creating Divisions Between People

Satan sows discord among people, especially in relationships.

"And Satan's plan is only to cause



dissension between you." (Quran 48:10)

4. Why Do We Continue to Be Deceived by Satan Even After Knowing He Is the Enemy?

• Forgetfulness of Allah

When we forget Allah's remembrance and guidance, we become vulnerable to Satan's whispers.

"And whosoever turns away from My remembrance – indeed, he will have a depressed life..." (Quran 20:124)

• Weakness of Faith

Weak faith and lack of spiritual discipline make it easier for Satan to deceive us.

"Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds, Allah will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow." (Quran 47:12)

• Relying on One's Own Understanding

Sometimes, due to arrogance or reliance on one's own intellect, individuals ignore Allah's guidance and fall prey to Satan.

"Do not be like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget themselves." (Quran 59:19)

• Lack of Knowledge and Awareness

The lack of knowledge about the true teachings of Islam leaves people open to deception.

"Say, 'This is my way; I invite to Allah with insight, I and those who

follow me.'" (Quran 12:108)

5. How to Identify the Attacks of Satan

• Self-Reflection and Awareness

By being mindful of our inner thoughts and feelings, we can recognize when Satan is whispering negative influences.

"And if an evil whisper comes to you from Satan, then seek refuge in Allah. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Knowing." (Quran 41:36)

• Feelings of Guilt and Shame

When we feel guilt after an action, it can be a sign that Satan is influencing us to act against righteousness.

"And those who, when they commit immorality or wrong themselves [by sin], remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins." (Quran 3:135)

• Desire to Act Selfishly or Sinfully

Satan often tempts people to act in selfish, immoral, or sinful ways. Recognizing this desire is key to stopping the attack.

"Indeed, those who fear their Lord unseen will have forgiveness and great reward." (Quran 67:12)

6. How to Overcome Satan's Attacks and Come Out of Blindness

• Seek Refuge in Allah

We are taught to seek refuge in Allah from Satan's whispers and influences.

"And if an evil whisper comes to you from Satan, then seek refuge in Allah. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Knowing." (Quran 41:36)

• Constant Remembrance of

Allah

Engaging in Dhikr (remembrance of Allah) protects the heart and mind from Satan's attacks.

"Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest." (Quran 13:28)

• Strengthening Faith Through Prayer and Good Deeds

Performing regular prayers and good deeds builds spiritual strength and shields against Satan.

"Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds – they will have gardens in Paradise." (Quran 18:107)

• Repentance and Seeking Forgiveness

If we fall into sin, sincere repentance (Tawbah) and seeking Allah's forgiveness removes Satan's influence.

"And whoever does a wrong or wrongs himself but then seeks forgiveness of Allah will find Allah Forgiving and Merciful." (Quran 4:110)

• Seeking Knowledge and Wisdom

Knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah protects us from deception.

"Say, 'My Lord, increase me in knowledge.'" (Quran 20:114)

Conclusion:

Satan's attacks are subtle and deceptive, but with awareness, sincerity, and a strong connection to Allah, we can recognize his whispers and protect ourselves. The key to overcoming Satan's deception lies in seeking refuge in Allah, engaging in consistent worship, and purifying the heart through repentance and self-reflection. By doing so, we can free ourselves from the blindness he seeks to impose upon us and remain on the straight path to righteousness and eternal success. ■

The Quran profoundly addresses the concept of duality, illustrating contrasts in creation, moral decisions, and ultimate outcomes. This serves as a framework for human reflection and guidance, emphasizing the balance and divine wisdom in every aspect of existence.

1. Good and Evil

• Human choices are inherently dual, with the potential for virtue or vice, guided by free will and moral responsibility.

• Surah Al-Balad (90:10): "And have We not shown him the two ways?"

• Surah Ash-Shams (91:8-10): "And inspired it [the soul] with [discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness. He has succeeded who purifies it, and he has failed who instills it [with corruption]."

• Lesson: Recognizing this dual nature helps individuals consciously strive for goodness, purifying their souls through righteous actions.

2. Heaven and Hell

The Quran's Perspective on Duality: Guiding Choices and Outcomes

• The ultimate duality lies in the outcomes of human actions eternal reward or punishment.

• Surah Al-Imran (3:195): "...I will surely admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow as reward from Allah."

• Surah Ghafir (40:76): "Enter the gates of Hell to abide eternally therein, and wretched is the residence of the arrogant."

• Lesson: This stark contrast motivates individuals to live with accountability, aspiring for eternal bliss through good deeds.

3. Belief and Disbelief

• Faith and disbelief represent spiritual duality, shaping one's response to divine guidance.

• Surah Al-Baqarah (2:257): "Allah is the ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darknesses into the light..."

• Surah Al-Kahf (18:29): "...whoever wills let him believe; and whoever wills let him disbelieve."

• Lesson: Faith is a conscious



choice, leading to divine support and light, while disbelief results in spiritual darkness.

4. Life and Death

• Life and death signify the divine cycle of existence, emphasizing the transient nature of this world and the promise of resurrection.

• Surah Al-Mulk (67:2): "He who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed..."

• Surah Al-Baqara (2:28): "...then He will cause you to die, then He will bring you [back] to life, and then to Him you will be returned."

• Lesson: Awareness of life's temporary nature encourages

striving for good deeds and preparing for the hereafter.

Conclusion

The Quran's emphasis on duality

serves as a profound guide for understanding the balance, harmony, and divine wisdom in existence. By reflecting on these contrasts, believers are reminded of their responsibilities and the higher purpose of their lives. ■

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The Divine Name "Allah": A Profound Explanation

Him."

A Name of Ease and Mercy

Helen then emphasized the simplicity of the letters *Alif*, *Lam*, and *Ha*, which make up the name. She explained:

"These letters are light in pronunciation and do not require lip movement. This design allows a person, even on the

verge of death, to utter the oneness expression *La ilaha illa Allah* (There is no deity but Allah) with ease."

Helen's Transformation

Moved by the depth of Islamic teachings and the beauty of the divine name, Helen eventually embraced Islam and took the name *Abida* (the worshiper). ■

- "The closer you are to the Creator, the calmer your heart becomes."
- "True peace begins when the heart remembers its Maker."
- "Spiritual growth starts by silencing the ego and listening to the soul."

The Journey of Self-Discovery: Sadath Khan's Transformative Mission



Muhammad Farooq

An old friend of ours, Younis Khan Sahib, a successful businessman and industrialist, warmly greeted us at a literary gathering and invited us to the "Discover Yourself" workshop he was organizing on December 1st at Cookxone Hotel, Jubail, Saudi Arabia. The workshop was scheduled to begin shortly before the Isha prayer. Knowing that such events often start late, we arrived after Isha and found Al Jabal bustling with trade. Sadath Khan's lecture had already begun, addressing a packed hall of attendees from various nationalities, including Nepali and Pakistani traders.

Sadath Khan spoke with the ease of a seasoned college professor, engaging the audience in a lively and interactive session. Although we had missed the beginning, his words resonated deeply, evoking memories of classroom days decades ago. His insights struck a chord, aligning with our own thoughts and writings published across various platforms. As he spoke, it became clear that Sadath Khan's approach mirrored our efforts to connect the attendees



with their Creator, guiding them beyond surface-level knowledge. Despite nearing his mid-seventies, Sadath Khan displayed remarkable energy, moving around the hall with a microphone in hand. He interacted directly with the audience, ensuring each person felt involved. His warm, personal engagement made complex topics relatable and impactful. The three-hour program, punctuated by a short tea break and Isha prayer, left a lasting impression, reinforcing the idea that Allah chooses His servants for His work.

During the event, Younis Khan introduced prominent local businessman Muhammad Farooq Shah Bandri Patel, highlighting his 35 years in trade. As a gesture of respect, another esteemed businessman, Waheed Latif Sahib, was presented with a bouquet.

Dr. Sadath Khan: A Life of Purpose and Transformation

Sadath Khan, was born in

Bangalore in 1950. With a background in science and engineering, his career spanned commerce, journalism, and eventually spiritual guidance. His transformative journey began with the creation of the "Discover Yourself" workshop, born from his personal quest for self-realization. "Discover Yourself" workshops are advanced meditation sessions designed to guide participants from self-created illusions to the ultimate reality. These sessions offer more than knowledge; they provide a transformative experience, empowering individuals to break free from inner constraints and discover peace, calmness, and clarity. Participants emerge with renewed confidence, stronger family bonds, and a deeper connection to their Creator.

The workshops help individuals shed anger, jealousy, despair, and depression, fostering positivity and hope. By addressing past traumas

and setting new goals, participants unlock their potential and align their lives with divine purpose. Sadath Khan's mission is to bridge the gap between humanity and God, emphasizing that true peace stems from a deep connection with the Divine.

The Birth of "Discover Yourself"

Having been immersed in the spiritual realm for nearly three decades, Sadath Khan recognized the need for inner refinement within the Muslim community. As the editor of "Islamic Voice" since 1987, he observed that many Muslims focused on jurisprudence while neglecting the spiritual essence of Islam. This imbalance led to societal issues such as divorce, mistrust, and discord.

Driven by this realization, he launched the "Discover Yourself" workshop series. Through these workshops, Sadath Khan

addresses the inner conflicts that hinder personal growth, guiding participants toward inner peace and spiritual fulfillment.

Since July 2002, Sadath Khan has conducted over 500 workshops across India and internationally, transforming the lives of thousands. His workshops have reached audiences in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Muscat, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Lesotho, the UK, the USA, Norway, Singapore, and Karachi.

A Call to Action

As Sadath Khan continues his mission, we hope educational institutions recognize the value of his work. By introducing "Discover Yourself" workshops to senior students, colleges can prepare future leaders to navigate life with confidence, purpose, and a deep connection to their Creator. (www.discoveryyourself.in)

Sarfaraz: MashaAllah, a very impactful session highlighting the importance of accepting reality and avoiding denial. The presentation was superb.

Momina: It was a wonderful experience that brought peace and calmness to my restless mind and heart. I am truly thankful to Allah for this life-changing lesson.

Jamil Akhtar: The workshop helped me realize the value of submission and acceptance, which are essential for finding solutions to life's challenges.

Dr. Safoora: A beautiful way of life was presented, focusing on equality, acceptance, and a positive attitude. I learned to submit to the will of Allah for inner peace.

Mofiduzzaman: A thought-



provoking experience that clarified the duality of life, equality in humanity, and the power of submission over denial.

Mhd Imran: MashaAllah! The session shifted my perspective from being mind-centered to Allah-centered. Simple solutions to complex problems were shared.

Nadeem: Outstanding session! It transformed my thinking and

clarity on life's realities.

Maiza: I learned how to live a peaceful life with clarity, understanding the Quran as a guide for living.

Afeef ur Rahman: A wonderful and educational session. I wish it had been longer to cover even more topics.

Abdul Majid: I discovered so much about myself. Acceptance of

the past is key, and I am grateful for this session.

Shahida: The session strengthened my belief in Allah and brought peace to my heart. May Allah grant success to the organizers.

Mahajabeen: I now understand the importance of accepting life and following the path of Allah for true peace.

inspiring experience.

Shanila Nazir: I learned the importance of treating everyone equally, staying positive, and connecting with Allah for peace of mind.

Bushra: The workshop taught me how to stay calm, affirm my faith, and navigate external challenges with clarity.

Participant Reflections: Discover Yourself Workshop in Jubail

The Discover Yourself Workshop, held on 30 November 2024 at the Arabian Gulf International School in Jubail, was a transformative event. It aimed to inspire personal growth, foster spiritual clarity, and equip participants with tools for living a life aligned with truth and acceptance. Below are some of the key reflections from the participants, showcasing the impact of this enlightening session:

"The Discover Yourself Workshop brought transformative insights to participants, fostering peace, purpose, and a deeper connection with Allah. It left a lasting impact, inspiring many to live a life rooted in truth, acceptance, and submission."

Jawairiyah: I learned to accept things in life with positivity. Mashah Allah, keep up the great work!

Ayesha: Mashah Allah! It was a great experience, and I look forward to attending more workshops like this.

Fariha: This workshop changed my perspective on life and taught me valuable lessons about reality and acceptance.

Mhd Zohair: Gained inspiring knowledge about Islam and the world.

Shadab: Learned to submit to the will of Allah.

Quader: The Islamic way of life was beautifully explained. JazakAllah Khair for organizing this workshop.

Hamdanuddin: I learned about life, the duniya, submission, and more. The presentation was excellent, thank you!

Mueez: A great and amazing experience that taught us many lessons about life and Islam.

Raaina: I learned to understand the duality of life internal and external and how to make my life easier by accepting reality.

Asar: Alhamdulillah! The workshop helped me look within and inspired me to lead by example for my family and society.

Sayeda Mahiya: This workshop ignited a spark within me to pursue my goals. Thank you for the

Fatima: It was an amazing session that taught me how to be a better human being and treat everyone equally.

Rayesa: I now reflect more on truth versus falsehood and have gained a deeper awareness of myself and my thoughts.

Madeeha: A wonderful experience of self-discovery and personal growth.

The Journey of Dr. Manmohan Singh – From Humble Beginnings to India's Economic Architect



M A Siraj

Dr. Manmohan Singh (1932–2024), who passed away on 26th December 2024, was the chief architect of India's modern economy during a time of severe macroeconomic crisis. Born in 1932 into an agrarian family in Gah village, Jhelum, Punjab, Singh's early years were marked by hardship. Although his official birthdate is recorded as September 26, he once shared with a biographer that there was confusion, and some records listed it as February 4, 1932. Losing his mother at a young age, Singh had no memories of her and was raised by his grandparents while his father worked in Peshawar.

Singh attended Khalsa High School in Peshawar, studying there until matriculation. His education was disrupted by the turmoil of Partition, which claimed the life of his grandfather in the riots. A telegram reading "father killed, mother safe" announced the tragic news. As violence spread, Singh had to sit for his matriculation exams twice first in Peshawar and later in Amritsar, where the family



relocated.

In 1947, Singh and his family migrated to Haldwani under police protection but later settled in Amritsar. He pursued his BA at Hindu College and later Khalsa College. A scholarship of Rs. 176 enabled him to continue his studies at Punjab University, Hoshiarpur, where he completed his MA. Singh then traveled to London by ship to pursue research in Economics at Cambridge University. He briefly returned to Punjab University to teach but resumed his studies at Oxford University, earning a Ph.D. in 1960.

Singh's career advanced rapidly. By 1972, at the age of 40, he became Chief Economic Advisor at the Union Ministry of Finance. He later served as Secretary of the Ministry of Finance (1976), Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (1982), and head of the Planning Commission (1985–1987).

To the surprise of many, Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao appointed Singh as Finance

Minister in 1991. Singh was initially unaware of the significance of Rao's call to Rashtrapati Bhavan, leading to a brief misunderstanding. Together, Rao and Singh spearheaded India's economic liberalization, dismantling the license raj and opening the economy to foreign investments. Singh entered politics through a Rajya Sabha nomination in 1991 and later served as Leader of the Opposition (1998–2004) before becoming India's Prime Minister. He was the first to complete two consecutive full terms after Jawaharlal Nehru.

A close friendship with Dr. Mahboobul Haq, Pakistan's former Finance Minister, shaped Singh's worldview. In 1968, he visited Pakistan at Haq's invitation but declined to visit Gah, where his grandfather was killed. Instead, he sought out a cherished bookshop in Peshawar, where the shopkeeper refused payment for the books Singh selected. In his Delhi bedroom, a watercolour of Gah gifted by former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf remained a poignant reminder of his roots. (News Trail)

M.A. Siraj, Associate Editor at News Trail, from Bangalore and Doha, Qatar. can be reached via email at maqsiraj@gmail.com. ■

Breath of Life: The Lungs in Perspective

Haroonica

From our first breath to our last, the lungs remain our constant companions. As the first internal organ exposed to the external environment, the lungs must continuously inhale and exhale, exchanging oxygen and carbon dioxide to sustain life. The quality of our breathing often mirrors our overall health.

Breathing has evolved into an art form through various gentle exercises. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, the lungs are believed to possess peak energy between 3 a.m. and 5 a.m. Many religions also consider these early hours sacred for their calm and spiritually uplifting nature.

In Islam, in addition to the five obligatory prayers, a voluntary prayer called *Tahajjud* holds special significance. The best time for this prayer is during the last third of the night.

Abu Huraira narrated that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: "Our Lord, the Blessed, the Superior, comes every night to the nearest Heaven to us when the last third of the night remains, saying: 'Is there anyone to invoke Me, so that I may respond to invocation? Is there anyone to ask Me, so that I may grant him his request? Is there anyone seeking My forgiveness, so that I may forgive him?'"



[Sahih al-Bukhari 1145, Book 19, Hadith 26]

During the hours between 3 a.m. and 5 a.m., when the air is at its purest and relatively free from pollution, practicing mindful breathing can offer profound physical, mental, and spiritual benefits. By paying attention to our breath, we align ourselves with nature, unlocking health and vitality while nurturing a sense of peace and connection to the divine. ■

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30 Minutes of Exercise Boosts Memory and Cognitive Performance, Study Finds



Photo courtesy: uk.news.yahoo.com

New research reveals that starting the day with exercise, such as cycling or brisk walking, can significantly enhance memory and cognitive function throughout the day.

A study conducted by University College London (UCL) found that 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity, paired with at least six hours of sleep,

leads to noticeable improvements in cognitive performance the following day.

“The takeaway is simple – physical activity benefits your brain, and quality sleep enhances that effect,” said Dr. Mikaela Bloomberg, the study's lead author.

Long-Lasting Cognitive Benefits

Previous studies have linked physical activity to a lower risk of dementia and short-term cognitive boosts. However, as Bloomberg notes, many of these studies were conducted in controlled lab environments, measuring responses over brief periods.

This new research, published in the *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, focuses on real-life scenarios, showing that the positive effects of exercise on the brain can persist longer than previously thought.

How the Study Was Conducted

The study observed 76 adults aged 50 to 83, all free from cognitive

impairments or dementia. Participants wore accelerometers for eight days to track their physical activity and sleep while continuing their daily routines. Each day, they completed simple online cognitive tests assessing memory, attention, and processing speed.

The results showed that for every 30-minute increase in physical activity, there was a **2% to 5% improvement in working and episodic memory scores** the next day.

A Step Toward Supporting Cognitive Health

Bloomberg highlighted the importance of expanding this

research to individuals with mild cognitive impairment.

“Even a slight improvement in cognitive performance can significantly enhance daily life for those experiencing early signs of cognitive decline,” she noted.

The study underscores the potential of exercise in protecting brain health as people age.

“Cognitive decline is a natural part of aging,” Bloomberg added. **“By making small, daily adjustments like regular physical activity, we can help maintain cognitive function, independence, and social engagement as we grow older.”**

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