

# Community Link

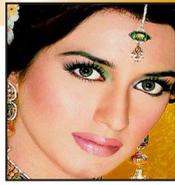
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## Senate Chairman Visits Islamic Society of Orange County

■ Pakistan Link Report

**Garden Grove, CA:** Senate Chairman Mohammadmian Soomro visited the Islamic Society of Orange County (ISOC) on Friday, July 20 to demonstrate the respect and importance that the Government of Pakistan accords to religious institutions and places of worship. He offered Friday prayers at the mosque and later joined community members at a lunch in the ISOC cafeteria.

Mr. Soomro took questions from the community members and allayed their concerns relating to a number of issues. He wholeheartedly concurred with Dr Muzammil Siddiqi's observation that the mosque should promote harmony and understanding between various groups and faiths rather than be a dump of arms and a catalyst for violence. "Masjids don't have to play the role of the Lal Masjid," he remarked, adding, the government showed utmost restraint in dealing with the militants to minimize casualties during Operation Silence. He added that the people of Pakistan were by and large moderate and peace-loving individuals and only a fringe group made up the extremists. It was unfortunate that their militancy served to distort the true teach-



Senate Chairman Mohammadmian Soomro arrives at ISOC

Supplementing this argument, Dr Muzammil Siddiqi, Director of ISOC, unequivocally stated: "We condemn the use of the masjid for politics... collection of arms in masjids is something



L to R: CG Syed Ibne Abbas, Javed Nawaz, Mohammadmian Soomro and Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi

doing a good job and telling others about Islam." He lauded the Pakistani-American community's support in strengthening institutions in Pakistan. "Thank you for the support given to Pakistan." He also served the community with a well-meaning advice: "Your children should go to Pakistan to keep their links with the country."

The Senate Chairman was confident that overseas Pakistanis could play a major role in bringing about a wholesome change in



Senate Chairman Mohammadmian Soomro with Consul General, ISOC officials and prominent community members



ings of Islam and has given the religion a bad image, nationally and internationally.

that is not acceptable in Islam..."

Mr Soomro complimented the Muslims in the US who "were

the economy of Pakistan. He spoke of the "tremendous op

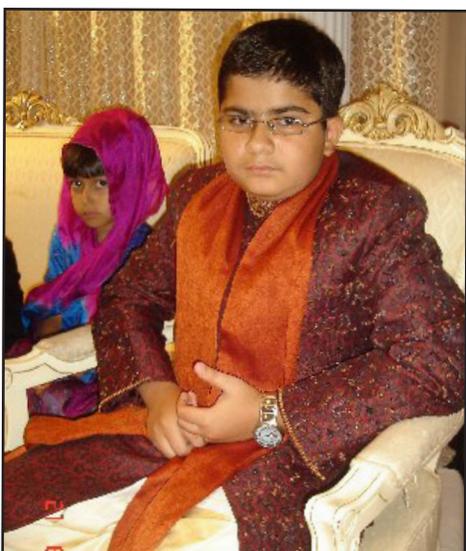
**SOOMRO, P19**

■ Pakistan Link Report

## A Moment of Joy and Celebration

ily of the boy," Dr Sakr observed.

He was all praise for the devotion and assiduity of non-Arabs in memo-



Ehab S. Sharif



Abubakr Vakil

son, Ehab S. Sharif.

Ehab is twelve-and-a-half years old and has memorized the Holy Qur'an in just two-and-a-half years! Dressed in a sherwani and pajama he was a picture of elegance on the eventful day, and deservedly so - memorizing the Holy Qur'an at such an early age is no mean achievement. Seated on the stage with becoming pro-

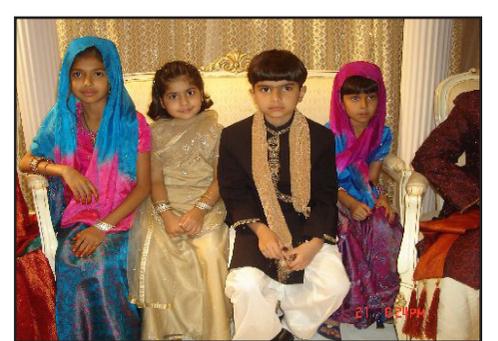


The young hafiz is all smiles as he stands with his grandfather, mother and relatives

priety, the Abubakr Vakil family youngsters furnished proof of good upbringing and impeccable manners at the soul-lifting ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Ahmad Sakr, well-known religious scholar, stressed the importance of the memorization of the Holy Qur'an. "Nowhere has anyone memorized any book, except the Qur'an," he remarked as he referred to the practice of hifz or memorization among Muslims.

Hifz is the ultimate of miracles. Ahab's memorization is no less than a miracle, especially as he is a non-Arab and so young, Dr Sakr commented. "Credit (for Ehab's memorization) goes first to Abubakr Vakil and then to the fam-



Ehab's brother, sister and cousins

rizing the Qur'an. "Non-Arabs memorize the Qur'an more than the Arabs," and have introduced the tradition of holding Bismillah, Ameen, Qur'an Khawani and Ayatul Kareema functions in the Ummah.

Dr Sakr advised the gathering to read the Qur'an. "If you want to talk to Allah and want Him to talk to you, read the Qur'an," he exhorted the prominent community members present on the occasion. He also reminded the audience of a hadith of the Prophet: The best among you is the one who reads the Qur'an and then teaches it.

Pakistan Link extends its heartiest felicitations to M. Abubakr Vakil and his family on Ehab's success in memorizing the Qur'an.

Finally, the moment of joy and celebration is here," said a jubilant Mr. Abubakr Vakil, prominent community activist and leading entrepreneur, at a reception he jointly hosted with his wife at the Knotts Berry Farm Resort Hotel on Saturday July 21st to celebrate Hifzul Qur'an by his grand-

New York: When the doctor told Shazia Quadri that God had blessed her with another son, the young mother prostrated in thanks for a healthy child.

Two months later, her whole world turned upside down when she found out that Aariz Atif, had hepatoblastoma, a rare form of liver cancer. Doctors in Karachi said his only hope of survival was a liver transplant, not possible in Pakistan.

With the help and determination of her relatives in the US, Shazia, her husband Atif, and their children Hamza and Aariz were allowed to enter the US on human parole for Aariz's treatment. As a foreigner, he was not entitled to any Medicaid and insurance companies refused to take his case.

As he underwent sessions and sessions of chemotherapy, with the help of family and strangers the required amount of \$300,000 was raised towards the transplant.

Doctors at the Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh have said that 18-month-old baby Aariz who now has a full set of teeth and has started running is ready for his transplant.

As he awaits the day a liver will be available, his daily chemotherapy costs at Stony Brook Hospital in New York continue to increase. His current outstanding bill for his chemotherapy and other tests has now exceeded \$200,000. An interview with his mother, Shazia gives a glimpse into his family's trial.

**Pakistan Link: How did you feel when Aariz was born?**

Shazia Jahan Quadri: I was so happy so I prostrated to Allah for blessing me with another baby boy in good health. I was in pain because of a second c-section but it disappeared when I saw him. Everyone was very happy including my husband, and especially my two-year-old son Hamza. He was trying to touch his brother to feel his delicate skin and was asking where he came from.

**PL: When and how did you discover the tumor?**

SJQ: After a week we did his aqeeqah and everything was fine. Then his stomach became hard and we thought it was gas. After two weeks his stomach got bigger and harder. He got fever and we took him to a child specialist. The doctor became worried about his stomach but first gave him belly medications. Aariz got better but his stomach got

## Fear and Hope: An Interview with the Mother of Aariz Atif



A precious child with his loving parents



harder and bigger. The doctor requested an ultrasound. Aariz was two months old. The report said that some big mass was present which could be hepatoblastoma. A Cat Scan further confirmed an hepatoblastoma, a rare childhood liver cancer that affects less than a million children every year. The tumor was large and reached into his pelvis.

It was April 10th, 2006 when we learned about his tumor and the whole world turned upside down. I felt dead.

**PL: How were you able to come to the US?**

SJQ: After receiving his chemo protocol, Dr. Shamvil told us that he needed a liver transplant as the tumor got shrunk but never went away. There is no facility of liver transplant in Pakistan. My maternal cousin worked on getting a visa for us, another cousin helped her and we were accepted on human parole. Now I am here in America living with one of my aunts. My uncles and aunts help us. My husband had to leave his work. We gave up almost everything to come here.

**PL: How have the hospital visits been?**

SJQ: In Karachi in the Children Cancer Hospital, the staff was cooperative and well trained. Here

at Stony Brook Hospital, the staff is also cooperative, especially a nurse named Lori who is Aariz's favorite. She is doing everything for us. Aariz started learning things in the hospital, he spends every day in the cancer center. He is growing while getting chemo, he started walking in the hospital, he is very used to the hospital and he thinks that it is his normal life.

**PL: Tell us about his treatment.**

SJQ: In the US, he has treatment every day. He will continue to get this toxic chemo until the transplant. He has a serious life-threatening infection in his lungs called aspergillus for which he receives medicine everyday.

I stay all day except the weekends in the hospital; it is a very long day for me and my son Hamza, who has made friends with all the nurses.

**PL: How old is Aariz now? What does he do?**

SJQ: Aariz is 18-months-old and started walking when he was not connected to his medicine. When the nurse does a treatment he yells "all done" and we all laugh. He plays with the medical supplies and pushes the big pump with his medicines.

**PL: Has your faith become stronger in Allah?**

SJQ: I already had a very strong faith in Allah

but now it is stronger. When I reflect on the four weeks I spent in Liaquat National Hospital in Karachi, when Aariz was very sick or when Dr. Shamvil told us that our only hope is a transplant, I realize how Allah helped us and gave us courage to fight and keep our hopes.

I truly believe "mayoosi kufr hai." Whenever I pray I say Allah, I have not given up hope and I know that You don't like those people who lose hope. Ya Allah give me "istaqamat." It is this faith in Allah which keeps me and my very supportive husband, going.

**PL: What is your hope now?**

SJQ: That inshaAllah I will see Aariz running around me always, playing. My husband left work in Pakistan to come here. It's hard seeing the hospital bills getting larger and larger and we have no insurance. We depend on our faith, family and friends to get by each day.

I know there are many people who are helping us in this crucial time. I am very grateful to them. Jazakumullahu khairan. Please keep praying for Aariz's health.

Note: If you are able to, please send a donation to help give this baby a hope for life. Aariz's bill at Stony Brook Hospital in New York is more than \$200,000. Checks or money orders can be made to:

Save Aariz Foundation  
17 Hamilton Avenue  
Mount Vernon, NY 10552

To donate online and for more updates and information, visit [www.helpaariz.com](http://www.helpaariz.com)

### SOOMRO FROM P17

portunities" that exist for investment in a number of sectors, including power generation, information technology, mining, housing, and infrastructure development. "Investors are making good profits," he remarked, and any initiative on the part of an enterprising businessman could be highly rewarding.

Mr. Soomro assured the gathering that democracy was taking roots in the country. "We have a parliament that is elected and a President who is elected by the parliament. The parliament approves the budget. The legislation has to come through the parliament. It is a democracy," he told the community members.

Prominent among those who attended the lunch were: Dr Muzammil Siddiqi, Consul General Syed Ibne Abbas, Javed Nawaz, Ismail Manju, Abdul Qadir Najjad, Dr Naqvi, Hamid Malik, Ahmed Ali, Arif Merchant, and Karim Raza.

Los Angeles: LoRuda, a California-based company, has launched an awareness campaign against human trafficking and anti-slavery by producing sweatshirts with a picture of Pakistan's most renowned human rights activist, Mr Ansar Burney, imprinted on them. ([www.loruda.com](http://www.loruda.com))

Available in three different colors the women and men's wearing sweatshirts showing images of anti-human trafficking and anti-slavery focus on Burney's important work and spotlight his efforts to save un-

derage children (child camel jockeys) from slavery and young girls from prostitution against in the Middle

## Sweatshirts Feature Ansar Burney's Human Rights Work

Eastern countries.

Truthseeker Tales is screened on the inside of the sweatshirts. For the first edition, LoRuda teamed up with Los Angeles-based artist Nora Shields to present Ansar Burney's historical

human rights work. It is a real life story that continues to resonate deeply and helps bring true meaning to the word "Truthseeker."

LoRuda Company said that the children are abducted and sold on the black market to camel-racing owners in the Middle Eastern countries. These innocent

children are starved, physically and sexually assaulted, and many times die. Our real life protagonist, Ansar Burney, sneaks into areas where children are forced to live and brings them back. Running with the young



boys under both arms, Mr Burney frees them from private prisons.

LoRuda has announced that with the campaign of awareness 1% of all sales in 2007 would go to the Ansar Burney Trust International.

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## Pakistani-Americans See CJ's Reinstatement as Major Step to Independent Judiciary

■ By Hazem Kira

**Chicago, Illinois:** The Pakistan American Democratic Forum (PADF), a grassroots organization, has welcomed Supreme Court of Pakistan's decision to reinstate the CJ, declaring it "a major victory for Pakistani civil society in general and the judiciary in particular, and a major defeat for the authoritarian establishment and its foreign sponsors."

The PADF President Dr. Muhammad Ashraf Toor has called for immediate reinstatement of 13 judges of high, civil and session courts that were either fired for supporting the chief justice or had resigned in protest against Gen Musharraf's unconstitutional action.

The PADF has urged the Supreme Court of Pakistan to use its newly-acquired popular mandate to take suo moto cognizance of four key issues: legal framework for the upcoming elections in view of Article 43 of the Constitution of Pakistan to ensure full compliance with the Constitution, free and fair elections and complete neutrality of the election commission, reinstatement of those judges and public officials who either lost or resigned from their respective offices to protest Gen Musharraf's unconstitutional actions, secret kidnappings of Pakistani citizens allegedly by foreign agencies, and the Lal Masjid incident including its antecedents and consequences.

"The unprecedented determination of the

people of Pakistan has produced two affirmative results: an independent judiciary and a free press", political scientist Dr. Agha Saeed said. Consequently, the movement for democracy in Pakistan has acquired two backbones."

The PADF statement in part reads:

We Pakistani Americans welcome Supreme Court of Pakistan's recent decision to reinstate Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhary and void Gen Musharraf's unconstitutional actions. The judiciary has taken a much-needed step toward its own independence.

It is a direction-changing victory for the real moderates, the 160 million of people of Pakistan, who oppose Gen Musharraf's arbitrary rule and its support by neocons in the United States.

We also call for the immediate reinstatement of the following thirteen judges who were either fired for supporting the chief Justice or had resigned in protest against Gen Musharraf's unconstitutional action. These include: High Court Judge Justice Jawad S Khawaja; Civil Judges Iram Jehangir, Malik Javed Iqbal, Ashraf Yar Khan, Rajesh Chandra, Sakhi Mustafa, Pir Ali Syed Rashdi, Allah Wachaio, and Ihsam Malik; Additional Sessions and Civil Judge Zulfiqar Ali and Syed Khurshid; Deputy Attorney General Nasir Saeed Sheikh; and Additional Advocate General (Punjab) Qaiser Khalil...

## FOP President Lauds CJ Verdict

**Los Angeles, CA:** The Supreme Court of Pakistan reinstated Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhry, whom the government had suspended in March for alleged misconduct. A 13-member panel of judges voted to drop all charges. The President of the Friends of Pakistan USA Mr. Sarfaraz Khan has called the verdict a "historic moment". The Friends of Paki-

stan President believes that the decision speaks positively of the political situation in Pakistan that such kind of issues can be resolved through the established institutions. He said that it is FAIR AND JUST for Chaudhry's reinstatement and hopes that this judgment finally puts our country on the road to constitutional rule and democracy.

## On a Daughter's Graduation



Mahera with her proud mother Sufia Altaf

"First of all, we would like to thank our family and friends for coming to Mahera's graduation party and all the positive comments, which provided inspiration" said the proud parents. We feel a sense of accomplishment. Now, we have another accomplishment to share: the July 20, 2007 high school graduation of our daughter, Mahera, from Academy of the Canyons Junior College High School. This achievement signifies a great start to a hard-working career ahead of her. Mahera is currently studying pre-medicine and in the future, Inshallah, she would like to become a doctor.

Tariq and Sufia Altaf who are very prominent community members said that they have always encouraged their daughters to pursue



Pictures above: Mahera with her parents Sufia and Tariq Altaf and family friends

their dreams, reach for the stars, do the best they can, respect family and friends, and remember teachers and counselors.

"We are so very proud of Mahera, as is her brother, sister, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandmothers and numerous other family and friends," said Mahera's parents.



Graduation Celebrations: Sana Zahara Shah graduated with Honors from UCLA as a double major in Psychology and History. She plans to attend Pepperdine School of Law in the Fall of 2007 for her J.D. (Juris Doctorate).

Her graduation celebration was held at the Shahnawaz Restaurant on Friday June 22, 2007. She is seen in the pictures above with her parents, Rehana Shah and Kazim Shah, and roommate Vareseha Zaman



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