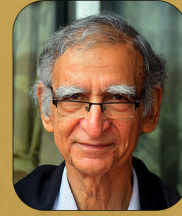




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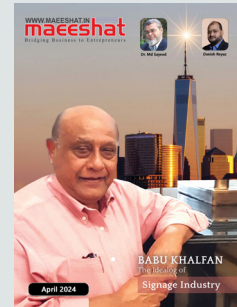
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From The Editor's Desk



By: Danish Reyaz

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) called upon Muslims to acquire ilm (knowledge) come what may, even if it required traveling as far as China. The religion that explicitly puts so much emphasis on knowledge and education has, sadly, seen the Muslim world falter and lag, especially in terms of modern education, for years.

However, there is a growing realization among Muslims about their mistake, and efforts are being made to educate the new generation. Amidst all this, one must also understand that the Islamic idea of education doesn't exclude Islamic teachings; it has to go in tandem with worldly education.

Despite the awareness of the importance of education—rather modern education paired with Islamic teaching—Muslims lack quality institutions that balance both these aspects. But the situation is changing now, with new age Edupreneurs showing the way with innovative approaches.

One such remarkable Edupreneur is Ashfaq Motiwala in Aurangabad, who has revolutionized the way top-quality modern education can be blended with Islamic values and principles. He has founded Pearls Academy a top-quality K12 school with modern amenities. What sets this school apart, is its unique curriculum that equally addresses both the needs of Muslims students.

The school has been doing exceptionally well and serving students not only with contemporary education but also

Islamic education, comprehensively developing students to succeed in the competitive world while upholding strong moral values.

Recognizing Ashfaq Motiwala's visionary contributions to the community, we have decided to feature his story in our cover piece. This article will explore his journey in establishing Pearls Academy and his ideas and vision for the community's development. It will provide in-depth insights into his dedicated life and serve as a powerful source of inspiration.

In addition to the inspiring story of Ashfaq Motiwala, this new edition of our magazine features several other compelling articles, including news and events, views and opinions, and other topics of public interest.

We hope you enjoy this month's issue as much as you have enjoyed our previous ones, and we look forward to your valuable feedback. So, what are you waiting for? Let's dive in. Happy reading!



More than 625,000 children out of school for more than eight months in Gaza



The UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) says more than 625,000 children in Gaza have not attended school for over eight months.

300,000 of them were UNRWA students before the war, it said on X.

“Play and learning activities provided by UNRWA teams are critical in preparing children to get back to school and restore their right to education.”

<https://x.com/UNRWA/status/1806595212661186995?s=19>

Last week, the Gaza Media Office said that at least 800,000 students have been deprived of an education as Israel’s months-long offensive against the Gaza Strip continues.

The Office said, according to a

statement by the Ministry of Education in Gaza, “more than 800,000 students of various educational levels in the Gaza Strip have been deprived of their right to education since Oct. 7 last year, due to the genocidal war being waged by the criminal Zionist occupation on the Gaza Strip.”

Among them: “40,000 high school students from various branches will not be able to participate in this year’s session of the high school exams, representing an unprecedented violation that threatens their future and undermines their chances of enrolling in local and international universities and colleges,” the Office added.

Last Saturday, 50,000 students went to final high school exam halls, “Tawjihi,” in West Bank governorates

and Palestinian schools abroad, while the Israeli onslaught prevented students in Gaza from taking the exams.

The Gaza Media Office said that “85% of educational facilities are out of service due to direct and deliberate targeting, posing a significant challenge to efforts to resume the educational process after the war ends.”

“Plans have been put in place to make up for the academic year for students from the first (elementary) grade to the eleventh grade and higher education students, ensuring that the academic year is not lost and that they possess the essential concepts and skills necessary for their continued learning,” said the Office. (With Agencies Inputs)

Amina Arif Kadiwala, an urdu medium student from Mumbai bags AIR 1 in NEET UG 2024



Amina Arif Kadiwala, an Urdu medium student, has achieved an extraordinary feat by securing the first position in the All India NEET UG 2024

examination. Hailing from Madni High School in Jogeshwari, Mumbai, Amina outshone approximately 25 lakh students across India to claim the top spot. Her success is particularly remarkable given the competitive nature of the exam and the high level of preparation required.

Amina's journey to the pinnacle of NEET UG 2024 is a testament to her dedication, hard work, and perseverance. As an SSC student from an Urdu medium background, she faced numerous challenges but remained steadfast in her pursuit of excellence. Her achievement has not only brought pride to her family and school but also serves as an inspiration to countless other students

from similar backgrounds.

Madni High School, known for its commitment to providing quality education, played a significant role in nurturing Amina's talent. The school's supportive environment and dedicated teachers provided her with the guidance and resources needed to excel in her studies. Amina's accomplishment underscores the importance of providing equal educational opportunities to students from all linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds.

Aspiring to study MBBS, Kadiwala has studied till class 10 in Urdu and then took admission into SVKM's Mithibai College. She completed her schooling at Madni High School,

Jogeshwari.

She revealed that initially, it was a challenge for her as she was weak in English, but slowly she learned the language and aced the exam

Amina's success story has garnered widespread acclaim and admiration. Her exceptional performance in the NEET UG 2024 has opened doors to some of the best medical colleges in the country, paving the way for a promising career in medicine. As she embarks on this new journey, Amina is determined to continue working hard and making a positive impact in the field of healthcare.

In an era where the importance of education cannot be overstated, Amina Arif Kadiwala's achievement stands as a beacon of hope and motivation for aspiring students across India, demonstrating that with determination and hard work, any obstacle can be overcome.

Let's work together to bring a visible change

Minorities' community students are in a dire need for support, guidance and financial assistance in West Bengal



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HDC Shares Malaysia's Halal Industry Expertise and Know-How with Neighboring ASEAN Countries

The Halal Development Corporation Berhad (HDC) is taking a proactive step to fast-track halal industry's development within this region by organizing the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) – Halal Industry Module, a bilateral technical cooperation programme established by the Malaysian Government to share Malaysia's development experiences and expertise with other developing countries.

The first series of the programme, entitled "Halal: Industry Awareness and Ecosystem Development", concluded yesterday with 15 international delegates from the Philippines, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Thailand completing the 10-day programme.

Specially designed to help each country's representatives understand and experience Malaysia's approach to developing the halal ecosystem, MTCP also guides the delegates in developing their halal ecosystem in their respective countries.

Speaking at the MTCP's closing ceremony, HDC Chairman Khairul Azwan Harun said, "Our intention

to share our experiences with our ASEAN neighbours stems from the similarities in our cultures and experiences. As the coming ASEAN Chairing country in 2025, Malaysia is focused on strengthening engagement within ASEAN, allowing us to share our resources and collectively build a community that benefits from each other's expertise.

With the 1.9 billion Muslims worldwide or 24 per cent of the global population driving the demand for halal products and services, the projected USD 5 trillion global halal market size by 2030 is "too significant for ASEAN to ignore and too vast for any one country to fulfil alone," said Azwan.

"Therefore, we hope that ASEAN countries can collaborate to build a robust halal ecosystem and collectively tap into this economic opportunity. We, at HDC, can help develop a customized framework to realize the potential of halal trade in various aspects as well as solutions to support the movements of halal products and services," he added.

Fully funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia (MOFA), this programme highlights Malaysia's crucial role in advancing halal awareness and supporting ecosystem development in the industry. This accreditation further cements HDC's standing as a premier institution committed to promoting knowledge, expertise and best practices in the global halal industry.



FORUM KAZAN 2024: THE BEST PLATFORM TO EXPLORE RUSSIA'S HALAL INDUSTRY

Halal Development Corporation Berhad (HDC) recently participated in the Kazan Forum 2024 held in Kazan, Russia. This prestigious forum serves as an international platform to discuss economic development, trade, and cooperation among Islamic countries.

Mr. Khairul Azwan Harun, Chairman of HDC, specially invited by the organizers as an international panelist, participated in various discussion sessions and panels to promote Malaysia's capabilities in the global halal economy. HDC's delegation, led by the Chairman, demonstrated Malaysia's commitment as a leader in the global halal industry, in line with the country's halal diplomacy strategy.

During a panel session, Khairul Azwan Harun emphasized the importance of utilizing digital platforms to assist companies in joining the halal supply chain and, at the same time, enhancing the value proposition of Halal certification to target consumers.

"The Forum Kazan 2024 is an excellent platform because trade and investment discussions can be conducted directly. Malaysia can leverage this platform to promote its products and services in the halal industry to the global market and attract foreign investment to the



country. We at HDC are committed to expanding the reach of Malaysia's halal industry and further expanding the Halal trade network through Malaysia-led Halal Diplomacy," he said.

HDC's participation in the Kazan Forum 2024 also opens opportunities for strategic collaborations with certification bodies from Russia and the Middle East such as Gulftec, International Center of Halal Standardization and Certification of Religious Board of Muslims of Russian Federation, and LLC BelHalal.

Furthermore, HDC is exploring potential cooperation with local Russian companies such as M2 Farm LLC, Miratorg Holding, Sweet Factory "Volshebznitsa", Uniconf, and Russia's leading vegetable oil producer, Nefis Group, to create more opportunities for local halal ingredient producers.

More importantly, HDC aims to forge strong partnerships with Azerbaijan and the UAE in digitalization projects, which are expected to boost halal trade to higher levels and strengthen industrial development among participating countries.

HDC believes that these efforts also create significant opportunities for Malaysian halal industry players to penetrate the halal markets in Russia and Central Asian countries.

The Kazan Forum 2024 attracted more than 1,000 participants from over 50 countries, including government representatives, entrepreneurs, and industry experts.

HDC will continue to play an active role in empowering Malaysia's halal industry, expanding its market, and strengthening its international position. Participation in forums such as the Kazan Forum 2024 is part of HDC's ongoing efforts to strengthen halal diplomacy and promote Malaysia as a global halal hub.

Principals from CBSE Schools across the country gather at USTM for Exposure Visit

A two-day-long 'Exposure Visit Program' for CBSE School Principals has successfully culminated here today at the University of Science and Technology Meghalaya (USTM) where 34 school principals from various renowned CBSE schools from across India participated. The visit has been organized by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in collaboration with USTM from 29th to 30th April 2024. The program has been supported by the Department of Skill Education, CBSE under the Skill Education sector.

Addressing the school principals in an interactive session today, Shri Mahbubul Hoque, Chancellor of USTM said that the role of a school principal is multifaceted and essential for creating an environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. He welcomed all the participants and said that USTM is always open to extending all kinds of support to uplift school education.

In the inaugural session yesterday, Prof GD Sharma, Vice Chancellor of USTM welcomed all the school principals and said that the National Education Policy 2020 has emphasized on Skill Education to become integral to School and Higher Education. Accordingly, CBSE has envisioned promoting Skill Education from Class 6th onwards in all its affiliated schools. He said that an added benefit of such an exposure visit is that it gives the principals a chance to meet other like-

minded school leaders, share stories, and gain a lot in the process.

Speaking on this occasion, Dr Jagadish Barman, Jt Secretary, CBSE Centre of Excellence Guwahati said, "This Exposure Visit is expected to leverage the synergies between schools and Higher Educational Institutions and create a positive platform for cohesive interaction in the future learning ecosystem." These Principals may, in turn, mentor the teachers of schools in their neighborhood thus, unfold unlimited opportunities for educator empowerment, he added.

In this context, Prof Amit Choudhury, Dean, School of Technology and Management at USTM said that this year CBSE has selected USTM for principals' exposure visit apart from six other institutions including TERI School Of Advanced Studies New Delhi, Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar, Asian Academy of Film Television Noida, Indian Institute of Technology Tirupati, Whistling Woods International Mumbai, and Indian Institute of Management–Raipur. The resource persons from USTM were: Dr E Karim, Dr Azmol H Barbhuiya, Dr Monalisa Bora Deka, Dr Alika Borgohain, Dr Baharul Islam, Dr K Aye, Dr S Gazi, Dr Nitu Borgohain, Dr Deboja Sharma, Dr Moutushi Das, Dr Mehjabin Rahman, Dr Papiya Dutta, Dr Palme Borthakur.

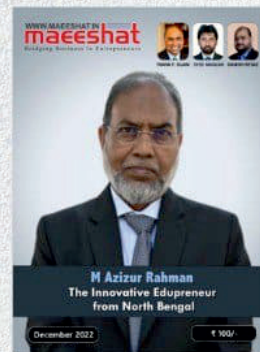
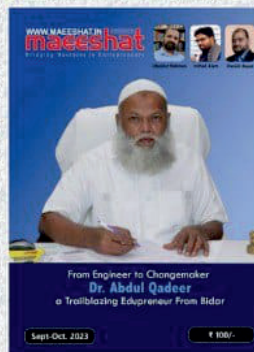
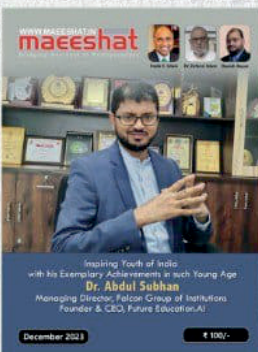
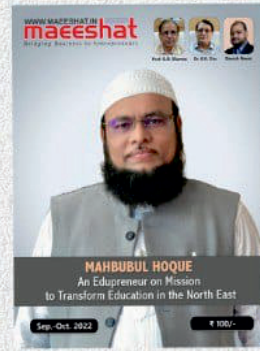
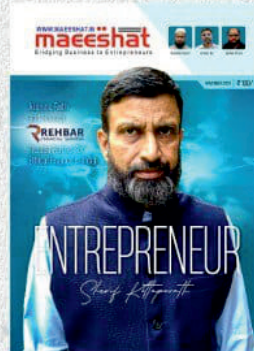
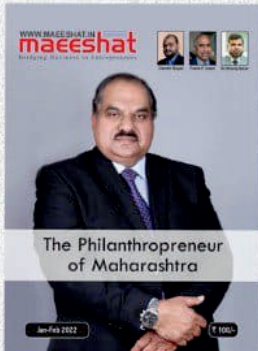
Dr Nirmaljit Singh Kalsi, Chairman, National Council for Vocational Education and Training took an

online session on "Up-scaling of Skill Education in line with NEP 2020". Several sessions took place on both days.

The participating schools in the program were Christ International School Bangalore, Mahavir Senior Model School Delhi, RS Jhunjhunwala International School Gujarat, Poddar International School Maharashtra, Manipal School, Brahmani Public School Odisha, DPS Ahomgaon Guwahati, Faculty HS School North Guwahati, Sharada Vidyaniketan Public School Mangalore, Kendriya Vidyalaya no.1 Kunjaban, KV NFR Maligaon, Ideal English Senior Secondary School Manipur, Livingstone Foundation International, PM Shri KV Khanapara, Holy Brook Sr. Sec. School, North East Public School Udalguri, Army Public School PRTC Bangalore, SBOA Public School Guwahati, The Priceton School, Sree Swami Vivekananda Higher Primary School, Kendriya Vidyalaya NEHU Shillong, Army Public School Shillong, SJ Patel Eng School Gujarat, Delhi World Public School Haryana, Jnana Ganga Central School, Dr. M Ramanna Shetty Memorial English Medium High School, Kendriya Vidyalaya ONGC Agartala, Kendriya Vidyalaya Assam University, Kendriya Vidyalaya Aizawl, Buhai School Sikkim and Kingcup Public School Itanagar.

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The Edupreneur of Marathwada

Md Ashfaque Motiwala

Leading the Way in Educational Innovation





By: Danish Reyaz



Nestled in the heart of Maharashtra, Aurangabad holds great significance among the cities in India. It is where echoes of history seamlessly blend with the strides of modernity. Famous for its breathtaking heritage sights like the Ajanta Ellora caves, the Mughal-era marvel Bibi ka Maqbara among several other historical gates, forts, temples, mosques, dargahs, and museums, Aurangabad stands as a testament to India's rich cultural and historical legacy.

The city of Aurangabad was named after the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb when he made it the capital of the Deccan. Consequently, it has a sizeable Muslim population. The rich architecture of Aurangabad bears the conspicuous imprint of the Muslim architecture of Mughal and Nizam eras, while the Muslim community as whole has significantly shaped the city's cultural, educational, and economic landscape.

From magnificent structures to vibrant cultural practices, and from traditional attire to exquisite cuisine, Muslims have profoundly influenced every aspect of life in Aurangabad. Their contributions have helped create a city that is not only a testament to

historical grandeur but also a thriving center of modern-day progress.

Nevertheless, after the downfall of Muslim rule, the Muslims of Aurangabad faced significant challenges. Following the partition of India, they fell behind in reaping the benefits of progress, resulting in enduring hardships that are still evident today. Despite these setbacks, the community remains resilient, continually striving to improve their conditions and contribute meaningfully to society.

There are various historical and socio-political reasons that can be ascribed to the backwardness of Muslims in the city, but the most potent reason for this misery is the lack of education. Not only is a significant portion of the minority community illiterate, but those who could attend school were also handicapped by the lack of modern education necessary for excelling in the competitive world of jobs and livelihoods.

However, this situation is changing rapidly, with growing efforts to improve educational opportunities and outcomes. The community itself is driving this change, showing a



newfound awareness and zeal to make a difference. Various institutions and foundations have stepped forward with a shared goal of enhancing educational standards and opportunities and thereby improving livelihoods and the overall status for Muslims in the city.

Aurangabad As Educational Hub

The push for educational progress in Aurangabad is evident in the emergence of numerous educational institutions over the time. The city proudly hosts Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar University, Mahatma Gandhi Mission (MGM) University, and Rafeeq Zakaria Campus as most sought-after destinations for students. Besides, numerous professional colleges and schools have sprung up over the years, elevating the educational status of the city. Additionally, there are numerous coaching centers aiding students in preparing for various competitive exams.

In a relatively short span of time, Aurangabad, once trailing in

educational standards, has transformed into an educational hub. It now caters not only to students from the city and surrounding areas but also attracts learners from across Maharashtra and other states.

And the Muslim community is making the most of the opportunity, having finally realized that only through excelling in education can it make progress in society and free itself from the curse of age-old poverty and backwardness.

Memon's Contribution

Aurangabad is home to several Muslim communities that have made significant contributions to the educational advancement of the city. However, it is the Memon Muslims, a business community, who have been particularly instrumental in initiating progress in this field.

Memons originally belongs to Gujrat living in its border areas like Kutch, Bhuj, Veraval and several other places. Starting from latter part of the nineteenth century to different phases

afterward this community migrated from Gujrat in pursuit of better opportunities and spread to different areas in Maharashtra and also other states.

The presence of Memons in Aurangabad and its neighbouring areas can be traced back to Nizam era. Jalna, an erstwhile part of Aurangabad, had several food grain markets during the rules of Nizams, attracting many Memons to engage in trade. Over the time, most of them permanently settled in the region, leading to growth of their population.

Since the community is known to be industrious and resilient, they could carve a niche for themselves in city's business landscape. Over the years, they have established themselves as a prominent business community in Aurangabad dealing in real estate, textiles, wholesale and retail, and various other sectors. Their exceptional dedication and steadfast commitment to success not only set them apart but also serve as an inspiration for others to emulate,



fostering further contributions to society.

Having said that, his community's commitment to social upliftment is truly inspiring, as they strive not only to better their own circumstances but also to elevate those of their Muslim brethren. At the forefront of their efforts is a profound dedication to educating the underprivileged. Through various institutions, the Memons ensure that students from minority backgrounds receive quality education, empowering them to compete and succeed, thus fostering positive change within their communities.

Meet Ashfaq Motiwala

Ashfaq Motiwala is a prominent

and well-respected figure in the Memon community of Aurangabad, known for his exceptional leadership in various business ventures and his dedication to education. Driven by his indomitable entrepreneurial spirit, Motiwala founded Pearls Academy, a leading minority educational institution in the city. The academy is renowned for providing high-quality, modern education from kindergarten to 12th grade, adhering to international standards.

However, the distinctiveness of this institution lies in its unique approach to holistic education, with a proper emphasis on value-based learning. Understanding the crucial role of moral and ethical teachings in shaping individuals amidst today's challenges

of corruption and declining values, Pearls Academy offers a range of Deeniyat courses aligned with Islamic principles alongside its modern curriculum, ensuring a comprehensive educational experience.

Pearls Academy has been achieving new heights of success each year, with a hundred percent pass rate for students who are not only prepared to excel in the world but are also shaped into fine individuals with strong Islamic moral values.

And as mentioned, the person driving this exemplary initiative is Ashfaq Motiwala, under whose competent leadership the academy has earned praise from all around, including both the Muslim community and others.



A Crusader for Value-Based Holistic Education

The soft-spoken Ashfaq Motiwala is an extremely determined, clear-headed, and a visionary man. The lack of a school that gives due importance to modern education but also Islamic teachings prompted him to establish Pearls Academy and set a new standard in this field.

“For me Islamic teaching is a non-negotiable thing. I can’t envision modern education without the teaching of Islamic values and morals. After all, education’s prime objective is holistic and harmonious development of an individual and not mere worldly success.” says Ashfaq Motiwala with gentle conviction.

From Business to Education

Under Motiwala’s competent leadership, Pearls Academy has

become an exemplary initiative, earning praise from all quarters. He reflects “Our intervention in the field of education was much-needed since there was a dire need of value-based modern education for Muslims.”

While he is successfully leading his businesses, it is his foray into education sector that has given him a distinct identity and honor. At the same time, it has provided him with a new zeal and vision to improve the quality of education for the minority.

Nevertheless, Motiwala admits that education was not what he initially envisioned as his calling. He had been content with his successful business ventures, where he had already demonstrated his entrepreneurial prowess.

A Consummate Entrepreneur

Ashfaq Motiwala was born on

December 25, 1975, in Aurangabad to Mohammed Siddique Motiwala and Zulekha Motiwala. He is the third child among five siblings, with two brothers and three sisters. His father was in the land investing business, which afforded him the privilege of attending St. Xavier’s, an English medium school, where he excelled as a student. Motiwala graduated with a commerce degree from Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar University. He also pursued a law degree, but due to some challenging circumstances, he was unable to continue his studies after two years.

For Ashfaq Motiwala, the introduction to business happened quite early in life. He says that since his family had a business, discussions at home naturally revolved around it, which drew him in. “I may have been in the 11th standard when I started getting involved in my family



business,” he says. “After my classes, I used to sit in the office, helping my father. Since we dealt in land investing and plotting, I had to visit the sites as well, gaining a lot of exposure.”

However, while managing the land and plotting business, which remains his family’s core enterprise, he developed a desire to branch out and gravitated towards manufacturing. Before that, he tried his hand at trading and succeeded. He then established a manufacturing unit for automobile spare parts, which became Maharashtra’s third-largest plant of its kind. He has also achieved significant success in the retail business, at one point operating a dozen retail stores in the city featuring top brands.

While still in college, he independently designed and developed the Motiwala Trade Center, their first commercial project in the heart of the city. Since then, Motiwala has become a

prominent name in the construction business in the city and surrounding areas.

Journey Into Edupreneurship

With his excellent entrepreneurial skills and spirit, Motiwala has diversified his businesses significantly and has been quite successful in all his endeavors. The question, therefore, arises: what prompted him to venture into educational entrepreneurship (Edupreneurship)?

Recounting the story behind this move, Motiwala explains that when his children reached school age, he searched for a school that balanced Islamic teachings with modern education. To his surprise, he couldn’t find any to his satisfaction in his city.

“If a school excelled in modern education, it neglected moral education. Conversely, those that emphasized Islamic teachings often disregarded

modern education,” says Motiwala with palpable disappointment.

It was then that he decided to address this problem, realizing that other parents might be facing a similar dilemma regarding their children’s education. He consulted with his family members, friends, and experts in the field and set out to start Pearls Academy.

However, the decision wasn’t abrupt. Before starting his school, Motiwala had gained considerable knowledge in this field through his involvement as a member of the advisory body of Boon School, started by one of his dear friends who has since passed away. Motiwala’s circle of friends was always very passionate about community work, especially education.

During his association with Boon school Motiwala had the several opportunities to interact with



community members and understand how the educational level of minority group could be improved. While he supported Boon school, he also provided assistance to several other schools that approached him, offering both financial support and guidance due to his eminent position in the society.

Carrying forward the Family Legacy

The decision to establish the school wasn't an isolated one for Ashfaq Motiwala family. In fact, he has followed a well-trodden family path. He explains, "My grandfather, Haji Jan Mohammed, came to Aurangabad in 1952 and started a business. Over time, he realized that the region lacked a good school for Muslims, especially the poor. So, he started an Urdu medium school to help elevate

their social standing and improve their conditions marred by poverty." Therefore, Ashfaq Motiwala is the second person in his family to establish a school.

While the Urdu medium school still exist and is being taken care of by other family members, Motiwala is now quite immersed in running the Pearls Academy.

Busy with his business commitments Motiwala was not very much involved with the functioning of Urdu medium school. However, as his interest in education grew, he charted a new direction in this field by establishing Pearls Academy, a premier school with English being the medium of instruction.

He says, "We live in vastly competitive world, where other communities are developing leaps and bounds. To catch

up with them we have to embrace the English medium modern education without reservation; otherwise, we risk lagging behind."

Motiwala, however, advocates giving due importance to the Urdu language as well. He says, "We can integrate Urdu into our religious teachings in our schools, as Pearls has done. In this way, while Urdu is kept alive, our children also reap the benefits of English education necessary for excelling in the modern world."

Safeguarding Cultural Values

According to Motiwala, our cultural values are declining rapidly as joint family structures disintegrate. Even in families where the joint structure remains intact, members are often preoccupied with their individual lives, leaving little time to teach or inculcate in their children values aligned with



Islamic culture and principles.

He further explains, “The same issue exists for families who can afford quality education but cannot find the right institution for their children that pays equal attention to worldly and Islamic teachings.” In this context, the establishment of Pearls Academy serves as a beacon of hope for thousands of families seeking comprehensive development for their children, alongside steadfast adherence to Islamic morals.

From Humble Beginnings to Thriving Institution

By now, it is clear that Pearls Academy came into existence with noble intentions to provide the community with a comprehensive educational solution for their children. The academy has been unwaveringly focused on its mission, consistently improving and adopting new methods to maximize teaching outcomes.

However, like in any field, the beginning was not smooth sailing.

There were many challenges, including financial and infrastructural issues. The most significant challenge, however, was the hesitation of people who were unsure how the school would manage to integrate both modern and Islamic education effectively.

“Initially, it was tough, but over time things started falling into place as more students enrolled and the school grew in terms of grades, producing excellent results. We started with about a few dozen students in a humble building and now host about one thousand students across two campuses, along with a residential setup,” Motiwala states proudly.

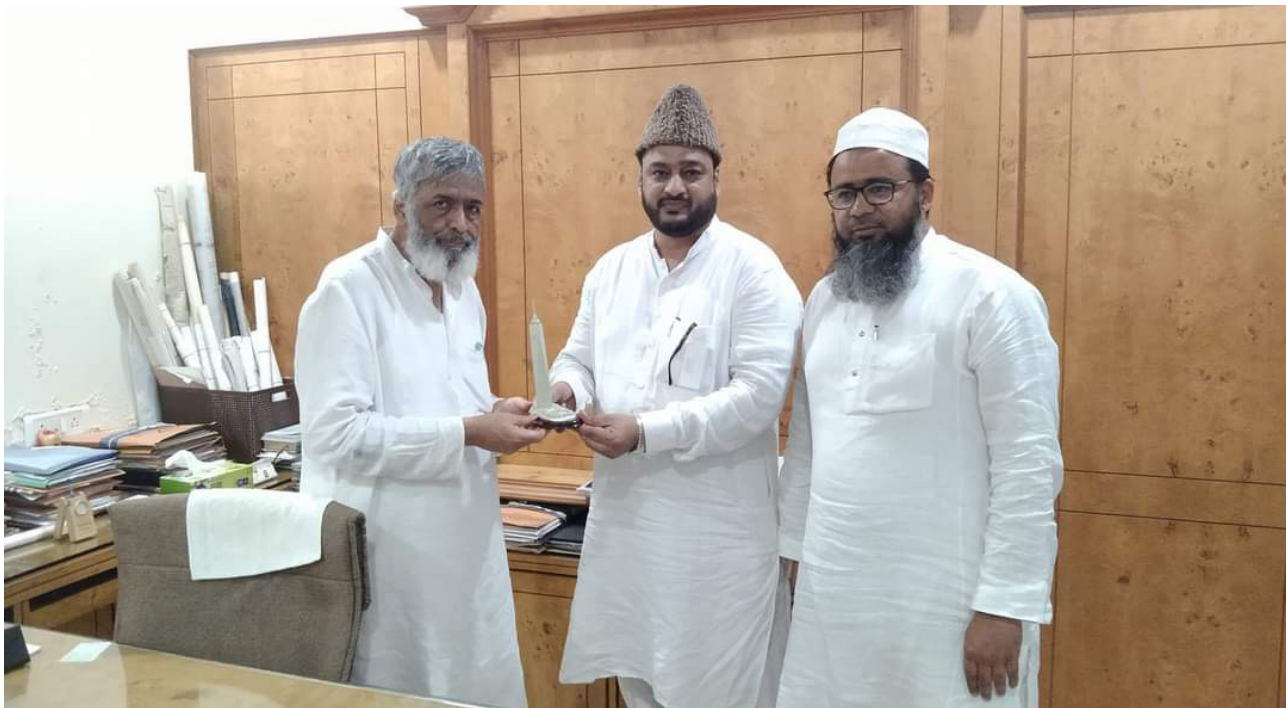
Certainly, the school has flourished with its dedicated programs and effective curriculum implemented by a highly competent group of teachers and supported by committed staff and employees all under the untiring stewardship of Ashfaque Motiwala.

Zulekha Motiwala Social Welfare Charitable Trust

The Pearls group of schools is divided into two main sections: AMES Kids (Ayesha Motiwala English School), which serves students from preschool to 5th grade, and Pearls Academy, which educates students from 6th to 12th grade. Both institutions are managed by the Zulekha Motiwala Social Welfare Charitable Trust, established in 2008.

“The trust is named after my mother, who recently passed away. She was the guiding force for our entire family,” says Ashfaque Motiwala, his voice tinged with sadness for the loss.

This trust embodies the Motiwala Group’s dedication to social upliftment. It is well-managed by the Group and other eminent individuals, making a significant positive impact on society through its various welfare activities, particularly in the field of education. And Pearls Academy stands out as prime example of these efforts, alongside the traditional Urdu



medium school.

AMES Kids

AMES Kids is the first school that Ashfaq Motiwala started in 2009 in his pursuit of providing quality education of international standards to children in their foundational years. The aim of AMES Kids is not to follow the path of other schools, but to develop its own style of learning in a creative and inspiring atmosphere.

“In no time, AMES Kids has made its mark as an elementary school that, beyond the conventional education, has emerged as the destination for the excellent early childhood care and education aimed at comprehensive growth of a child,” says Motiwala.

AMES Kids boasts high-tech facilities, including technology-driven classrooms, physical and digital libraries, modern computer labs, spacious playground, and comprehensive sports equipment. It prides itself on having competent and dedicated teachers, well-trained in

early childhood care and education, who provide personalized attention to each child, helping them thrive as bright students.

Innovative events and activities in the classrooms or on the premises give students hands-on learning experiences. They help develop social skills, cultural awareness, problem-solving abilities, creativity, confidence, engagement, and motivation, among many other benefits.

The curriculum, designed according to Multiple Intelligence (MI) Theory, promotes the all-around development of children, not just their cognitive skills. The school employs a modern pedagogical approach with ample resources to support teaching and learning. Additionally, a strong emphasis on moral and ethical values within the framework of Islam further enriches the curriculum.

Motiwala says, “The school has gained the trust of parents who prioritise their children receiving a top-quality education from an early

stage. It prepares them not only for the next phase of education but also instil Islamic values that serve them in good stead in this world and the hereafter.

Pearls Academy

In 2014, Pearls Academy was established as a complementary upgrade to AMES Kids. It serves students from the 6th grade onwards, continuing the good work started by AMES Kids.

“Establishing Pearls Academy was crucial for us,” says Motiwala. “We wanted to ensure that the hard work we put into our elementary students wouldn’t go to waste. We were concerned that after leaving us, they might end up in schools that lack the same level of sincerity and dedication to their future.”

Ever since its inception Pearls Academy has been providing exemplary education of international standards, while preserving and extending Islamic educational foundation initiated at AMES Kids.

At Pearls Academy, every detail is meticulously planned, from state-of-the-art facilities and a highly effective curriculum to personalized attention for each student and ample exposure and opportunities for them to shine.

Pearls Academy has established itself as one of the premier schools in Aurangabad, known for producing students with excellent academic records and, most importantly, strong Islamic moral values. These qualities help students become excellent social members and better citizens overall.

Motiwalla says, “Besides modern education, our emphasis on faith and character development enables our students to exhibit integrity and best of manners, guided by the teachings of the Quran and Hadith. From

day one, our goal has been to achieve a harmonious balance of Deen and Duniya in our students.”

Moral Education Programs at Pearls

The world is struggling with

numerous conflicts, fights, and wars. These political issues have deeply infiltrated society, causing people to become increasingly angry and hateful towards one another. “Just look at social media posts these days, and you’ll see how shameful and bigoted people have become. We’ve

Both should have been given equal importance. Schools that focus solely on worldly education are largely to blame for this unfortunate situation.”

Therefore, according to him, Pearls is an attempt to correct this by providing due importance to moral education based on the teaching of Quran

and sayings and practices of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Religious education has always had a calming effect on individuals, purifying their hearts and turning them into compassionate, well-behaved, and responsible citizens. When these individuals assume leadership roles, they are more likely to address and solve the problems of humanity rather than exacerbate them.

In commitment to this noble cause, Pearls has Deeniyat and Qaida/

Quran program in its curriculum that is one of the seven guarding principles of the institutions to realize its goals. These principles also include community engagement, innovative learning systems, inspired teaching, and fostering connection among minds.



reached this degraded state because of the decline in our moral and ethical values,” laments Motiwala.

He continues, “This steady decline is due to the neglect of religious education, which upholds our morals, in favor of modern education.



The Islamic education curriculum is structured into three programs: 1) Deeniyat, 2) Quraniyat, and 3) Hifz. The goal of these Islamic and Quranic studies is to provide Tarbiyah, the Islamic upbringing of a child, instilling the values necessary for success in both this life and the hereafter.

Deeniyat

Deeniyat encompasses the study of morals, etiquette, Islamic history, jurisprudence, and Hadith, following a specially designed curriculum that aligns with modern pedagogical standards.

Quraniyat

Quraniyat focuses on the study of the Quran, including an understanding of the Holy Book and basic Arabic grammar. It covers the teaching of Makharij, Tajweed, Nazirah, and Qira'at. Students are also required to memorize various Surahs and essential Masnoon Duas in Arabic, along with their Urdu translations.

Hifz

Hifz, the memorization of the entire Quran, is a cornerstone of Islamic teaching. At Pearls, a dedicated Hifz Academy provides a specialized program with three stages tailored to students' ages and grades. This program is led by highly skilled Huffaz and Qaris who employ advanced teaching methods, including neuro-linguistic programming, memory enhancement techniques, and psychological counseling. The program is meticulously monitored, with structured evaluations ensuring the best outcomes for the students. The program includes:

Qaida Program begins in grade 1 and completes in 18 to 24 months. The Qaida program is designed to be taught in regular school hours so that no extra burden is put on the tender shoulders of young students.

Nazera Program, on the other hand, requires students to stay back beyond their regular class hours till evening to complete their Nazera program and

academics. The Nazera program starts after completing the Qaida program and usually takes 24 months.

Hifz Program follows the Nazera program and requires students to stay in a residential hostel for about 36 to 42 months, which is the duration of the course.

“These programs are perfectly balanced with academics, ensuring that our students get the best of both worlds without compromising on either. While receiving our state-of-the-art modern education, we make sure that students, without much burden, also receive Islamic education,” explains Motiwala “This equips them with the necessary knowledge to be true Muslims, leading successful, disciplined, and peaceful lives in society, and seeking salvation in the hereafter.”

Residential System (Oyster)

To help each student reach their maximum potential, Pearls offers a residential education system where



students and staff reside in the on-campus hostel, known as “Oyster.”

“Like Oyster lives in a calcified shell protected from outside danger, the inmates in the Pearls hostel are protected from the unnecessary distractions and outside humdrum of life to stay focus on their studies,” says Motiwala.

Living on the hostel campus has several benefits for Pearls students. Not only are the students helped academically with structured schedules and fewer distractions to concentrate on their studies, but they also have better access to sports, arts, and other activities for their all-around development.

The round-the-clock supervision and care of students in a structured environment promotes discipline, better time management, organizational skills to maximize their learning outcomes.

While academic performance improves in the hostel, Motiwala

highlights the most significant benefit of hostel life: the development of strong bonds and friendships among peers, fostering a sense of community and belonging. Additionally, living away from home encourages students to become self-reliant and responsible, as they manage their daily activities and time independently.

Special Foundation Course: BUNIYAD

Competition is becoming increasingly cutthroat, and even the best education sometimes can’t guarantee success in professional competitive exams. Therefore, Pearls not only provides excellent education but also extends a helping hand to students, developing the essential skills needed to succeed in various competitive exams.

To achieve this, the school offers a special foundation course called Basic Understanding to Nurture Intellectual Attitude and Diligence (BUNIAD), which prepares students from the early stages of their education. The course enhances a child’s cognitive

abilities, helping them to broaden their knowledge and develop problem-solving skills. This prepares them to excel in various levels of competition in the future.

“BUNIAD is one of our outstanding initiatives, designed to be both forward-thinking and highly beneficial for our students. It equips them with the extra skills needed to excel in various types of exams,” says Motiwala. “From an early age, this program helps to identify each student’s field of interest and then works in that direction to help them achieve it.”

The dedicated and qualified subject experts make it easier for students to build a strong foundation and achieve set academic targets. To that effect, from standard VI onwards, there is a specialised program to address the specific educational needs of slow or gifted learners.

At the vocational training centre, experts provide the most relevant and up-to-date training to students to enhance their employability skills.



Also, top-level experts reside on the campus and guide students to decide a career roadmap and achieve it.

Pearls Academy conducts various sessions and seminars to spark career ambitions among the students from the very early days. Lately, a session on “Why Civil Services?” was organised for the students of grades 8 to 10 who were introduced to building the right strategies for clearing civil service exams. Similar sessions are regularly organized to counsel students for their engineering and medical exams.

“Early intervention is crucial for shaping a student’s career, and BUNIAD excels at this by mentoring and guiding them to focus on every detail essential for their success,” says Motiwala with satisfaction.

A School With a Difference

Pearls Academy is celebrated for its unique approach, blending top-notch education with the moral upbringing of children, a focus often neglected by most institutions. By bucking

this trend, Pearls has successfully implemented this teaching method and inspired others to follow suit.

The school also stands out in other ways. “The school upholds the same values it teaches its students,” says Motiwala. “Pearls is like a big family where all members are treated fairly and respectfully.”

At Pearls, the relationship between teachers and students is unique. Students not only receive pastoral care but are also inspired to follow the right paths demonstrated by their teachers. In addition to teachers, students, and their parents, the supporting staff are also regarded as equal stakeholders in the school’s progress. Their hard work is sincerely and fully acknowledged.

The COVID Example

The tumultuous period of COVID-19 forced many businesses to confront the harsh reality of dwindling profit tough decisions regarding their workforce. Sadly, some opted for retrenchments and pay cuts, leaving loyal employees

stranded in a precarious situation. It felt profoundly unjust to ask staff and employees who had devoted their time and effort to supporting organizations through both lean and prosperous times to suddenly depart due to financial constraints imposed by the pandemic.

This attitude of passing the onus of shrinking business to its employees was the order of the day during the pandemic, and was reflected across all sectors, sadly including even education sector, which is traditionally seen as more driven by social obligation than purely profit motives.

Despite this trend amidst the backdrop of uncertainty and economic strain, there were shining examples of compassion and integrity. Pearls Academy stands out as one such beacon of ethical leadership. Motiwala explains, “Instead of succumbing to the prevailing trend of layoffs and salary reductions, we chose a different path—one that demonstrated a profound commitment to our



employees' well-being and dignity.”

He adds, “Instead of viewing workforce as mere expenses to be slashed in times of crisis, we recognized their value and contributions. In a gesture of gratitude and solidarity, we not only retained our workforce but also went a step further by providing increments—a decision that clearly conveyed our priorities and principles.”

In doing so, Pearls Academy not only preserved the livelihoods of its staff but also nurtured a culture of loyalty, trust, and mutual respect that endures beyond the shadow of the pandemic. This commitment was evident in the recent successive years' results of the academy's students, who not only excelled in board-level exams but also secured top positions in NEETs and IIT/JEE exams.

A Shout-Out to School Development Team (SDT)

The Pearls Academy has an excellent School Development Team (SDT), which constantly keeps one step forward into the future. The team led by Mr ----- focuses on building modern facilities and introducing innovative programs for the betterment of the school and its students.

“The progress and transformation you can see at the Pearls campus are the result of untiring dedication and hard work of our School Development Team (SDT),” informs Motiwala, “Whether establishing a Residential Facility, Senior Secondary School, Hifz Academy, Sports Academy or introducing Foundation Course, SDT has always been instrumental in all of

these initiatives.”

Lately, SDT has partnered with Bengaluru-based SportzVillage, known for implementing Sports and Physical Education (P.E) programs specific for different age groups of students.

Also on the card is a Robotics STEAM Lab and Entrepreneur Incubation Centre Hub necessary for keeping up with the world in learning new approaches to education.

Sports Academy

The school that gives utmost emphasis on making the education qualitative and moralistic also recognizes the importance of physical sports, as they promote good health and well-being for students. The entire sporting program at Pearls is managed by a



dedicated Sports Academy as part of integrated academic program.

Motiwala states, “The objective of this Academy is to support students in their pursuit of sporting aspirations by provided essential coaching facilities and equipment. We have qualified coaches and physical trainers to ensure this.”

To help its students achieve excellence in sports, the Academy offers both In-School and After-School programs.

The In-School Program is geared towards advancing physical fitness and basic sporting skills. This is achieved through a structured

curriculum, training, and assessments.

The After-School Program, on the other hand, focuses on training students for competitive sports. This program requires students to train in at least two major sports, honing their talent and skills to succeed at a

competitive level.

The success of the sporting program at Pearls is largely due to Motiwala’s passion for sports. During his school years, Motiwala represented the state in basketball and played professional football. He is also very

fond of adventure sports, having participated in mountaineering, cycling, rafting, and paragliding. In fact, he excels in paramotoring, which is motorized paragliding. He is among the top 30 certified paramotor pilots in India.

A man with such a deep interest and proficiency in sports is naturally inclined to ensure





excellent sporting infrastructure and facilities at his school. According to Motiwala, not all students excel in academics; many possess a natural talent for sports. At Pearls, our aim is to identify such talents at a young age and nurture them with the right coaching and training so they can make their mark in the sports they love.

Laurels and recognitions

For its proven track record for excellence, Pearls Academy has many laurels and recognitions coming its way on a regular basis. First and foremost, it was adjudged as one of the Best Preschools at the

National level by AKG Education, New Delhi.

The school has won lots of awards for participating in myriad events such as Lokmat Times Campus Club, various inter-school activities, Olympiad exams, and several sports

competitions.

While several teachers and students have won several prizes, recently, Sayyed Saad Aman, a grade VII student, became one of the youngest authors in the country for his maiden novel “SanFranciscan Dream,”



available to purchase on Amazon. He is a talented author who has also written a dozen stories besides translating a Marathi novel into English titled “The Shackles.”

Another recent laurel the school has won is for an exciting activity. During the lockdown, its students managed to read about 5500 books



online. The librarian Mr. Furqan was awarded by the EPIC- The Leading Digital Library for Kids across the Globe.

Future Plans

Pearls Academy has become a leading school in Aurangabad, earning praise and recognition from all around. With each passing year, its results and popularity continue to grow, leading to a demand for a +3-level college. However, Motiwala says he has no plans to extend the school beyond the 12th grade.

He explains, “Pearls is designed as a K-12 concept school. Our entire focus and strategy are centered on providing early-stage care and education to students in an optimized environment.”

Motiwalwa is, however, open to the idea of opening Pearls branches in other locations. “Our expansion plan is already in the pipeline. Initially, we aim to establish branches in five states. After assessment, we could expand

pan-India, but that’s the plan for now.”

The Need for More Such Schools

Motiwalwa understands the need for such schools throughout India if Muslim education is to be significantly advanced. However, with limited resources, he does not want to overextend by managing too many schools, which could become difficult to handle. Therefore, he encourages others to start similar schools and offers to provide the necessary knowledge and training if needed.

However, Motiwala says that the initiative in this regard isn’t very encouraging. People are still stuck in old times and opening traditional schools and Madrasa which are not helping the community to compete in the modern world.

He says, “We need to establish schools with international standards and modern amenities.” He recounts that when he attended St. Xavier’s school, he was always impressed by its high

standards. “Traveling in the school bus, I would see many other convent schools with similar facilities, and it made me wonder why Muslims don’t have schools like that.”

He laments, “Muslims, in general, lack the confidence and vision to start such schools and tend to stick to conventional ones. What they don’t realize is that to make our children competition-ready and nurture big dreams, we need to educate them in top-notch schools with modern setups and facilities.”

Motiwalwa continues, “We desperately need schools like these, but we also have to design our curriculum with future development in mind. We should stay ahead with a clear vision of what students will need 15-20 years from now. To truly prepare them for the future, we must provide our children with exposure that goes beyond the present, focusing on their long-term success.”

The world needs both skillful and ethical individuals. That’s why the



education system we've developed at Pearls can serve as a model. By combining quality modern education with Deen-based teachings, we nurture students with strong ethical values. This approach can address many of the issues that stem from a lack of ethics in our society.

Inspiring the Youth

Motiwalla firmly believes that youth are the foundation upon which any community's progress depends. Given that Muslims face significant challenges in terms of progress, the role of their youth is especially crucial. He encourages our young people to work diligently and purposefully, aiming to write a new chapter of success and thereby elevate the condition of our community.

He says that education is the only way for the community to emerge from the morass of poverty and backwardness. The youth should never lose sight of this fact and make it their mission to highly educate themselves and succeed in all walks of life, through sheer hard

work and sacrifices.

He adds, "The youth while pursuing their individual dreams, must also help others who are less privileged and lack the necessary information on how to obtain the best education and prepare effectively for various competitive examinations."

He urges businessmen and entrepreneurs to step forward and share their success stories with our youth, inspiring them to think big and achieve their goals.

The road to success is filled with many obstacles, and our youth should display a never-give-up attitude and steady perseverance towards their goals. Achieving their goals can improve their conditions and provide status in society, which in turn will inspire the entire community to succeed.

Citing his own example, Motiwalla shares that when he was young and still in college, his father, a land investor, was wrongfully dragged into legal battles by his rivals, creating financial strain on the family. This

phase had a significant impact on Motiwalla, but he didn't give up. Instead, he committed to working hard and succeeding in his endeavors to improve his family's condition. "Had I faltered or bogged down, I couldn't have achieved anything in life and would have disappeared into oblivion. But my never-say-die attitude sailed me through," says Motiwalla. He expects similar spirit and passion to succeed from our youth.

Advocating for Youth Leadership

Muslims have been caught between political and religious leaderships, paying the price with no progress in society because both types of leadership have an orthodox outlook and lack fresh ideas or the drive to make a difference. According to him, there is a huge opportunity for youth leadership to emerge; however, this should be done in an organized and coordinated way.

At present, although the youth leadership is passionate about making



positive changes, it is fragmented and disorganized, and because of that, nothing significant is being achieved.

There is a need for everyone to come on the same page, set priorities, and work persistently for at least a decade or more to see tangible results. A combination of patience and passion is essential.

Motiwalla believes that the future belongs to the youth to lead the community, and this transition is already underway. We need fresh approaches to solving our existing problems, and no one is better suited to provide them than the youth.

Message to Muslims

Islamophobia has peaked worldwide in recent times, including in India, fueled by the rise of right-wing politics and unregulated social media, where anti-Muslim propaganda is freely disseminated daily. The whole system seems to be working with the intention of defaming and harming the community. Since Muslims are

economically and educationally a backward community, they are at a loss on how to navigate this difficult situation.

The situation can provoke an angry reaction among Muslims, and hardline groups may capitalize on this anger and hopelessness by brainwashing some individuals into extremism.

However, according to Motiwalla, this must not be allowed to happen. We must address this situation with wisdom and without being reactive. We need to revolutionize minority education in the country so that the community can progress in comparison to other communities.

No one accuses an advanced community; once Muslims reach a level where they are contributing more to the nation, such voices will gradually subside, or the community will be able to affirmatively handle such criticism and dispel misconceptions about them.

There have been numerous instances when Motiwalla has acted as a bridge in diffusing communal strife, as he

aspires for the peaceful coexistence of all communities. When the Babri Demolition occurred and Aurangabad was on the brink of a riot, Motiwalla and his family rose to the occasion and calmed both sides, preventing murder and mayhem.

He recounts, “Our home was on the border dividing both Hindu and Muslim settlements in Aurangabad. We could have been badly affected if there had been a communal flare-up. I was too young to fully understand the volatility of the situation back then, but instinctively, to avoid violence, my family, being well-known in the city, sprang into action, and I joined them in negotiating for peace in the area. We succeeded, and ever since, I have been an advocate for peace.”

He continues, “Islam is a religion of peace so peace should always be given a chance under any circumstances. At the same time, we must expose the nefarious designs working to malign our community and this can be achieved by strengthening our education and increasing our

representation in the mainstream society as well as at the government and political levels.

He also exhorts Muslims to reduce their consumption of foods and clothes if necessary and forgo unnecessary luxuries, such as extravagant rituals like lavish weddings, in order to prioritize their children's education above all else.

Motiwala emphasizes, "Remember, it is upon parents, whether rich or poor, to answer to God for providing their children's education. Every child has the right to a good education, and as parents, we must ensure it, lest we be held accountable for our negligence before God.

Conclusion

Ashfaq Motiwala's journey from a successful businessman to a leading figure in educational entrepreneurship reflects a profound commitment to addressing the needs of his community through innovative solutions. His journey began with a quest for a school that offered both modern and Islamic education, highlighting a significant gap in the educational landscape for Muslims.

Combining his entrepreneurial spirit with his deep-rooted sense of social responsibility and visionary leadership, he established Pearls Academy. This institution integrates modern education with strong ethical and moral teachings rooted in Islamic principles in a well-furnished setup.

The specially designed curriculum at Pearls Academy effectively addresses both academic and spiritual development, setting a benchmark for comprehensive education.

Under Motiwala's able leadership, Pearls Academy has flourished, evolving from a modest beginning into a model institution that blends academic excellence with moral integrity. This success reflects Motiwala's vision of providing a balanced education that prepares students to excel both in the world and in their ethical and moral lives, as well

silently and counter Islamophobia in peaceful way, makes him a leader par excellence. His emphasis on a patient and passionate approach to tackling community challenges and long-term goals for development underscores the importance of sustained effort and never-say-die attitude.

In essence, Ashfaq Motiwala's remarkable work with Pearls Academy, his advocacy for similar educational initiative nationwide, and his passion for positive societal changes

exemplifies his forward-thinking approach to addressing existing problems. Through his efforts he has shown the potential of combining modern education with core values to create a more



as in the hereafter.

Motiwala's commitment extends beyond education, as he advocates for a new generation of youth leadership, recognizing that current political and religious frameworks haven't lived up to expectations. His emphasis on organized and coordinated youth involvement aims to foster future leaders who can drive meaningful change.

His valuable advice to Muslims to prioritize their children's education above all else, as well as to progress

balanced and ethically grounded society, setting a precedent for others to follow.

In recognition of Motiwala's ethical leadership, stellar contributions in the field of education, and his efforts to inspire the community to move forward on the path of progress, Maeshat Media extends its sincere thanks to him and hopes he continues to serve the community and realize all his visions for its advancement.

AI trailblazer Mustafa Suleyman: Inspiring Muslim youth

By: Asad Mirza

Mustafa Suleyman's Syrian father worked as a taxi driver and his English mother as a nurse. He grew up off Caledonian Road in the London Borough of Islington, where he lived with his parents and his two younger brothers.

Most people may ask, who is Mustafa Suleyman? Well, Mustafa is a Syrian-born British citizen, about whom Microsoft's former chief Bill Gates said: "Watch his work, he can become a big name in the world of technology". If Bill Gates said it, then we should also give Mustafa, a second to review what he has achieved.

Mustafa Suleyman's Syrian father worked as a taxi driver and his English mother as a nurse. He grew up off Caledonian Road in the London Borough of Islington, where he lived with his parents and his two younger brothers.



Suleyman went to Thornhill Primary School, a state school in Islington, followed by Queen Elizabeth's School, a boys' grammar school in Barnet. Around that time, he met his DeepMind co-founder, Demis Hassabis, through his best friend,

Demis's younger brother. Suleyman initially attended Mansfield College, Oxford, before dropping out at 19.

Mustafa's practical life began when he started the 'Muslim Youth Helpline' with his friends at the age of nineteen. In fact, the situation of the Muslim youth in Britain was very similar to the dictum; "Faith has stopped me, which has drawn me to disbelief".

That is, on the one hand, it was their (Muslim youth's) compulsion to blend into the British society; on the other hand, they had to avoid the drug culture and immorality. This phone helpline service was for their guidance. Coincidentally, this service

started around when 9/11 happened, as a result the incidents of Islamophobia started to increase and the Muslim youth came under more pressure. So in that era this service helped Muslim youth to get out of social isolation. It has become the largest mental health service for Muslims in the UK today.

Suleyman subsequently worked as a policy officer on human rights for Ken Livingstone, the Mayor of London, before going on to start Reos Partners, a 'systemic change' consultancy that uses methods from conflict resolution to navigate social problems. As a negotiator and facilitator, Mustafa worked for a wide range of clients such as the United Nations, the Dutch government, and the World Wide Fund for Nature.

But for Mustafa Suleyman, essentially a philosopher and brilliant manager, this was just the beginning. The turning point in his life came in 2009. An environmental conference was being held in Copenhagen. Mustafa was also among the organisers. His effort was to get the delegates to the conference to agree on a common strategy against deforestation. He was very disappointed when he saw that they could not agree on a common strategy. But there was a new way out of that despair.

This was the year 2009. Facebook was emerging as a huge company. In those days, Mustafa read somewhere that the number of active Facebook users has reached one hundred million. This thing stuck in his mind.

He realised that not even a few people could be brought together on a common goal at the Copenhagen Conference; on the other hand, it takes only a few days for millions of like-minded people to connect on social media.

That day Mustafa realised that in the future it would be technology that

would bring people together. Thus he entered the computer field from the world of philosophy and ideas. The very next year he started a company called DeepMind along with his friends. It was an artificial intelligence research firm.

What was the goal of DeepMind? Making decisions that humans might have to think about for an infinite amount of time, better prepare computers to make them in a much shorter amount of time!

Just think, in 2023, most of us were being introduced to the world of artificial intelligence for the first time, but Mustafa Suleyman and his friends were creating AI algorithms 13-14 years ago, when even in the West very few people were aware of this field. In one of his interviews Mustafa said that at times he had to hide his work from people because people started laughing when they used to hear about artificial intelligence/AI; as it seemed to them like a silly dream of children reading science fiction, which is impossible to interpret.

"Deep Mind" must have been hidden from the eyes of the general public, but the people of the tech world were watching its rise very carefully. Several big names including Tesla's Elon Musk and PayPal's Peter Thiel started investing in it. Then in 2014, Google bought DeepMind for sixty five million dollars. It was Google's largest and most expensive acquisition outside the US at the time.

The achievements of DeepMind could be the topic of a separate discussion. For now a simple anecdote would suffice. Google has data centres around the world that require a lot of electricity to keep cool. Mustafa was given the task of finding a solution. He applied DeepMind's algorithm to find the optimal solution. Now such solutions are actually a large combination of many decisions.

Finding the perfect combination that gives the best results is a very time-consuming task. Take an example of biryani. Everyone is aware of the 12 to 15 different spices in it, but still there are only a few shops where there is huge rush. This is because they have found the perfect combination of spices and the perfect time to add them to the pot, to bring out the flavour.

So, if this project of saving electricity at the Google data centres was given to a person, he might not have been able to find the best and ideal situation even in ten years. However, after 'considering' not hundreds of thousands or millions, but billions of combinations, DeepMind proposed the best solution that reduced the power consumption of Google's data centres by forty percent. Mustafa wanted to use the same solution in buildings around the world to reduce global electricity consumption and environmental pollution.

This same Mustafa Suleyman has become a part of Microsoft last month. In March 2024, Microsoft appointed Suleyman as EVP and CEO of its newly created consumer AI unit, Microsoft AI. Now, as the chief executive of Microsoft AI; he has a wide world to conquer and limitless skies to soar. Let's see to what heights he takes the field of AI.

The number of Muslims in the tech world is very small. In such a situation, if a genius, a layman basically, comes forward and reaches for the sky, we should also be happy about it and it should motivate our youth to become like him. Today we need such heroes to inspire and motivate our youth to emulate him.

Drawing Competition at Ibn E Mariyam Play and Preschool



Kolkata: In a bid to boost creative skills among children, Ibn E Mariyam Play and Preschool organized a drawing competition on June 2, 2024.

The event was graced by the presence of Mr. Abul Kalam, Director of DR APJ Abdul Kalam College, Jharkhand, who served as the chief guest. Kolkata's renowned social activist, Afrin Gholam, was the guest of honour.

The drawing competition provided

young children with a platform to express their imagination and talent through art. Their colourful and innovative artworks showcased themes related to the environment.

The initiative by Ibn E Mariyam Play and Preschool aimed to create awareness about the nutrition and encourage healthy eating habits among young children. The school's efforts were appreciated by both parents and teachers, who recognized the importance of such educational

events in promoting the well-being of children.

"Over 30 children participated in the drawing competition held at the Ibn E Mariyam Play and Preschool premises. Based on age, the participants were divided into categories (A and B)," said Maeeshat Academy Director Danish Reyaz and also the founder of the school. He noted that the event concluded with the distribution of prizes to top three winners in each category, along with participation

certificates for all the children who took part in this competition.

Danish Reyaz remarked, “We pray to Allah (God) to provide us with a good life both in this world and the hereafter. Through our prayers, we ask Allah to bless us with a good environment so that we may lead prosperous lives. He highlighted, “To achieve happiness, it is essential to cultivate good manners. Ensuring children have a proper learning and playing environment is crucial for their development. The drawing competition not only fostered creativity but also emphasized the importance of preserving a healthy environment.”

Mr. Abul Kalam, Director of DR APJ Abdul Kalam College (Jharkhand) and the chief guest, said, “Childhood is a critical phase in a child’s life, as it is the period when they learn and develop foundational skills. The way a child is raised significantly impacts their future. If the learning environment is healthy and positive, the child is likely to have a bright future.” He lauded Maeshat Academy Director Danish Reyaz for his effort and initiative, noting that despite residing in Mumbai, Reyaz established this school in Kolkata to

provide the children of the city with a conducive and healthy learning environment.

Social activist Afrin Gholam also commended Danish Reyaz, saying, “I have known him for a long time. The type of school he has established in Kolkata is rare in the City of Joy.” She expressed concern that children today are becoming addicted to mobile phones at a very young age, causing headaches for parents who find that their children use phones more than they do. She suggested that children should be engaged in creative activities to divert their attention from phones. Gholam said, “When you approach children with these ideas, such as drawing competitions or summer camps, they will take an interest in them. I am glad that Ibn E Mariyam Play and Preschool is diligently working in this regard.”

She further emphasized that Ibn E Mariyam Play and Preschool plays a crucial role in creating a healthy learning environment specifically tailored for children belonging to the Muslim community. In addition to this important aspect, the preschool also prioritizes the overall mental and physical growth of children,

integrating various physical activities into their curriculum.

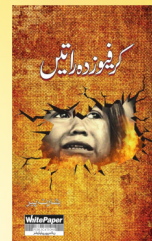
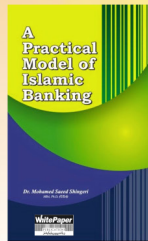
Nazia Parveen, HOD of Ibn E Mariyam Play and Preschool, stated, “We ensure that children are drawn to our various fun and physical activities and see Ibn E Mariyam Play and Preschool as their second home. When they wake up in the morning, their thoughts are centred around coming to Ibn E Mariyam Play and Preschool. Our enrolled children are so enthusiastic that every morning, their first thought is about attending Ibn E Mariyam Play and Preschool.”

Ibn E Mariyam Play and Preschool, which began its journey in April this year, conducts physical activities for children twice a month to enhance their interest, focus, and love for studies through fun-based activities suitable for their young age and learning capacity. Additionally, the school emphasizes providing children with foundational Tarbiah education through an effective curriculum that bridges the gap between early modern education and moral and ethical education in accordance with the tenets of Islam.



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Ibn E Mariyam Play and Preschool concludes an exciting two-day summer camp



Kolkata: Ibn E Mariyam Play and Pre School, which started imparting education to children in April this year, organized its first summer camp on May 11, 2024. More than 50 children from different age groups

participated in the two-day camp, which concluded on Sunday, offering children a wide array of activities designed to promote their overall development and create memorable experiences.

The camp, held at Ibn E Mariyam Play and Pre School, an initiative of Maeeshat Academy and Kolkata's first inclusive school for children situated at 46, D-Shri Dhar Roy Road, had animal walks, colour identification

activity, non-fire cooking, clay pot painting, and physical activity.

As the event drew to a close, tokens of appreciation and certificates were awarded to all participants, acknowledging their enthusiasm and dedication throughout the camp.

Referring to the parents, Danish Reyaz, director of Maeeshat Academy, said: "Today, the situation is changing. The overall development (mental, physical, and psychological) of children is very important. In this era, parents (who have children) are worried that their children might not be affected by the present situation. At the same time, couples who don't have children are worried. They wonder if there is a medical reason or some other reason. At this time, when different diseases are making life difficult, it is our responsibility to take care of the health of our children. Keep an eye on the fact that proper nutrition is being given to the children. They should eat proper food and get good sleep. Apart from this, they should ensure that their children receive the best education. Ibn E Mariyam has been established to ensure that we should give our children a proper education at an early age so that they become human beings. They should be

mentally, physically, and spiritually fit."

Nazia Parveen, head of the department of Ibn E Mariyam, said,

these activities. Different schools, NGOs, and societies conduct summer camps. Through our summer camp, we ensured that children become mentally, physically, and spiritually fit."

"It was an awesome summer camp. My son, Ata Waris, enjoyed it a lot. He is very happy after playing games and activities," said Ruhi, a parent.

Kainaat, another parent, said, "I will give Ibn E Mariyam's summer camp 5 out of 5."

"It (summer camp) was awesome my children are very happy. They want to go again. They enjoyed the activities," said Nazia Reza, another parent.

"My son Md Zohaib Ali participated at the summer camp. It was a good decision for us to enroll his name in this activity. He engaged his weekend in a productive task which not only improved him physically but also psychologically. After returning from the camp, he excitedly told us about the different activities he was engaged in which included little exercises, races, hand painting, pot painting and sandwich making. He also talked with his mates and at

the end he was handed over with the participation certificate which would be a lifelong memory, " said Md Jahangir Ali, a guardian.



"We are conducting these activities because children waste their time during summer vacation. Their time can be utilized by learning through

Public School Teaching: A Profession at Risk



Frank F. Islam

The school year is over. School is out. The students are gone. The teachers have left.

Sadly, many of those teachers have left permanently and will never return. For a variety of reasons, in 2024, public school teaching is a profession at risk.

What Teachers are Thinking and Feeling

The primary reasons for that risk, however, are the thoughts and feelings of teachers themselves. A Pew Research Center (Pew) report, released on April 4, states that “Public K-12 teachers are stressed about their jobs and few are optimistic about the future of education...”

The Pew report, based upon a national survey of 2,531 U.S. public school teachers, revealed that of those teachers “who don’t plan to retire or stop working this year, 29% say they will look for a new job in the 2023–2024 school year.”

40% of those respondents said they would look for a job outside of education; 29% said they would look for a non-teaching job in education; and only 18% would look for a teaching job at another public school.

A central factor contributing to these potential departures or migration from the teaching field is how teachers feel about their jobs. The Pew research found that

- 77% said their job is frequently stressful
- 68% say their job is overwhelming
- 70% said their school is

understaffed

- 52% said they would not advise a young person starting out to become a teacher
- These feelings are driven by the following factors identified through the research:
- Student problems, including poverty, chronic absenteeism, anxiety and depression.
- Challenges in the classroom, including students showing little or no interest in learning, students distracted by their cellphones, and troublesome student behavior.
- Parents involvement as insufficient in dealing with children’s misbehavior in school, helping their children with homework, and ensuring school attendance.

The Pew survey found that: “A large majority of teachers (82%) say the overall state of public K-12 education has gotten worse in the past five years.” And five years from now, “A narrow majority (53%) say it will be worse.”

Pew states that “Among teachers who think things have gotten worse in recent years, majorities say the current political climate (60%) and the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (57%) are major reasons.”

Teachers are not only feeling distressed. They are also feeling disrespected. That insight comes from a working paper published in November 2022 by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University.

According to Jessica Grose of the

New York Times, that paper, written by Matthew Kraft of Brown and Melissa Arnold Lyon of the University of Albany, “painted a dire picture of the profession: Perceptions of teacher prestige have fallen between 20 and 47 percent in the last decade to be at or near the lowest levels recorded over the last half century.”

Here is another part of that “dire picture,” as reported by Grose, “Teachers’ job satisfaction is also at the lowest level in five decades, with the percent of teachers who feel the stress of their job is worth it dropping from 81 percent to 42 percent in the last fifteen years.”

That job satisfaction finding from the Brown University research correlates with a finding on job satisfaction from the Pew Research. Pew found that only 33% of all teachers were “extremely or very satisfied” with their jobs, compared to 51% of all U.S. workers.

Together, the Pew and Brown studies paint an extremely dire picture and explain why many teachers do not want to be part of that picture going forward, as well as the disappearance of many teachers from classrooms over the past several years.

The Flight from Classrooms

We have been writing about teachers’ flight from the classroom and the consequent teaching shortage since 2022. Our most recent post on the subject was in September 2023. At that time, we wrote:

Unfortunately, there is no good national database on teacher shortages, and the data available on a state-by-state basis varies considerably in quality and timeliness.

The best national data we found was in an update of a research study (done for the Annenberg Institute at Brown University) conducted by three academics released on August 23 of

this year.

The original study, released in August of 2022, revealed that “...there are at least 36,000 vacant positions along with at least 163,000 positions being held by underqualified teachers.”

This update, using more up-to-date and comprehensive data, estimates that “...there are at least 55,000 vacant positions and 270,000 underqualified positions...” The study’s authors note these estimates are conservative because they cover only 43 states for varying time periods, with only one state reporting results for the 2023–2024 school year.

That “conservative estimate” means that nearly 1 in 10 teacher jobs are either unfilled or held by underqualified teachers.

Various studies have shown that the teacher shortage varies significantly from state to state. A new study, released in March of this year by Scholaroo, highlighted the extent of that variability in terms of the teacher student ratio.

According to Newsweek, the Scholaroo study shows that the state with the best teacher student ratio was Vermont, with 97.6 teachers per 1,000 students. Nevada had the worst ratio with 43.65 teachers per 1,000.

The five states with the worst ratio were: Nevada, Utah, Arizona, California, and Florida. The five states with the best ratio were: Vermont, New Hampshire, North Dakota, New York, and Missouri.

This variability extends beyond the teacher student ratio by state; it also occurs within states. As we noted in our 2023 piece:

- Certain “kinds” of teachers are hardest to find — among those are special education, science and math teachers.
- High poverty and high minority

school districts are often hardest hit by shortages.

The Pew Research report released in April of this year had similar findings regarding schools. It showed:

- Teachers in high poverty schools had a much more negative outlook.
- Teachers in high poverty schools are more likely than those in medium and low poverty schools to say they deal with behavioral issues every day.

The Scholaroo study confirmed that almost every state had a shortage of special education teachers, and many were short math teachers and science teachers as well.

Band-Aid Fixes to the Teacher Pipeline

These shortages have necessitated short-term or what might be called “band-aid” fixes — none of which ensure a high quality or good learning experience for students. Those fixes include: schools and districts increasing class sizes, canceling courses, adding more responsibilities to the workload of current teachers — and, as discussed earlier, the data shows that many schools in states across this nation have had to fill the vacant positions with “underqualified” instructors.

In August of 2023, as the 2023–2024 school year was starting, Moriah Balingit of the Washington Post published an insightful article on what schools have done, and were doing, to cope with the teacher shortage. Following are some of the “coping” approaches that Balingit details in her piece:

- A principal of a school in rural Maine filled 80% of his open positions with “long-term substitute teachers, after he was unable to find qualified educators. Long term subs don’t need teacher

training or a college degree. Many of his new hires lack both.”

- The Independence School District in Missouri switched to a four-day week to attract new candidates. Balingit reports that the district superintendent said the district did this because “the number of applicants for even traditionally competitive roles — like elementary school teachers — dropped off considerably.” As soon as the shortened work week was announced, the applications in the district increased four-fold.
- The Milwaukee public schools had around 200 vacancies going into this school year. This caused the district officials to start looking internationally for qualified teachers. “This year, schools in the city are set to hire 150 teachers from abroad, far more than in pre-pandemic years when they would hire just a few...”

While these are tactical solutions, all are inadequate because they do not put a fully qualified teacher into the classroom. Balingit stresses the importance of this, writing: “Research has shown that a good teacher makes a bigger difference in student achievement than anything else in the school. The impact is especially great on poor students and students of color, who are unfortunately the ones most likely to get underqualified educators.”

A Strategic Solution

What is demanded in these trying and troubling times for teachers — both current and future — is a strategic solution that addresses the root causes of the problem. Fortunately, in August of 2023, the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) issued an excellent report outlining The Federal Role in Ending Teaching Shortages.

The report, authored by Linda Darling-

Hammond, Michael DiNapoli Jr., and Tara Kini sets forth and spells out seven key initiatives to confront and combat the teacher shortage. They are:

1. Increase educators’ net compensation through tax credits, housing subsidies, and salary incentives.
2. Strengthen recruitment by making teacher preparation debt-free.
3. Support improved preparation by expanding high-retention pathways into teaching.
4. Provide high-quality mentoring for all beginning teachers.
5. Increase investments that enable educators to expand and share expertise.
6. Incentivize the redesign of schools to support teaching and learning.
7. Rethink school accountability.

The LPI Report labels the initiatives in those seven areas a Marshall Plan for Teaching. Given the severe and serious nature of the problem, a Marshall Plan is exactly what is needed to restore and reinvigorate the nation’s teaching infrastructure.

But as with the Marshall Plan for Europe after World War II, the plan will need involvement and investment from the states, not just from the federal government. The Report recognizes and emphasizes this, stating that “A Marshall Plan for teaching should focus the powers of the federal government on working closely with states to support teaching supply and quality in at least seven key areas.”

In our opinion, given this contextual positioning, each state should develop its own strategic Marshall Plan to complement the national plan. This would enable the state to partner with the federal government and maximize the impact of the federal intervention for the state’s teachers, students, and

schools.

Each state can put its plan together by conducting a comprehensive situational analysis of its teaching workforce. Based upon that analysis, it can determine where it stands currently with regard to the seven key areas, what needs to be done in each area, and whether additional areas need to be added. This analysis can be used to set the goals and define the strategies for a state-level strategic plan.

A Nation at Risk

The need for planning and implementing action is urgent because in 2024 in these United States, a teaching profession at risk puts the nation at risk.

That might seem like a bit of an overstatement. But, we should remember that in 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education, established by President Ronald Reagan’s Secretary of Education T. H. Bell, produced a report titled A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform.

That Report, which focused primarily on teenagers and high schools, presented findings in four critical areas: content — curriculum; expectations — knowledge, skills and abilities school graduates should possess; time — spent in the classroom and on school work; and teaching — quality of those recruited to be teachers; teacher preparation; and teacher shortage in key fields.

The educational community and the American citizenry heard the message in the A Nation at Risk report and the imperative for educational reform was addressed almost immediately.

In 2023, the Hoover Institution at Stanford University issued a report titled A Nation at Risk+40: A Review of Progress in US Educational Reform.

In the Introduction to that report, Stephen Bowen reviews the major educational reforms implemented over the past forty years, and explains how the chapters in the report evaluate the progress made by these reforms.

Bowen concludes his executive summary in the Introduction as follows:

Forty years on, significant challenges remain. The COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating effects on student learning, and chronic absenteeism remains at alarming rates. Even prior to the pandemic, student achievement, as measured by standardized tests, seemed to have plateaued despite ever-increasing resources — in time, dollars, research, technology, and human capital — being devoted to school reform.

At the end of his Introduction, Bowen observes

As the chapters in this series detail, widespread, energetic, and dedicated action is indeed what their remarkable little report inspired. Such action remains necessary today. The nation and its schools face challenges that are as great or greater than those they confronted forty years ago, and there is much to learn in the pages to follow about what was tried and why and what that tells us about the best path forward.

The Hoover Institution is not alone in its assessment of the current condition of our educational system and its correlation to the past. The Learning Policy Institute, in its Report on the teacher shortage, provides significant evidence for the problematic state of education in the United States today.

In a section titled “Déjà vu All Over Again,” it provides this analysis with evidence to support each point:

- Unfortunately, the story of teacher shortages is not new: The nation

has been in a recurring cycle of teacher shortages for at least the past 50 years.

- Shortages are just one symptom of how teaching has struggled to be recognized and treated as a profession throughout most of U.S. history. Overall, teaching conditions in the United States compare poorly with those of other industrialized countries, especially those that are highest achieving.
- At the root of the crisis in teaching is the way teaching was conceptualized when our current school structures were designed a century ago to accommodate compulsory mass education and the migration from rural to urban communities in the manufacturing boom generated by the Industrial Revolution.

LPI’s focus on teaching is critical because a qualified teacher is pivotal to student learning, as stated in its Report:

Research finds that individuals who enter teaching without having completed preparation — either through emergency permits or alternative pathways — are typically less effective and have significantly higher turnover rates, which both harm student achievement and create churn that exacerbates shortages. Research also finds that teacher quality is the most important in-school factor affecting student learning and the percentage of underprepared teachers in a district is strongly and negatively....associated with student achievement, especially for underserved students of color.

In 2024 we know the nature of the problem. It is well defined and documented. We also knew the nature of the problem in 1983. It was well defined and documented then.

The question, more than four decades

later, is will the United States develop and implement the plans to address the problem satisfactorily? The importance of doing so is essential to the future of this nation and to ensuring that it is no longer a nation at risk.

Given this, it’s appropriate to close this blog with the following powerful statement from the A Nation at Risk report, which is as relevant today as it was in 1983:

For our country to function, citizens must be able to reach some common understandings on complex issues, often on short notice and on the basis of conflicting or incomplete evidence.

Education helps form these common understandings, a point Thomas Jefferson made long ago in his justly famous dictum: I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion.

Part of what is at risk is the promise first made on this continent: All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost. This promise means that all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently guided, can hope to attain the mature and informed judgment needed to secure gainful employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interests but also the progress of society itself.

Public education is one of the primary pillars of our American democracy. Qualified teachers are the cement that helps hold that pillar together. Without them, that pillar will crumble and so will our democracy.

Gender Studies Kerala Chapter of IOS Centre organises Summer School Program in Kozhikode



By: Pervez Bari

The Institute of Objective Studies, (IOS), Centre for Gender Studies, Kerala Chapter, organized a Summer School- 2024 from May 11 to 15, 2024, at its seminar hall at Kozhikode, Kerala. The five-day camp was aimed to enhance the awareness and foresight of young participants on contemporary issues through a series of educational and cultural activities.

According to a Press Release issued by IOS imparting basic but deep knowledge to the university students pursuing professional disciplines like Graduations and Masters in business studies, science, computer science, engineering and medicine etc.

“It was also an outreach programme in that we want to introduce the IOS, to a new and larger audience, particularly the students who are future leaders in medical science, technology and business studies. These students are a very bright section of the young generation with the potentials to become leaders and decision-makers in their respective fields. It is, therefore, very necessary to acquaint them with the fundamental teachings of Islam as well as the great role that Islam played in the making of global human civilization, the release said.

Objectives of Summer School programme

The objectives of the Summer School programme were as follows: To equip the target students with basic and deep knowledge about Islam as faith and source of global Islamic civilization;

To educate about the Islamic worldview and how Islamic Sciences, Quran, Hadith and Fiqh developed; To enable students understand and analyze the Muslim contribution to world human civilization and how Islamic intellectual renaissance is possible & To prepare students how to cope with the challenges of modernity and westernization from an Islamic perspective.

Besides, it was aimed at equipping students with the Islamic knowledge to live and succeed in the globalized world as follower and torch-bearer of Islam.

The Summer School was inaugurated by Jamal Kochangadi, a respected senior media personality and writer. His inspiring address set the tone for a week of intense learning and personal development.

Daily Activities and Sessions

Each day of the Summer School was structured to provide a rich blend of academic sessions, cultural programs, and personal development activities. The feedbacks were written down and discussed daily, ensuring continuous improvement and participant satisfaction.

The curriculum covered a wide range of topics, including:- Stress Management; Communication Skills; Quran: Contemporary Issues and Challenges; Design Thinking; Mappila Songs and Aesthetic Pursuits; Interpersonal Skills; Sufi Aesthetics and Islam; Quran: Introduction to



Chapters, Text, Context and Message; Media Democracy and Contemporary Challenges; Art and Literature in Islam; The Art of Compassion; Campus Life; Islamophobia: The Menace and the Matrix; Gender Discourses and Islam; The Value of Knowledge; Feminine Identity and Islam; History, Historiography, and Resistance & Religion in the Age of Contemporary Challenges.

Senior journalists and scholars who delivered their lectures and conducted the sessions included: C. Dawood, NP Chekutty, Nishad Rauthar, Dr. PK Poker, Baburaj Bhagwati, PT Kunhali, AK Abdul Majeed, Dr. Al Vilayatullah, Khalid Musa Nad V, Dr. Ashraf Kalpetta, Dr. Jameel Ahmad, Dr. Anas, Shihabuddin Ibn Hamza, Shifa M, Zuhair Ali etc.

Cultural Programs and Break Activities

Each day had vibrant cultural

programmes that highlighted the rich cultural heritage and artistic expressions within the Islamic context. The Hazrat Ayesha Research Library provided beautifully prepared books, making the break times both enjoyable and educational.

A notable feature of the Summer School was the emphasis on personal development. Participants were encouraged to engage in reel-making projects based on various topics, fostering creativity and practical application of the knowledge gained.

The Summer School culminated with the award and closing ceremony and celebrating the achievements and participation of the students. The camp succeeded in its objective to provide comprehensive exposure to Islamic, social, and cultural topics, significantly contributing to the personal and intellectual growth of the students.

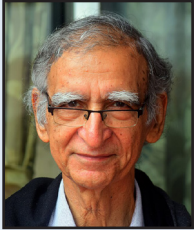
Feedback and Outcomes

Most students expressed full satisfaction with the camp, particularly appreciating the exposure to unfamiliar topics and the holistic approach to learning. The camp's success underscores the importance of such initiatives in developing well-rounded, aware, and foresighted individuals.

The IOS Centre for Gender Studies, Kerala Chapter's Summer School 2024 was a resounding success, providing invaluable insights and experiences to its participants. By integrating academic rigour with cultural enrichment and personal development, the camp significantly contributed to the participants' growth and understanding of contemporary issues within an Islamic framework.

Nalanda Mahavihar:

Did Bakhtiar Khilji destroy it?



By: Ram Puniyani

The campus of Nalanda was inaugurated formally by Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi on 19th June (2024) in presence of Ambassadors of many countries like Myanmar, Srilanka, Vietnam, Japan, Korea among others. Most of these countries are the ones where Buddhism was spread by the preachers sent by Emperor Ashok. Initially the idea of reviving Nalanda as a premier global University was floated by the then President A.P.J Abul Kalam in 2006 and later ratified by Bihar Assembly and UPA Government. On the occasion; Modi stated that this University was burnt by foreign invaders in 12th Century. He was just parroting the popular perception that Bakhtiyar Khilji, the courtier of Mahmud Ghori had burnt it.

This perception is an add-on to the other such 'social common sense' that Muslim invaders destroyed the Hindu Temples and spread Islam by force. Incidentally the propagation of these understandings began with the introduction of communal historiography by the British and later picked up with big gusto by the communal streams, Muslim communalism and Hindu Communalism. While the propagation of myths propagated by Muslim League against Hindus is playing havoc in Pakistan, in India it is RSS which has played this up, leading to Hate against Muslims in our society to the extent that Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel had to write this about RSS, "All their speeches were full of communal poison. It was not necessary to spread

poison in order to enthuse the Hindus and organize for their protection. As a final result of the poison, the country had to suffer the sacrifice of the invaluable life of Gandhiji."

When Modi was mouthing that Nalanda was burnt by foreign invaders, this falls in the same category of falsehoods which are used to spread the Hatred against Muslims. Nalanda had a glorious residential University, spread out in a large area in Rajgir Bihar, built by Gupta's in the sixth century. It was a Buddhist center as Archeological evidence shows. Primarily it was for study of Buddhist philosophy, in addition Brahminical scriptures, mathematics, logic and health science were also taught. Its tradition of open discussion and logic were so high that it attracted students and scholars from various destinations. It was supported by the Kings, later with the coming of Pala and Senaa dynasty its patronage was reduced and withdrawn. Patronage was redirected to new Universities, like Odantpuri and Vikramshila in particular.

This was the beginning of the decline of Nalanda. Who set fire to the great library housing millions of books, Manuscripts and rare collections? While it is being attributed to Khilji, particularly after the coming of the British, there is no single primary source mentioning this. Khilji's primary goal was to loot and plunder. On route from Ayodhya to Bengal he did attack Kila-i-Bihar thinking this is a forte with wealth. On the way he

plundered wealth and killed people. Nalanda was not on the route, rather far away from the route, and he had no reason to attack a University. Most of the primary sources related to history of that time do not mention Khilaji coming to Nalanda. Tabakat-a-Nasiri written by Minhaj-e-Siraj has no mention on these lines. Two Tibetan Scholars, Dharmaswamin and Sumpa were keenly studying the history of India, particularly related to Buddhism, in their books also; Khilji is not mentioned as the one who either came to Nalanda or burnt it. Taranath, another well known Buddhist scholar from Tibet also does not mention any such fact.

Interestingly Buddhist structures of importance like Ajanta, Ellora, and Sanchi stupa were also not the subject of ire of

‘invaders’! Nor do the Indian historians Jadunath Sarkar and R C Majumdar endorse Nalanda being destroyed by Khilji. So how it got burnt and lost its historical importance. Many stories abound apart from the Khilji destroying it, being most prevalent.

Prof. D. N. Jha, the authority on Ancient Indian History in his essay, ‘Responding to a communalist’ in compilation of his essays (Against the Grain, Manohar 2020, pp 185 onwards) gives an excellent summary of the relevant part of the book ‘History of Buddhism in Indian’ by Tibetan monk

Taranath. “During the consecration ceremony of the Temple built by Kakutsiddha at Nalendra [Nalanda] ‘the young naughty Shamans threw slops at tirthika beggars (Brahmins, added)...Angered by this one of them went for arranging livelihood and the other sat in the deep pit and engaged himself in ‘Surya Sadhana)...He performed a sacrifice and scattered the charmed ashes all around which resulted in the miraculous fire.”

History of Indian Logic p. 516, cited by D R Patil, ‘The Antiquarian

Buddhist in large measure, the notions of equality ruled in a big way. Due to this the Brahmanical rituals declined leading to a big dissatisfaction among Brahmins. A bit later when Ashoka’s grandson Brihadrath was ruling, his commander-in-chief Pushyamitra Shung murdered Brihadrath and became the ruler unleashing an anti Buddhist persecution.

All reliable sources point to the fact of Brahmins burning the library as revenge.

Bringing in Bakhtiar Khilji fits into the general Islamophobic propaganda against Muslims and at the same time hides the true story of persecution of Buddhism during that period.

What we need to preserve from the



Remnant’ in Bihar says that this incidence refers to the actual scuffle between Buddhist and Brahmanical mendicants. The latter propitiated the Sun God, performed a sacrifice and threw the living ambers and ashes from the sacrificial pit to Buddhist temples. This is what led to the burning of the great collection of books at that time.

We also need to register that this was a period when the attacks against Buddhism were coming up as the resurgence of Brahmanism was coming up in a big way. After the period of Ashoka when India became

Buddhist period is a spirit of free debate and logic as the underlying base of education. In present times our Universities are being stifled by the imposition of a culture of obedience and subordination in the matters of academia. The knowledge cannot be imbibed or developed under such conditions. If we can learn this from the tragic history of the struggle between Buddhism and Brahmanism in India, it will be a crucial aspect of the development of academia in the country.

Opposing a Film is Like Running After a Mirage



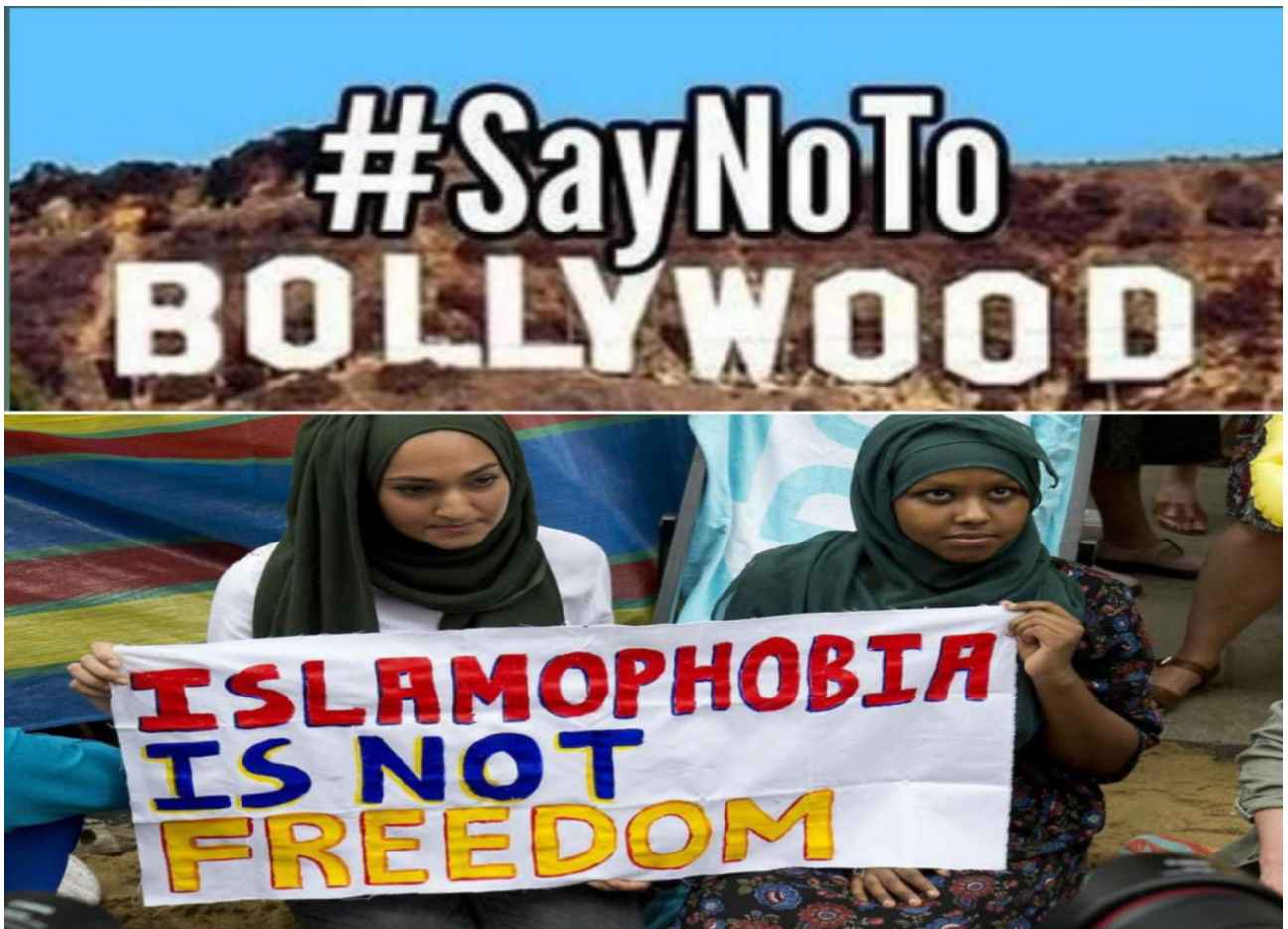
By: M. Burhanuddin Qasmi



One thing we Muslims generally misunderstand, either due to our innocence or in the flow of religious sentiments, is that many in the Indian film industry – Bollywood, like some political parties, believe in making money by inflaming the sentiments of innocent people. They deliberately make anti-Islam and anti-Muslim films so that some people oppose them and some others raise flags in support of their films. They want every TV channel, newspaper and social media platform to keep discussing for and against their films. Sometimes the film makers themselves spend handsomely and provide inputs to the so-called opponents so that they can create a mess about the film in media and public. This author had also received a financial offer, in the past, from some film makers to publish a TV byte and newspaper statement about so-and-so film, and they said, “In return, you will gain name and fame, and a ‘philanthropist’ will bear all the expenses ‘for the sake of Deen (Islam)’.”

Commonly, when the opposing group is fully ready and it is in the battlefield to fight against the film, then only a supporting group of that film is brought forward into the open, that too in a filmy-style and usually by the film-makers themselves, in the initial stages. Conspicuously, without polarizing the atmosphere through such tricks for and against a film which does not have content for entertainment in it, cannot be successful.

Recently, a movie, I’m deliberately not naming, that allegedly portrays Muslims having more children in a negative light is in discussion among Muslims. The “Mujahideen” of social media are hell-bent in opposing and demanding a ban against the movie. It should be noted that this film has not been released as yet, and generally every film-maker spends crores of rupees to introduce his film to the public beforehand so that people rush to watch his film as soon as it is released in theaters. On the other



hand, given the current situation, despite millions of opposition to any anti-Islam film by Muslims; it will not be banned in India. If a Muslim still does not realize this fact, then this person is living in some other planet, and he is in dire need of treatment.

Considering the present mind-set in India opposition of a Bollywood film from Muslims' side will bear nothing except helping in the promotion and publicity of the film itself by unwarranted media hype about the film, which we are doing, at present, in search of reward (Sawab) either because of our extra innocence or utter ignorance. Some of us are also earning the "reward" of gaining popularity for ourselves in the social media by making the title of that film, its content and the people working in it famous

for free.

It is noteworthy, however, that following the release of that film, it is possible that it will be a complete flop; may be all the things that were presented for promotion from the film-makers are not as explicit as they were made to appear, or it is also possible that it will become a big hit and our opposition will become a cause of further embarrassment for all Muslims.

Therefore, in today's internet era, it is wise not to oppose any film, book or video, instead, offer a better alternative content to the public, because mere opposition only promotes that bad thing even more. Moreover, if films are even blocked or banned by any government to be released in normal mood that they are meant to be, then

the producers upload them on OTT platforms like Netflix and YouTube, etc., which are then watched by millions of people for free – time and time again.

Spending energy opposing an upcoming film in this era is nothing but self-delusion and running after a mirage, which is not a rational action anyway. Some social media activists or small media houses incite the common people for this kind of unwanted activism against or for some illusory danger in which their own marketing strategy remains part of their game-plans. Thus, it is highly desired from the public and the Muslim youth to stay away from such useless activism which helps none but your own opponents.

India's shift from coal to green energy poses economic and livelihood challenges for marginalized communities, says new NFI study

India's ambitious plans to transition from coal to green energy pose a significant challenge to the marginalized communities in the coal-dependent regions of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and other south-eastern regions of the country. These marginalized communities, dependent on coal mining for their livelihood, belong to Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST).

A new study carried out by the National Foundation of India (NFI) and released in New Delhi on June 26 has stated that the phasing out of coal will result in significant job losses and economic downturns for the marginalized communities, which are already reeling under the impact of caste-based inequities. The OBC, SC and ST communities, which have limited access to resources and opportunities, will be disproportionately affected by the drive to switch over to the green and renewable forms of energy.

The study, titled "At the Crossroads:

Marginalised Communities and the Just Transition Dilemma", is a sequel to the "Socio-Economic Impacts of Coal Transitions in India" published by the NFI in 2021 when COVID had the world in its grip. The new study delves deep and engages at the community and workers' level breaking down the caste system and, the hierarchy underpinning it, to assess and map the socio-economic status of coal and non-coal workers in the high coal-bearing districts and blocks.

The findings of the study released in the form a report notes that 41.5% of surveyed households belong to OBCs, 17% to SC, and 23% to ST, with only 15.5% from the general category. A significant portion of the population, particularly among SCs, STs, and OBCs, has limited access to education, with many having only primary education or no literacy. The study covered two districts each from three central Indian states – Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Odisha, surveying

1,209 households and conducting 20 Focused Group Discussions (FDGs). It has highlighted the much higher representation of SC/ST and marginalized communities, with significant disparities in education and health.

Among the key findings of the study, the most important ones relate to caste-based inequities. Access to resources and opportunities is significantly skewed, with marginalized communities being disproportionately affected. The phasing down of coal is expected to result in significant job losses and economic downturns in coal-dependent regions. This will not only impact the coal miners and workers directly but also the broader local economy. Regarding health concerns, prolonged exposure to coal mining pollutants has resulted in widespread respiratory and skin diseases among the local populations. At least 75% of participants in FDGs reported issues such as chronic bronchitis, asthma, and various skin



conditions.

The report identifies several challenges in achieving a just transition, including the need to upskill a largely under-educated workforce and the lack of alternative livelihoods. It underscores the importance of community-specific policies, robust institutional mechanisms, and coordinated efforts between government bodies. The study offers a potential framework for safeguarding the interests of these communities through alternative livelihoods, ecological Restoration and inclusive policies.

“Social and economic disparities were evident across districts, with varying income levels and irregular wage receipt patterns,” said Pooja Gupta, co-author of the study and a research associate at NFI. “Dhanbad (Jharkhand) and Koriya (Chhattisgarh) are solely reliant on coal production,

and reported lower incomes compared to more diversified industrial districts like Angul (Odisha),” added Gupta. She also pointed out that during the survey and field visits, access to basic welfare schemes was notably lacking, exacerbating the vulnerability of these communities.

It was also found that the policy and institutional challenges loomed large, characterized by administrative negligence, poor service delivery, and fragmented governance structures. “Without a clear plan in place, workers in declining industries may face sudden job losses without adequate support or alternative employment opportunities; exacerbating tensions within the affected communities,” Gupta remarked.

“The findings highlight the stark caste-based inequalities in access to education and livelihood opportunities

in coal-dependent regions,” said Biraj Patnaik, the Executive Director of NFI. “There is an urgent need for community-specific policies and robust institutional mechanisms to address the socio-economic impacts of coal transition on marginalized communities,” he added. Patnaik also hoped that this report would catalyze meaningful discussions and actions towards a just transition, ensuring that the vulnerable populations are not left behind in the move towards a cleaner, sustainable future.

The NFI is an organisation committed to enabling social justice through civic engagement, promoting and developing grassroots leadership, mobilising resources and providing a platform for dialogue. It was founded in 1992 by eminent leaders such as C. Subramaniam, M. S. Swaminathan and Kamla Choudhury.

The report has looked at the choices the labourers are forced to make by their social standing which is often determined by caste. The document also discusses the governance and policy issues surrounding the coal transition and the need for comprehensive statistics and stakeholder engagement in decision-making processes. For the large swathes of the population living in coal and coal-allied districts from Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha, the future looks uncertain as the economy is weaned off coal.

The objective of the report is not only to present a potential framework for safeguarding these communities and marginalised populations whose livelihoods are at stake, it also offers plausible options to make local environment and governance aligned towards achieving the goal of a just transition.

A substantial chunk of the population surveyed identified themselves as less-educated or with no education at all and do not hold any cultivable land for initiating alternative sources of livelihood, making the task of upskilling them very challenging. For the study, two districts were selected from the three states, and 18 to 20 villages and towns were selected in each district. Research and surveying 1,209 households showed a highly skewed representation of different classes.

Significantly, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi interacted with some people who were ferrying coal on their motorcycles and bicycles during his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra earlier this year in the states where the NFI undertook the study. The researchers have unearthed stark realities of the people who eke out a living by selling coal or working in the coal industry, while Rahul Gandhi might not have asked them about their castes.

Issues such as women's safety,

predominance of lung and allied diseases, and lack of access to education were raised by at least 75% of the participants. Respiratory diseases were reported as a major issue in all the FGDs. Prolonged exposure to airborne pollutants from coal mines contributed to respiratory ailments such as chronic bronchitis and asthma. Further, approximately 65% of the respondents reported having skin issues, such as dermatitis, eczema, and fungal infections among the mining force.

Caste-based inequalities concerning access to resources and opportunities are key issues in the transition to clean energy. In coal-bearing areas where the work is dominated by marginalized communities, opportunities for education and livelihood are less. The report looks at the challenges faced by women in coal mining regions, issues related to rehabilitation and compensation for individuals affected by coal mining activities, and the ground realities of affected communities.

Analysis of survey responses indicates a clear correlation between caste and educational attainment, wherein the households with only primary education or no education are more prominent among marginalised castes such as SCs/ STs/ OBCs. In coal-producing districts such as Dhanbad and Koriya, nearly 57.5% and 52% of the marginalised communities had no formal education or had only primary education. The figures once again highlighted the inter-relationship and inter-sectionality of caste, with occupation, income, and education.

Additionally, the report highlights the difference in incomes between coal-centered districts and districts with diversified industries. Dhanbad and Koriya reported lower incomes compared to districts with more diversified industrial activities. The

lower incomes can be attributed to several factors ranging from dependence on the coal industry to limited economic opportunities in these regions. On the other hand, districts like Angul have a more diverse economic landscape including manufacturing, power generation and agriculture.

The phasing down of coal can have both direct and indirect effects on household livelihoods. Loss of employment is a direct fallout from the transition that India seeks to achieve, impacting household livelihoods, especially for those who rely solely on coal-related employment, depriving at least 1.30 crore people of a source of income impacting the local economy, as businesses that rely on the coal industry will also suffer.

As coal-related jobs decline, individuals may need to transition to alternative occupations requiring retraining and acquiring new skills which may take considerable time and resources, according to the study. The indirect effects are the economic downturn and disruption of communities which are underpinned by a strong sense of identity and social cohesion.

Lastly, phasing down coal will affect the power sector in India, which is heavily reliant on coal-fired power plants. As coal-fired power plants are phased out, there will be a decrease in the demand for coal, leading to a decline in the coal industry.

Some of the major recommendations to mitigate the deleterious impact of the transition, offered by the report, include improving infrastructure and connectivity in coal mining areas to facilitate economic development and access to markets. Enhance social infrastructure in coal mining areas like ramping up quality healthcare facilities and educational institutions. Encourage investment

in alternative industries to offer livelihood opportunities. Improve access to finance and credit facilities for individuals and businesses in coal mining areas.

The report underscores the importance of community-specific policies, coordination between government bodies, and robust institutional mechanisms, and offers a roadmap for policymakers to mitigate the adverse impacts of the coal transition by emphasising on alternative livelihood sources, ecological restoration, and inclusive policies to safeguard the interests of vulnerable communities caught amidst the change.

The report seeks to remind once again that a comprehensive assessment of coal transition impact within Indian regions demands a rigorous evaluation of socio-economic dynamics, livelihood challenges, and potential policy frameworks. Coal mines have shut down in the past and the process is not certainly new but closures without an alternative to the livelihoods of vulnerable people who will bear the brunt of the transition is problematic. The study offers a way out by examining the challenges and the systemic response that needs to be put in place.

The majority of the surveyed households were from marginalised and socio-economically backward communities. On the work front, 38% of the sampled 1,209 households work in the coal sector and 62% work in non-coal sectors, leading to the reasonable conclusion that the government's initiative to transition away from the coal industry will most severely impact backward communities mainly in the coal sector.

Out of the total sample population, 464 households are engaged in the coal sector and 745 work in the non-coal sector. People from marginalised communities in coal-dependent

districts, such as Koriya, Dhanbad, and Ramgarh have higher engagement ratios in coal-sector occupations 39%, 42.14%, and 18.7% respectively. Whereas households from the general category engaged in coal from Koriya, Dhanbad, and Ramgarh are 3% and 7% respectively, none from Ramgarh.

The districts of Angul and Jajpur have different caste and occupation equations. The impact of the presence of coal allied industry in Angul is visible in its occupational structure – 5.5%, 6.6% and 27.8% of SC, ST, and OBC respectively are working in the coal sector, which is a clear shift from what was observed in other districts. Project-affected people, tribal communities, particularly vulnerable tribal groups, rural populations, indigenous communities, and other weaker segments of the population are at heightened risk despite several legal frameworks for their safeguards.

Administrative negligence and poor public services governance are major challenges for a just transition, but they are continuing trends in coal-dependent regions. Prevalent theories of energy transition mostly debate sustainability transitions and do not sufficiently address them. Given the complex inter-mingled web of governance, laws and bodies for different components of energy, land, coal mining, and communities there's a need for coordination and cooperation at the centre, state and local levels.

A top-down approach to environmental and climate change management and multiplicity of institutions, powers, and planning can be detrimental to just transition, the study said. One example of such overlap can be seen in the case of rehabilitation and resettlement policies in the coal mining sector. In coal mines, the implementation of such policies is undertaken by the mining company, while monitoring is

under the chairmanship of the district collector.

Alternative livelihoods and job opportunities have to be created for coal-dependent communities. However, poor planning and disaggregated vision of the roadmap for coal transition by government authorities is evident. In its recommendations, the report pointed out that given the wide differences in socio-economic and demographic characteristics of every district, policy decisions have to be hyper-local removing the possibility of a one-size-fits-all approach. Policy decisions must keep in mind that each of these factors must be addressed promptly. To address multiple needs and redress multifaceted challenges faced by communities' recommendations have been designed on the principles of a sustainable livelihood framework.

The sustainable livelihood framework aims to improve human capital, environmental capital, economic capital, and physical capital to foster community leadership and protect vulnerable communities. It focuses on enhancing skills, improving access to social welfare benefits, and addressing local ecological issues.

After the identification of vulnerable communities and regions, programmes should be launched on the lines of Dalit Bandhu, and coordination and planning should evolve between the Department of Agriculture, horticulture, labour, and Animal Husbandry. An environment for developing programmes for animal husbandry, livestock development, and aquaculture should be evolved with an emphasis on offering credit in vulnerable areas at low interest rates and setting up technical centres in vulnerable areas for the promotion of public participation and awareness for programmes launched under this head, the report noted.

Global Perspectives Meet Academic Excellence:

Jamia Hamdard

Debuts Under-Graduate Programme in International Studies & Global Politics

Jamia Hamdard Institute of International Studies at Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi has launched a flagship under-graduate programme dedicated to study and research within knowledge domain of international studies, global politics, and world affairs for the academic year of 2024-25, following the ongoing growth of its M.A. programme in International Studies.

The world has now increasingly become more dynamic and interlinked, with multiple crisis occurring. From the resurgence of wars in Ukraine and Palestine, to the global threats of pandemics and climate change, it has become more necessary than ever to comprehend the political,

social, economic, and technological imperatives that drive these processes. Over the years, the demand has grown in India for students to study subjects in the broader field of international relations, geopolitics, and international political economy.

The newly introduced programme, titled B.A. (International Studies and Global Politics) is a four-year under-graduate programme (FYUGP), spanning eight semesters, with

2020. Students interested in further studies after three-year UG Degree, they can opt to study for their fourth year. With this, the students can avail honours degree or an honours degree with research in the field of international studies subject to whether they submit a research project/dissertation or not.

The under-graduate programme in international studies aims to create

multiple exit-entry options at the end of each year, giving students an option to avail a UG Certificate, UG Diploma, and UG Degree each at the end of first, second, and third year, provided they attain the minimum credits as stipulated in the National Education Policy of



graduates informed in important aspects about world politics. Along with having wide spectrum of conventional courses pertaining to global politics like international peace, political economy, international bodies, great power politics, the programme has Meticulously-crafted curriculum focused on the study of defense & security, maritime & Himalayan geopolitics, cyberspace security, global health, foreign policy of major global powers, religion & culture's influence on IR, International trade & tourism, sport diplomacy, global food security, Non-State Actors in World Politics, and all facets of India's foreign policy and international relations. Setting a new ambition for the discipline, the programme also includes all area studies of international relations including West Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Europe, along with courses that focus on the individual as the referent, including migration and diaspora.

The curriculum reflects inter-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary and holistic approaches envisioned in NEP2020 and it is also complemented by practical insights on international relations and diplomacy by eminent diplomats from India and abroad as Professor of Practice. The B.A. programme, in its optional subjects, also includes courses pertaining to the complex relationship between religion, culture and world politics in the current era. There are also multidimensional aspects of this discipline, wherein student will be learning at least one foreign language, social science statistics, India's freedom struggle in global Perspective as well as reflections of world politics on popular culture.

Moreover, this B.A. programme in international studies and global politics, which is going to be first introduction by any government funded

university in national capital of Delhi, has been crafted not only to familiarize students with the predominant Euro-centric perspectives in international relations but also to elucidate the roles and contributions of various civilizations like Near Eastern, Indian, Chinese, and Islamic civilizational systems in shaping global order and international affairs. It discusses the past five millennia, wherein myriad civilizations have risen, declined, endured, and many of which played significant roles in establishing world order and influencing foreign relations long before the ascendancy of Western powers or the onset of European colonialism circa the 16th century AD. Examining international relations through a historical-civilizational lens shall enable learners to explore both material and ideational aspects of state and societal relationships. Moreover, it will foster a departure from conventional state-centric interpretations of the "international system" towards a broader conceptualization of global order.

Furthermore, this programme shall also incorporate knowledge systems outside hegemonic Western sources and incorporate India's civilizational legacy into the course work, combining the study of conventional and non-conventional aspects of the broader discipline of International Studies. Following the guidelines of National Education Policy 2020, the aim of this under-graduate programme is to not just impart domain knowledge but also impart the necessary skills for the current professional market as well as the Indian ethos to create well-informed citizens for the nation.

The inaugural batch will accommodate sixty (60) students, with an annual tuition fee of ₹50,000. For Further Information about eligibility, details of application, admission procedure and other information, log on to Jamia Hamdard Admission Portal [https://](https://ums.jamiahamdard.ac.in/)

ums.jamiahamdard.ac.in/, or do visit www.jamiahamdard.edu.

Employment Prospects

Graduates of this programme will be more equipped to evolve expertise in the field of international politics and they will be well-positioned to pursue careers in think tanks, journalism, policymaking, research, bureaucracy, embassies & consulates, international organisations/bodies, and corporate set-ups that require geopolitical analysis.

About Jamia Hamdard

Established on a vision of human service and educational excellence, Jamia Hamdard was accorded the status of a deemed-to-be University by the Government of India in 1989. Being a government funded Deemed to be University, Jamia Hamdard has witnessed remarkable growth over the years, evolving into one of the nation's premier universities. Notably, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Government of India, bestowed an 'A+' Grade upon Jamia Hamdard for the 4th cycle with a rating of 3.41 out of 4.0 in 2023. Jamia Hamdard's commitment to innovation and excellence is further evidenced by numerous accolades, including its ranking as 49th among the top 100 universities in India and 78th among the top 100 institutions/universities/colleges in the overall category of the National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF) in 2023 by the Government of India. Jamia Hamdard is also figured in Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings between 601-800 and QS World University Rankings between 1201-1400 in 2023. Jamia Hamdard stands at 10th position out of the 75 Universities and Institutions of India ranked in the QS World Rankings. In the QS Asia University Rankings 2023, Jamia Hamdard stands 501-550.

NGO Dupes People in Name of Qurbani



Hyderabad police have registered a case against an NGO that cheated several Muslims after collecting money for Qurbani on Eid al-Adha.

The victims lodged complaints with Habeeb Nagar, Film Nagar and other police stations after 'Khidmat Foundation' failed to deliver their 'Hissa' (share) in the cattle.

They had paid Rs.2,700 to Rs.2,800 for each share. They were promised home delivery of the 'Hissa'. After waiting for a few hours, the victims called the mobile numbers of the NGO but the phones were switched off.

Realising that they were cheated, many people approached the police and lodged a complaint.

Several people had also paid money and entrusted it with the responsibility of distributing meat among the poor.

The number of victims is said to be in hundreds. The NGO is believed to

have cheated people to the tune of Rs.2 crore.

People in areas like Toli Chowki, Jahan Numa and Mallepally had paid money to the organisation for 'Qurbani'.

The organisation lured people with discounts, offering a hissa for Rs.2,700 to Rs.2,800. At many places, where various organisations organise collective Qurbani, each hissa was priced between Rs.3,500 to Rs.5,000.

Gullible people fell into the trap without checking the antecedents of the

organisation.

This is the first such incident of an organisation duping people in the name of Qurbani.

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