



The Federation of Aligarh Alumni Association

The 18th Annual Convention Report

The XVIII Annual Convention of Aligarh Alumni Associations (FAAA) was hosted by AAA in Atlanta on July 26-28, 2019 at Double Tree Hotel by Hilton, Roswell, GA. The theme of the convention this year was “Sir Syed’s Vision and the 21st Century.” The convention was attended by over 125 delegates from all over the United States, Canada, India and the Middle-East. This was a record attendance in the history of FAAA conventions.

The Convention started on Friday evening, July 26th with an hour for socializing and networking followed by dinner. The participants were then entertained with brief sessions on “Sheri Nashist” recited by Ms. Sadaf Farooqui, Dr. A. Abdullah, Mr. Perwaiz Jafri, Dr. Nausha Asrar, Dr. Razi Raziuddin, Mr. Siraj Karatela, Mr. SMA Naqvi and Mr. Zia Khairabadi. The last session of the day “Aligs Got Talent” was performed by Mr. Ali Rizvi, Dr. Hina Nazli, Dr. Ateeq Ahmad, Mr. Suhail Farrukh, Ms. Sheeba Masroor and Qawwali by Aligarh Alumni Association of Atlanta (AAAA) & others. The Chief Guest, Mr. Ravish Kumar also recited his poetry. The audience enjoyed all these sessions.

The program continued on the morning of July 27th with Tilawat-e-Qura’n by Dr. Ahmadullah Siddiqi followed by a welcome address by Dr. Asif Taufiq, the President of AAA Atlanta. Annual reports were presented by BOT Chairman, Prof. Tariq Haqqi and the outgoing BOD team members Mr. Noman Siddiqui (Treasurer), Mr. Faraz Hasan (Secretary) and Dr. Nausha Asrar (President). Dr. Asrar briefed about achievements of the federation during last 12 months including resolving long standing dispute of membership of Washington DC association.

Dr. Rashid Naim & Dr. Ghulam Nadri of Georgia State University presented their views and findings on Sir Syed’s vision, mission and its relevance on Muslim educational traditions and empowerment. Dr. Razi Raziuddin illustrated the failure of Muslim institutions and individuals, 150 years following the debut of Sir Syed's mission, to make any significant headway in advancing it.

Mr. Moez Wajihuddin of Dawat-e-Hadiya presented a message from His Holiness Dr. Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin, Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University. The Chancellor’s message emphasized the need for commitment to acts of kindness and generosity. He quoted a verse from the Holy Quran that states Allah raises those with faith and knowledge in stature and station. He further said, “Knowledge is a means of ascension, both spiritual and material. If progress and growth are to soar in the heavens above, then knowledge and action combined are the wings upon which we take flights.” The Chancellor in his message expressed appreciation of the work done by Aligarh Alumni in community work and prayed for future success.

AMU Vice Chancellor, Professor Tariq Mansoor in his written message published in the 2019 ALIGAtlanta magazine to the Alumni conveyed his good wishes and appreciated their valuable contributions. “Alumni have always stood as a pillar of strength and have always extended their support towards various developmental initiatives of the University, a fact which we in AMU deeply appreciate,” the Vice Chancellor noted.

Professor Sufiyan Beg, Chairman AMU Alumni Affairs presented a brief talk on the current research and academic developments in AMU. He hoped and wished for creating an environment that would inspire students



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for intensive research in science and other fields aiming at becoming Nobel Laureates. Prof. Beg appealed to the Alumni to support this mission by organizing lectures and workshops. He stated that the Vice Chancellor is more interested in building funds for AMU infrastructure rather than providing scholarships to students from the Alumni. Prof. Beg also thanked the Alumni for their continued support in various ways.

In a powerful speech, Guest of Honor, Mr. Abbas Akhil, House Representative, New Mexico Assembly, USA spoke about his Aligarh journey and how it prepared him for what he is today. He recalled many interesting and inspiring instances of hostel life, academic and campus activities. Then, Mr. Akhil shared his experience of running for the political office and emphasized the importance of holding the public office to influence and help the citizens.

Chief Guest Mr. Ravish Kumar of NDTV gave an overview of deteriorating education and media status in India. He explained how systemically the entire education system is being distorted based on myths rather than facts or scientific researches. He emphasized the need to get involved, to protest and to resist these destructive forces in the broader interest.

Mr. Kumar's presentation was highly appreciated, and the entire audience gave him a standing ovation.

Mr. Hasan Ghias of Dallas talked about improving AMU schools and its impact. Ms. Amtul Suhail gave an update on "Education of Girls and Orphans (EGO)." Prof. Shaheen Usmani of Brooklyn College (BC), NY spoke about their work with Sir Syed National Schools in U.P. Mr. Asad Equabal of Dubai explained uses and importance of "ALIGConnect" App.

Next, the talk on "Global Initiative and Trends" was given by Dr. Wesley Barker of Mercer University, Prof. Anil Pradhan & Prof. Sultana Nahar of Ohio State University (OSU) and Prof. Mustaque Ahmad of Georgia Institute of Technology. Dr. Wesley shared her and her students' experience of visiting the AMU campus for a summer program. Profs. Pradhan & Nahar gave an overview of Indo-US AMU-OSU Collaboration in STEM Education and Research, and how they plan to continue helping students & faculty.

In the evening session, delegates were divided into groups for discussion and recommendations on theme topic "Motivating, Strengthening & Growing Member Associations." A quick rundown of previous efforts was given by Dr. Moyeen Haque. Many useful and creative recommendations were shortlisted by four breakout groups. It ranged from improving website, nominating young councilors to forming of new associations and changes in bylaws. Mr. Umar Farooq concluded the session.

Elections for the next team was held at the end of the day-time session. Following were elected:

- Mrs. Amtul Suhail (AAA of Norther California) - Member of BOT
- Dr. Salim Shah (AAA of Virginia) - President-Elect
- Mr. Haris Jamil (AAA of Chicago) - Secretary -Elect
- Mr. Obaid Qadri (AAA of New England) - Treasurer-Elect

The annual convention banquet started with recitation of the Holy Quran by Mr. Omer Kamal followed by welcome address by Dr. Rasheed Ahmad, President FAAA. Dr. Ahmad recognized the services of the previous FAAA presidents and also thanked the local Atlanta officers for their contributions. He briefly



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went over the background and aims & objectives of FAAA. Paying tribute to Sir Syed, Dr. Ahmad noted that Sir Syed symbolizes the phoenix which will continue to regenerate and to be born again. He laid out some of the proposals for AMU & FAAA including starting campus orientation tour for new students, developing an FAAAA digital newsletter and greater participation in the extension lectures on advanced topics.

Mr. Ravish Kumar, Anchor and TV Journalist, NDTV India spoke about responsible journalism and India's secular democracy. Mr. Kumar recalled the changes Indian society is undergoing and the various recent incidents. The color and tone of any event is viewed through a polarized prism. He was concerned about the loss of objectivity in the media. Mr. Kumar emphasized the urgent need to effectively disseminate the positiveness and respond to the fake narratives through social media. His talk was honest, factual, cogent and well-referenced. Once again, he received a standing ovation from the audience.

Dr. Farzana Bharmal, Dr. Asif Taufiq and Dr. Wasi Siddiqui received AAA Atlanta award for their patronage & services. Dr. Nausha Asrar, Dr. Tariq Haqqi and Dr. A. Abdullah received FAAA awards for their leadership and dedication. Special awards were given to visiting guests, Dr. Sufyan Beg, Mr. Abbas Akhil and Mr. Ravish Kumar.

Mr. Kauser Usmani, Seceratry FAAA thanked all the guests, sponsors, speakers, delegates and organizers for making the convention a huge success.

After a delicious dinner, the entertainment night started with a stage play on Sir Syed & Aligarh Movement by AAA Washington DC. The play was narrated by Dr. A. Abdullah. Mr. Khalid Hameed Baig, Mr. Masood Farshori and Mr. Ali Rizvi were the main actors. It was directed by Mr. Ali Shoaib Hasan with sound effects by Mr. Afzal Usmani, and costume design & makeup by Mr. Farooq Ahmad. The audience enjoyed and applauded the play. It was followed by University Tarana which drew everyone onto the stage. The next entertainment was Ghazals & Geet. Mr. Azhar Mahmood and Dr. Shahid Rafique delighted and mesmerized the audience with melodious songs and powerful ghazals. The banquet was attended by around 190 people.

The July 28th event started with a brief session that included interaction of office-bearers with delegates and member associations. Discussion on FAAA Bylaws was coordinated by Dr. Saif Sheikh and Dr. Moyeen Haque. At the convention closing at around noon, the delegates were given a driving tour of Downtown Atlanta which included Georgia Tech, CNN, Coca-Cola, Olympic Park, etc.

This sold-out event was meticulously planned and executed by AAA Atlanta team and FAAA steering committee. All the arrangements from airport pickup, speakers' selection, session topics to time management, entertainment and post-event site-seeing received very high marks from the attendees.

The Convention was sponsored by AMU Chancellor's Office, Dr. Asif Taufiq, Dr. Sayed Amir, 27th Investments and Turkish Airlines.

Kauser Usmani
Secretary, FAAA

Dr. Rasheed Ahmad
President, FAAA