

PRESS RELEASE

Jan 25, 2015

For Immediate Release

Second Annual Multicultural Gala of Bangladesh Association, Houston Houston, Texas

On Friday, Jan 23, 2015, Bangladesh Association, Houston (BAH), hosted its second Annual Multicultural Gala to celebrate its 36th anniversary. The event was held at the Marriott Town Center, Sugar Land. Mayor Annise Parker of the City of Houston declared that day as the Bangladesh-American Center Day. H.E. Mohammad Ziauddin, Ambassador of Bangladesh to the United States, delivered the keynote speech. Mr. Qasim Sharif, CEO of Stratum Energy, chaired the event and also delivered a memorable speech to build a strong America. On behalf of Mayor Parker, Councilman Jack Christie and Councilman Richard Nguyen presented the Honorary Citizenship Certificate to the Ambassador. Mr. Shah Haleem, BAH Chairperson, delivered the welcome speech.

The Gala has helped raise about \$450,000 (including matching funds, before gala expenses) to benefit the Bangladesh-American Center (BAC), but additional funding is needed to complete the Center. Community leader and the Center Fundraising Chair Mr. Arun Roy conducted fundraising activities. Dr. Selina Ahmed pledged \$50,000 to reserve the naming rights for the Contemplation Room of the Center. Each of the following families pledged \$150,000: Mr. Qasim & Noreen Sharif, Mr. Amanul & Sandra Syed. Each of the following families pledged \$15,000: Mr. Gias & Nazma Khan, Arun & Ratna Roy, Shah & Marufa Haleem (Maggie), Mohammad & Afsana Hasan (Masud). Each of the following families pledged \$10,000: Dr. Nizam & Mrs. Meah, Lutfor & Tahmina Rahman. Many other patrons of the Center made pledges ranging from \$100 to \$1,000. In addition, Dr. Abdus Sattar pledged \$10,000 to fund college scholarships under a new long term program that BAH plans to initiate in his honor. BAH thanks all donors for their generous contributions.

The Gala was conducted by Channel 13's VP of Community Affairs Cynthia Cisneros with invited guests that included local and federal leaders. Many delegates including representatives from the offices of Senator Ted Cruz, Senator Cornyn, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, and Congressman Al Green attended the event to present certificates of recognition. Texas Comptroller Mr. Glenn Hagar, Consul General of Turkey Mr. Ferhat Alkan, and Consul General of South Korea Mr. Suk b Park graced the occasion and delivered speeches too. Mayor Annise Parker and Harris County Sheriff Adrian Garcia sent congratulatory video messages. Senator Rand Paul sent a greeting message, which was delivered by Dr. Nizam Meah. Other local, state, and national leaders and elected officials also sent greeting messages.

Other community leaders who attended the event include Mr. Matlub Khan, Ruhi Ozgul, Mehmet Okumus, Mr. Saeed Sheikh, and Mr. MJ Khan (President of ISGH). Members of the Turkish Chamber of Commerce and Pakistan Chamber of Commerce also attended the Gala. Leaders from Turkish, Pakistani, Indian, and Chinese communities were also present.

The Gala was coordinated by its following program directors: Shah Haleem, Khaled "Zulfiquar" Khan, Dr. Rafiq Khan, Afzal Ahmed, Sumana Saluuddin, and Mohammad Moniruzzaman. Gala magazine was designed by Mr. Azadul Haq. Dignitary management responsibilities were carried out by a team led by Mr. Hasan Rahman and Maggie Haleem. Gala financials was managed by BAH Treasurer Mr. Azmal Khan. BAH logistics were carried out by team of people led by Shumana Salauddin and Ashiqul Talukder. BAH also honored new founding members of the Center—Kazi Mahboob Kamran, Rawnak Chowdhury, and Dr. Amirul Islam—for fulfilling their commitments.

The Gala represented many countries and their local artists in performing guitars, dance, and music to entertain the audience throughout the entire four hours. US national anthem and color guards were presented jointly by the Houston Police Department and the Houston Sheriff Department Honor Guards. Elsie High Choir team performed the opening ceremony along with other multicultural performances. Final performance of the night was conducted by singer Kaderi Kibria, who was awarded Masud Karim Foundation Award by Mrs. Dilora Alo.

The Gala objective was to honor and empower people to promote culture, education, health care, and outreach programs. Awards were presented to H.E. Ambassador of Bangladesh Mohammad Ziauddin, Qasim Sharif (Founder, Stratum Energy), Hasan Rahman (Ex-BAC Director), Cynthia Cisneros (VP, ABC Channel 13), Mrs.

PRESS RELEASE

Sandra Syed and Amnaul Syed, Oli Mohammed (Chair, BAC Shaheed Minar Project), Shahid Ullah (Ex-COO, Afren Resources), Saddam Ahmad (BAC Chief Engineer), Arun Roy (Ex-Chairperson, BAH), Dr. Selina Ahmed (Chair, BAC Corp Fundraising) and Late Dewan A. Ahmed, Ratna Roy (BAC Fundraising Team), Marufa Haleem (BAC Fundraising Team), Azadul Haq (Ex-Director, BAC), Naz Husain (Ex-Chairperson, BAH) and Afzal Ahmed (Ex-Chairperson, BAH).

BAH deeply appreciates the support of all BAH leaders, volunteers, and following sponsors: A Media, Turkish Airlines, Sam's Club, Kroger, SN Talk, Shahnai restaurant, Astro Apparel, Stratum Energy, Sign USA, Meah Family Foundation, Realm Real Estate Professionals, Sugar Land Marriott, and many others.

Photos of the Gala are available on BAH website at <http://tinyurl.com/BAH-Gala-2015>.

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