

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 Jan 23, 2015 as the Bangladesh-American Center (BAC) 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. Dr. Nizam Meah delivered the greeting message from Senator Rand Paul.

The Gala has helped raised about **\$450,000 (matching funds included)** to benefit the Bangladesh-American Center, but more funding is needed to complete the Center. Community leader and Center Fundraising Chair Mr. Arun Roy conducted the fundraising, Dr. Selina Ahmed committed to donate \$50,000 to reserve the naming rights for the Contemplation Room of the Center. Family of Mr. Gias and Nazma Khan, Arun and Ratna Roy, Shah and Marufa Haleem (Maggie), Mohammad and Afsana Hasan (Masud) committed \$15,000. Dr. Nizam and Jasmin Meah and Lutfor and Tahmina Rahman committed \$10,000 each. Mr. Qasim & Noreen Sharif and Mr. Amanual & Sandra Syed each also committed to donate \$150,000. There are many more commitments for donations from \$100 to \$1,000 received from individuals for the Bangladesh-American Center. In addition Dr. Abdus Sattar committed to donate \$10,000 for the college scholarship funds. BAH to initiate a long term scholarship in honor of Dr. Abdus Sattar. We thank all the donors from the bottom our hearts.

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 recognition certificates. 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 also delivered speeches. Congratulatory video message was sent by Mayor Annise Parker and Harris County Sherrif Adrian Garcia. Greeting messages were received by local, state and national leaders.

Many other community leaders including Mr. Matlub Khan, Ruhi Ozgul, Mehmet Okumus, Mr. Saeed Sheikh and Mr. MJ Khan (President of ISGH) attended the event. Members of the Turkish Chamber of Commerce and Pakistan Chamber of Commerce had a also attended this Gala. Leaders from Turkish, Pakistani, Indian, and Chinese communities were also present. The Gala was coordinated by Shah Haleem, Khaled "Zulfiquir" Khan, and Dr. Rafiq Khan and Afzal Ahmed, Sumana Saluuddin, Mohammad Moniruzzaman the program directors. 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 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 Center Founding members Kazi Mahboob Kamran and 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. Elsik High Choir team performed the opening ceremony along with other multicultural

performances. Final performance of the night conducted by singer Kaderi Kibria who was awarded Masud Karim Foundation Award by Mrs. Dilor Alo.

The Gala objective was to honor and to empower people to promote culture, education, healthcare, 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. Sandra Syed and Amnaul Syed, Oli Mohammed (Chair BAC Shaheed Minar Project), Shahid Ullah (Ex- COO of Afren Resources), Saddam Ahmad (BAC Chief Engineer), Arun Roy (Ex-Chairperson of BAH), Dr. Selina Ahmed and late Dewan A. Ahmed (Chair Corp Fundraising), Ratna Roy (Fundraising Team), Marufa Haleem (Fundriasing Team), Azadul Haq (Ex-BAC Director), Naz Husain (Ex-BAH Chair, Chief Photographer and Webmaster), and Afzal Ahmed (Ex-BAH Chairperson).

BAH deeply appreciates all the donors, BAH leaders, volunteers and sponsors of the Gala for their support: 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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